

THE LITERARY AND CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE EARLY
ROXBURGHE CLUB

PhD 2015

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude is owed to Professor Helen Phillips for her unfailingly erudite guidance and support over what has proved to be a very long haul. This thesis would not have been completed without her immense kindness and encouragement. Many thanks also to Dr Rob Gossedge for his valuable insights, advice and humour, and to Dr Anthony Mandal and Professor Stephen Knight for their counsel at strategic points. Much appreciation is also due to Rhian Rattray for her kindness and for being efficient on the many occasions when I was not. I am grateful for the financial assistance offered by ENCAP which has contributed to the presentation of papers based on my research at Exeter and Leeds, and towards research trips to Oxford, Cambridge and London.

Foremost among the many people outside of Cardiff University to whom I owe thanks, are the Roxburghe Club for their generosity in allowing me access to their archive, and with especial thanks to Nicolas Barker and Dr John Martin Robinson for their patience in answering my enquiries. Thanks are also due to the many archivists and librarians who have assisted me, with especial mention of those of the Society of Antiquaries, John Rylands Library and Chatsworth House archives.

I am indebted to Peter Miles, my tutor at Lampeter University, who originally encouraged me to undertake postgraduate research. Special thanks are owed to my family for their patience and forbearance over the past seven years and especially to Iris who made this possible. Lastly, I am grateful to my parents, who although they did not live to see the completion of this thesis, encouraged in me a love of reading which was the beginning of everything.

SUMMARY

The Roxburghe Club has an unbroken publishing history from 1814 to the present day. Since the Club's edition of *Havelok the Dane* appeared in 1828, the Roxburghe has gained a reputation as a producer of valuable editions of manuscripts and reprinted early books. The founding period of the Club, however, has been viewed with less approval, often seen as a frivolous, unscholarly period of wasted years when little of value was produced by a membership composed of dilettante aristocrats. Examination of contemporary sources presents an alternative narrative of the formative years of the Club showing that the early members of the Roxburghe, rather than being frivolous bibliomaniacs, were in fact educated men with serious literary purpose and ability. The origin of the inaccuracies about the Club's history is shown to be traceable to one malicious source and an accurate alternative biography of the Club is presented in correction of this version. The books produced by the members during this period were important texts that contributed to the emerging field of English Literature. By examining the political and religious affiliations of the members, it is demonstrated that the social and political makeup of the early group was far more complex than previously acknowledged; a change of perspective that in turn has implications for the texts that were presented to the Club. The early Roxburghe represented a significant potential forum for the exchange of important ideas about early authors and texts.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ODNB = Oxford Dictionary of National Biography <<http://www.oxforddnb.com>>

HP = The History of Parliament < <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org>>

INTRODUCTION

The Roxburghe Club was founded in 1812 and has enjoyed an unbroken record of private publishing to the present day. It was founded by a group of wealthy bibliophiles who shared an interest in the earliest printed books and who wished to share amongst themselves reproductions of rare volumes published at their own expense. The print runs were therefore small and the volumes available only to members and occasionally to close friends. The membership is still small (forty) but today the Club publishes 42 volumes of each publication for the members and Club, but additionally up to 300 for sale. The modern incarnation of the Roxburghe Club is that of a respected printing society publishing highly collectable modern editions and facsimiles of rare and important texts from the fifteenth to the early nineteenth centuries, with high standards of scholarly editing and luxurious presentation. Posterity has tended, on the other hand, to view the early years of the Roxburghe Club and its founder members in a distinctly dismissive manner, sometimes with ridicule, often with belligerence, but seldom with open-minded seriousness. In order to examine the Roxburghe Club and its long and complex connection with, and contributions to, the world of literature and the histories of editing and literary studies in Britain it appears to be necessary to look almost anywhere *but* in British literary history and commentary for answers. The history of the Club has been up to now almost entirely played out in the footnotes of books on other topics, which is a testament to the importance of many of the Roxburghe volumes, and yet explicit references to the Club's early years tend to be with an eye to its denigration as a group of gourmandising, dilettante bibliomaniacs who published unscholarly editions of

trivial works, only of value to other collectors as a consequence of their manufactured rarity.

The result of what can be seen as this belittling yet surprisingly tenacious creation myth about the Club has been to minimise and almost render invisible its serious and significant contributions in the early nineteenth century to the development of English literary studies, the formation of the history and canon of English literature, and also to the evolving practice and theory of editing and facsimile making in this period. The cultural significance, connections and legacy of the Club's early decades have been treated as negligible. What detailed modern scholarly research has been undertaken on the Club's early activities has centred on biographical and, in the strictest sense, bibliographical data and questions, on the factual history of the Club and some of its members. Other research has been produced with an internal and narrowly-focussed reference for the Club itself and in relation to the Club's subsequent history, without engaging with wider questions about political, cultural and academic contexts, implications and issues.

To investigate the early Roxburghe Club's activities and influence, in relation to wider parameters of those kinds, it is necessary to sift through many types of contemporary documentation: accounts of book-collecting, politics, newspapers and periodicals, the history of libraries and private collections and the gossip columns of the early and mid nineteenth century. Given the pioneering character, as this thesis will argue, of the Roxburghe editions during the Club's first decades and the importance of the debates and discussions undertaken under the

Club's aegis, at a period of crucial importance for European attitudes towards literature in the vernacular traditions and their history, and towards older, popular, and non-classical culture and writing, it may seem surprising that there has not to date been a thorough examination of this period of the Club's history. Perhaps that partly reflects what Jon Klancher identifies as 'the disappearance of collector culture from twentieth-century bibliography' and the process of almost self-conscious disassociation between the academic study of the book and its antiquarian past with its taint of emotional rather than analytical response.¹ This prejudice against the world of book collectors, enthusiasts and scholars of the early nineteenth century, perceived as still embedded in an age of Romanticism, of antiquarianism, amateurism and unscientific approaches to editing, by a later nineteenth-century, increasingly institutionalised, academic establishment is, in the case of the Roxburghe Club's activities exacerbated by the larger problem posed by the frequently repeated impression – the Roxburghe myth of origins - that the Roxburghe Club represented merely the hobby and extravagance of Regency aristocratic playboys, rather than a significant contribution to literary study and scholarly editing in early nineteenth-century Britain.

As little scholarly and critical evaluation of the Club's early decades has been carried out, the brush strokes of the existing picture have generally been broad. Accounts of it have tended to offer factual outline histories or to take the Club as exemplifying excesses of early nineteenth-century bibliomania, within studies of that short period of perceived collecting frenzy. It is certainly necessary to look at the wider subject of bibliomania in the early nineteenth century, as there is

¹ Jon Klancher, 'Wild Bibliography: The Rise and Fall of Book History in Nineteenth-Century Britain', in *Bookish Histories*, ed. by Ina Ferris and Paul Keen (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 85-106 (p.25).

obvious overlap with perspectives on the Roxburghe Club itself. Nevertheless, the lens of bibliomania has contributed to the tendency for writing about the Club to be content frequently to repeat a set of received views, usually negative, which have created a complex pattern of omission, lack of respect, simplification and at time misrepresentation.

In such contexts, writers have often been content to repeat unquestioningly earlier sources on the Roxburghe Club. These have often been biased or limited and in some cases demonstrably incorrect. With substantial scholarly work on the early Club restricted to accounts taking a bibliographical (in the strict sense) and biographical approach, rather than wider and critical ones, those who write of the Club and its significance have often tended to repeat a set of received views, usually negative, which have created a complex pattern of misrepresentation, lack of respect and at times misrepresentation. These errors need to be corrected to provide a strong raft of facts for the basis of any further research, especially research aiming to look beyond the narrow facts of the publications and members' biographies. This thesis will examine in detail the Club's foundation and early years, and its primary task will be to investigate a range of questions which the Roxburghe myth has obscured, questions about its genesis and also its prehistory; its place in the spheres of politics, religion and money of its era; the contentious issue of its members' class backgrounds; its relationship to satire; members' publications, literary writings; and its contributions to the early nineteenth century development of editing, facsimile-making and 'small press' printing. It will aim to evaluate how far and where there is need to present a more accurate counter-narrative to that received

perception of the Club as of interest mainly as a somewhat laughable example of rich men's self-indulgent enthusiasm for rare and curious antiquarian books.

This reappraisal will be carried out by looking at the written material both published and unpublished, produced about the Club and its activities by Club members and at other contemporary sources such as periodicals, newspapers and books. Information and opinions found in those contemporary sources will then be traced and analysed, in its various forms, through later commentators, especially those of the Victorian period, in modern criticism.

It is important to make some preliminary remarks about the selection of material here. Apart from limitations of space within a thesis and the decision to focus at times particularly on certain figures, from the very large amount of material about early Roxburghe members which the research has yielded, there are also certain lines of argument that underlie the selection and emphases. Although some high-profile members of the early Club such as Earl Spencer might initially appear to present a fruitful source of primary material, their prestige as historical figures is not necessarily reflected by their influence on the formation and ethos of the Club. It can, indeed, be argued that the more famous the man, often the less significant was their contribution to the philosophy of the Roxburghe and it is some less well documented members who emerge as the most instrumental in the founding and activities of the Club. Walter Scott, for example, although both famous and respected as a writer, antiquary and editor, only dined with the Club once and contributed little to the formation of its methods, instead taking his book-collecting lead from Dibdin in exchanges of letters in the days before the formation of the Club. In contrast, men hitherto virtually unknown to critics and

historians such as William Bolland and those men who, if known, are not acknowledged for the true stature of their work, of which Joseph Haslewood is the most important example, prove from the research undertaken for this thesis, to be the driving forces and dynamism behind the Club though they are often only glimpsed in the background of many subsequent writers' accounts of the Club. Dibdin, of course, remains centre stage and he is still well-known, but I would claim often for the wrong reasons. This thesis will concentrate on the accounts of these smaller men who left fewer obvious traces but who were more central to the origins of the Roxburghe.

One theme that can be seen to run through most if not all commentary on the club and its activities is that of class, whether implicitly or explicitly, with approval or disapproval, and from whichever direction the comment comes. Therefore, the extent to which class politics have affected the Club's reputation and the evaluations of its competence require detailed examination. In addition to the influence of attitudes to class on the received narrative about the Club, there has hitherto been virtually no attempt to research and analyse the political views and activities of the members. Comparing these realities with the perceptions of the class politics of the group proves significant. In the section 'Money, Politics, Religion' I will take a close look at members' allegiances and beliefs, and also at what proves to be the interesting question of to what extent these may have influenced the types of items being reproduced.

The thesis falls into two main sections. The first traces and analyses the creation and furthering of what can be called the Roxburghe myth, attempts to get behind

it and to demythologize the Club's activities in its early decades, re-examining not only the history of the organisation, its members and operations, but also contemporary responses, including satire, as well as truths and prejudices about the issue of social class. The second section presents the results of investigations into the publications, activities and contemporary connections of the Club, together with the serious literary interests, writings and studies of many of its members. These substantial achievements and relationships form a powerful rebuttal of the dismissive narrative about the Club's first decades that has held sway for nearly two centuries.

0.1 DATES

It would be too extensive an undertaking to examine the entire history of the Club up to the present. The founding and early years have hitherto lacked the thorough and wide-ranging research they deserve, and it is this period which has proved the most fertile ground for what might be called the creation myth of the Roxburghe Club, as a coterie of aristocrats, indulging in drinking, dining and fashionable, 'bibliomaniac' excesses of book-collecting. The thesis will examine the period between 1812 when the Club was founded and 1835 when Viscount Clive became the second president, at which time the club began to change its methods and became more consistent and predictable in its organisation. This foundational period was a rich and varied one which saw the Club change and develop in important ways. It ends in what is in many ways a natural break in the Club's history, not least because thereafter a set of written rules was established rather than a loose set of what were essentially gentleman's agreements. At this point too an annual subscription of 5 guineas was introduced,

with the intention of printing from now on Club editions as a jointly funded venture rather than individually financed publications. Hitherto the books had been presented to the Club by individual members at their own expense, and also without any interference from a Club policy regarding the editing or presentation of the volumes. Consequent upon this creation of Club funds it became necessary for the Club to be answerable for those monies and so for the first time a bank account was opened in the club name and a treasurer elected.

The period from 1833 onwards also signals the end of what de Ricci calls the ‘Dibdinian age’, which he considered culminated with the sale of Richard Heber’s vast collection.² Following the massive auctions of Heber’s books the market was saturated and prices were low; the great collectors who had followed Dibdin’s lead were already dead or had ceased in their headlong accumulation of books as a result of infirmity, diminished interest or lack of funds.³

These changes can be seen as a move towards a more professional, institutional ethos and structure in the Club, but they were perhaps also partly forced upon the Club. The malicious publication of Joseph Haslewood’s personal journal, under the title of the ‘Roxburghe Revels’, had placed the Club under the microscope of public ridicule and, while most of the accusations were unfounded, it perhaps appeared desirable for the remaining members to distance themselves from what could be seen as the excesses of earlier and considerably different times and present a more acceptable club face to the emerging Victorian world. The theories, discussions and practices of scholarly editing and reproduction, in

² Seymour de Ricci, *English Collectors of Books 1530-1930* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1960), p. 102.

³ De Ricci, p. 102.

whose development the activities of the Club played, as this thesis will argue, a significant role, had also moved into a new era, away from the earliest Roxburghe ambitions for fellow-enthusiasts to share reprints of their treasures with each other. The Roxburghe entered a new phase, as an editing and literary society, at a point where many new societies dedicated to fostering interest and studies in English texts came into being. Publishing and scholarship were changing and, like the post-1830s Roxburghe, were becoming more institutional and even professionalised. The world of books, and of discussion and study of books, had been a strongly social and associational one during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, whether in coffee houses, salons or clubs. Though societies for the promotion of literary knowledge, and their publication of research and editions, were a major force in Victorian academic developments, they represented a more institutional, less collegial, forum for these. As the founder Roxburghe members were swiftly dying away or becoming too infirm to continue to meet, it was natural that the Club under the direction of its new President should strike out in new paths, more suited to the emergent new age and very different to the hedonistic Regency Age that had inspired its foundation.

0.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The most substantial publications on the Club are two biographical histories of the Roxburghe Club by Nicolas Barker, the first in 1969 and the more recent in 2012. These are invaluable to any study of the Club's history but serve very specific purposes. The first work is a slim volume of 99 pages, containing an essay outlining the history of the Club, with a membership list and list of publications.⁴ The recent work is a more detailed study which retells the history of the Club from 1812 to 2011.⁵ Barker is a current member of the club and editor of some Roxburghe publications, and the book presents a carefully-researched history from the Club's own archives, supported by historical and biographical documentary evidence. Barker's focus, in the sections devoted to the early Club, is primarily on the biographical details of the early members, especially with regard to their family backgrounds, education and bibliographical interests. He does not attempt to examine their political roles or opinions in the context of contemporary political events or controversies. This is a good, clear and accurate history of the Club but one primarily aimed at book collectors and specifically members of the Roxburghe themselves. It is essentially a retelling of an accepted version of the founding of the Club which, while not untrue, does not ask any searching questions regarding political, class or literary intent and significances discernible in the Club's activities. Discussing the dramatic and arguably seriously damaging, events surrounding the publishing of the 'Roxburghe Revels' article in the *Athenaeum*, Barker downplays the significance

⁴ Nicolas Barker, *The Publications of the Roxburghe Club, 1814-1962: An essay by Nicolas Barker, with a bibliographical table* (Cambridge: Printed for presentation to members of the Roxburghe Club, 1964).

⁵ Nicolas Barker, *The Roxburghe Club: A Bicentenary History* (London: The Roxburghe Club, 2012).

and damage of the article to the Club and does not devote much space to addressing any of the accusations made or question their validity. That may be partly because this is not an analytical investigation into the Club and partly because in the longer view of its two-century-long history this piece of early nineteenth-century libel may seem merely a bygone curiosity. Perhaps, however, one might speculate that the shadow of the *Athenaeum* slur, so long left in many ways unchallenged, and helping to shackle the Club with such a damaging and embarrassing creation myth, may itself, still powerful, have discouraged examination of the topic in a volume focussed on bibliographical documentation and celebration of the Club over two centuries up to the present day.

There is an unquestioned acceptance (as would be expected given its intended readership) of the aristocratic nature of the Club and through that acceptance an unexamined assumption that this aspect of the club is a defining quality. That assumption, as mentioned previously, has both dissuaded modern critics from paying serious attention to the Club and it proves can be shown to be factually untrue when the class and profession of the majority of the members of the early Roxburghe Club are examined. Well researched and relatively thorough in biographical terms, this scholarly but not analytical study makes no sustained attempt to formulate any view as to the significance of the activities of the early Club members within the worlds of books, publishing and literary-historical scholarship of the period, for example in relation to developments and controversies about the methodology of editing older texts. Barker, quite reasonably for his initial readership and the type of book he was commissioned to produce, does not set his account within any existing scholarly framework or

attempt to engage with any other writers' opinions. Consequently, while providing abundant factual information, especially from the Club archives, this is a learned, detailed and celebratory historical guidebook to the club, rather than a critical study. It is consequently a book that is difficult to engage with in critical terms.

There has been little other academic research that deals directly with the Club's early years, and, in fact, little that deals with the significance of its entire two hundred years of existence. The Club's name, as already observed, tends to crop up in articles discussing matters connected with the period of alleged 'bibliomania' in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In such a context the Roxburghe Club, sometimes as a whole and sometimes in the guise of individual members, especially Thomas Frognall Dibdin, Richard Heber and Samuel Egerton Brydges, often appears as an exemplar of ardent bibliomaniac excess. The paucity of research has created a situation whereby the only readily accessible information on the early club has been that in the maliciously erroneous 'Roxburghe Revels' article. This version of events and its author's evaluation of the Club have been passed along over time through various works, gaining strength as they proceeded. Consequently many works offer similar judgements, based on the same erroneous source. It is interesting to trace the movement of this meme through a variety of types of texts, seeing how ideas have gained ground without being substantiated by fact.

The Victorian book collector and historian John Hill Burton produced works mainly concerning historical subjects but in 1862 published *The Book-hunter*, a

book about book-collecting in which he covers the early period of the Roxburghe Club.⁶ Unfortunately, in his writing he is so immoderate in his class-based attacks on the non-aristocratic members of the club that the editor of the 1863 edition felt compelled to distance himself from the opinions expressed and in a footnote explains that the author had relied too heavily on the opinions of the ‘Roxburghe Revels’ *Athenaeum* article, describing Hill Burton’s comments as ‘an exceedingly dishonorable [sic] and malicious performance’.⁷ Inevitably works thereafter that rely to any extent on Hill-Burton’s views are problematic in terms of their veracity.

Clive Bigham, in 1928 produced a fairly straightforward, but class-conscious and superficial, outline history of the Club, to a large extent repeating the usual errors and prejudices, traceable back to the ‘Roxburghe Revels’ article, via Burton.⁸

When John Buechler’s 1958 survey article uses the phrase ‘an organisation whose list of members reads like Burke’s Peerage or a bibliophilic Who’s Who’, it brings the class issue again to the fore.⁹ Of the years of the Club under discussion here he writes ‘as interesting as the early years of the club may be to a gourmet, they were not distinguished by much literary or scholarly activity’.¹⁰ Concentrating on biographical information without addressing literary contexts

⁶ John Hill Burton, *The Book-Hunter* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1862).

⁷ John Hill Burton, *The Book-Hunter*, ed. by Richard Grant White (New York: Sheldon, 1863), p.271.

⁸ Clive Bigham, *The Roxburghe Club: Its history and its Members 1812 – 1927* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1928).

⁹ John Buechler, ‘The Roxburghe Club’, *College and Research Libraries*, 19 (1958), 19 – 23 (p. 19).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

or questions, Buechler largely follows Bigham, Hill Burton and thus the 'Roxburghe Revels'. He follows the lead of others in viewing the later club as significant in bibliographical terms, and the early club as interesting only in its foibles.

In her short article, Valerie Logario writes in a largely positive, if unoriginal, way about the club, giving emphasis to its aristocratic reputation. Echoing Buechler she writes:

From its inception to the present day, the club's membership resembles Burke's Peerage, supplemented by a few notable Americans and Europeans, the majority of whom either own or are associated with libraries, and by some leading scholars.¹¹

Lagario acknowledges, however, the efforts of the club in the field of preservation of early texts and credits it with 'stimulating the collecting of books by the affluent, viewing the book as an artefact and consequently upholding the highest standards of typography and book production'.¹²

She also views the club as the inspiration behind the founding of the later publishing clubs. She does, however, repeat the usual criticism of the early club ('during its early years, the club was better known for its gourmet and gourmand proclivities than for its bibliophilic and scholarly pursuits'), taking her lead from Bigham's 1928 club history both directly and indirectly through reliance on Buechler.¹³ Lagario evaluates the greater part of the books produced by the early club as 'ephemera of some historical or antiquarian interest' but places higher value on the two early reprints from manuscripts (*Balades and Other Poems* and

¹¹ Valerie M. Lagorio, 'The Roxburghe Club Collection', *Books at Iowa*, 35 (November 1981) <<http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/scua/bai/lagorio.htm>> [accessed 03 07 2012]

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

the *Chester Mysteries*), the second of which she credits (with justification) with having set the ‘standard for subsequent editions of medieval dramatic texts’.¹⁴ Lagorio’s interest in the club is mostly related to the later period when the club turned to collective publishing and its mid-Victorian publications were often edited by eminent scholars such as Madden and Furnivall. Several parts of her essay are taken almost verbatim from Buechler without acknowledgement, although she does reference Buechler in a general way.

David Matthews’ *The Making of Middle English* examines the Club’s connection with the growing popularity and study of Middle English and makes many important points about their bearing on this history.¹⁵ Obviously his main focus is not on the Early Modern era of the Black-letter printing which was, one might say, the distinctive feature of the Club’s interests and enterprises from its inception on. Matthews’ discussion, however, also relies quite heavily on Biggam and Hill Burton. Although their class preoccupations do not detract from Matthews’ own judicial and appreciative arguments regarding the Club’s role in the popularisation of Middle English texts, they do to some extent disfigure the overall tone of the chapter dealing with it. ‘The Roxburghe Revels’ article is also referenced by the chapter’s title ‘Turtle Soup and Texts’ which is clearly an allusion to the lavish menus that the original article had mocked as a sign of the Club’s supposed concentration on gourmandising rather than books, but it can also be seen as a shorthand reference to the members’ class. Matthews uses phrases that include ‘the somewhat feudal relations between aristocrats and aspiring litterateurs’, implicitly foregrounding the significance of aristocratic

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ David Matthews, *The Making of Middle English* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999).

rank in defining the Club's significance, and making the claim that 'the social divide within the club sometimes recreated the relationship of supplicant artist to great lord.'¹⁶ This thesis will offer evidence against this persistent assumption that non-aristocratic scholars were treated superciliously by aristocratic members, but no-one before this had offered as well-informed and carefully analysed assessment of the early Club's achievement as Mathews, in such judgements as this:

Between 1812 and the late 1830s, these clubs were responsible for almost the entirety of Middle English production. The Roxburghe was alone in the field until 1823, and even when a publication came from elsewhere, it was typically done by someone who was a member of the club. Despite their variations, the character of their publications was similar, editorially and critically. There were significant overlappings in personnel and in general, a coherent character for Middle English was constructed in the period.¹⁷

Although throughout the twentieth century scholars have acknowledged that the Roxburghe Club displayed an interest in early English literature at a time when it was receiving relatively little attention, and was instrumental in preserving and giving value to many early works that might otherwise have perished, frequently such praise appears grudgingly given, with the implication that such achievements came despite, rather than because of, the members' intentions. Far from being wide-ranging contributors to various literary fields, their own publications – in this disparaging narrative – were only made possible either by the outside influence of 'real' scholars, that is, professional scholars, paid to bring the kudos of their academic status to the publications, or the lucky attraction of more scholarly members such as Beriah Botfield, whose later induction saved their books from amateurism. There is a recurring theme that

¹⁶ Ibid., p.87.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 90.

underscores many discussions: that the Club only started producing anything worthy of note once it was taken in hand by ‘real’ scholars, without the handicaps of high rank and birth, as evidenced by this early-twentieth century comment:

Much literary work of high value was accomplished by this club, when it had outgrown the pedantries in which it had been reared, and had come under the fostering care of the scholarly Beriah Botfield and had secured the services of men like Sir Frederic Madden and Thomas Wright.¹⁸

Laurel Braswell-Means looks at issues surrounding this period of book-collecting in *Antiquarian or Bibliographer? The Dilemma of Thomas Frognall Dibdin*.¹⁹ She displays some interesting ideas on the subject of the Bibliomania but is sometimes inaccurate where the Roxburghe is concerned; one example is her statement that *Havelok* was the club’s first item published, rather than the first club edition, that is, one not presented by an individual member.

Michael Edward Robinson in his dissertation *Ornamental Gentlemen* addresses bibliomania in terms of what he views as a ‘queer type’. Robinson proposes that ‘both within and without bibliomaniacal circles, representations of collecting betray anxiety about the sexuality of the collector’.²⁰ While finding many of his points stimulating, I find his argument far from compelling and would argue that a number of the views that he propounds are based on a misreading, both of individual texts and more generally of the cultural and social currents of the

¹⁸ *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature in 18 Volumes*, Vol. XII (1907 – 21) <<http://www.bartleby.com/222/1508.html>> [accessed 15 October 2013] also see Lagorio.

¹⁹ Laurel Braswell-Means, ‘Antiquarian or Bibliographer? The Dilemma of Thomas Frognall Dibdin’ in *Medievalism in England*, ed. by Leslie J. Workman (Cambridge: Brewer, 1992), pp. 105-112.

²⁰ Michael Edward Robinson, ‘Ornamental Gentlemen: Literary Curiosities and Queer Romanticisms’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Southern California, 2010), p.vi.

Regency period, leading Robinson to misconstrue early nineteenth century fashion and sensibility as effeminacy in sexual or gender terms. Robinson refers specifically to both Heber and Dibdin as examples of this effeminacy in his argument and, while there are differences in the way in which he approaches these characters, I would argue that the conclusions that he draws about both are problematic. While it is correct that Heber was homosexual, he was obviously far from being camp and had not been generally regarded as a problematic character in any sexual or social sense before the libel scandal exposed his sexuality to the public arena. Walter Scott, one of his closest friends, writing in his diary after the scandal had broken wrote ‘God, God whom shall we trust! Here is learning, wit, gaiety of temper, high station in society and compleat [sic] reception every where all at once debased and lost by such degrading bestiality’.²¹ This is not the reaction of a man who already suspected his friend’s secret life or had anticipated such an occurrence, and again in a letter Scott wrote ‘I think with horror that if he had asked me to let my son go on a trip to the continent with him or any other such expedition I should have considered it the most fortunate thing in the world’.²² It seems doubtful, if his closest friends were unaware of his sexual proclivities, that society at large should have seen him as effeminate or sexually problematic.

Robinson asserts that Dibdin was ‘collecting in a camp style marked by ornate book design and compulsive typographical emphasis’ but does not appear to

²¹ *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott*, p. 162 in Louis Crompton, ‘Don Leon: Byron, and Homosexual Law Reform’, *Journal of Homosexuality* 4 (Spring/Summer 1983) pp. 53-71 <<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/englishfacpubs/58>> [accessed 21/10/2012]

²² *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. by Herbert Grierson, 12 vols (London: Constable, 1932-37), Vol X, p. 73.

have taken into consideration the ubiquity of such emphases in Bookseller's 'puffs' or adverts which appeared in every journal of the time. 'Camp' is used with too little qualification or definition in Robinson's argument to be a useful description. Furthermore, Robinson explicitly connects the Roxburghe Club with themes of coded homosexuality, writing that:

In *Effeminate England*, Joseph Bristow argues that in England effeminacy does not become conjoined to genital queerness until the Wilde trials. The Roxburghe circle as represented in Dibdin's works offers the possibility that at least in some quarters this connection predated Wilde by nearly a century.²³

This is an assertion without basis in historical fact and, similarly, Dibdin's allegedly camp writing style is just that – a style and not even a style that he used in all his writing. His sermons are in style entirely solid and without affectation. His bibliomaniac writings seem more calculated to appeal to his readership: the book collecting 'Ton' in the age of sensibility, rather than being a reflection of a personal, innate, penchant for florid display expressing his own character or proclivities. The fashionable language was not a matter of sexuality but of class, and of literary performativity: adopting a style which flamboyantly, in its phrases and form, would mark one out as a ticket-holder for Almack's. Language was used to exclude the nouveau riche from the world of old money and blood.

Robinson also claims that 'the stigmatism of bibliomania was closely related, if not entirely reducible to the appearance of mass culture'.²⁴ This assertion would be difficult to prove, and Robinson does not provide evidence. The historical antagonism towards bibliomania could plausibly be regarded as indicative of

²³ Robinson, p.68.

²⁴ Ibid., p. vi.

other causes of friction, which this thesis will consider. One of these causes may be summarized as the fear of loss of control over knowledge and social authority. Equally it can be seen as anxiety regarding the blurring of class distinctions, or even simply economic concerns regarding the perceived development of a financial ‘bubble’ at a period of great social, political and financial instability. The book market was increasingly witnessing fortunes being invested into libraries, and purchases being made of volumes at inflated prices that were unlikely to hold up in the long term, signalling future financial ruin for unwary collectors.

Phillip Connell has examined bibliomania in terms of economics, class politics and cultural hegemony in an essay which, while about bibliomania in general, specifically refers to Dibdin and the Roxburghe sale.²⁵ To address economic and political contexts for the controversies around bibliomania represents a welcome move forward from studies that accept a simple narrative in which the Club’s interest lies essentially only in its (alleged) primarily aristocratic membership and character. Connell describes the Roxburghe sale as ‘a foundational myth for the burgeoning second-hand book trade’.²⁶ He correctly observes that bibliomaniacs were criticised for collecting books for rarity rather than intrinsic, historical and literary, value but mistakenly gives as an example of this opinion *Bibliosophia*, failing to acknowledge that it is a satire written by one of the leading bibliomaniacs of the time. Little credit is given to Bibliomaniacs for being aware of, and amused by, the contemporary view of their collecting – they

²⁵ Philip Connell, ‘Bibliomania: Book Collecting, Cultural Politics, and the Rise of Literary Heritage in Romantic Britain’, *Representations*, 71 (Summer 2000), 24-47.

<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2902924>> [accessed 04/04/2011]

²⁶ *Ibid*, p. 25.

were not ignorant of how other people saw them and often ‘played up’ to those views. Connell detects a perceived need to make the extreme wealth and conspicuous consumption of the aristocracy more palatable during a time of war, economic instability and general social and political discontent. He correctly links changing attitudes towards book-collection to a new imperative for personal aristocratic collections to be seen more as a national wealth or resource. He suggests that ‘the acquisitive mania of the wealthiest aristocratic collectors can be seen to have represented something more than dilettantism or self aggrandizement: the bibliomania symbolized an attempt to promote the participation of distinctively aristocratic cultural practices within a broader emergent idea of the literary past as a collective national heritage.’²⁷ This view does not, however, take into account the visibly non-aristocratic participants of the bibliomania; the collections amassed by learned ‘self-made’ and professional men from more humble backgrounds and the specialised collections that had always been made by actors and dramatists, as well as by scholars researching particular areas of antiquarianism.²⁸ The mere existence of these collectors serves to call into question Connell’s claim that book collections were a ‘distinctively aristocratic cultural practice’.²⁹

Connell describes the 1809 first edition of *Bibliomania* as ‘a series of bizarre, rambling dialogues which together comprised a kind of dramatised mock pathology’.³⁰ The first edition is in fact a straightforward essay; it was the next

²⁷ Connell, p.28.

²⁸ The participation of these middle class collectors during the bibliomania is discussed by James Raven in 'Debating Bibliomania and the Collection of Books in the Eighteenth Century.' *Library & Information History*, 3 (2013). pp. 196-209.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid, p.31.

edition that introduced the longer dramatised form. Connell fails to acknowledge that Dibdin was a respected enough bibliographer to be employed by the Royal Institute to give a series of public lectures on the history of literature.³¹ Connell proposes that the sales of French aristocratic libraries during the revolution are the realisation of a disconnection between learning and landed property and sees Dibdin as lamenting this process but fails to acknowledge that Dibdin, and many other book-collectors, were anxious to benefit from the dispersal of the French aristocratic libraries.³² Connell compares Dibdin and D'Israeli's writing on literary heritage (Dibdin's *Bibliomania* and D'Israeli's entire oeuvre in a somewhat unequal comparison) and he views Dibdin's *Bibliomania* as 'rather hermetic in its evocation of bibliophilic obsession, a bizarre, self-parodying folly'.³³ He contrasts this with D'Israeli's works, citing their 'breadth and sophistication as indicative of their much more substantial contribution to English literary culture during the Romantic period'.³⁴ Connell views Dibdin as promoting the idea of bibliomaniacs as the keepers of choice of literary heritage and views both writers as ascribing the bibliomania to the changing face of commercial literature: Dibdin seeing it as a possible antidote to and desirable arbitrator of literary culture and D'Israeli viewing it as a pathological condition arising from a natural desire to preserve knowledge, and viewing aristocratic collectors as unreliable conservationists of learning. Jon Klancher has pointed to shortcomings in Connell's approach, arguing that his viewpoint, while superficially compelling, fails to take into account the differing opinions that

³¹ O'Dwyer

³² Connell, p. 32

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

existed amongst Tories at that time.³⁵ This failure is one this thesis will address, and indeed will widen the question, both in order to evaluate the range of political opinion represented among the bibliophiles of the Roxburghe Club, and to argue that it is not possible to generalise about the Club on political lines at all.

Ina Ferris, in an article which discusses bibliomania in general, examines the value placed upon the physical versus intellectual aspects of books throughout the bibliomania period.³⁶ The Roxburghe Club is only briefly mentioned as a symptom of the age of bibliomania, although various members remain implicated in the discussion as a result of their identification by others as bibliomaniacs. Ferris differentiates between bibliophiles and bibliomaniacs, citing Egerton Brydges as an example of a bibliophile: one of those who tried to ‘distance themselves as rapidly as possible from the ‘black-letter mania’.³⁷ It is unclear whether Ferris regards Egerton Brydges as distinct from the other members of the Roxburghe or if she regards the Club as a whole as immune from the bibliomania. Ferris describes bibliomania as ‘typically cast as a distortion of properly literary and readerly values, a perverse lust after physical properties’.³⁸ She also discusses early nineteenth-century writers who include Isaac Disraeli, Lamb and Hunt, and considers their self-disassociation from bibliomania, and equally fervent sensual reaction to books. Ferris points to the tendency in all of these writers to personify books or to discuss them in animate

³⁵ Jon Klancher, ‘Wild Bibliography’, p. 38 fn. 31).

³⁶ Ina Ferris, ‘Bibliographical Romance: Bibliophilia and the Book-Object’ in *Romantic Libraries*, ed. by Ina Ferris February 2004, *Romantic Circles*. (25 October 2004). <<http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/libraries/Jackson/Jackson.html>> [accessed 19 April 2014]

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

terms.³⁹ Ferris relates Hazlitt's description of the loss of sensation when reading to a 'Wordsworthian note of lament', tying bibliomania thus to Romanticism in its emphasis on sensation.⁴⁰ While, however, Hazlitt's intriguing observation may be seen as belonging to both his own critical acumen and to the contemporary imaginative cultivation of Romantic states of consciousness, it does not in itself connect book collecting, of the kind that interested many Roxburghe Club members, to any attitudes that could be labelled Romantic. This analysis is valuable in the debate about bibliomania but only useful to the study of the Club in as far as the Roxburghe Club members can be seen as bibliomaniacs and that point is strongly debatable in the case of most of the Club members. Ferris describes Dibdin as 'one of the quintessential bookmen of the early nineteenth century' and she points out that Dibdin, in his writing, sees everything from the perspective of books, even when the subject matter is travel or history.⁴¹ In particular, she claims that:

Dibdin's reading of the French Revolution hinges on the question of its way with books, pointing to what we might call a bibliophilic politics that cuts across stock political lines to produce a certain degree of ambivalence.⁴²

Such attention to the ways in which a world-changing political event might be judged in terms of its books is an approach central to modern cultural studies: the Dibdin that Ferris constructs can be viewed as ahead of his time in his intellectual appreciation of the significance of books, rather than a quaintly bookish man unengaged with serious issues in the outside world. This same emphasis on a book-centred politics can be seen in Kristian Jensen's recent

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

work, *Revolution and the Antiquarian Book*.⁴³ Ferris provides evidence to illustrate how contemporary authors and journalism promoted the view that studies of man-made items were of lesser value than the study of natural phenomena, arguing that consequently ‘bibliographical figures such as Dibdin – a producer of books on books – were thus routinely demoted in the literary-scholarly field’.⁴⁴ A class-based argument also comes into Ferris’s discussion here too: she says that this prejudice was even more prevalent in the case of Dibdin who was ‘associated’ with ‘commercial speculation’. Here she is probably referring to the fact that Dibdin was often criticised both for his personal commercial dealings as a book-collector’s agent and for his willingness to use terms in his writing that were more often connected with book-sellers’ advertising. Both activities were considered inconsistent with his class.

Kristian Jensen in *Revolution and the Antiquarian Book* analyses the creation and significance of the new market for incunables in the romantic period. Jensen examines the collecting and buying habits of book collectors in general during this period and specifically and in detail scrutinises the activities of two leading Club members, Earl Spencer and T. F. Dibdin. Jensen investigates how the political background of revolution, war and upheaval affected the book markets of Europe and how collectors, including Spencer and Dibdin, working as his agent, while they were ostensibly often hindered in their purchasing activities, through official channels were conversely able to make the most of the less overt

⁴³ Kristian Jensen, *Revolution and the Antiquarian Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

⁴⁴ Ferris, ‘Bibliographical Romance’.

freedoms of this period of political and social disruption to further their collections.

David McKitterick, in his informative and closely-researched *Old Books, New Technologies*, discusses a number of areas that directly relate to the activities of the Roxburghe Club and uses the Club to illustrate a number of wider issues concerning the printing and reproduction of books at this period, specifically he looks at the Club's facsimile reproductions of early books.⁴⁵ One area that McKitterick examines is that of authenticity and the issues of efficacy that surround the interest in facsimiles during this period; matters that obviously have a strong bearing on the methodology and intentions of the Club. He summarises these issues briefly, saying:

It also prompts questions having greater implications concerning the values set on the integrity of what was previously created, and what was received by each generation, as books became damaged or altered over time. If a copy or facsimile was not an original, to what extent could it be said to be representative? How far was it admissible as textual or historical evidence? How far was it a reinterpretation, as distinct from a copy? How far do concepts of verisimilitude alter with changes in technology, whether manual, mechanical or chemical?⁴⁶

This thesis intends to examine some of these questions further in the context of the Roxburghe Club's activities and attempt to outline why the creation of facsimiles appears to have been so important to them during these early years.

Deirdre Shauna Lynch, in *Loving Literature: A Cultural History* covers some aspects (primarily those of book purchasing) of the Roxburghe Club's activities in the context of the bibliomania and of the changing literary currents of the

⁴⁵ David McKitterick, *Old Books, New Technologies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 91-93.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.73.

early nineteenth century.⁴⁷ She examines the increase of popularity of book-collecting between the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century and its designation as the bibliomania. She for the most part treats the bibliomania as a function and symptom of class and views the collectors as problematic to constructs of national heritage in the same vein as Connell. Lynch gives a well researched and thoroughly explained history of this age of collecting and outlines the fashions in book-buying of this time, but she also adheres to a model that insists upon a dichotomy between the literary worth and financial value of the books collected by bibliomaniacs (and by her wider inference the Roxburghe Club) at this time, failing to give the collector of the period credit for any specialist literary knowledge or anything approaching a systematic approach to building of their libraries:

The bibliomaniac's random acquisitiveness and enthusiasms for curious books rather than worthy ones highlighted too the critic's own inability ever to transcend wholly the modishness that prevailed in the contemporary book market.⁴⁸

The word 'random' in this extract is especially striking as the quality of haphazard casualness implied by the word is surely the polar-opposite quality of that dedication and focus characterised by the painstakingly specialist collections amassed by many of these men. Lynch, on several occasions refers to 'curious books', most notably when she writes:

Another reason that the Roxburghe sale made noise was that it registered emphatically gentlemanly collectors' shift toward "curious books" printed in the black letter, such as those Caxtons, and away from texts whose classical and tasteful bona fides were rather more securely beyond dispute.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Deirdre Shauna Lynch, *Loving Literature: A Cultural History* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2015), pp. 111-118.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.107.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.112.

It is unclear in what context Lynch is using the word ‘curious’, and whether she intends it to be read in the modern sense of ‘odd or unusual’ or in the early nineteenth-century sense of ‘interesting’. This lack of clarity gives a more derogatory sense to her view of the types of books being collected than she perhaps intended.

Overall, Lynch follows the lead of other recent commentators (notably David Matthews) in using the Club as a shorthand or exemplar of the Bibliomania. The underlying assumption remains, however, not questioned; the Bibliomania, as a financial ‘bubble’, in common with other crazes both before and since, certainly had a strong financial and social basis, and the Roxburghe Club were certainly formed against the backdrop of the Bibliomania, were inhabiting the same hunting grounds as bibliomaniacs and were frequently referred to as bibliomaniacs, but were the Roxburghe Club actually bibliomaniacs? My belief is that either they were not, or that the word bibliomania held a different meaning when used by the collectors themselves, to the pejorative meaning assigned by general society and that is one of the matters that this thesis intends to examine.

THE PERSISTENCE OF MYTH

1.1 THE FORMATION OF THE CLUB

The scholler lookes upon his bookes,
And pores upon a paper.
The gentle bloud likes hunting,
Where dogs doe trace by smelling.
And some like hawks, some groves and walks,
And some a handsome dwelling.
Yet all these without sack, old sack, boyes,
Makes no man kindly merry.
The life of mirth, and the joy of the earth
Is a cup of good old sherry.⁵⁰

The Roxburghe Club, although destined within two years to find its metier as the prototypical book club, at first started with a far more humble intention.

According to Dibdin's later reminiscences, it was originally intended merely to commemorate, on a yearly basis, a particularly enjoyable gathering of book lovers at a dinner which had been held to celebrate a red-letter day during the sale of a library reputed to be 'one of the finest and most perfect ever got together'.⁵¹ This collection that had come up for auction had previously belonged to John, Duke of Roxburghe, a renowned bibliophile who had died on the 19th March, 1804. The sale took place over a period of forty-two days and was carried out by the auctioneer R. H. Evans at 13 St. James's Square, the late

⁵⁰ Pasquil 'Palinodia' in *A Roxburghe Garland* (London: Bensley, 1817), p. 9.

⁵¹ William Roberts, *The Book-Hunter in London* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1895), p. 52.

Duke's residence.⁵² One of the most eagerly anticipated lots of the auction was the Valdarfer Boccaccio of 1471, believed at that time to be a unique copy, and which finally went under the hammer on the 17th June, 1812.⁵³ According to an account given by the Reverend T. F. Dibdin, on the evening of the 16th June a number of 'enthusiastic and resolute bibliomaniacs' met for dinner at the home of Mr William Bolland in Adelphi Terrace and an agreement was made to meet for dinner at the St. Albans' Tavern on the evening of the 17th after the sale.⁵⁴ The choice of venue was made 'from an affectionate respect to the memory of the St. Albans' Press', indicating that the group were already meeting in a spirit of commemoration of the early printers, and in celebration of their shared interests.⁵⁵ Though Dibdin states that the dinner took place on this date, other accounts, probably incorrectly, report it as occurring on June 4th.⁵⁶ An invitation for the event still held in the Roxburghe Club archives shows the date of printing as the 12th June, 1812.⁵⁷ This obviously means it would have been impossible for the decision to dine to have been made on the 16th June, casting doubt on Dibdin's account of events. Even at this early stage the gathering is described as the 'Roxburghe Dinner', which implies the intention of continuation and an eye cocked towards posterity. That the meeting had been agreed some time before the eve of the sale is borne out by another club member, Joseph Haslewood, in his journal the 'Roxburghe Revels':

⁵² Rev. A. Hume, A.I. Evans, *The Learned Societies and Printing Clubs of the United Kingdom* (London: G. Willis, 1853), p.109.

⁵³ Dibdin relates that "It has been said that the amount of that *one day's sale* equalled what had been given for the ENTIRE COLLECTION", *Reminiscences of a Literary Life* (London: Bloomsbury, 1836), p.369.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 367 – 8.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

⁵⁶ Hill Burton, p.267.

⁵⁷ Contained in the MS of Joseph Haslewood, the 'Roxburghe Revels', this invitation was also reproduced in Bigham *Roxburghe Club*, p. 2.

upon Wednesday the 17th day of June “Il Decamerone di Boccaccio” was to be sold and that for being considered the rarest article in the whole of the Duke’s library [...] the Rev. T.F. Dibdin, who therefore justly claims the title of Founder of the Club, suggested some few days before the sale, the holding of a convivial meeting at the St Albans Tavern after the sale of that day.⁵⁸

Possibly Dibdin, writing many years after the event, had become confused over the particulars or he may have intended to imply that the dinner was already arranged at an earlier date and that on the eve of the sale he merely convinced the group with whom he was dining to accompany him the next evening. It is, however, also possible that Dibdin, who over the course of his life wrote about and amended the ‘lore’ of the Roxburghe Club many times, considered the shorter time frame more romantically dramatic for the purposes of myth-making, carrying as it does, an implication of passionate, spur of the moment, decisions which led to the founding of the illustrious club. Apart from Dibdin and the host William Bolland, the friends and fellow book-enthusiasts present on the evening of the 16th included another soon-to-be-Roxburgher, Mr George Isted, a barrister and prominent member of Boodle’s club, who later amiably contested with Dibdin for the honour of having been the instigator of the Club’s founding.⁵⁹ Neither man was an aristocrat, so whichever actually founded the Club, the impulse was not aristocratic. The Club was born from friendship and a shared love of antiquarian books; most of the people who made up the original membership already knew each other and its initial impetus had its roots and inspiration in the collecting of early printed books. Dibdin had for many years acted as an instigator, focus, and hub for this network of collectors, and rather than viewing the dinner as an impulsive act and the chance beginning of a new

⁵⁸ Joseph Haslewood, ‘Roxburghe Revels’, Roxburghe Club Archives.

⁵⁹ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, pp.368 – 9.

venture it is tempting to see the foundation of the Roxburghe Club as the crystallisation of this groups bookish enthusiasms and, in particular, Dibdin's ambitions for bibliography and early English literature.

1.2 THE FIRST ROXBURGHE DINNER

During the next day's auction more avid book-collectors were added to the invitation, bringing the party up to eighteen. These eighteen original diners were Earl Spencer, George Granville Leveson-Gower, Mark Masterman Sykes, Samuel Egerton Brydges, William Bentham, William Bolland, John Dent, Thomas Frognall Dibdin, Francis Freeling, George Henry Freeling, Joseph Haslewood, Richard Heber, Thomas Cuthbert Heber, George Isted, Robert Lang, John Delafield Phelps and Roger Wilbraham.⁶⁰ The auction had been the triumphant scene of the book battle later portrayed in such romantic terms by Dibdin in the *Bibliographical Decameron*, with the Valdarfer Boccaccio eventually won by Lord Blandford for £2,260.⁶¹ It was an unprecedented amount of money to pay for a book, unequalled until the sale of the Syston Park 1459 Psalter, in 1884.⁶² In 1807 William Beloe had estimated the future selling price of the Valdarfer at 'not much less than five hundred pounds', a

⁶⁰ Roxburghe Club, *List of Members 1812 – 1991, List of Books 1814 – 1990* (Leeds: Roxburghe Club, Smith Settle, 1991).

⁶¹ Bigham, p. 2.

⁶² Seymour de Ricci, *English Collectors of Books and Manuscripts (1530 – 1930) and Their Marks of Ownership* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1930), p. 72.

misjudgement which indicates how quickly book prices were rising during this period.⁶³

The group of collectors who met that evening were in high spirits and ready to celebrate the fortunes of book collecting after such a spectacle of unrivalled bidding; Dibdin later maintained that the purpose of the dinner was ‘not so much for convivial, as for belles-lettres, or if the reader pleases, for bibliomaniacal, purposes’.⁶⁴ The Club weathered heavy criticism regarding the lavish nature of the early dinners, but this social aspect does not undermine or negate the more serious purpose of the Roxburghe meetings. Even today it is difficult to find any society or association, however learned, that does not involve dining or drinking as some part of its activities, even if it is only the annual Christmas or conference conviviality. At the first dinner a number of toasts were proposed that were thereafter used at all later meetings. These were:

1. The immortal memory of Christopher Valdarfer, printer of the Boccaccio of 1471.
2. The immortal memory of John Duke of Roxburghe.
3. The same of Gutenberg, Fust and Schoiffher, fathers of the art of printing.
4. The same of William Caxton, father of the British Press.
5. Of Dame Juliana Barnes and the St. Albans’ Press.
6. Of Messrs Wynkyn De Worde, Pynson and Notary, the successors of Caxton.
7. The Aldine family at Venice.
8. The Giunti family at Florence.
9. The Society of the Bibliophiles Français at Paris.
10. The prosperity of the Roxburghe Club; and in all cases as the last toast, the cause of Bibliomania all over the world.⁶⁵

⁶³ William Beloe, *Anecdotes of Literature and Scarce Books*, 2 vols (London: F.C. and J. Rivington, 1807) Vol II, p. 235.

⁶⁴ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, p. 375.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 375.

Hill Burton notes that these toasts vary depending on which account is consulted and that the most accurate would appear to be those recorded by ‘Mr Hazlewood [sic]’ which agree with those given by Dibdin, p.269.

This series of toasts, with their emphasis on the names of the early practitioners of printing, could be viewed as acting as a sort of catechism; the repetition at each dinner ensuring that the *raison d'être* of the club is not forgotten or sidelined.⁶⁶ Although the toast may well have arisen from a light-hearted situation within the first dinner, its preservation displayed a dedication to those early books, especially early printed books and their printers, which brought the members together and neatly encapsulated what was dear to the founders' hearts. If the Club was founded today, the toasts would have formed the basis of its mission statement. Nicolas Barker, a current member of the club recently wrote that:

The toasts, once proposed individually, now as a single recitation, reflect the state of knowledge, as well as the vocabulary, of the time, and if time has seen changes in both, the unchanged toasts are a memento of the origin of the club.⁶⁷

1.3 THE ACTIVITIES OF THE EARLY YEARS OF THE CLUB

The evening proved to be such a roaring success (Haslewood wrote up his account of the dinner at 1am on the morning of the 18th June if that can be taken as an indication of how long the dinner lasted from its 6:30pm start) that it was agreed that it should be repeated on the yearly anniversary of the day, and so the Club was duly formed.⁶⁸ The number of members, it had been agreed, should be increased and by the next meeting in June 1813 the membership stood at twenty-

⁶⁶ Glanmor Williams describes a similar set of toasts given in the 1820s at the annual St. David's Day dinner of the Cymreigyddion (Welsh Patriotic Society), where the celebrants enjoyed 'as lavish a dinner as they could rise to. At the dinner the usual order of the toasts was: 'The King and the Church'; 'the principality of Wales', and the 'Immortal memory of Saint David', followed by a bewildering, not to say, intoxicating, miscellany of other toasts', in 'Language, Literacy and Nationality in Wales', *Religion, Language and Nationality in Wales: Historical Essays* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1979), pp.127-147 (p.121).

⁶⁷ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, p. 31.

⁶⁸ Haslewood, 'Roxburghe Revels' MS.

four, with the addition of the Duke of Devonshire, the Marquis of Blandford, Lord Morpeth, Thomas Ponton, Peregrine Townley and James Heywood Markland. By the third dinner the membership reached thirty-one, with the inclusion of Viscount Althorp, Mr. Justice Littledale, Edward Littledale, Rev. William Holwell Carr, James Boswell and James William Dodd. The membership has remained at this number although Dibdin cryptically says that ‘there have been many attempts to enlarge it, but unsuccessfully’.⁶⁹ This is not overly surprising given the Club’s strictly exclusive approach to membership: the presentation of even one black ball sufficed to debar a postulant from inclusion. According to one source, ‘it used to be remarked, that it was easier to get into the Peerage or the Privy Council, than into “The Roxburghe” ’.⁷⁰ This method of election was not, of course, unique, and was the same process used by Johnson’s Club to which Earl Spencer already belonged.⁷¹ Spencer may have been instrumental in carrying over this stringent means of preventing the acceptance of uncongenial nominees.

The idea of reprinting items for distribution among the membership is attributed to William Bolland, who made the suggestion at the 1813, first anniversary dinner, volunteering to present the first edition himself the following year. Unforeseen and unexplained difficulties delayed the production of the promised volume, and it was eventually at the dinner of 1815 that Bolland presented the company with the first Roxburghe volume.⁷² Dibdin also ascribes to Bolland the idea of printing the alphabetical list of members’ names in the front of the

⁶⁹ Dibdin *Reminiscences*, pp. 376 – 378.

⁷⁰ Burton, p. 267.

⁷¹ Frank Brady and W. K. Wimsatt, *Samuel Johnson: Selected Poetry and Prose* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), p. 18.

⁷² Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, p. 379.

volume with the intended recipient's name in red, a custom adopted thereafter in Roxburghe Club volumes. From here onwards the men (the club did not gain its first female member until 1985 when Mary Crapo, Viscountess Eccles, took that honour) working in alphabetical order by surname, took their turn to print a rare item for distribution amongst the other members.⁷³ Some of these offerings were reprints from items in their own collections, others from texts in the collections of museums and other libraries. There were no hard or fast rules about this process; some years a number of editions were presented to the Club simultaneously – in 1818 for instance nine volumes by separate editors were presented at the dinner, but occasionally there would be a year such as 1823 or 1826 when nothing new was distributed. A few members, including Thomas Heber and Alexander Boswell, did not live long enough to present their copy; several men produced more than one edition.

In 1816, in the liberal literary and philosophical periodical the *Monthly Magazine*, 'bibliomaniacs' were criticised for neglecting the memories of men of literary genius in favour of the early printers. A contributor, Mr E. Evans, asserted that bibliomaniacs had failed to subscribe to a proposed memorial to Locke, which had resulted in the abandonment of the project, but that should it be proposed to erect a memorial to Caxton they would be at the front of the queue to hand over their money.⁷⁴ The Roxburghe Club appeared to respond in 1820, when it attempted to erect a stone tablet in Westminster Abbey to the memory of William Caxton. Dibdin describes this initial choice of venue as proceeding 'from the fact of Caxton having erected the FIRST PRESS IN

⁷³ Roxburghe Club, *List of Members 1812-1991*.

⁷⁴ 'Mr Evans on the pretensions of the bibliomaniacs', *Monthly Magazine* (1816), Vol 42, Part II, pp. 115 – 118.

ENGLAND within those walls'.⁷⁵ Joseph Haslewood recorded the choice as at first falling between Westminster Abbey, where Caxton had installed his printing press in workshops belonging to the Abbey, and St. Margaret's church where Caxton was buried in 1479.⁷⁶ A committee comprising Earl Spencer, Heber, Bolland, Utterson, Hibbert and Dibdin was elected to organise the project, and Dibdin, Markland and another unnamed member chose a suitable spot for the memorial and received permission from the Clerk of the Chapter.⁷⁷

Unfortunately:

[The Roxburghe club] found the fees of admission for our humble mural monument within the abbey so heavy, that it amounted to an inhibition to have it placed there: and accordingly we looked out for an eligible situation within St. Margaret's church, where, in fact, Caxton and his relations were buried. Very much to the honour of the vicar and the churchwardens of that parish, the monument was admitted to be erected FREE of all charges.⁷⁸

Clive Bigham states that the sum demanded by the Clerk of the Chapter of Westminster Abbey was £120.⁷⁹ This would not appear to be an excessive sum to a group containing a high percentage of wealthy men, but perhaps the point was more one of principle than economics, as Dibdin continues:

all that I choose further to say upon this subject is, that if *any* monument might have been allowed a *gratuitous* entrance within the walls of the Abbey, it was surely that of the FATHER OF THE BRITISH PRESS – who first exercised his art *there*.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, pp. 386 – 7.

⁷⁶ Haslewood, 'Roxburghe Revels', p.104.

⁷⁷ Ibid. p. 104. Dibdin in his *Reminiscences*, written at a much later date also mentions the involvement of Markland.

⁷⁸ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, pp. 386 – 7.

The inscription on the stone reads: 'To the memory of WILLIAM CAXTON, who first introduced into Great Britain the art of printing, and who, A.D. 1477, or earlier, exercised that art in the Abbey of Westminster, this tablet in remembrance of one to whom the literature of his country is so largely indebted was raised Anno Domini MDCCCXX, by the Roxburghe Club. Earl Spencer, K.G. President.'

⁷⁹ Bigham, p. 6.

⁸⁰ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, p. 387.

This angle on the matter is somewhat borne out by the account given in the article printed in *The Athenaeum* entitled 'The Roxburghe Revels': the anonymous author of this slanderous attack quotes a letter received by the Club in reply to their application to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey:

I am directed by the Dean and Chapter to acquaint you that neither the situation against the projecting corner by St. Benedict's Chapel nor on the wall by Shakespeare's monument proposed by you to place the Tablet to the late Wm. Caxton are approved but the space in St. Edmund's Chapel is not objected to and as soon as you will inform the Dean and Chapter that the Committee acquiesce in the last mentioned situation the Dean and Chapter will consider the price required of which I will give you due information.⁸¹

The reaction of the Club members is expressed by Haslewood, writing in his journal, quoted in the same article, who indicates that the Club had agreed to the amount to be paid but objected to the proposed site:

This day reversed all gone before and the parish church of St. Margaret's is to be adorned with the monument of Caxton. Voting that the exorbitant Fees of the Abbey sho^d be submitted to was not sufficient, the Goths that guide there, can have no other God than gold: for they gave such a choice of situations that to have followed their sinister wishes wo^d have been not to bury the body, but to bury the monument. A biting satire might be engendered here from [sic] as 'The Curse of Caxton'.⁸²

It is of course also reasonable that Haslewood should view the proposed fee as 'exorbitant', as he was not a rich man. A memorial to Caxton was eventually installed in Westminster Abbey in 1954.

The Club continued to meet yearly although the fortunes of book prices and the popularity of book collecting had begun to wane. The continued interest of the members is perhaps the strongest argument against accusations of mere bibliomania; such a superficial adherence to fashion would have resulted in the

⁸¹ 'The Roxburghe Revels', *Athenaeum*, 324 (Jan. 11, 1834), p.30. For further information about this article see section 1.5.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

Club closing when fashion moved on. In 1825 Club meetings were made a more frequent occurrence rather than the once-yearly dinner.⁸³ Although possibly coincidental, it is interesting to consider whether the coming of the railways in any way affected such decisions, allowing as it did, for quicker, safer travel to London from the outlying regions where members lived. Wrangham mentions, in a letter to Egerton Brydges, his long journey to attend the Roxburghe Dinner saying ‘Five hundred miles travelling will, I trust, be a pledge to the Club of my gratitude for their kindness and my sense of their importance’.⁸⁴ Many of the members who were not in London for the summer must have had equally long journeys to make, and there were risks to travelling by road.

In 1828, in a departure from usual protocol, the Club produced a club edition at the members’ joint expense and employed the young scholar Frederic Madden to edit the volume.⁸⁵ This was the *Ancient English Romance of Havelok the Dane*, and the high quality of the edition and the ambitious scope of the notes, introduction and appendices accompanying the edition make it a major contribution to the study of English literature, and of editing in Britain. The change of direction was rumoured to have not been unanimously popular within the club, however, with more senior members including Haslewood and Dibdin apparently regretting the introduction of an editor from outside the ranks of the club.⁸⁶ The face of the Roxburghe Club was changing both figuratively and literally; the older members of the original group had naturally been dying away

⁸³ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, pp. 72.

⁸⁴ Extract from a letter between Archdeacon Wrangham and Samuel Egerton Brydges, dated 19th January 1825 in Michael Sadleir, ‘Archdeacon Wrangham: A Supplement’, *Library*, 4 (1939), 422-461 (p. 439)

⁸⁵ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, p. 72.

⁸⁶ This event is covered in more detail in section 2.4.

over the first two decades, and even some of the newer members such as the Boswells had met untimely deaths, leaving room for new book devotees to take their places at the table. In 1833 Richard Heber and Joseph Haslewood died, both of whom were, arguably as much as Dibdin, driving forces behind the ethos of the fledgling Roxburghe. Haslewood's death and the subsequent dispersal of his estate in particular, inadvertently caused a series of relatively minor but far-reaching problems for the club which adversely affected its public reputation. Sir Walter Scott, the most successful author of this period, had died in the previous year and although never a regular attendee at the dinners (in fact only attending once), he was certainly the club's most famous member. He was also one of the period's most committed proponents, and successful popularisers, for the cause of book-collecting and antiquarianism in general and a steadfast supporter of the Roxburghe Club in particular. The literary world, as much as the political and public world, was changing fast. Earl Spencer headed the Club until his death in 1834, and by the time Viscount Clive (later Earl of Powis) took the chair as President in 1835 the club was transforming from its exuberant Regency foundations to a more solemn and orderly incarnation, more befitting of the Victorian Age that Britain was already entering in outlook if not in name. Barker writes that 'as elsewhere, the new reign introduced a period of greater seriousness in the Club's publications, which it would be ungrateful to describe as perhaps also a trifle dull'.⁸⁷ This earlier, more vibrant, period of the club, with its eccentric members who belonged to a more individualistic, less organised age, has tended to be ignored or deplored by critics and academics who have favoured the club's later, standardised and more obviously scholarly

⁸⁷ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, p. 75.

presentation. The formative years of the club are often overlooked or viewed as the poor and indeed embarrassing foundation from which later and greater things grew, despite the worst efforts of the founding members. This thesis will examine in detail these formative years, between the Club's foundation and of Earl Spencer's death, to form a picture of the value of the activities of these early years, and to demonstrate that the Club was already a positive and far-reaching influence on the development of literary studies and national culture.

1.4 SOCIAL AND MEDIA REACTIONS TO THE ROXBURGHE CLUB

Bibliomania could be argued to have been, to some extent, a media construct - with the high prices, obsessive collecting and identification (and self-identification) of collectors as bibliomaniacs defined and promoted by the newspapers, books and periodicals of the day. As often when a previously private and solitary avocation gains sudden and visible popularity, it also becomes the cause of much public ridicule, criticism and hand-wringing. The Roxburghe Club, possibly as a result of its highly publicised aristocratic membership and a taste for self-promotion, provided a focus for this anxiety and opprobrium. In the satirical poem *Bibliomania* by John Ferriar, bibliomania is defined as the collecting or hoarding of books to the point where social relations or health are damaged - this obsessive-compulsive disorder gradually expanding in the public mind to include book collectors in general.⁸⁸ Dibdin acknowledged the dim view taken of bibliophiles, and their automatic conflation with bibliomaniacs in the minds of the public, in his answering work *Bibliomania*

⁸⁸ John Ferriar, *Bibliomania; an Epistle to Richard Heber Esq.* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1809).

which is part satire, part warning and part celebration of the obsessive collecting of books. It was first published in 1809 as a relatively brief essay.⁸⁹ Later it was extended and the format altered to become a series of discourses between a group of friends, who discuss various aspects of book collecting and collectors.⁹⁰ This later version contains an exchange between the collector Lysander (Dibdin) and the more scholarly Philemon in which Lysander asserts that he is ‘an arrant bibliomaniac’ who loves books ‘dearly – that the very sight, touch, and more the perusal..’ at which point his friend cuts in and says ‘hold, my friend, you have renounced your profession – you talk of *reading* books – do Bibliomaniacs ever *read* books?’⁹¹ This joke acknowledges a criticism often levelled against book-collectors and against the Club: that they cared more for the appearance and rarity of the books that they collected than for the literary contents. Surprisingly, given such low opinion of the literary worth of what they produced, they were also criticised for not making copies available for purchase by the general public.

A letter from the *Gentleman’s Magazine* of September 1813 complained

The honourable members of the Roxburghe Club have no doubt, persuaded themselves that they are aiding the diffusion of useful knowledge, and promoting the interests of literature. But, instead of diffusing knowledge they selfishly cut off the springs which should feed it; and, instead of promoting the interests of literature they materially injure them.⁹²

The judgement seems unjustly harsh as the club was just over 12 months old and had not yet printed anything. In fact it would be another twelve months until William Bolland presented the club with its first volume. It also appears doubtful that the springs of literature would have been as gratefully received as the letter-

⁸⁹ T.F. Dibdin, *The bibliomania: or, Book-madness; containing some account of the history, symptoms and cure of this fatal disease, in an epistle addressed to Richard Heber, Esq.* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1809).

⁹⁰ T.F. Dibdin, *Bibliomania, or, Book-Madness; a bibliographical romance, in six parts ; illustrated with cuts* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1811).

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.4.

⁹² J.M., *Gentleman’s Magazine*, Sept 1813, pp. 211-2.

writer believed. The Club helped to nurture a taste for early books. The Scottish Bannatyne Club, while emulating the Roxburghe example in most matters, decided to avoid the accusation of withholding literature from the reading public by making its volumes available for sale to the public. The club secretary admitted that it ‘always proved a complete failure’.⁹³ Apparently the public wanted the option to purchase the books on principle, and from a fear of being excluded, rather than wanting the books themselves. In a reply to the above complainant, ‘A.C.’ points out that the Club may provide services to literature other than those of directly supplying books to the masses:

The fame of the unusually high prices which rare Articles in Literature have lately obtained in the search after, and care in the preservation of, such articles: it has also operated favourably upon all books, by inducing the possessors to preserve what might otherwise have been destroyed, in hope that it would be found to possess considerable value. Within my recollection, and that of many others, Old Books, out of the common course of reading, found their way in large quantities to the cheesemongers; hence it is that copies of some works have become so rare, and that others are supposed to be extinct, because references to them occur in different works while the books themselves are no where to be found.⁹⁴

The author also points out that:

The introduction of Literature amongst the amusements of the higher ranks of Society makes it fashionable, and thus promotes useful exertions in the cause amongst the more numerous imitators of the great, who form minor and subordinate libraries of rarities of the second class.⁹⁵

Both these points imply that the Roxburghe members might assist the cause of literature despite themselves, if not by design: faint praise, grudging even, but praise none the less and a point raised by another letter in the same issue, written by an author who signs himself ‘A lover of reason and good sense, yet, a staunch Bibliomaniac’, presumably because the two characteristics were generally

⁹³ David Lang, Appendix ‘Testimonial to the Secretary’, in *Adversaria: Notices illustrative of some of the earlier Works printed for the Bannatyne Club* (Edinburgh: Bannatyne, 1867), p. 6.

⁹⁴ A.C., letter, *Gentleman’s Magazine*, Oct 1813, pp338-9.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

considered to be mutually exclusive: ‘To contend merely for the harmlessness of the Institution in question would be, in my mind, a culpable humiliation; yet who can deny that it is at least inoffensive?’⁹⁶ A letter written in reply to ‘AC’ in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* of December 1813 countered his point regarding old books being sold as waste paper, saying with an obviously complacent, anti-scholarship rejection of any notion that literature not readily admired by modern society could be worth digging out or reprinting:

If an old work is truly valuable, it will not be necessary to search monasteries, dive into vaults, pore over bookstalls, or grub up all the trash which has been consigned to the silence of centuries, and which, but for their officious zeal, would have been of much more service in the shops of cheesemongers.⁹⁷

Samuel Egerton Brydges eventually addressed this point with a well-reasoned article in the *Theatrical Inquisitor, and Monthly Mirror* of Aug 1819, in which he asks:

if it be true that great intrinsic beauty or sublimity cannot obtain, even for a day, the public favour to many productions which are candidates for fame, may it not equally happen, that the same capricious insensibility may throw back into the shades several of those which have obtained it?⁹⁸

In a letter, written a year earlier to a soon-to-be fellow Roxburgher, Archdeacon Wrangham, he had addressed the same issue:

I know there is a very general impression, that what has once fallen into oblivion is not worth reviving: - that it is bigotry, & whim, & fanciful & factitious curiosity, which finds charms in these rusty treasures dug from the grave! As if the present age monopolized all knowledge, all wisdom; & all genius!!! A mere collector is, to be sure, a mighty dull & contemptible sort of animal – but when a man of talents & literature extends his inquiries into the productions of past ages, he greatly increases his intellectual stores, & can scarcely fail to ameliorate & enlarge his heart –

⁹⁶ A Staunch Bibliomaniac, *Gentleman’s Magazine*, Oct 1813, p.339.

⁹⁷ J.K, *Gentleman’s Magazine*, Dec 1813, p.544.

⁹⁸ Samuel Egerton Brydges, ‘On Bibliomania’, *Theatrical Inquisitor, and Monthly Mirror*, April 1819, 277-279 (p. 277).

In such a mind a selfish pride, & narrow & undue estimate of living eminence can scarcely continue to find food & encouragement.⁹⁹

We can see here within the Roxburghe membership already a recognition of the cultural and historical construction of taste, long before this became an essential perspective in the study of literature. Long domination by the Latin and Greek classics in the education and literary tastes of middle- and upper-class men led all too readily to an assumption that literary quality was a fixed, easily recognisable, indeed universal value. Interestingly, in the *Theatrical Inquirer* article Brydges uses the word bibliomaniac in a precise and positive way, writing that

There is a strong opinion among those who are not infected with the Bibliomania that no books or at least no works claiming the praise of genius have sunk into oblivion but such as have deserved to be forgotten.¹⁰⁰

In this context bibliomaniac is used to refer to a collector of early printed books, without any reference to the collection of rarities, oddities or rich bindings at high prices.

Unfortunately, once the club's vociferous detractors had put forward their opinions, in some cases before the club had actually produced any items, their logic seemed to become circular – the Roxburghe Club printed items nobody else had valued, therefore the Roxburghe Club's judgement was faulty, which meant that anything printed by the Club was without value. One criticism reappearing at intervals was that the collecting, and especially reprinting, of old, neglected works channelled money away from the development of modern books; for example, a letter in the *Monthly Meteor* of August 1812 asserts that:

⁹⁹ Sadleir, 'Archdeacon Francis Wrangham: a supplement', p.450.

¹⁰⁰ Egerton Brydges, 'On Bibliomania', p.277.

The sums expended upon the Valdarfer Boccaccio, or upon Caxton's earliest printed works [...] would reward and stimulate to future labours authors whose productions, filled with learning and ability, are calculated to delight and instruct mankind. The price of a worm-eaten pamphlet, if properly directed, might relieve the distresses of the Chattertons and Burns of our day, nourish the opening buds of genius, now nipped by poverty and want.¹⁰¹

There seem two assumptions being made here: firstly that the audience for modern works is the same audience as those purchasing and reprinting early English works, and, secondly, that reducing spending on one area of literature would automatically increase the spending in another area, deemed more deserving of attention. But it is not evident that the bibliomaniacs of the early nineteenth century were underwriting their collections of rare books by reducing their expenditure on contemporary publications or conversely that all those who collected early printed texts were also significant purchasers of contemporary works.

When they had first gathered to celebrate the Club could not have suspected the degree of scorn and criticism that their actions were soon to attract and over the intervening time the activities of the early days of the Club have often been dismissed as those of an ignorant group of wealthy dilettantes, producing books of no value and lacking the knowledge or literary taste necessary to be considered as anything other than an amusing footnote of bibliophilic history. This label they seem partly to have inherited from an earlier club, the Dilettanti, a light-hearted group of wealthy travellers (once euphemistically described as being 'not renowned for scholarly attainments'), who in 1734 founded a club to

¹⁰¹ 'The Bibliomania', *Satirist or Monthly Meteor*, 11 (1812: Aug), p.125.

dine well and occasionally publish a book on antiquarian subjects.¹⁰²

Incidentally, The Dilettanti Society, whose membership included Joshua Reynolds, Charles Fox and Garrick, seem to have suffered a similar fate to the Roxburghe: to having been initially written off on the opinion of one man, in their case Horace Walpole.¹⁰³ The Dilettanti allegedly managed to avoid producing anything substantial for the Club's first thirty years, while still continuing to meet and carouse and the supposed resemblance must have been irresistible to the Roxburghe's contemporaries, who almost as soon as the club was founded began to call them dilettantes.¹⁰⁴

John Payne Collier was, according to Arthur Freeman and Janet Ing Freeman, 'consistently hostile to the 'Roxburghe' school of costly reprints' and about Dibdin 'was habitually caustic', presumably because as the most visible and flamboyant personality of the Club he made an easy target.¹⁰⁵ Reviewing Dibdin's *Typographical Antiquities of Great Britain* he writes:

while all investigations of the origin and progress of printing must almost necessarily be productive of some useful information... this excuse... will not apply to the mere divers into the depths of black-letter darkness, who exhaust those lives that might have been devoted to valuable acquisitions, in employments to which they blindly attach an imaginary and factitious importance.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² Harrison Ross Steeves, *Learned Societies and English Literary Scholarship* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1913), p. 71.

¹⁰³ For further details see William Biggs Boulton, *The Amusements of Old London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1901), pp. 182-4.

¹⁰⁴ Steeves, p.71.

Susan A. Crane also points out the use of 'dilettante' as a means to discredit antiquarians in general writing that 'the antiquarians became figures of ridicule and contempt from the nineteenth century onward, their status reduced to that of 'dilettante''. 'Story History and the Passionate Collector', in *Producing the Past: Aspects of Antiquarian Culture and Practice 1700-1850*, ed. by Martin Myrone and Lucy Peltz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 187-203 (p.187).

¹⁰⁵ Arthur Freeman and Janet Ing Freeman, *John Payne Collier: Scholarship and Forgery in the Nineteenth Century* (Yale University Press, 2004), p. 68.

¹⁰⁶ John Payne Collier, 'Review of *Typographical Antiquities of Great Britain*', *The Critical Review: or Annals of Literature*, 4 (London: W.Simpkin & R. Marshall, 1816), 245-254 (p. 246).

Allowing that Dibdin was ‘a man of profound learning in the science of bibliography’, he immediately attributes this learning to Dibdin’s access to ‘all the collections of curious and rare books in the three kingdoms’ going on to describe Dibdin’s learning as ‘a very inapplicable and comparatively useless kind’.¹⁰⁷

Payne Collier, employed as the Duke of Devonshire’s librarian, must have been aware of the Club’s activities and how central Dibdin was to its ethos. Collier shared an interest in the books that concerned the Club, making his spleen all the more inexplicable. In the review Collier particularly singles out for criticism Dibdin’s habit of pointing out ‘insignificant peculiarities’ and it is tempting to suggest that Dibdin’s annoying attention to details of typography may have been of particular concern to a man later exposed as a forger of literary antiquities.¹⁰⁸ Whatever the case, Collier appears slightly more appreciative of the activities of other Club members. He was happy, for example, to receive copies of the rare items printed at the Beldornie press by E.V. Utterson, and in 1844 Collier edited the Club edition of *Household Books of John Duke of Norfolk and Thomas Earl of Surrey*.

Individual antipathy aside, underlying much of the criticism appears to have been a degree of hostility to the Georgian forms of sociability of which the Roxburghe were an obvious and high-profile example, lasting on into the opening of the Victorian period. In a more staid and serious era, there appears to be a perceived impropriety in the use of dining and drinking as a forum for

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p.245.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

scholarly pursuits evident in early articles such as one in the *Retrospective*

Review of 1827:

Few objects would be more worthy of praise than a body of literary men joining their purses and talents for the dissemination of valuable neglected literature, by printing impressions accessible to those who are interested in the subject; but the very reverse has hitherto been the conduct of this society of bibliomaniacs. Opportunities are, however, given them of redeeming their characters as literary men, by acting in a manner consistent with common sense and the age in which we live.¹⁰⁹

There is a clear distancing here between the Club's activities and the 'common sense' of the 'age in which we live', an overt disapproval not only of the items being reproduced but of the moral standing or character of the men who are carrying out the reprehensible acts of printing limited editions.

1.5 THE ROXBURGHE REVELS

While the club attracted negative reactions for many reasons and from many sources the most damaging attack occurred in the *Athenaeum* in 1834. This unpleasant episode concerning a manuscript titled the *Roxburghe Revels*, heaped ridicule and accusations on the Club, which dogged its reputation for many years and is still occasionally quoted in present-day articles about it. Nicolas Barker dismisses the events as being relatively unimportant, saying that 'probably the attack made less of a stir than one might suppose from Dibdin's passionate defence of his friend', but although if one merely looks at the events of the time that may be true, it cannot be overstated just how far the influence of the episode

¹⁰⁹ Sir Thomas Croft, 'Early English Poetry', *Retrospective Review*, Series 2, I, p. 156.

has spread in terms of the shaping of critics' largely negative viewpoints on the club, its early activities, and the nature and quality of its achievements.¹¹⁰

This virulent attack was made following the death of one of the Club's founder members, Joseph Haslewood, and the subsequent discovery of notebooks among his papers relating proceedings at several Club meetings. The notebook entitled the *Roxburghe Revels* was a private journal rather than an official Club minute book, and included copies of the menus from their dinners, rough minutes of the business transacted at the meetings, personal letters sent between the members and other related ephemera. It was undoubtedly intended for Haslewood's personal amusement and included occasional observations regarding the other club members that, while not particularly offensive, were obviously not meant for publication. Haslewood at the time of his death had left detailed instruction in his will for the disposal of his library and personal papers. He had requested that his books be sold by Samuel Sotheby, with the proceeds going to his brother and nephew; he specifically requested that his personal papers should not be sold. At a later date Haslewood had (apparently under the misapprehension that a recent legal alteration would mean that Sotheby's would be considered a legatee because of the wording of his will, and thus render the auction proceeds liable to legacy duties) changed his will to request that a friend should choose the auction house, adding that he expected that his friend would 'probably adopt my original wish': a clear statement of his wishes disregarded by his executors, along with his wish that the auction be held at the Easter following his death.¹¹¹ His brother

¹¹⁰ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, p. 74.

¹¹¹ An excerpt from Haslewood's will in 'Sale of the library of Joseph Haslewood, Esq. F.S.A.', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1 (London: 1834), 286-88 (p. 287).

declined to be executor, and the friend who dealt with his estate must have held doubts about the propriety of selling the Roxburghe Revels manuscript because he sent it to various individuals, some of whom excised passages from the journal before it went to be auctioned by Mr. Evans in December 1833.¹¹² An article in *Gentleman's Magazine* related that:

There was a general outcry at the "Roxburghe Revels" being brought to sale, and if only forty shillings had been bidden for the book, it might have been bought in; but as it was run up to forty pounds, that sum so far outweighed any scruples of respect which might have been entertained for the character of the deceased, that the temptation could no longer be resisted. This is the palpable and barely disguised truth.¹¹³

The manuscript was bought by a bookseller named Thorpe who immediately offered it to Haslewood's closest friend T.F. Dibdin, effectively giving him the opportunity to suppress its publication. Dibdin, with admirable moral conviction but perhaps a degree of naivety, declined to buy it, viewing it as tantamount to blackmail and later explained:

Of course no gentleman would think of putting his hand into his pocket with a view as it might have been said of hushing up any strictures advanced upon such an association. The characters and rank in life of the members placed them far above it.¹¹⁴

Eventually, through a series of sales, it came into the possession of the proprietor and editor of the *Athenaeum* magazine, Charles Wentworth Dilke, who declared that he had 'resolved therefore to purchase it at any price, that we might gratify curiosity, and give our readers its principal contents'.¹¹⁵ Shortly after, a series of vitriolic articles appeared, in which Haslewood's memory was thoroughly desecrated and he was erroneously and maliciously held to be an illiterate, vulgar and dishonest fool, who had fraudulently insinuated his way into the Club. The

¹¹² Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, Vol 1. pp.425-7.

¹¹³ 'Sale of the library of Joseph Haslewood, Esq. F.S.A.', (p. 287).

¹¹⁴ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, p. 426.

¹¹⁵ 'The Roxburghe Revels', *Athenaeum* (1834: Jan 4), 1-6 (p. 1)

article was published anonymously and although the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* described the article's author as being 'almost certainly James Silk Buckingham', the *Athenaeum*'s founding editor, it seems just as likely that it was written by Dilke himself as he had bought the manuscript at great personal expense and with obvious intent to publish the contents.¹¹⁶ The *Athenaeum* during his editorship established itself as a widely read, highly influential periodical. While there was clearly an element of spite, envy or possibly moral disapproval against the Roxburghe Club as a whole, there must also, presumably, have been a concrete reason for carrying out such a vicious posthumous attack on an individual such as Haslewood, and Dilke, as will be seen, had the personal motive necessary for an act that otherwise displays inexplicable malice towards a man so recently deceased. If Dilke was not the sole author, then the article was almost certainly a joint endeavour between Dilke and Silk Buckingham with Dilke making (or rather purchasing) the arrows for Silk Buckingham to fire.

While Haslewood, as Cathleen Hayhurst Wheat has stated, 'carried on no literary quarrels but seems, for the most part, to have been on the best of terms with fellow antiquarians like Bliss, Park, and Singer,' it would appear that there had, at an earlier date, occurred a brief and not particularly cordial correspondence between Haslewood and Dilke.¹¹⁷ Hayhurst Wheat at the time of writing, however, had clearly not seen the undated and unsigned letter, apparently in Haslewood's handwriting, now in the Roxburghe Club archives, in which

¹¹⁶ Alan Bell 'Joseph Haslewood', *ODNB* [accessed 27 April 2010]

¹¹⁷ Cathleen Hayhurst Wheat, 'Joseph Haslewood and the Roxburghe Club', *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 11 (1947), 37-49 (p. 37).

Haslewood recounts to an unidentified recipient, how he had previously encountered Dilke:

The edition of old plays announced in the preceding prospectus as edited by a gentleman of the name of “C. W. Dilke” who resided at “No. 10 Stanhope Street, Newcastle Street,” i.e. Stanhope Clare market. I take this from a letter addressed to myself. Before the first number appeared for the plays were published periodically the first of every month, I considered it necessary to have an interview with Mr. Martin the publisher, communicated to him as much as appeared necessary that such a work was in contemplation on an enlarged scale and to form a very complete and valuable collection of early dramatic pieces. Fortunately Mr. Martin informed me the said Mr. Dilke had formed his own selection and plan and same could not be in any manner altered. I say fortunately for could a co-operative plan have been formed it would have been the means of attaching to a respectable work an impotent coadjutor in Mr. Dilke whose plays form a tasteless selection and whose notes prove him an [undecipherable word] for such an undertaking.

He has stuck my name at the head of those from whom he derived assistance, having answered a letter of his on the subject of Marston and which answer, had he duly considered, he might have discovered was a most palpable sneer at his work, by telling him the volume he enquired about was “neither of sufficient rarity to keep as a curiosity, or of any value to an editor.

The escape from this coalition was unquestionably fortunate: - but it was unfortunate for the public this imperfect project was ever attempted as it made those who had contemplated a work reputable to all parties, to consider the market forestalled[...].¹¹⁸

The volume referred to is undoubtedly the anthology *Old English Plays*, published in 1814.¹¹⁹ Dilke’s edition does indeed include the acknowledgement mentioned above, saying that ‘to Mr. Haslewood he is indebted for some information respecting the prefixure to the octavo edition of Marston’s plays’, but it also seems likely that he did indeed ‘duly consider’ the insult offered towards his edition and his own talents and chose to take his rather cowardly revenge anonymously after Haslewood’s death through public character

¹¹⁸ Letter from Joseph Haslewood to an unknown recipient contained in a scrapbook which forms part of the Roxburghe Club Archive, deposited with the Society of Antiquaries, London.

¹¹⁹ *Old English Plays: Being a selection from the early dramatic writers*, ed. by Charles Wentworth Dilke (London: Whittingham and Rowland, 1814).

assassination.¹²⁰ This conjecture seems confirmed by a letter from Alexander Dyce to Samuel Egerton Brydges.¹²¹ Dyce attributes Dilke's act to 'revenge' for Haslewood's review of the edition (although Haslewood's letter makes it clear that the argument had originated earlier in its production) and further comments that Dilke's publication 'might have annihilated the Roxburghe Club' – a far more apprehensive judgement from a contemporary than Barker's downplaying of the effects of the publication.

Paradoxically, given the presumable intention of damaging Haslewood's personal and professional reputation, this episode actually instead confirms that Haslewood, far from being the uneducated amateur that the *Athenaeum* would have liked to paint him, was of sufficient standing as an editor and expert on early literature to have been approached by other editors working in similar areas looking for advice and soliciting collaboration. Haslewood was of sufficient professional standing to have been approached by Dilke himself, who clearly did not consider him either ignorant or without influence in their field of shared interest. Dibdin confirms this in his defence of Haslewood and indicates that he understands who is behind the article and why they have written it:

If the deceased had been the weak, harmless, ignorant and puzzle-headed creature described by this anonymous libeller, why take so much pains to "...draw his frailties from their drear abode?" And why, on dramatic points, betray such unusual sensitiveness and acrimony of feeling and expression? There seems throughout the whole to be something like an under current of rivalry in the histrionic department.¹²²

¹²⁰ Dilke, *Old English Plays*, p. xxiii.

¹²¹ 'in private hands' but extracts appear in the 2011 Bonhams catalogue of auction 19386 (The Roy Davids Collection) at which it was sold.

¹²² Dibdin, 'Observations on the Attack on the Late Joseph Haslewood Esq., F.S.A.', in *Roxburghe Revels and Other Relative Papers* (p. 80).

The accusations made against Haslewood, spiteful and wide ranging, formed a formidable destruction of both his character and professional competence. The original *Roxburghe Revels* manuscript was quoted lavishly throughout the article but usually taken out of context, purposely misconstrued or slanted to show both Haslewood and the Club in the worst possible light. This wilful attempt to misrepresent Haslewood's meaning is illustrated by the following example, quoting a passage relating a small gathering of the Club:

We were friendly without argument, jocose, lively, and consistent. There was no seeming hero of the table and therefore no one injudiciously loquacious: A complaint perhaps less to be advanced as against the R. Club, than any collective party I was ever in.¹²³

This is a straightforward description of a dinner party at which no one person takes the limelight or is overly garrulous, but to the *Athenaeum* writer:

These few lines contain, as it were, the essence of Haslewood: the allusion to the "seeming hero of the table," was a hit at Sir Walter Scott, and shows the paltry envy of our Roxburgher's character.¹²⁴

Haslewood's class was the subject of many of the jibes and the author asserts that 'we think it extraordinary, as we have over and over again said, that such a man should for a single hour have been tolerated as a member of such a body'.¹²⁵

He writes that Haslewood was:

Sprung from the very humblest class – we happen to know that he was born in Brownlow Street Lying-in Hospital – he never had any regular education, and he never remedied this original misfortune by subsequent exertion; yet, by strange accidents, he was brought in contact with some of the most scholar-like, best informed, and most accomplished men of the age.¹²⁶

Early on, the author, rather perversely and in direct contradiction of many of his later accusations, comments that 'while living Mr. Haslewood was a very

¹²³ 'The Roxburghe Revels, MS.', *Athenaeum* (1834: Jan 25), 60-64 (p. 63).

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

¹²⁶ 'The Roxburghe Revels, MS.', *Athenaeum* (1834: Jan 4), 1-6 (p. 1).

cautious and polite man, and, had he extended this feeling to his death few would have had reason to complain'.¹²⁷ This admission does not prevent the author from proceeding to accuse Haslewood of various crimes against propriety, sensationally spread over three weekly instalments of the magazine. Dibdin later asked 'is a man to be pointed at, or hooted at, because later in life he has associated with gentlemen – when his evil stars, at an earlier period, had driven him in an opposite direction?'¹²⁸ The *Athenaeum* author thought that, yes, he should be ridiculed for moving out of his own class and socialising with men on the basis of a shared interest rather than shared class or equal wealth, displaying a degree of snobbery that was on his side, considerably beyond that of the 'elite' Roxburghe Club itself. If it was Silk Buckingham, this attitude is difficult to understand as he himself was a self-made man, who had risen in society from his origins as a farmer's son. Dilke was a liberal known for his radical political commentary; this line of attack on the basis of inferior class seems a hypocritical line for this pair to take, and presumably shows how desperate they were to score points against Haslewood and the Club. Nicolas Barker points out that Buckingham had been a troublemaker during his time in India, having made indiscreet attacks on the government which led to his expulsion and 'clearly enjoyed a row'.¹²⁹ It is of course possible, that after paying such a high sum for the manuscript, in the hope of finding salacious details he could use against Haslewood and other Club members Dilke was disappointed to find little that could be held against them, and was forced to stoop to a more desperate level of ridicule than originally anticipated in order to find his mark and justify his purchase.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, p. 428.

¹²⁹ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, p. 74.

The author has much amusement at the expense of Haslewood's unorthodox use of English, although the faults are far less prevalent or significant than he claims and almost every example to be found in the original is quoted and ridiculed, suggesting that such is the standard found throughout the document which is far from the case. He criticises Haslewood's speech and education, describing him as displaying 'vulgarity and ignorance'.¹³⁰ Dilke also claims:

Though he could scarcely open his mouth without committing an offence of some kind or other against his mother-tongue, he was prudent enough not to open it often in company where his blunders were likely to be detected.¹³¹

Later he writes 'how the waiters could have kept their countenances, while attending upon the Roxburghers, when Haslewood opened his mouth, we cannot imagine'.¹³² An article in response to the *Athenaeum* appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, a journal to which Haslewood had been a regular contributor. Its author points out:

with respect to his personal manners, he was perfectly quiet and unobtrusive in society; and therefore the gentlemen of rank and education who have composed the Roxburghe Club had no cogent reason (as his slanderer has pretended) to dismiss from their society a man possessed of very extensive information on subjects connected with their favourite pursuits.¹³³

Dibdin, defending his late friend wrote that:

Throughout the whole of this writer's strictures he boldly affirms, although necessarily he was never present, that the Members of the Roxburghe Club were shocked and disgusted with the conversation of the deceased. The assertion is CONTRARY TO TRUTH. Never was speech more harmless than that which fell from his lips. As above observed, it was only Haslewoodian.¹³⁴

¹³⁰ 'The Roxburghe Revels, MS', (1834: Jan 11), 28-30 (p. 29).

¹³¹ Ibid., (1834: Jan 4), p. 1.

¹³² Ibid., (1834: Jan 25), p. 64.

¹³³ 'Sale of the Library of Joseph Haslewood, Esq. F.S.A.', (p. 287).

¹³⁴ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, pp. 428-9.

It can also be pointed out that as the writer of the article was under the erroneous impression that the Roxburghe Club was no longer in existence, he could not have based his accusations on any conversation with a contemporary member or even a close associate of a member.

The alliterative titles of the many manuscripts that Haslewood left behind him were held up as examples of his ridiculous lack of taste:

If he had termed himself “a lion of literature and alliteration,” he would have been nearer the mark; for his only forte seems to have been “affecting the letter.” He had a sort of knack of this kind, and much of the rubbish he collected, and which was recently sold by Mr. Evans, was recommended to purchaser about as sagacious as Haslewood himself, not by comical, but by coxcombical, titles.¹³⁵

Dilke, as an editor working in the same literary fields as Haslewood, must have recognised that such titles (*Garlands of Gravity*, *Poverty's Pot Pourri*, *Wallet of Wit*) while not appealing perhaps to contemporary tastes unfamiliar with earlier literature and intolerant to works considered inelegant, were an erudite and witty nod to the alliterative titles of Elizabethan works such as the *Batchelars banquet* (1603), the *Garland of Goodwill* (1579), *Paradise of Dainty Devices* (1579) or *A Caveat for common cursetors* written in 1566, reprinted by T. Bensley in 1814, and actually dedicated to Haslewood ‘as a testimonial of esteem for his bibliographical talents and persevering research in the revival of ancient literature’.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ ‘The Roxburghe Revels, MS’, *Athenaeum* (1834: Jan 4), p. 1.

¹³⁶ Thomas Harman, *A caveat or warning for common cursetors vulgarly called vagabonds* (London: 1814).

The Roxburghe Club itself received a share of criticism, but the jibes levelled at the Club are mild in comparison with those levelled at Haslewood, generally confined to spiteful comments regarding the quantities of eating and drinking carried out, while managing obsequiously to avoid any direct criticism of the aristocratic members. The titled members are somewhat bizarrely treated as innocent victims, forced to endure Haslewood's continuing presence in the Club, a viewpoint which overlooks the power and influence wielded by the aristocracy in social situations, which would have made any question of them tolerating Haslewood's company under protest unthinkable. The author does discuss in detail, and disapprove of, the high cost of the dinners. These were of course extravagant by modern standards, and the amount of alcohol consumed, or at least purchased, impressive. The most expensive dinner quoted in the article is that of 1818, at which 15 members incurred a bill of £87 9s. 6d. or £5. 14s. per head. This was, however, exceptional even for the Club; the amount per head was usually around £2 10s.¹³⁷ The amounts are exorbitant but not unusual when the venues at which they dined are taken into account. One hotel at which they ate on a number of occasions was the Clarendon Hotel, described as:

The only place in England where a French dinner was served that was worthy of mention in the same breath with those obtainable in Paris at the Maison Doré or Recher de Cancalle's. The prices were very high, dinner cost three or four pounds a head and a bottle of claret or champagne was not obtainable under a guinea.¹³⁸

¹³⁷ More representative amounts given for other years are:

1813 - £50 among 21 members

1814 - £2 5s. per person

1815 - £57 or £2 17s. per person

1816 - £62 13s. 6d among 23 members

1817 - £49 among 22 members

1819 - £55 13s. among 21 members

¹³⁸ Lewis Melville [pseud], *Some Eccentrics and a Woman* (London: M. Secker, 1911), p.80.

When compared with the dinners held by similar specialist-interest dining clubs the sums involved would not appear to be too unusual and neither would this form of meeting. It was common practice for many of even the most scholarly of societies to hold meetings in social settings. Peter Clark points out that ‘by 1800 clubs and societies had penetrated almost every sphere of British social life, frequently annexing much of the territory of established public sociability’.¹³⁹ For example, the Geological Society, when first founded in 1807, as a dining club, met once a month, later twice a month, from November to June and the cost of their dinner was initially set at 15 shillings per person.¹⁴⁰ While less than half the cost of an average Roxburghe dinner, given the frequency of congregation this represents a far higher expenditure per year per member, and meeting twice a month would ensure only the wealthy could have afforded to attend. In other words, the Roxburghe Club had an exceptional capacity for partying once a year but over the long haul it was a relatively affordable club. Membership of many clubs at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century could, according to Clark, be ‘horribly expensive’, with ‘heavy outlays for dinners, open-ended drinking, gifts, servants, regalia, charitable donations, and so on’.¹⁴¹ An article, probably by Dibdin, in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* March 1834, addresses this point, with an added telling reference to charitable organisations of the time:

The alleged extravagance of the Roxburghe Club Dinners would equally apply, we conceive, to every party patronizing the same expensive houses; and should rather be regarded as the tax paid for the fancied advantage of being entertained at an aristocratic tavern, with foreign cookery, and rare

¹³⁹ Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 126.

¹⁴⁰ M. J. S. Rudwick (1963). ‘The Foundation of the Geological Society of London: Its Scheme for Co-operative Research and its Struggle for Independence’, *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 1(1963), 325-355 (p. 329).

¹⁴¹ Clark, p. 222.

foreign wines (though perhaps scarcely tasted), than as the particular profusion of the Roxburghe Club. A retired literary student might say, and we should agree with him, that the cost would have been far more profitably spent on intellectual instead of sensual gratifications; but does not this argument apply to every tavern dinner, so many of which divide the money expended, not on the mere researches of a private literary club, but on the objects of public charitable institutions? And yet such dinners are considered advantageous to those institutions, and promoted with that view.¹⁴²

The repeated criticisms of the Club's drinking habits and insistence on reprinting the menu and alcohol bill from each dinner might be partly explained if Silk Buckingham's were involved. A committed temperance campaigner, he would presumably have taken a dim view of the Roxburghe's, or any other club's, excesses. Furthermore, while direct criticism of the significance of the Club's literary activities might have been difficult to prove open to intelligent debate, holding the Club up to ridicule for its dining habits was an easy target in this attempt to undermine their claims to being taken seriously. The author's disapproval of the alleged frivolity also resonates with developing evangelical sobriety: 'the growing hostility, headed by the religious revival movement, to the perceived frothiness of much sociability'.¹⁴³ It was perhaps carefully calculated to invoke an easily aroused public censure.

RESPONSES TO THE ATTACK

The article was reprinted privately alongside a rebuttal of its claims under the title *Roxburghe Revels and other relative papers; including answers to the attack on the memory of the late Joseph Haslewood, Esq. F.S.A. with specimens of his literary productions* edited by James Maidment, a friend of Haslewood, and with

¹⁴² 'Sale of the library of Joseph Haslewood.', p. 287.

¹⁴³ Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, p.192.

contributions by Dibdin.¹⁴⁴ Dibdin also revisited the subject in *Reminiscences of a literary life*, but however strongly Haslewood's friends voiced their dismay and rebutted the accusations the damage was done and the reputations of both Haslewood and the Roxburghe Club were injured with lasting effect. A gossip column in the *Athenaeum* in 1848 returns to the subject, saying:

our readers will agree with us in thinking that the club *was* "shewen up" "finely larded" with sauce of its own preparing; and it is only proper to add that the resolute purchaser of Piccadilly subsequently sold the volume for 50l. to the editor of this paper at the risk of its being so. It would have been a pity to disappoint the prophecy.¹⁴⁵

Over the intervening period views regarding this episode have divided largely into two groups: those who, however spirited the defence by Haslewood's friends, have chosen to take the slanderous version of Haslewood's character as truth, and ignoring the views of the people who knew him have seen his acceptance into the Club as an aberration by an otherwise elite and judicious membership during their wayward early years. The other group comprises those who have considered the attack on Haslewood to have merely been a way of hitting out at the Club itself, with Haslewood as an individual largely irrelevant.¹⁴⁶ Neither approach, I suggest, gives an adequate picture of the events or their lasting damage to the reputations of the Club and to Haslewood. Moreover, they ignore that Haslewood *had* a reputation to lose, rather than being merely the uneducated non-entity or fool that he was painted by the *Athenaeum*.

Looking at the first group, a number of critics simply repeated, without debate, the points of the *Athenaeum* article itself. The most well-known of these is John

¹⁴⁴ *Roxburghe Revels and Other Relative Papers*, ed. by James Maidment (Edinburgh: 1837)

¹⁴⁵ 'Our Weekly Gossip', *Athenaeum*. 1073 (1848: May 20), p. 509.

¹⁴⁶ See Hayhurst Wheat, 'Joseph Haslewood and the Roxburghe Club', pp. 37-49.

Hill Burton in the *Book-Hunter*. Although writing only thirty years after Haslewood's death, Hill Burton appears to accept Dilke's evaluation of Haslewood's character and abilities without apparently checking the veracity of the accusations. The judicious comments made by Hill Burton's American editor and already mentioned above (page 13), failed to prevent later authors from freely quoting Hill Burton's repetition of the original article in a literary version of Chinese whispers. In 1861 an article had appeared in *Blackwood's Magazine* titled 'The Book-hunter's club', which, although unattributed, is obviously the material that Hill Burton would later publish as *The Book-Hunter* and includes:

It is singular that so small and exclusive a club as the Roxburghe should have proved an exception to the rule of secrecy [which controlled the public images of other clubs] and that the world has been favoured with revelations of its doings which have made it the object of more amusement than reverence. In fact, through failure of proper use of the black ball, it got possession of a black sheep, in the person of a certain Joseph Haslewood. He had achieved a sort of reputation in the book-hunting community by discovering the hidden author of *Drunken Barnaby's Journal*. In reality, however, he was a sort of literary Jack Brag. As that amusing creation of Theodore Hook's imagination mustered himself with sporting gentlemen through his command over the technicalities or slang of the kennel or the turf, so did Haslewood sit at the board with scholars and aristocratic book-collectors through a free use of their technical phraseology¹⁴⁷

This article and the book that evolved from it became, directly and indirectly, a major conduit through which the *Athenaeum* claims were repeated in later articles and commentaries which referred to the early Roxburghe Club. Thirty years after the *Book-Hunter*, Haslewood's alleged character was still being raked over, with Edward Edwards in his, for the most part well-measured and perceptive *Libraries and Founders of Libraries*, saying of Dibdin:

¹⁴⁷ 'The Book-hunter's club', *Blackwoods Edinburgh Magazine*, 90 (1861:Oct.), 440-462 (pp. 446-7).

When you read his *Reminiscences* of the men with whom he had mixed in life, you are left in considerable doubt whether or not he quite understood the difference between two men, both of whom were “Roxburghians” and editors of black-letter rarities – Walter Scott and Joseph Haslewood.¹⁴⁸

Edwards does not make it clear what he considers the prime difference between the two men, especially in view of the fact that beyond the obvious disparity in fame, both came from relatively humble backgrounds and raised themselves through the medium of literature and bibliophilic pursuits. W. Powell Jones also draws a line between Scott and the rest of the Club:

There were numerous disciples, some of them erudite with futile eagerness like Samuel Egerton Brydges, some learned and profound like Richard Heber, and a few sane gentlemen-scholars like Walter Scott.¹⁴⁹

It is interesting to consider what the difference between a ‘learned and profound’ man and a ‘sane gentleman-scholar’ might be and also note the wild differences in opinion that occur when critics attempt to put relative values on the individual Club members. However that may be, Walter Scott clearly had no objections to sharing a dinner table with Haslewood: he did so at the one Roxburghe dinner that he attended during his membership, although the *Athenaeum* article had implied that Scott must have found his company insufferable. The article attempted to attribute Scott’s failure to dine with the Club again to Haslewood’s presence:

He had quite enough of it: One day perfectly satisfied him; for, although he met on that occasion Earl Spencer, the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Althorp, Lord Clive, Mr. Phelps, Mr. Markland, Mr. Towneley and other accomplished gentlemen, Haslewood seems to have been a sort of “frog in the fire” or a wet blanket, which cast a damp over the whole company: his uninformed dullness was like a cloud that overshadowed and oppressed.¹⁵⁰

In fact, Scott commented on the dinner in his journal thus:

¹⁴⁸ Edward Edwards, *Libraries and Founders of Libraries*, (London: Trübner., 1864), p. 419.

¹⁴⁹ W. Powell Jones, ‘Three Unpublished Letters of Scott to Dibdin’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 4 (July 1940), 477- 484 (p. 477).

¹⁵⁰ ‘The Roxburghe Revels, MS.’, *Athenaeum* (1834: Jan 11), p. 61.

Dined at the Roxburghe Club. Lord Spencer presided, but had a cold which limited his exertions. Lord Clive, beside whom I sat, was deaf, though intelligent and good-humoured. The Duke of Devonshire was still deafer. There were many little chirruping men who might have talked but went into committee. There was little general conversation.¹⁵¹

If Scott was disappointed it was over the relative boredom from sitting with the two leading aristocrats that night, whereas he perceived the busily chatting lesser men – the committee members - as likely to have included some he regretted not conversing with. There is neither any mention of Haslewood nor of the wild carousing for which the Club was criticised. Moreover, Scott appeared to value Haslewood’s abilities as an editor and critic and mentions him in a letter written to another Roxburghe member, Sir Francis Freeling:

I was much pleased with the two plays printed by Mr Haslewood which threw the most curious & valuable light upon various disputed points of dramatic history. I sincerely hope Mr Haslewood will print the rest which cannot fail to give the highest interest whether restricted to the club or published in the proper sense.¹⁵²

Cathleen Hayhurst Wheat argues that Haslewood was merely the means by which the *Athenaeum* authors could attack the Roxburghe Club, although she acknowledges that there is what appears to be ‘personal animosity’ in many of the article’s comments and raises the possibility that the men may have been known to each other through their respective contributions to the *Retrospective Review* and shared field of interest. Hayhurst Wheat also notes the lasting damage inflicted upon Haslewood’s reputation: ‘even Bigham, eulogizing the club and its founders a hundred years later, takes his cue from the writer of the *Athenaeum* and dismisses Haslewood with a reference to “his affectation for

¹⁵¹ Walter Scott, *The Journal of Sir Walter Scott* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1890), p. 181.

¹⁵² Grierson, *Letters of Walter Scott*, X, p. 285.

birth, books, and banquets”, “his lack of scholarship”, and “his verbosity”¹⁵³.

Perhaps it is best to leave the subject with the *Athenaeum*'s author who writes:

People may talk as they will of the envy of actors and artists, but it is nothing compared with the envy of authors of an inferior grade: your low literati form the most grudging, carping, fretting, and in some respects most mischief-making and malignant class of the community.¹⁵⁴

1.6 SATIRE AND THE ROXBURGHE CLUB

‘What wild desires, what restless torments seize

The hapless man, who feels the book-disease’¹⁵⁵

Not all the discussions regarding the Roxburghe Club and its foibles were serious in tone and much of the criticism appeared in the form of satire, often from the pens of other book-collectors, and occasionally from the pens of its own members. There had long been a culture of satirical verse aimed at book collectors and their perceived foibles, but in the first decade of the nineteenth century a more personal humorous exchange began between a number of arrant bibliophiles, including of course Dibdin, who was always in the thick of anything concerning book collecting.¹⁵⁶ This exchange was gaining momentum by the time the Roxburghe Club was inaugurated. While the same old jokes and

¹⁵³ Wheat, p.43.

¹⁵⁴ ‘The Roxburghe Revels, MS,’., *Athenaeum* (1834: Jan 25), p. 63.

¹⁵⁵ John Ferriar, *The Bibliomania, an epistle to Richard Heber, Esq.* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1809), lines 1-2.

¹⁵⁶ As Susan Manning writes ‘fanaticism, eccentricity and bitter territoriality made antiquarians a gift to caricature and satire’, ‘Antiquarianism, Balladry and the Rehabilitation of Romance’, in *The Cambridge History of English Romantic Literature*, ed. by James Chandler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 45-70 (p.48).

jibes were present, the spirit of the compositions seems almost self-congratulatory and celebratory, rather than either harshly accusing or earnestly penitent. The authors of these satires were not poking fun at the ridiculous 'other' with his strange predilections but rather indulging in a shared joke using the shorthand of the confirmed insider: vouching their place in the membership of the book-collecting fraternity by gently mocking the extremes of their passions in the shared language of their obsession.

In 1809, John Ferriar had published a poem called *The Bibliomania, an epistle to Richard Heber Esq.* Having declared 'bibliomania' to be a mental disorder, he dedicated his tongue-in-cheek work to his friend Heber, the most notoriously obsessive collector of them all. Dibdin's reply to Ferriar's *Bibliomania* appeared soon after and confusingly was called *Bibliomania; or Book Madness*.¹⁵⁷ Although following Ferriar's lead in treating the idea of the 'disease' of Bibliomania humorously, it is simultaneously a spirited defence of the love of books. It is a celebration dense with the details so dear to book-collectors of the time: auction prices, talk of large copies, rare items, black-letter, etc. Dibdin writes that 'it may gratify a bibliographer to find that there are other MANIAS beside that of the book; and that even physicians are not exempt from these diseases'.¹⁵⁸ He points out that any variant of collecting may lead to 'mania' and that many pastimes may lead to book-collecting. Dibdin later reprinted an expanded and much more solemn form of his work as a 'bibliographical romance in six parts' which contained an extended conversation between a number of

¹⁵⁷ Dibdin, *Bibliomania; or Book Madness* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1809).

¹⁵⁸ Dibdin, *Bibliomania*, p.7.

characters on all things bibliographical.¹⁵⁹ Dibdin himself appears in this story under the pseudonym of Lysander and all the other characters are thinly veiled bibliophiles of his acquaintance, including a number soon to become Roxburghe Club members, including Haslewood, Henry Drury, Richard Heber, John Dent, Mark Masterman Sykes, William Bolland and Walter Scott.¹⁶⁰

The exchange of fire continued: James Beresford, in his turn, created an amusing retort to Dibdin's *Bibliomania*, titled *Bibliosophia*, published in 1810.¹⁶¹ He included at the front of the book an 'advertisement':

The first of the two following pieces contains a feeling remonstrance against the prose work, lately published by the Reverend T.F.D. under the title of BIBLIOMANIA; OR BOOK-MADNESS.¹⁶²

He accuses Dibdin of being disloyal to book-collectors in trying to justify their collecting by implying that they might read the books, an idea he professes to find abhorrent to the true collector:

I will begin by designating the high and dignified passion in question by its true name BIBLIOSOPHIA – which I would define – an appetite for COLLECTING books, fully distinguished from, wholly unconnected with, nay absolutely repugnant to, all idea of READING them.¹⁶³

He mitigates this criticism with an obvious respect and affection for Dibdin (as well as acknowledging Dibdin's position with regards to the study of early English literature as well as book-collecting) when he writes:

I have thus stepped down from my text, for a few moments, for the purpose of intreating Mr. D. to accompany me into this private corner of

¹⁵⁹ T. F. Dibdin, *Bibliomania, A bibliographical romance in six parts*, (London: Messrs Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1811).

¹⁶⁰ For a complete list of the characters who appear in the *Bibliomania* and their real-life counterparts see the supplement to the later *Bibliomania; or book-madness* (London: Henry G Bohn, 1842), pp. 569 – 613.

¹⁶¹ James Beresford, *Bibliosophia* (London: William Miller, 1810).

¹⁶² Ibid, 'Advertisement'.

¹⁶³ Ibid, p. 4.

the page, where I would say to him, in a low whisper “To be sure, Sir, you have left us a little in the dark, as to the side you really mean to take between the two great parties of Book-hunters – those who collect, and those who read; and you may, perhaps, be regarded by the censorious, as a sort of literary Trimmer – but, if you are a bat, you have on other occasions, as distinctly shewn the reading half of your partisans, that you can fly, as you have now convinced the collecting half, that you can creep. Even I, if I could find it in my heart to say any thing favorable on the wrong side of the question, am strongly tempted to squeeze out a compliment to your late Edition of the “Utopia”.¹⁶⁴

Dibdin obviously relished this publication as he refers to it in a later edition of the *Bibliomania*, saying:

Early in the ensuing year (namely, in 1810) appeared' *Bibliosophia, or Book-Wisdom: containing some account of the Pride, Pleasure, and Privileges of that glorious Vocation, Book-Collecting. By an Aspirant. Also; The Twelve Labours of an Editor, separately pitted against those of Hercules, 12mo.* This is a good-humoured and tersely written composition; being a sort of Commentary upon my own performance. In the ensuing pages will be found some amusing poetical extracts from it.¹⁶⁵

Dibdin, understandably, continued to prove an irresistible target for satirists including an appearance in a Cruikshank cartoon about which A.N.L. Munby observes that in this:

Dibdin appears, with his *Bibliomania* under his arm, in a print of “The Antiquarian Society” which accompanied a slashing attack on the body in a scurrilous periodical, *The Scourge*, 1 June, 1812.¹⁶⁶

This caricature of another learned and antiquarian society would have been exactly contemporary with the founding of the Roxburghe Club, appearing only sixteen days before the inaugural dinner. Dibdin appears wearing an oddly shapeless hat, and is in fact the only person in the room depicted as wearing any headgear which makes him stand out. Dibdin was still giving amusement to wits in 1824 when Thomas De Quincey produced the *Street Companion; or the young*

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, pp. 3-4.

¹⁶⁵ Dibdin, *Bibliomania*, (1811), p 652.

¹⁶⁶ A.N.L. Munby, *Book-Collectors, Preservers of the Humanities* (Berkeley: The Rasmussen Press, 1976), p. 20.

*man's guide and the old man's comfort in the choice of shoes.*¹⁶⁷ De Quincey unmaliciously, and with some ingenuity, parodies Dibdin's ambitious but less than accurate work the *Library Companion: The Young Man's Guide and the Old Man's Comfort in the Choice of a Library* (1824).¹⁶⁸ De Quincey, acknowledging his own passion for book collecting, presents a humorous equation between a passion for books and a passion for shoes. Purporting to be written by the 'Rev. Tom. Foggy Dribble' this piece closely follows the form of the foreword belonging to the original and in the words of William Axonde 'the parallel between boots and books is worked out with whimsical completeness'.¹⁶⁹ Morrison and Sanjiv, more strongly, suggest that de Quincey at times detects erotic currents in both his own love of books and 'bibliomania' in general: his central satirical parallel, of obsessive love of shoes, is described in terms tinged with erotomania and foot fetishism.¹⁷⁰

Obviously, in this context of satire and parody aimed at bibliophiles and their works, it would have been odd if the Roxburghe Club, with its high profile as the acme of wealthy bibliophiles, had not become the target of the occasional piece of comic writing or barbed humour. One such is William Beckford's *Rare doings at Roxburghe-Hall*, 1819.¹⁷¹ It was published in a single volume with another poem titled *A Dialogue in the Shades*: the latter item apparently planned as early as 1816 and originally intended to be included with another piece,

¹⁶⁷ Thomas De Quincey, 'The Street Companion; or the young man's guide and the old man's comfort in the choice of shoes', *London Magazine and Review*, (London: Taylor and Hussey, 1825), pp.73-77.

¹⁶⁸ T.F. Dibdin, *Library Companion; or the young man's guide and the old man's comfort in the choice of a library* (London: Harding, Triphook, and Lepard, 1824).

¹⁶⁹ William E. A. Axon, 'Quincey and T. F. Dibdin', *Library*, 8 (1907), 267-274 (p. 274).

¹⁷⁰ Robert Morrison and Dabiel Sanjiv, *Thomas de Quincey: New Theoretical and Critical Directions* (New York and Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), p.128-29.

¹⁷¹ William Beckford, *Rare Doings at Roxburghe Hall*, (London: William Clarke, 1819 rep. Cambridge: Claude Cox, 1985).

Repertorium Bibliographicum.¹⁷² Although *Rare doings at Roxburghe-Hall* and *Dialogue in the Shades* were published anonymously, C W Cox, in the foreword to the 1985 reprint of both items says:

Guy Chapman [the author of a 1937 biography of Beckford] has little doubt that it is William Beckford. There is no doubt that Clarke edited the *Repertorium* and that Beckford had a hand in it. It is clear that the *Dialogue* and the *Ballad* were designed as a satirical comment on the collectors of the libraries described, which included Beckford's own library. The style and brilliance of the performance point to the fantastical genius of Beckford. The commissioning of not one but two versions of the engraving to illustrate the joke point to Beckford's £100,000 a year and one million in cash. The only other contender is the Bookseller Clarke. It seems most improbable that he would undertake so elaborate and expensive a send-up of his betters, including his patron Beckford.¹⁷³

Rare doings at Roxburghe Hall takes as its theme the sale of the Roxburghe collection and in particular takes Dibdin's famous description of the auction of the Valdarfer Boccaccio and uses the motif to satirical, or perhaps merely further satirical effect, along the way mentioning some of the Club members. The verses satirise the auction 'battle' between 'Earl Spiro' [Earl Spencer] of 'Alprop' [Althorpe] and 'Lord Blandish' [Marquis of Blandford].¹⁷⁴ The author says that his ballad is 'imitated and modernized from an unique black letter tract, supposed to be written by Sir Robert Ker', (the first Earl of Roxburghe).¹⁷⁵ It uses a ballad stanza and some ballad-like idioms. Before the battle begins, the Baron's 'dogs' step up to defend their master:

The man that first did answer make,
Was noble *Blandish* he;
Who said, "We list not to declare
Nor shew whose dogs we be.

¹⁷² C. W. Cox, foreword, (1985).

¹⁷³ Guy Chapman, *Beckford* (New York: Scribner's, 1937), p.286.

¹⁷⁴ John and Windiline Spira were German brothers who introduced printing to Venice in 1469. John Spira is credited with introducing the 'direction word' at the bottom of the page. See C.H. Timperley, *ADdictionary of Printers and Printing*, (London: H. Johnson, 1839).

¹⁷⁵ William Beckford, *Rare Doings at Roxburghe Hall*, page unnumbered.

A few verses later:

Up leap'd a brisk and gallant dog,
Brag-deeptone was his name;
Who said, "I would not have it told,
To my eternal shame,

That ere our noble chairman fought,
And 'Vice' stood looking on;
While I have power of teeth and nails,
I'll gore them to the bone."

Here Dibdin is caricatured as 'Brag-deeptone' described in a footnote as 'Deeptone – Saxonice Deep-din; an excellent full-mouthed dog, sonorous and sagacious'.¹⁷⁶ Another 'dog' steps up:

See Hart o' Greece with desp'rate thrust
Stout Dygore disarm
"Launcelots" and "Tristrams" crouch beneath
The vigour of his arm

Hart o' Greece most likely refers to the Duke of Devonshire, who until his father's death in 1811 was Marquess of Hartington and known to his family as 'Hart'. He was a passionate collector of marbles and other artworks and travelled extensively on the continent in pursuit of suitable items.¹⁷⁷ 'A Dialogue in the Shades', contained in the same volume, features Beckford, a keen book-collector himself, as 'Fodius' with his pack full of rare editions of purportedly trivial works and nursery rhymes.¹⁷⁸ Although this poem contains no direct comments on the Roxburghe Club, it does mention *Cocke Lorell's Bote*, which was reprinted for presentation to the club in 1817 by Henry Drury.

¹⁷⁶ *Rare doings at Roxburghe Hall*.

¹⁷⁷ For a full account of the life and collecting passions of the Duke of Devonshire see James Lees-Milne's *The Bachelor Duke, A life of William Spencer Cavendish, 6th Duke of Devonshire 1790 – 1858* (London: John Murray, 1991).

¹⁷⁸ Foreword by Claude Cox to facsimile reprint of 'Dialogue in the Shades'.

Another ballad appeared around 1815 titled the *Bibliomaniac Ballad* which although published pseudonymously (under the name of Christofer Valdarfer), was probably by Haslewood.¹⁷⁹ Dibdin, in the *Bibliographic Decameron*, writing on the possibility of Bernardo, his literary alias for Haslewood, becoming a poet says:

Lisardo I presume speaks only from report: and report is generally a treacherous authority. However, Bernardo is certainly the *reputed* author of a 'Bibliomaniac Ballad' which appeared in the 'Morning Chronicle,' some three years ago with the following dedication:

'To the Roxburghe Club, by way of dedication,
And all black letter dogs who have passed initiation.'

The 'conceit' or point of this 'ballad' lay in stringing together the names of all the old printers...¹⁸⁰

The author does this with aplomb, fitting one hundred and eleven printers' names into a poem of ninety-six lines, mostly through the extensive employment of homophones and puns. He also manages to work in references to Dibdin and to Triphook and Leigh, two well-known book sellers of the time. As if this feat were not sufficient, the poet includes a great many book-related terms, helpfully italicised for the non-expert. The resulting poem, taking the form of a tribute to a deceased uncle, is less painful than might be expected, as a representative sample illustrates:

Oft with smile showing JOY he called ENGLAND his own;
Boasted BARLEY though *short* and his CORNE stain'd BROWN,
When LYNNE'S *goats* were *fox'd* he'd a simile steal,
'Twas in no case to sacrifice ABRAHAM'S VEALE.

¹⁷⁹ This poem was reprinted in an anthology: Charles Henry Timperley, *Songs of the Press and other poems relative to the art of printers and printing* (London: Fisher, 1845), p23.

¹⁸⁰ T.F. Dibdin, *The Bibliographical Decameron; or ten days pleasant discourse upon illuminated manuscripts, and subjects connected with early engraving, typography and bibliography*, 3 vols (London: W. Bulmer, 1817), III, p 22. See also Ralph Thomas, *Handbook of fictitious names*, (London: J.R. Smith, 1868) p. 159 and William Cushing, *Initials and pseudonyms; a dictionary of literary disguises 2d series* (New York: Thomas Y, Ceowell, 1885), p. 451.

He as FISHER caught FRIES (*Walton* tells no such thing)
While the barb of his HOOKE held the BATE for a LING:
Then he'd COUSIN a CHAPMAN or KNIGHT to the treat,
Which the BUTLER and COOKE serv'd with CHARD that was *beat*.

The ballad also appears in a later anthology with the following comment:

As regards this ingenious and not particularly poetical series of verses — which at once recalls Homer's list of ships — the allusions and puns will be readily understood by those who are intimate with the annals of English printing. To those who may not happen to be so familiar, it should be pointed out that the apparently obscure allusions have reference to the mottoes and devices employed by the printers mentioned, e.g. "Arise, it is Day," was the motto used by John Day. — Ed.¹⁸¹

The ballad, highlighted by the dedication, is a mild satire on the Club's dedication to the early printers, laughing at their shared foibles through its litany of the names of those who made up the pantheon of their printing gods, knowing that those names and terms would be instantly recognisable to members of the Roxburghe, and indeed to any bibliophile of that period.

In 1817 James Boswell made his second presentation to the Club called *A Roxburghe Garland*.¹⁸² This small volume contained a number of extracts from other poems as well as the following verses, written by Boswell himself.¹⁸³ It is amusing enough to deserve quoting in full:

L'Envoy

To Boccaccio in Heaven, as he chatted one day
With Chaucer and Caxton, and two or three more,
The news of our Meeting went up, as they say,
And it set the Celestial Bard in a roar:

¹⁸¹ *Book-verse; an anthology of poems of books and bookmen from the earliest times to recent years* ed. by William Roberts (London: Elliot Stock, 1896), 176 – 181 (p. 176).

¹⁸² James Boswell, *A Roxburghe Garland*, (London: Bensley, 1817).

¹⁸³ According to Dibdin the pieces are taken from *A pleasant pint of poetical sherry*, from Pasquin's *Palinodia* (1634) and *Coronation of Canary*, from Jordan's *Fancy Festivals*. See Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 390.

Says he, "Well I ween
When these fellows convene.
My laurels look fresher, more lively their green;
So myself from this hour, I exultingly dub,
The Patron and Friend of the Roxburghe Club.

But since they of me as their origin boast,
I shall storm, like King ' Herode,' as drawn by Jhan Parfre,
Unless, as their first Anniversary toast.
They drink in a bumper, my printer Valdarfer";
Quoth Wynken de Worde: "Twill be vastly absurd.
Unless Caxton's their second, and I am their third;

Then the whole will go smoothly, unchecked by a rub,
And we all shall be pleased at the Roxburghe Club."
Let the poor plodding pedant our revels despise.
Who would cover his dullness with gravity's cloak:
Cui bono? What brings them together? he cries —
Why to eat, and to drink, and to laugh, and to joke:

With the joys of old wine
From France or the Rhine,
Old friends, and old books, at our wassail combine;
While the butterfly fop, and the miserly grub,
Are excluded alike from the Roxburghe Club.
That our social enjoyment of rational mirth
Is an evening well spent, e'en a cynic might own;
If Diogenes' self could revisit the earth,

He would soften his manners and alter his tone:
Alexander the Great
He contemned, and his State;
But on D * * * * I'm sure he would civilly wait;
And beg that he'd try to make room for his Tub,
As he longed for a frisk with the Roxburghe Club.

But it is not alone, that good-humour'd and hearty.
Mirth's Goddess admits us to join in her crew;
That we shine, both distinguished Mercurio et Marte,
To our Chief and our Founder the honour is due:

Old Spencer, a name
That for ever shall claim
The loftiest place in the Temple of Fame;
And Marlborough, who France could, like Wellington, drub,
Are emblazoned at once in the RoxBURGHE Club.

From your humble servant,
June 17, 1817. A Member.'

This self-confident, amiable paean to the Roxburghe Club is willing to make light of any criticism of their dinners and to celebrate unashamedly both their literary pursuits and their revelry in equal measure. This ballad was later included in a Victorian anthology under the title ‘To Boccaccio in Heaven (A Parody)’, although with several errors and misattributed to James’ brother Alexander Boswell who had been responsible for printing the book at his Auchinleck Press.¹⁸⁴

1.7 THE ROXBURGHE CLUB AND THE POLITICS OF CLASS

Unfortunately, the Roxburghe Club, its publications, and its place in the world of literature is a subject whose outlines frequently become hazy and unreliable because it is almost invariably viewed through the lens of class politics or at least what could be described as a heightened class awareness. It is difficult to find any reference to the Club that does not, at least in passing, refer to its ‘aristocratic’ membership, even in contexts in which the make-up of its membership is entirely irrelevant to the subject. The idea of British class division, with its connotations of breeding, education and bloodline, does not simply mark out a social demographic but creates a preconception, or ideal, of aristocracy and its imagined relationship and responsibilities towards society, other social classes and especially to activities that relate to culture and intellect. As will be discussed in the section ‘Money, Politics, Religion’, there was, in actuality, a vast range of affluence, political persuasion and religion represented within the ranks of the club, all of which factors may have a greater influence on

¹⁸⁴ Roberts, *Book-verse*, pp. 138 – 140.

the pursuit of cultural objectives than class alone, but none of which (with the possible and partial exception of money) have been so uniformly referenced in discussions on the Club's activities.

It is interesting to note that comments referring to a perceived class disparity between the founding members of the Club have come entirely from outside its ranks, except on the occasions when Dibdin felt stung into remonstrance. It is difficult to ascertain what feelings the members may have held on the matter, as published sources have little to say on the topic, and in private there may have been as many opinions as there were members. If so, it did not provoke any reaction that reached print and it did not apparently result in members resigning their place in the club. Through its early history there were few resignations and those occurred due to ill health, advanced age and the difficulties of travel in the early nineteenth century. It should also be noted that if any single man had objected to the election of another, that opposition would have been sufficient to prevent it occurring through the use of the 'black ball'.

Initially among contemporary commentators there can often be seen tacit approval of the perceived aristocratic sophistication, education, and breeding of the Club members, which makes the foundation and activities of the club newsworthy. Letters to the *Gentleman's Magazine* discuss the activities of the club, using phrases full of assumptions that class delineations are important as a context to their actions. In one such letter the writer asserts that 'the example of men of such distinction as the Roxburghe Club, certainly affords a precedent of

no little weight'.¹⁸⁵ In a reply to his letter, his correspondent refers to 'the revival of a literary taste amongst those who have spacious palaces in which to deposit such ornamental entertaining and intellectual furniture' and later the same writer refers to 'the introduction of Literature amongst the amusements of the higher ranks of Society', and yet more precisely 'the revenues of Noblemen and Gentlemen of liberal mind and literary taste'.¹⁸⁶ If we view the aristocracy and gentry of the early nineteenth century as the focus of early nineteenth-century celebrity culture, then the founding of a book club by a number of high profile bibliomaniacs fits easily into the context of the respectful coverage of the fashionable activities of famous people. Bibliomania is at the height of its notoriety, the high prices paid at the Roxburghe Sale, not just for the Valdarfer Boccaccio but for many of the other books as well, are a talking point and the formation of the club provides more column inches of domestic news, or arts and society news, for the periodicals to recycle.

Soon disapproval appears in letters submitted to the periodicals, complaining that the club is failing to promote literature in ways considered appropriate, implying that the members carry the weight of 'noblesse oblige', equally in the realm of books as in other activities, where their social status must incur heavy responsibility. It is not morally sufficient to be following their own interests; they must set an example to those below them (primarily those immediately below them in social terms and therefore more anxious to emulate them), and preferably provide the means by which those less financially and socially privileged might be enabled to aspire to the same pastimes and interests:

¹⁸⁵ J.M., Letter, *Gentleman's Magazine*, (1813: Sept), p. 212.

¹⁸⁶ A.C., Letter, *Gentleman's Magazine*, (1813: Oct), p. 338-9.

The noble members of the Roxburghe Club are setting a most meritorious example to the world; they have done, and are doing, all that can be wished of them.¹⁸⁷

A letter printed in 1816 raises a note of middle-class alarm at the notion that the upper classes, in the guise of the Roxburghe Club - the writer obviously unaware of or ignoring its middle-class membership - might be using limited edition printing as a way of excluding the middle class from their sphere, complaining:

This mode of printing and publishing will gradually throw a monopoly of the means of instruction into the hands of the wealthy, depriving the middling class of society of their proportion of knowledge by the difficulty of procuring it.¹⁸⁸

Comments gradually appeared questioning the propriety of the Club and its activities, including a slightly puritanical letter written to the *Morning Herald* in 1818 criticising Dibdin for his attendance at a dinner in Paris. It was not just aristocrats who were expected to fulfil a moral role: clergymen, with perhaps more justification, were also expected to set an example and the correspondent writes:

It appears that this dinner was given by an English Clergyman. It may be thought that Clergyman might employ himself better in his own country, than in promoting a convivial festival in the most licentious capital of Europe. This by the way. This Clergyman, as might be expected, acted as the President of the feast [...] an honour, if an honour, which he certainly deserved, as it was at his own expense. Of course, he cannot be a poor curate.

The writer goes on to criticise the toasts given at the dinner (these being the usual toasts given at the Roxburghe Club dinners) saying:

Let me, then, ask all friends of morality and religion, whether it was commonly decent, not to say unsuitable, to use the mildest term, to the character of an English Clergyman, to toast the memory of a man [Valdarfer] because he was the first printer of a work that, instead of being held valuable, ought never to have seen the light, because its obscenity far over-balances any humour which it may contain? [...] I respect the

¹⁸⁷ 'A Staunch Bibliomaniac', Letter, *Gentleman's Magazine*, (1813), p. 339.

¹⁸⁸ E.Evans, 'To the Editor of the Monthly Magazine', *Monthly Magazine, or British Register*, 42 (1816: Sept), pp. 115-118.

character of Earl Spencer too much, not to sympathise with him in the regret which he must feel, in standing next, in a silly revel, to a licentious Printer [...] There is no necessity to say, common sense sufficiently points out the laudable purposes to which [the Club] might have been directed, if instead of being devoted to antiquated obscenity, it had been employed in patronizing genius.¹⁸⁹

In this letter appear several assumptions regarding the social positions of Club members: there is the assumption that a clergyman should have no place at a social occasion in Paris, and that his being there automatically means that he is ‘no poor curate’, although Dibdin was far from being in the position of the wealthy cleric. He was in fact often in financial difficulties, in large part, it must be allowed, due to his expensive book-collecting and printing habits. Another assumption is that Earl Spencer, being of such moral standing, must object to his name being associated with printers of ancient immoral works, although the writer does not indicate what he supposes Earl Spencer might be doing at the ‘silly revels’ if he feels such regret.

Criticisms of this kind, equating social standing with moral probity, eventually coalesce to take the form of simple, overt snobbery, quite distinct from any implied context of morality, which materialises in the *Roxburghe Revels* article, and which is not only directed at the inclusion of Haslewood and Dibdin but also in the suggestion that Haslewood was attempting to bring other perceived undesirables into the Club, such as ‘Mr. Bliss, the son of a bookseller at Oxford’.¹⁹⁰ This carries an implication that Haslewood’s class might further seek to infect the Club, propagating itself like a virus through the healthy body of aristocratic Club life. It is left to Dibdin to point out that:

¹⁸⁹ John Bull, Letter printed in the *Morning Herald*, (25th September, 1818), excerpt contained in ‘The Roxburghe Revels’ MS. in the Roxburghe Club Archives.

¹⁹⁰ ‘The Roxburghe Revels’, MS., *Athenaeum* (1834: Jan 4), p. 5.

The application was made to the Rev. Philip Bliss of St. John's College, and now Dr. Bliss, Registrar of the University of Oxford. The father of Dr. Bliss was a Clergyman, and not a bookseller. But what if he had been? The late Rev. Peter Elmsly, Principle of St. Alban's Hall, was the nephew of a bookseller of that name in the Strand: and when did Oxford boast a more perfect ATTIC-GREEK SCHOLAR than that excellent man?¹⁹¹

Here Dibdin answers the accusers by meeting the snobbery head-on, pointing out that social standing (and again that apparently dangerous proximity to commercial life) is no indication of knowledge or enthusiasm, and although it is impossible to say whether this would have been a unanimous opinion, this is probably as close as it is possible to get to the views of the members on the question of class and its significance within the world of the Club's activities, that is. that class was a secondary concern to the love and knowledge of books. This may be a point that Dibdin felt personally, as E.J. O'Dwyer comments: 'there could have been few among the aristocratic or wealthy professional men who made up the Roxburghe Club who would have accepted Dibdin if he had not possessed solid qualities beneath his ebullience'.¹⁹² Dibdin possessed the perceived correct minimum grade of social class, being solidly middle class, but in his flamboyance and excitability lacked the required characteristics of understated reticence that marked a gentleman. Without the shared arena of books he would have been unlikely to move so easily in the aristocratic circles he obviously enjoyed, so he was both damned and simultaneously saved socially, by his love of bibliography.

The issue of professional knowledge and its value in social terms leads into another facet of the class issue, which is that among critics there is often an

¹⁹¹ Dibdin, *Roxburghe Revels and Related Papers*, p. 82.

¹⁹² E.J. O'Dwyer, *Thomas Frognall Dibdin: Bibliographer & Bibliomaniac Extraordinary 1776 – 1847* (London: Private Libraries Association, 1967), p. 21.

unspoken belief that, because the Club is perceived as containing a high percentage of aristocrats, it must therefore be superficial, lacking in taste, bereft of learning and composed of dilettantes. There would often appear to be an assumption that wealth and learning, or even a genuine enthusiasm for intellectual matters, are incompatible. Overall the effect of this hyper-sensitivity to the class issues surrounding the Club, from whatever source, is negative.

The Roxburghe club at this time was certainly and unashamedly elitist and in fact the often quoted opinion stated that it was ‘easier to get into the Peerage or the Privy Council than into The Roxburghe’.¹⁹³ This exclusivity did not, however, necessarily adhere to typical class boundaries as closely as would perhaps be supposed and it would be a mistake to conflate ‘elitist’ with ‘aristocratic’. As Steeves writes ‘the club prided itself upon exclusiveness, but an exclusiveness which belonged to the nature of its hobby, rather than to aristocratic preferences’.¹⁹⁴ While undoubtedly a significant percentage of the Club were members of the aristocracy, a far larger number adhered to the more stereotypical picture of a bibliophile: lawyers, schoolmasters and clergymen, in other words, those men who would have developed a love of books during their university education and continued to come into daily contact with books in their career. It appears that the aristocratic members exerted a weight upon the popular imagination (and possibly on their own Club mythology as well) that was not reflected by their actual numbers in the club. Out of the eighteen men present at the original dinner (those who could therefore be considered to be the

¹⁹³ Also expressed in the anonymous observation that ‘The Roxburghe Club is limited in number to 31 members and one black ball is fatal to the candidate who offers himself upon a vacancy; so that a Directorship of the India Board, or of the Bank of England, will henceforth be a position of comparative insignificance.’ A Letter by ‘Templarius’, *Gentleman's magazine* (Jul 1813), pp 3-4.

¹⁹⁴ Steeves, *Learned Societies*, p. 102.

founding members) only two were peers and a further two baronets. A baronet is technically classed as a commoner and therefore not strictly a member of the aristocracy.¹⁹⁵ At that dinner they ‘co-opted’ a further six members, of whom three were peers. By the first anniversary dinner, when the Club was increased to number thirty-one members, it contained seven hereditary titles if Egerton Brydges is counted, an eccentric whose right to any title at all was a matter of dispute.¹⁹⁶ Only five of these titled men were nobles. Aristocratic members were a definite minority, equalled in the club by clergymen and far outnumbered by practitioners of law and MPs. The tendency to give extra weight to the number of club members who can be classed as aristocratic has perhaps led to a greater percentage of titled members joining since the early days, and in 1929 Harold Williams pointed out that ‘[the club’s] membership list is still narrowly closed, and is more definitely aristocratic in personnel to-day than in its earlier years’.¹⁹⁷

It is easy to understand why the issues of class carried such importance in the early nineteenth century, when some Romantics (including Walter Scott), considered the feudal past to be recent enough to be considered both possible, and desirable, as a political pattern for the future. More prosaically, wealth, authority, education and class had been intrinsically entwined until the industrial revolution, and society would take some time to accept the changing face of affluence and increasing social mobility. The idea that a commoner, even one

¹⁹⁵ Aristocrats hold hereditary titles and are entitled to sit in the Lords. Baronets are a form of hereditary knighthood and are not allowed to sit in the House of Lords. See Debrett’s *Essential Guide to the Peerage* <<http://www.debretts.com/people/essential-guide-peerage/what-peerage>>

¹⁹⁶ He had attempted to claim the Barony of Chandos although it appears that he had little or no connection to the family that had previously held the title, but in fact descended from an entirely different family of the same name but less social standing. Eventually, after a long period of humiliating failure he was created a baronet in his own right in 1814. See K. A. Manley, ‘Samuel Egerton Brydges’, *ODNB*.

¹⁹⁷ Harold Williams, *Book Clubs and Printing Societies* (London: The First Edition Club, 1929), p.27.

with the considerable financial means and expert knowledge required to amass a collection of expensive rare books, should be able to fraternise with members of the aristocracy and gentry on equal terms, on the basis of a shared passion for books must have seemed daring.¹⁹⁸ It might have even appeared deliberately perverse, coming as it did, on the heels of the French Revolution and at a time when the British were uneasy and distrustful of social change and the potential for civil disruption. The overtly elitist nature of the club must have made this oddity appear even more impressive as inevitably many men, who considered themselves to be eminently socially suited to belong to the Club, may have been black-balled in favour of a socially inferior but bibliophilically more committed postulant. Ironically, what would, from a modern perspective, appear to be a bastion of the social hierarchy, might to contemporaries of its early years, have appeared to be a frighteningly radical and egalitarian group. The group's political makeup, covered in detail in the next section, may have only added to this unease. To members it may have seemed obvious that a commoner with the right sort of bibliophilic obsession and knowledge should take precedence over one who possessed all the social prerequisites, but lacked the necessary depth of passion. To the layman the Roxburghe Club appeared to be the literary equivalent of the 'Four-in-hand-club', those wild young aristocrats who gathered to use the working-class vernacular, dress in stable uniform and who delighted in bribing public coachmen into letting them drive the coaches.¹⁹⁹ In the case of the

¹⁹⁸ Kristian Jenson notes this social unease between the custodians of hereditary collections and active book-collectors, and relates that Earl of Pembroke was reluctant to lend Earl Spencer a book, demanding that 'Spencer kept the book well away from the disreputable company which he kept: 'your fraternity of book collectors or their associates'.' *Revolution and the Antiquarian Book*, p. 123.

¹⁹⁹ Charles J. Rzepka, *Selected Studies in Romantic and American Literature, History and Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 62-63.

A correspondent in 1816 makes a direct comparison between the Roxburghe Club and the Four-in-Hand or Whip Club saying 'that these thirty-one noblemen and gentlemen have an undoubted

Roxburghe Club we have aristocrats descending to the level of book-dealers and penurious scholars. A review of Dibdin's *Library companion* in the *Quarterly review* of June 1825 is critical of his use of 'booksellers' slang' and contemptuous of what is described as his willingness to 'lower himself into a walking puff for booksellers and book-collectors, engravers and auctioneers'.²⁰⁰ He was presumably perceived to be associating himself too closely with the perceived sordidness of mercantile life and, interestingly, some spheres of the publishing world itself were also attempting to distance themselves at this time from association with other forms of selling. As one account states:

At No.15, back of St. Clement's, Strand, "The British Press" and "The Globe" first made their public appearance in 1803, "with new and high pretensions," and were ostensibly started by, and intended to promote the views and trading speculations of, the publishing booksellers. These had justly complained of the capricious charges made by the Newspaper proprietors for advertisements, and also for the heedless manner in which notices of fine and expensive literary publications were associated with vile and disgusting quack puffs.²⁰¹

Here we see a desire to distinguish books from other types of merchandise, preferring perhaps to emphasise their connection with learning and the arts, and to escape from an association with the interests of other tradesmen. Obviously, from the point of view of the upper classes, trade was trade and no such distinctions were being made and Dibdin was perhaps seen by many of his contemporaries as displaying a dangerous propensity for ignoring the boundaries between gentlemen and tradesmen. He certainly was not wealthy enough to

right so to employ themselves, can be no question: that their eccentric companions, the members of the Whip Club, have an equal right to spend their money in horses and equipage, is equally indisputable.' E.Evans, 'To the Editor of the Monthly Magazine', *Monthly Magazine, or British Register*, 42 288 (1816 Sept), p. 115-8.

²⁰⁰ 'The Library Companion; or, the Young Man's Guide, and the Old Man's Comfort, in the Choice of a Library', *Quarterly Review*, 32:63 (1825:June), p.152.

²⁰¹Dr. Thomas Rees, John Britton, *Reminiscences of Literary London, from 1779 to 1853* (London: Suckling & Galloway, 1896) Rep. (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1974), p. 135.

support his book collecting habit without financial strain, which may have also led him to be open to suspicion: perceived as not wealthy enough for the company he kept and the interests he followed, and therefore almost certainly having financial interests in book dealing himself. It would also be a mistake to discount the possibility of simple envy, inhabiting as he did, a high-profile circle of well-connected men.

These class-based judgements could only later become more pronounced as the people who actually knew the early members gave way to the later Victorian critics, who wrote from a position of strong morals and sometimes social conscience, but little or no personal experience of the early club or its activities. Society had arguably become more rigidly conformist, less forgiving of eccentricity, leading to a number of censorious pronouncements in this later period against the club's prime movers. A common theme running through many of these views is of the early days as a disastrous, adolescent stage out of which it eventually matured into the valuable publisher it later became. It appears in this later period as a club which would guard carefully guard its social boundaries more carefully, less ready perhaps to accept as members people such as Haslewood or Dibdin (or at least the flawed picture of those two men's characters as penned by the *Athenaeum*).

A writer such as John Hill Burton does all the early members of the Club a disservice when writing:

The club thus abruptly formed, consisted of affluent collectors, some of them noble, with a sprinkling of zealous practical men, who assisted them in their great purchases, while doing minor strokes of business for themselves. These, who in some measure fed on the crumbs that fell from

the master's table, were in a position rather too closely resembling the professionals in a hunt or cricket club'.²⁰²

While neatly encapsulating the social make-up of the club this exhibits an unsubstantiated willingness to believe that relationships between the wealthy members and those with less secure finances could only have been those of master and servant rather than of fellow enthusiasts. Simultaneously, of course, there appears the all too ready assumption that the aristocratic collectors could not function in the world of collecting without the assistance of 'professionals'. Dibdin in his *Reminiscences* of 1836 had already been stung enough by similar accusations, in the *Roxburghe Revels* article and its aftermath, to declare that his accuser 'may as well be informed that I am not the Secretary – that I receive no emolument – that the office of Vice-president is one of no trouble and no indignity'.²⁰³ In the specific case of the relationship between Lord Spencer and Dibdin, the latter did act as an agent for the Earl but it is unclear how far he was employed to do so or whether it was a more complex matter of common interests, friendship and some degree of patronage of a less immediately monetary type. Dibdin certainly gained in career terms from the connection and later occupied a living at St. Mary, Bryanstone Square obtained for him by Spencer in 1823.²⁰⁴ Haslewood, a partner in his Uncle's legal firm, later inheriting the business, was also not reliant on the income made from his literary pursuits, though it no doubt helped to finance his book-collecting habit. He carried out paid literary services for people both within the club and without, but that would not appear to be the basis for his membership. Rather his friendship

²⁰² Burton, p. 245.

²⁰³ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, p. 429.

²⁰⁴ William Younger Fletcher, *English Book Collectors*, (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1902), p. 311.

with Dibdin, acquaintance with a number of the other founder members, and reputation as an editor of antiquarian literature appear to have led to his inclusion at the initial dinner. There is little indication that any other members carried out any paid services for peers within the club.

Other Victorian writers appear to have taken their cue from Hill Burton's book and more directly from the *Athenaeum*. William Roberts echoes the casual snobbery of many writers when he says that 'the Roxburghe Club might have sustained its raison d'être, if it had drawn the line at such men as Thomas Frognall Dibdin and Joseph Hazlewood [sic].²⁰⁵ Probably the most viciously class-based essay about the club published during this period, is one written by Francis Hitchman in 1881.²⁰⁶ It is also, incidentally, the most blithely inaccurate of the accounts written at this time: among its numerous errors it states that Earl Spencer was the winning bidder for the *Decameron* at the Roxburghe sale and confidently assures the reader that the Roxburghe Club ceased to exist in 1831. The essay's greater part is expended on a far from unbiased biography of Dibdin, making no attempt to disguise the author's feelings on Dibdin's style:

Dibdin is one of the worst of writers. He cannot even spell correctly - unless, indeed, his printers were more stupid than printers generally are - and his style is painfully pompous, stilted, and lumbering. His jokes are incessant, and remind the reader of nothing so much as of the gambols of an infantile elephant.²⁰⁷

The essay continues in this strain, implying that Dibdin's literary and social success rested primarily on willingness to flatter:

Relating in one book the genesis of a not particularly interesting passage of another, he tells how he read to one of his patrons the character which he

²⁰⁵ William Roberts, *The Book-Hunter in London*, (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1895), p. 63.

²⁰⁶ Francis Hitchman, 'Mr. Dibdin and the Roxburghe Club', *Eighteenth Century Studies: Essays* (London: S Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1881), pp. 273 – 303.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 273.

had given of him under an assumed name. The picture which is thus presented is not altogether an agreeable one, though a cynic might find a malicious pleasure in the spectacle of an elderly gentleman purring with self-satisfaction, whilst the "illustrious bibliographer " read to him four pages of egregious flattery.

It is in this scene, however, that the clue to Dr. Dibdin's popularity and reputation may be found. He was the head and chief of a great mutual admiration society. He flattered a number of influential and titled personages in the fashion which they found most agreeable, and they repaid his adulation by subscribing largely for the volumes in which it was enshrined, and by even more solid proofs of their gratification²⁰⁸

Continuing with its theme of social inequality inevitably leading to literary inadequacy the essay predictably (taking its cue from the *Athenaeum* article) moves on to another attack on the memory of Joseph Haslewood:

Unfortunately for its reputation the Club numbered amongst its members a certain Joseph Haslewood, who wrote, for his own diversion, a chronicle of its proceedings. This Haslewood was a person of extremely humble origin - according to Dibdin, he was born in the lying-in-hospital in Brownlow Street - and his education corresponded with his birth. By a series of accidents, he was brought into the clique which afterwards formed the Roxburghe Club, and when it was founded he was admitted to it, and entrusted with the editorship of some of its publications, though he was one of the most ignorant men in existence.²⁰⁹

These themes are familiar from the Roxburghe Revels article but Hitchman now goes on to give them a new twist, presenting the other members as being somehow held to ransom by Dibdin and Haslewood:

It was not until Dibdin ceased to be its principal member, and Haslewood its editor, that a better state of things came about. Remonstrance, mockery, and severe criticism, however, at last did their work, and, in 1827, the Roxburghe Club, much to their credit, emancipated themselves from the absurd tyranny under which they had until that time existed. To Haslewood's immense disgust he was deposed from the post of editor, for which he had not one solitary qualification; and Sir Frederick Madden having been taken into council, the metrical romance of " Havelok the Dane " was published under his care.²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 274.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 288.

²¹⁰ Ibid., p. 296.

Here there is no pretence of seeing Dibdin and Haslewood as equal members of the Roxburghe, but rather they are viewed as aberrations, commoners who should not have been admitted and who prevented the Club from exhibiting the taste and judgement that could have otherwise been expected from men of social standing. This is interesting as a relatively rare example of a later critic who views the aristocratic members of the Club as superior in their taste and abilities because of their class. Fairly certainly, founder members of the Roxburghe Club did not view Dibdin or Haslewood in that light, but the Club appears to have later been swayed to some extent by the negative received opinions of commentators. The Club history, published in 1928, dismisses Haslewood as:

An interesting but mysterious character, a friend of Dibdin's and not unlike him in his affection for birth, books and banquets and in his lack of scholarship. He had been the Club's earliest chronicler and the loss of his papers deprived it of some interesting records.²¹¹

Modern scholarship that mentions the Roxburghe has often accepted the legacy of earlier criticism without questioning the validity of the original sources and allowed a further simplified, if more entertaining, class-distorted narrative to dominate. This has taken several forms, each with its own angle on supposed class issues as causes of disruption and scandal. Modern scholars, generally, incline to see aristocratic origins as synonymous with dilettantish ineptitude, characterising the Club's early work. There is also often, surprisingly, a moral tone to modern commentary that echoes the censoriousness of the Club's Victorian critics. Erroneous connections are made between lavish dining and lack of serious purpose. An example appears in David Matthews' *The Making of Middle English*:

²¹¹ Clive Biggam, *The Roxburghe Club: Its history and its Members 1812 – 1927* (Oxford: Printed for the Roxburghe Club at the OUP, 1928), p. 8.

It was two years before Surrey's *Certaine Bokes of Virgiles Aenaeis*, turned into English Meter was presented to the club as its first fruit, an accurate indicator that for many members it was the annual dinner that was the real business of membership. Some of them never produced their editions, while at one dinner, fifteen Roxburghers ate fifty pounds of turtle and two haunches of venison at a cost of £85.²¹²

Reminiscent of the tone of the *Roxburghe Revels* article, this makes an unsubstantiated connection between a perceived lack of literary production and the extravagant club dinners, while making a covert reference to class in its references to turtle and 'haunches of venison', foods that carry unmistakable overtones of class privilege. In fact, the Club contributions were intended to be produced by the members alphabetically by surname: Bolland would print his contribution first and until then nobody else would be required to present (although in subsequent years more than one contribution was made annually and the alphabetical ordering seemingly ceased to be observed). The decision to each print a volume came at the first anniversary dinner, that is, June 1813, so Bolland's volume was produced during the following year for presentation at the dinner of 1814.²¹³ And in fact only one member of the original thirty-one did not present a volume: Thomas Heber who died in 1816, presumably before his alphabetical turn came around. Some members produced more than one volume during the term of their membership. David Matthews' argument appears to make assumptions about aristocratic ineffectuality, ignoring the facts underlying the rate of publication. It is, of course, easy to make such a mistake because so many sources of information about the early days of the Club are incorrect, a problem this thesis seeks to rectify.

²¹² Matthews, p. 86.

²¹³ Haslewood, 'Roxburghe Revels' MS.

Siân Echard is a modern commentator who has made interesting and thought-provoking references to the early Roxburghe methods of publishing, yet assumptions about aristocratic influences overshadow some arguments in her *Printing the Middle Ages*.²¹⁴ Echard looks closely at the history of the Trentham Manuscript and its presentation as an edition to the Club by Leveson-Gower in 1818 as *Balades and Other Poems*. Echard sees that dual claims were made about the literary heritage of early English authors: intellectual and genealogical, arguing that the latter prevail in early Roxburghe reprints, especially in the printing of the John Gower miscellany. She writes:

That the Leveson-Gowers could persist in their view of the relationship, and that Todd could thus encourage them in it suggests wilful ignorance, since by 1810 it was certainly clear that Gower was not correctly to be linked to the Yorkshire Gowers.²¹⁵

And later:

The exclusiveness of the Club's behaviour is in keeping with the kind of self-interested aristocratic antiquarianism traced, through the Leveson-Gowers, in this chapter; the club certainly offered Lord Gower a gratifying venue for the promotion of his own family history. The Trentham manuscript, under other circumstances, might have languished in obscurity – too unprofitable for popular republication, too French to be of interest to the growing world of Middle English literary scholars, too small and plain to be much of a collector's item – but it was admirably suited to be Earl Gower's presentation to the Club.²¹⁶

This view of self-interested 'aristocratic' publishing is worth further examination for some of the underlying suppositions. In the above extracts, Echard assumes that Earl Gower's reasons for his edition are primarily those of genealogy and his (misapprehension of his family's) descent from Gower the fourteenth-century poet, despite widespread awareness by that time that there was little or no

²¹⁴ Siân Echard, *Printing the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008)

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

connection. Although Leveson-Gower may have been stubbornly claiming that connection, there is little evidence for that and given the long history of book-collecting in the Leveson-Gower family it would be equally fair to assume that Leveson-Gower may have printed the manuscript because he believed it to be an important, rare, and neglected example of an author who deserved recognition as a major medieval poet. Being lucky enough to be its custodian perhaps he saw a good opportunity to safeguard the miscellany's future appreciation. Echard's argument is circular; the Yorkshire Gower family was after all a very old and wealthy family, who could easily make their case for their aristocratic status without recourse to a familial connection to a neglected medieval poet. If Earl Gower, and indeed his ancestors, had been keen to prove their connections and antiquity through the works of a poet, would not that itself show the family put high value on literary heritage and on Gower's poetry in particular?

Of the club, Echard writes:

It is important, given the story of the Trentham Manuscript, that this club had two kinds of members, hereditary aristocrats who passed their seats to their sons and held the highest club positions, and gentlemen collectors and antiquarians.²¹⁷

This again ignores the likelihood that, besides the obvious possibility of nepotism, there is a good reason for a Club seat to be passed to an aristocratic book-collector's son, namely, that many of the great aristocratic book *collections* were passed down from father to son with the title, and that Club membership was at least as much connected to the collection as the title. Many of the great collections were family affairs rather than the work of any individual.

²¹⁷ Echard, p. 117.

Another way in which a class demographic has been considered relevant to the Roxburghe Club's literary activities and as narrowing their significance, is exemplified in Philip Connell's *Bibliomania: Book Collecting, Cultural Politics, and the Rise of Literary Heritage in Romantic Britain*.²¹⁸ Here, Dibdin, and by association the Roxburghe are presented as evidence for the bibliomaniac as a cultural force for the promulgation of conservative values and the dissemination of aristocratic ways of addressing literature. Connell argues this contrasts with other contemporary writers including D'Israeli, whom he represents as believing that, 'if collectors such as Lord Spencer helped to preserve learning, then they did so almost in spite of themselves'.²¹⁹ Again his argument reveals the presumption that the aristocratic collector is a man who possesses money and the desire for books, but who lacks the necessary taste or knowledge to use these assets in any useful way. Connell adds to the prejudice by ascribing a form of influence to aristocratic collectors, crediting them with an agenda of cultural engineering:

The acquisitive mania of the wealthiest aristocratic collectors can be seen to have represented something more than dilettantism or self-aggrandizement: The bibliomania symbolised an attempt to promote the participation of distinctively aristocratic cultural practices within a broader emergent idea of the literary past as a collective national heritage.²²⁰

Again we see the assumption that an aristocratic collector must have, by the very nature of his class, a different motive to the academic, or even to a man of a different class, in his desire to possess or publish old books. The choice of motivations is apparently fixed inflexibly at cultural appropriation, shallow

²¹⁸ Philip Connell, 'Bibliomania: Book Collecting, Cultural Politics, and the Rise of Literary Heritage in Romantic Britain', *Representations*, 71 (2000), pp. 24 – 47.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

trifling with fashionable pastimes or the acquisition of status-symbol volumes: individual personality, higher motivation or knowledge have no place here. Jon Klancher, accepting Connell's overall argument about aristocratic influences, points out that even among political conservatives differences of opinion belied any class homogeneity in motivations:

Following Linda Colley's account of British nation-building, Connell makes a compelling case for the national impact of the Bibliomania as a cultural display of empire's cultural wealth after its fame crested with the Roxburghe auction of 1812: 'the bibliomania symbolised an attempt to promote the participation of distinctively aristocratic cultural practices within a broader emergent idea of the literary past as a collective national heritage.'(p.28) But he misses the battle among Tories themselves about the politics of the bibliomania and its relation to the wider bibliographical project.²²¹

Klancher suggests that, in addition to the conservative, Burkean, agenda discerned by Connell, Bibliomania was also motivated by an emotional excitement about the early modern period and to a dimly-felt sense that it provided an intriguing 'other' to modernity as it was proclaiming itself in the early nineteenth century:

Like Hone's *Mysteries*, black-letter readers turned their intensive attention not to the old quarrel between Ancients and Moderns, but rather in an often emotional way, to the *early* modern and its still-obscure relation to the appearances of modernity at the start of the nineteenth century. This is why it would be inadequate to identify the wild bibliography of the Romantic age, as Philip Connell does, with an aristocratic or Burkean conservatism alone.²²²

Overall critics view the Roxburghe Club primarily through the prism of the particular class stereotype they expect to find, without investigation of its actual make-up. It is seen as a homogenous group and as predominantly aristocratic in demographic, and as characterised by wealth, political bias and social or moral conscience that are held to be typical in some way of such a group. The next

²²¹ Jon Klancher, 'Wild Bibliography'; p. 38.

²²² *Ibid.*, p. 31.

section will investigate the actual make up of the early Club and the political and religious views of the members themselves to evaluate to what extent the Club has been misrepresented and whether any political or religious biases can indeed be discerned in its early composition.

AN ALTERNATIVE NARRATIVE

2.1 POLITICS, RELIGION, MONEY

Since the Roxburghe Club has always, and continues to be, viewed through a filter of class expectations, there exists an assumption that the activities of the club will have been strongly affected, whether in a positive or negative way, by the perceived aristocratic demographic of its members. This way of looking at the club, apart from its assumptions regarding the class most represented by the membership, also makes sweeping generalisations about the political, financial and religious affiliations of such a membership. There is an inclination towards representing the interests of such a group as being a public demonstration of the homogenous interests relevant to the rich, powerful and self-serving, displaying a vested interest in upholding the status quo and espousing conservative political and religious values. To date the political opinions and activities of the early Roxburghe Club members have been neglected, so in this section I will look at the political, religious and (to a small degree) financial positions of the early membership of the club and evaluate to what extent the results match the assumptions that have been made about this subject.

Far from being the homogenous group assumed by many critics the men who made up the early Roxburghe Club represented a spectrum, with a bewilderingly complex range of belief and opinion. It may be true to say, for instance, that all the members were comparatively wealthy; they obviously had to be to collect rare books, but the differences in wealth between the richest among them such as the Duke of Devonshire and the least wealthy such as Dibdin or Haslewood was vast. One might state too that they were all establishment figures, but they ranged from the ultra conservative, almost rabidly anti-radical, political activist such as George Watson Taylor or Alexander Boswell through to the somewhat radical Arch Deacon Wrangham. In terms of religion many were clerics, and of these some were high church, some evangelical but in character with the time, none were publically atheist. In Michael Edward Robinson's words, 'as Dibdin and his club of collectors illustrate, bibliomania lay astride more than one active social fault-line in early nineteenth-century Britain'.²²³ Among those fault-lines lie issues of relative affluence, individual viewpoints on the big political concerns of the day including radicalism and reform, and questions of religious conviction (and of possible social upheaval linked to religious freedom of expression), especially the thorny topical issue of Catholic emancipation.

The political opinions and, in most cases, activities, of the earliest Roxburghe Club members are striking. Of the first thirty-one, ten were at some point in their life an MP. The majority of the aristocratic members were MPs in the Commons until the subsequent succession to their title pushed them into the Lords, and a

²²³ Michael Edward Robinson, *Ornamental Gentlemen: Literary Curiosities and Queer Romanticisms* (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Southern California, 2010), p. 64.

number of the landed gentry held a seat at some time. Of the twenty-one not formally involved in Parliamentary politics, most were either clergymen or practised law, and of course not being officially Parliamentarian does not imply absence of political opinions. A number of the members held positions that could be interpreted as politically active outside of Parliament, such as Francis Freeling who, while Secretary of the Post Office, was accused by William Cobbett of acting to suppress the circulation of Cobbett's series of radical political pamphlets the *Porcupine*.²²⁴ Freeling denied the accusations but was also speculated to have been instrumental in founding or overseeing a government financed newspaper, the *Sun*, published with the intention of counteracting public subversion.²²⁵ Freeling used his position to make very effective inroads into the political controversies of the day and their promotion in publications. G. B. Smith sees his use of his office for political influence as not unique among civil servants; he belonged to a 'network of officials who assisted the government in monitoring the activities of corresponding societies and other radical supporters of the French Revolution'.²²⁶ In religious terms he was active in publishing and circulating anti-Catholic propaganda, and Barker points out

²²⁴ This 'suppression' perhaps had financial causes too: the socialist Historian G.D.H. Cole writes: 'the Porcupine was not a financial success. Cobbett had looked to secure a considerable circulation in America; but he found that a Mr. Freeling, Secretary of the Post Office, had secured a monopoly of the right of forwarding periodicals to America by the King's packet-boats, then, in time of war, the only safe means of conveyance. Freeling wanted five guineas a year for each copy sent. He subsequently offered to take three guineas, provided that Cobbett kept the transaction quiet, but Cobbett refused this bargain, and appealed to the Postmaster-General, Lord Auckland, from whom he got no redress. This severely injured his American sales, and also got him the enmity of the Post Office, which withdrew its advertisements from his paper. He also alleged that his deliveries of The Porcupine in Great Britain were constantly hampered by the postal authorities, orders for other newspapers being maliciously substituted by the Clerks of the Roads, who took most of the orders in the country districts.' G.D.H. Cole, *The Life of William Cobbett* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1924), p. 49.

²²⁵ David W. London, 'The Spirit of Kempenfeldt', *The Naval Mutinies of 1797* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2011), p. 88.

²²⁶ G.B. Smith, 'Sir Francis Freeling', *ODNB* [accessed 25 June 2011]

that ‘he lived in Bryanston Square, and was a parishioner of Dibdin, who admired his piety [...] as well as his books’.²²⁷

The founding of the Roxburghe Club was set against a backdrop of national change. The early nineteenth century was a politically volatile period and gathered around the table at the annual dinner were staunch representatives of both the Whigs and the Tories; pro and anti-abolitionists; the most conservative of traditionalists; and those who were verging-on-radical social reformers. Although a general view of the parties of the time would be, as Turner describes it in a pithy summary, that ‘at the 1807 general election “Tories” were defenders of court, church and established institutions, and “Whigs” were advocates of greater civil and religious liberty’, in reality personal rank, political party-adherence, and attitudes on the key controversies of the day were far from clear-cut.²²⁸ Roxburghe members illustrate not only a wide spectrum of political affiliations and causes, but also the tendency in individuals, including politically engaged figures, to a greater extent in the early nineteenth century than even now, to espouse a multiplicity of viewpoints, not necessarily corresponded to simple ‘left-wing’ or ‘right-wing’ allegiances.

Many of the wealthiest families were traditionally Whig. As Austin Mitchell points out:

Early-nineteenth-century Whigs had a satisfying feeling of being part of a long historical continuity. Tracing the history of their party back to the seventeenth century, they regarded themselves as the

²²⁷ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, p. 45.

²²⁸ Michael J. Turner, ‘Political Leadership and Political Parties, 1800-46’, *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. by Chris Williams (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 125-139 (p. 128).

‘descendants and representatives’ of the revolutionaries of 1688, and their principles as ‘strictly those of the revolution’.²²⁹

Even within this broad picture there were many factions and it would be completely wrong to denote the party as a uniform set of ideals and opinion. For one thing, factions existed within the Whig party which were often based in blood ties such as those between the Cavendish and Althorp families. Moreover, the ‘revolutionary’ principles mentioned above, going back to the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the ousting of the Catholic James II, with the political changes that came with the change of regime then, were not the same as the radical principles held by many political activists and propagandists in the period from the French Revolution to the 1848 revolutions in Europe. Many Whigs distanced themselves from radicalism and egalitarianism. Mitchell writes:

Normally there was little love lost between whigs and extreme radicals outside parliament. Cobbett, Hunt, Cartwright, and even Burdett, until he became respectable in the 1820’s, were regarded by whigs as spreading dangerous and impractical delusions.²³⁰

Individual differences and opposition to extreme contemporary radicalism notwithstanding, Rohan McWilliam neatly encapsulates a set of overall Whig ideals as a ‘philosophy of disinterestedness and support for public opinion as long as it took a constitutional form’.²³¹

It is important to bear in mind that Parliament in this period operated very differently to its modern-day incarnation and party politics as we know them had not yet solidified: before the age of mass suffrage there was less need for a party

²²⁹ Austin Mitchell, *The Whigs in Opposition* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1967). p. 8. Mitchell attributes these words to Lord Erskin, *A Short Defence of the Whigs* (London: James Ridgway, 1819), p. 4 and Sir G. Byng in *The Times*, 20 June 1818.

²³⁰ Mitchell, p. 20.

²³¹ Rohan McWilliam, *Popular Politics in Nineteenth Century England* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 49.

machine or organisation and less of a tendency for MPs to be whipped into presenting a uniform front to the public along party lines. Many MPs claimed to be independent of party allegiance. Many of these, however, were not as free of party politics as they might have wished to believe or have others believe.

Mitchell, again, explains a complex situation well:

The independence claimed by so many amounted to real neutrality only in a few cases. For the most part the members in the central zone of the house were ultimately subject to the attracting or repelling power of one of the two political poles. The range of opinion always resolved itself in discussion, and divisions into two sides and the differences within parties were variations on the same theme, not disharmonies. The existence of non-party divisions does not eclipse the fact that political ones in which ministry and opposition, or sections of them, clashed were in a majority most of the time.²³²

While many aristocrats, for historical reasons, identified with the Whigs, the landed gentry overall tended towards being Tory. Conservatism, developing at this period within Toryism, had formed as a reaction to the French Revolution and was strongly associated with the landed gentry and with the Anglican Church. The founding members of the Roxburghe Club included a number of leading Whig politicians from the traditionally aristocratic Whig families, notably the Cavendish, Howard and Althorp families. Among the Club members representing these families were the Duke of Devonshire (Cavendish), Earl Spencer (Althorp), Viscount Morpeth, later Earl Carlisle (Howard) and the Earl of Cawdor (Campbell).

Earl Spencer, by the time the Club was founded, was of course the head of the Althorp family, but in earlier career entered Parliament in 1780 as MP for

²³² Mitchell, p. 4.

Northampton, then returned for Surrey in 1882 serving as part of the Rockingham administration. He declined to serve under Shelburne but later supported the Fox – North coalition. In 1783 he succeeded to his title and thereafter held a number of posts, including that of Lord Privy Seal under Pitt; First Lord of the Admiralty (in which post he remained between December 1784 and February 1801) and later Secretary of State for the Home Department in the Grenville-Fox ministry. After retiring from office he continued to attend the Lords until his death in 1834.²³³ Earl Spencer regarded his work in these posts to be his public duty and by all accounts it was a duty that he carried out diligently and with intelligence. Unsurprisingly his son, John Charles Spencer, Viscount Althorp (a member of the Roxburghe Club as well), was also a loyal Whig supporter and similarly had a lengthy and illustrious, if somewhat reluctant, political career. He acted as leader of the Whig Party in the Commons despite his reluctance to take public office and was an example of the aristocratic sense of public duty which overrode his preference for a quiet country life. He was a strongly religious man who said that:

There is only one object ... worthy of the ambition of a man of sense, and that is, to obtain the favour of God. Political pursuits and political rivalships are not the means to conduce to this end ... The occupations and the compliances which necessarily belong to a political man must ... have a tendency to diminish religious feelings.²³⁴

Despite, or perhaps because of, this lack of personal ambition, Althorp became a respected and popular politician, leading Sir Edward Littleton, a fellow MP, to write to his wife that:

²³³ Malcolm Lester 'George John, Spencer, second Earl Spencer', *ODNB* [accessed 25 June 2011]

²³⁴ Le Marchant, pp. xv-xvi in 'John Charles Spencer, Visct. Althorp', *HP* [accessed 22 May 2014]

I sat next to Althorp, whom I like more and more daily. He has more simplicity and honesty about him than any man I ever knew. He laughed at the badgerings he has had in Parliament and said he cared less about them than he could have imagined, talked about his farms and his calves ... and his not having a minute night or day to himself ... He spoke most satisfactorily on the cordiality and union of the cabinet. Reform is to be brought on by Lord John Russell ... The government have thought it due to him not to take the question out of his hands, Althorp said he had always considered himself a pretty good radical before, but that he was ten times more so now, since he had been in office and had a peep behind the curtain.²³⁵

The Duke of Devonshire was another highly political man with a strong sense of the duty that accompanied privilege. He made regular attendance in the Lords and strongly supported reform, although as Michael S. Smith points out:

Reform was not a single ideology by any means. There were those, like Grey, who proposed a moderate alteration of the electoral system which would involve an increase in county seats, the abolition of 'rotten boroughs', and the establishment of a standard property qualification. Whig reformers did not desire democracy: a political system in which everyone could vote secretly and without a property qualification was inconceivable to them. There were others who had a more radical vision including universal male suffrage, annual parliaments, the secret ballot and payment of MPs.²³⁶

The Duke had no opportunity to sit in the Commons because he succeeded to his title (and all the associated responsibilities) at twenty-one and therefore went almost straight to the Lords. Later in life the Duke acted as Lord Chamberlain to George IV (between 1827-28 and 1830-34), albeit sometimes against his better judgement. Until 1924 this role was considered to be a political one, and up until 1782 had been of Cabinet rank. It was certainly a role that gave the Duke a great deal of influence with the King and the royal household, although he had at times been in opposition to the King, most notably in his disapproval of the King's treatment of Queen Caroline in 1820.

²³⁵ Hatherton mss., Littleton to wife, 3 Feb. 1831. in *HP*.

²³⁶ Michael S. Smith, 'Parliamentary Reform and the Electorate', *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. by Chris Williams (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), p. 159.

George Howard, styled Viscount Morpeth and later the 6th Earl of Carlisle, was yet another member of an illustrious Whig family, who supported Pitt's government. He was an MP in the family's interest for Morpeth, Northumberland and later for the County of Cumberland. Among the political items written by him are several contributions to the *Anti Jacobin* in the late 1790s, and he spoke against Fox's motion for the repeal of the Treason and Sedition Acts. These are clear examples of the fears present among otherwise liberal Whigs of the dangers of extreme radicalism in a revolutionary age. Morpeth later married the Duke of Devonshire's sister, and through that Cavendish connection became associated with Fox. He was in favour of Catholic Emancipation and made a speech in 1812 advocating sincere and cordial conciliation with the Catholics. Finally, among the liberal peers was John Frederick Campbell, Earl of Cawdor: a 'pro-Catholic Whig committed to securing criminal law reform and the abolition of the Welsh judicature and courts of great session'.²³⁷

Among the non-aristocratic Club members who were Whig MPs were Roger Wilbraham, Richard Heber and Samuel Egerton Brydges. Wilbraham was MP for Bodmin and Helston.²³⁸ A story involving Wilbraham illustrates the forthright nature of political sparring at the period and his own reformist viewpoint, both on the abuses evident in contemporary party politics and on the use of political bribery, at least where the Tory opposition were concerned:

Play was taken very seriously, for the stakes were always heavy, and conversation was resented. Sir Philip Francis came to Brook's wearing for the first time the ribbon of the order of the Bath, for

²³⁷D.R. Fisher, 'John Frederick Campbell, Earl of Cawdor' *HP* [accessed 23/05/2014]

²³⁸ John Burke. *A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Landed Gentry* (London: Henry Colburn, 1837), Vol I, p. 317.

which Fox had recommended him. “So this is the way they have rewarded you at last”, remarked Roger Wilbraham, coming up to the whist-table. “They have given you a little bit of red ribbon for your services, Sir Philip, have they? A pretty bit of red ribbon to hang about your neck; and that satisfies you, does it? Now I wonder what I shall have? What do you think they will give me, Sir Philip?” “A halter, I trust and hope!” roared the infuriated player.²³⁹

Richard Heber, although mostly concerned with his scholarly pursuits and book collection, had an interest in politics. He stood unsuccessfully as the candidate for the representation of Oxford University in 1806 but was later successful in being elected to the same seat in 1821. His political career ended when the Tory periodical *John Bull* printed an article which hinted that he was homosexual, an allegation which led to his temporary exile abroad and the destruction of his reputation. Egerton Brydges also had a political career of limited success which is summed up, somewhat despondently, by this extract from his autobiography:

I regret that I ever had any ambition, literary or political; but, unfortunately, one of my early desires was to obtain a seat in Parliament, and I never succeeded till I was on the verge of fifty – viz. Oct. 1812. Then I was successful in a contested election for Maidstone, and sat six busy years, till the dissolution in June, 1818. But I was not altogether unhappy during the discharge of that function, though I had innumerable sorrows and wrongs to distract me, which enfeebled and bound in chains any small faculties I might otherwise have displayed. I took an active part in the poor laws and the copyright bill.²⁴⁰

Brydges, perhaps too easily seen as merely an eccentric absorbed with self-induced woes and imagined slights, shows here the satisfaction he found during his career as an MP in two liberal causes.

At the opposite end of the political spectrum among the Roxburghe members were Tory supporters such as George Grenville Leveson-Gower, who started out

²³⁹ Lewis Melville [pseud.], *Some Eccentrics and a Woman* (London: M. Secker, 1911), p. 87.

²⁴⁰ Samuel Egerton Brydges, *The Autobiography, Times, Opinions and Contemporaries of Sir Egerton Brydges* (London: Cochrane & McCrone, 1834), Vol 1, pp. 104-105.

as a relatively rare example (at least among the Roxburghe membership) of an aristocratic Tory, although his family were traditionally Whig, and later in life he himself became a Whig. He was, and still is, a highly controversial figure and he and his wife were responsible for carrying out the notorious Highland Clearances between 1811 and 1820. It can be argued that he acted from conscience, as he apparently became convinced that the area could not support the crofters who lived there, and so he carried out a scheme of relocating the populace to the coast with the view of them becoming fishermen. It can also, however, be described as a form of ethnic cleansing resulting in suffering and destitution for the people who were forcibly exiled from their homes. His political career started with his election as MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme and later for Staffordshire. After 1807 he took little part in active politics although he did support Catholic emancipation.

Also among the Tory aristocracy, Edward Herbert, Viscount Clive became MP for Ludlow and took the opposite side in the matter of Catholic emancipation: Erskine comments that he ‘generally supported the Liverpool administration as an anti-Catholic Tory’.²⁴¹ He was described by the *Spectator*, in 1832 as:

A sagacious, clear-headed man of business, with perhaps the most insinuating address and plausible exterior of any Tory leader in the kingdom; and although no debater, [he] is a formidable parliamentary tactician.²⁴²

In 1837, Viscount Clive’s brother, the Hon. R.H. Clive, although not a member, presented a text to the Club which provides a striking example of how the choice of a presentation can display a marked link to individual political inclinations.

²⁴¹ Margaret Escott, ‘Edward Herbert, Viscount. Clive’, *HP* [accessed 23/05/2014]

²⁴² *Spectator*, 27 Oct.; *Salopian Journal*. 2 Nov. 1832 in ‘Edward Herbert, Viscount. Clive’, *HP*.

The text is called *The Love of Wales to their Sovereigne Prince expressed in a true Relation of the Solemnity held at Ludlow, in the Countie of Salop, upon the fourth of November last past, Anno Domini 1616, being the day of the Creation of the high and mighty Charles, Prince of Wales, and Earle of Chester, in his Maiesties Palace of White-Hall*, which is an extravagantly-worded encomium of the British royal family, celebrating the installation of an English Prince of Wales (later King Charles I) in 1616. The Clive family were landowners who possessed large areas of land in Wales, including 3,127 acres in the area of Merthyr Tydfil. Recently, in 1831 Merthyr had been the scene of political upheaval, with a working class uprising against low wages and unemployment which ended in a brutal suppression of the protestors and the execution, imprisonment or transportation of many of those involved. Against this background of unrest and suppression of rebellion, the reprinting of a tract celebrating the subjugation of the Welsh by the English nobility can be seen as a pointed, if not inflammatory, political act. It is interesting that it was contributed by the president's brother, perhaps indicating a desire on the part of Viscount Clive himself to retain some degree of personal distance between himself and the act of publishing and presenting such a politically significant text.

The landed gentry tended to sympathise with the Tory party or to consider themselves as independent. Alexander Boswell and Mark Masterman Sykes were both Tory but displayed very differing degrees of political passion. Boswell can only be described as a staunch Tory and an unfortunately hot-headed politician.

An opponent of parliamentary reform, in 1816 he had bought the Plympton Erle seat in Devon, using his inheritance to do so.²⁴³ David R. Fisher writes:

He evidently regarded the Whigs as dangerous and irresponsible maniacs and gave general support to government, voting with them in ten of the 13 divisions of the period 1817-1820 for which full lists have been found, including those on the suspension of habeas corpus, 23 June 1817, state prosecutions in Scotland, 10 Feb., the domestic espionage system, 11 Feb. and 5 Mar. 1818, and Tierney's censure motion, 18 May 1819.²⁴⁴

Boswell was also a man of action, renowned for his vigour and fine stature, and in 1820 he acted as head of the yeomanry and was highly active in suppressing dissent in Ayrshire or taking, as Paterson describes it 'an active part in opposing the democratical spirit which pervaded the country'.²⁴⁵ Boswell was voted into the Roxburghe Club in 1819, six years after his brother James. It is interesting to consider that in such a political age, political affiliation seemed to play so little part when it came to choosing Club members. As one black ball was sufficient to prevent membership, the high profile Whigs in the Roxburghe at that time must have voted for his inclusion, but it must have offered a curious proposition to mix socially with someone who considered one to be a 'dangerous and irresponsible maniac'. It was perhaps even a dangerous choice of dining partner in an age where duels, although illegal, still occasionally took place. Indeed, Alexander Boswell's untimely death was the result of a duel related to his political views and hot-headed approach to political disagreement. Perhaps time has exaggerated these issues? Alternatively, perhaps in most cases, the urbane manners and respect for debate, typical at least in theory, of gentlemen of the time, allowed the owners of such polemical opinions to mix easily and exchange

²⁴³ David R Fisher, 'Alexander Boswell', *HP* [accessed 13/05/2014]

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ *The Contemporaries of Burns*, ed. by James Patterson (Edinburgh: Hugh Paton, 1840), p. 322.

insults without taking such views as a personal slight? Possibly Boswell's undoubted intelligence, passion for books and entertaining nature were more important to the Club than political agreement. Alexander Boswell was far from being the only passionate, opinionated political animal at the table. There was certainly plenty of choice when it came to contentious topics and perhaps it came as a much needed buffer that some members, ostensibly political, were far more *laissez faire* in their opinions: Sir Mark Masterman Sykes acted as the Tory MP for York for thirteen years following his election in 1807, throughout which time he apparently did not give a speech on any subject and only rarely voted.²⁴⁶

It must be noted that the political divisions between individual members was a complex, far from clear-cut area. Even in cases where it appears obvious to us that an individual falls within the boundaries of party politics, even when he might self-identify with a particular flavour of political opinion, there is still a very real possibility that many views held and expressed by that person might often conflict with their professed alignment as we would understand it. An example of such conflict appears in the political beliefs of Sir Walter Scott, a Tory, but one who also desired to see social reform. He feared radicalism and unrest but rather than advocating the legal repression of dissent, as a Romantic he yearned for a modernised, idealised form of feudalism in which a modern, enlightened aristocracy would produce charismatic, popular leaders; men of principle and ability who could lead the populace to a state of civil harmony under a wise and fair leadership.²⁴⁷

²⁴⁶ Alan Bell, 'Sir Mark Masterman Sykes', *ODNB* [accessed 25 June 2011]

²⁴⁷ This vision appears in many Scott fictions, including *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) and *The Abbott* (1820).

John Dent, overall a political independent, in 1790 became MP for Lancaster in a change to the social and professional makeup of Parliament in which, according to Christie:

The expansion of banking, a service increasingly in demand as the pace of industrial and commercial growth quickened towards the end of the eighteenth century, is reflected in the growing number of bankers in the House. Sixteen men who were primarily bankers, of non-élite background, were elected to the Parliament of 1790.²⁴⁸

John Dent was one of these sixteen men, and was a partner in Child & Co, a city bank.²⁴⁹ Although by and large an independent MP, he gave general support to Pitt's first administration. He had attempted to introduce legislation in 1796 for the taxation of the ownership of certain dogs, a subject which cause hilarity among his colleagues and the press alike and led to his nickname of 'dog' Dent:

The day that Dog Dent was to bring forward the motion (that gave him that name) about a tax upon dogs, S[heridan] came early to the house, and saw no one but Dent sitting in a contemplative posture in one corner. S. stole round to him unobserved, and putting his hand under the seat to Dent's legs, mimicked the barking of a dog, at which Dent started up alarmed, as if his conscience really dreaded some attack from the race he was plotting against.²⁵⁰

The proposed tax on dogs was not a purely anti-canine or frivolous matter as the proceeds of the tax were intended to be 'appropriated solely to the relief of the poor'. As a final note on the dog tax, it received a passing reference in *Waverley*:

Another part in this concert was sustained by the incessant yelping of a score of idle useless curs, which followed, snarling, barking, howling, and snapping at the horses' heels; a nuisance at that time so common in Scotland, that a French tourist, who, like other travellers, longed to find a good and rational reason for every thing he saw, has recorded, as one of the memorabilia of Caledonia, that the state

²⁴⁸ Ian R. Christie, *British 'Non-Elite' MPS, 1715-1820* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 77.

²⁴⁹ He was a partner from 1795 – 1817, following in the footsteps of his father Robert Dent. See Philip Clarke, *The First House in the City; An Excursion into the History of Child & Co* (London: Perivan/Williams Lea Group, 1973), pp. 64-65.

²⁵⁰ Thomas Moore *Memoirs, Journal and Correspondence of Thomas Moore*, Ed. John Russell (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longmans, 1853), pp. 179-180.

maintained in each village a relay of curs, called *collies*, whose duty it was to chase the *chevaux de poste* (too starved and exhausted to move without such a stimulus) from one hamlet to another, till their annoying convoy drove them to the end of their stage. The evil and remedy (such as it is) still exist: But this is remote from our present purpose, and is only thrown out for consideration of the collectors under Mr Dent's dog-bill.²⁵¹

More seriously, he was a vociferous anti-abolitionist, as might be expected of the MP for Lancaster, a city that relied on slavery for much of its wealth.

Furthermore, he was married to the sister-in law of Isaac Gascoyne, the MP for Liverpool, another slaving port, and Gascoyne unsurprisingly was also an outspoken opponent of abolition.²⁵² In 1793 Dent argued in Parliament that abolitionist principles, 'however they might be suited to England, were destructive of the property of the planters' and that 'people should be prepared for liberty before they could enjoy it'.²⁵³ In 1799 he 'argued that the grievances of the slaves no longer existed as the Liverpool merchants had done everything possible to improve conditions on the middle passage'.²⁵⁴

George Watson Taylor was another extremely political figure and again not a particularly sympathetic one. During his lifetime he produced a number of highly political works including the play *England Preserved*.²⁵⁵ This was set during the minority of Henry III and apparently staged 'at the request of George III, at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden in February 1795 [where it] was applauded for its

²⁵¹ Walter Scott, *Waverley*, (1829), reprint, ed. by Susan Kubica Howard (Peterborough, ON: Broadview Press, 2010), p. 93

²⁵² R. Thorne 'Isaac Gascoyne', *HP* [accessed 09/05/2013]

²⁵³ R. Thorne, 'John Dent', *HP* [accessed: 09/05/2013]

²⁵⁴ 'Ibid.

²⁵⁵ George Watson, *England Preserved*, (London: T.N. Longman, 1795)

anti Gallic Spirit'.²⁵⁶ Early in his career Watson Taylor had been employed as secretary to Lord Camden, the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whose term of office had culminated in the Irish Rebellion of 1798. Sharing Camden's opposition to Catholic emancipation, Watson Taylor wrote the lyrics to *Croppies Lie Down*, a loyalist, anti-Catholic, anti-French, highly inflammatory folksong. It was composed during the Irish Rebellion of 1798 amid fears of a French invasion in support of the Catholic rebels. Presumably his beliefs had calmed somewhat with the passing of time as, after a subsequent meeting with Watson Taylor in June 1828, Thomas Moore, the Catholic, Irish songwriter and poet, reflected in his memoirs on how they:

felt, both of us, how strange it was that he and I who, thirty years ago, were placed in a position where either might have been called upon to hang or shoot the other, were now chatting over the whole matter amicably in his barouche.²⁵⁷

Moore goes on to describe *Croppies Lie Down* as a 'song to the tune of which more blood has been shed than often falls to the lot of more lyrical productions'.²⁵⁸ Watson Taylor had obviously mellowed a great deal by this time as his presentation to the Club in 1825 was an edition of *Poems written in English, by Charles, Duke of Orleans, during his Captivity in England after the Battle of Azincourt*; not an obvious choice for one who held such anti-French sentiments. Charles d'Orléans had been defeated in warfare against the English, thereafter spending much of his adult life as a princely hostage, and learned to write elegant love poetry as beautifully in English as in French: moreover, like John Gower, he is an example of a fourteenth-century poet who was virtually

²⁵⁶ *The Times*, 23 Feb. 1795; H. Bull and J. Waylen, *Hist. Devizes*, 527 in 'George Watson Taylor', *HP*.

²⁵⁷ *Memoirs, Journal, and Correspondence of Thomas Moore*, ed. by Lord John Russell (Boston: Little, Brown., 1853), V, p. 314.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

unknown at the times and has only been widely acclaimed during the last few years, an example, once again of the at times far-sighted literary appreciation shown in some early Roxburghe members' editions. As well as being anti-Catholic, in contemporary politics, he was anti-abolitionist. Watson Taylor was the son of a West India plantation owner and in 1816, as MP for Newport in the Isle of Wight:

[He] seconded Palmer's amendment to Wilberforce's motion on slavery. He stated the case for the planters. On 16 Mar. 1824 he informed the House that he had laid out nearly £17,000 a year on his West Indian estates and treated his negroes well saying: 'it was not his fault' that he had come into the plantations'.²⁵⁹

After standing as the member for Newport from 1816 – 1818, he was later the member for Seaford from 1818 to 1820, for East Looe from 1820 to 1826 and for Devizes from 1826 until 1832.²⁶⁰

A curious subset of political career was that of the Parliamentary agents for the plantation owners and Merchants of the West Indies. The agents were usually solicitors who worked within the political system to represent the interests of this influential group. George Watson Taylor has already been mentioned as the son of a plantation owner but among the Club membership were a number of men whose livelihood was dependent to some degree on this arrangement. George Hibbert was another example of this subset, acting specifically as an agent for Jamaican planters, and Robert Lang was a West India merchant. Incidentally, Lang's daughter married Francis Freulings's son George in 1816, highlighting the interesting point that quite a lot of intermarriage occurred between the

²⁵⁹ R. Thorne, 'George Watson Taylor', *HP* [Accessed: 02/04/2014]

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

families of the Roxburghe members, and this hints at another possible reason for the amicable nature of relations between the members.²⁶¹

Another Parliamentary agent for the West Indian planters was James Heywood Markland. One of the youngest Club members, although following a superficial parliamentary career his driving force was religious rather than political. He was a staunch high churchman who strongly supported church societies, and by the time of his Club membership had already anonymously published short essays on theological subjects, including *A Few Plain Reasons for Adhering to the Church*, 1807.²⁶² Later:

He was entrusted by Mrs Ramsden with the foundation of mission sermons at Cambridge and Oxford, and while resident in Bath three ladies, the Misses Mitford of Somerset Place in that city, selected him for the distribution of £14,000 in charitable works in England and the Colonies.²⁶³

Seemingly his experience as an agent for the West Indies recommended him for the task of liaising with colonial charitable activities. He appears to have been a genuinely pious man and it is difficult for the modern mind to encompass both his religious activities and his work as a lobbyist for the slave-owning plantation owners. Certainly, looking at the combined effects of these vested interests and the pressures on individual political and mercantile careers, one can gain an impression of how difficult it must have been to turn the tide of public opinion on slavery.

The members of the Roxburghe Club who were lawyers tended to be notably less politically active, perhaps because of the professional necessity to be

²⁶¹ G. B. Smith. 'Sir Francis Freeling', *ODNB* [accessed 1 June 2014]

²⁶² W.P. Courtney, 'James Heywood Markland', *ODNB* [accessed 25 June 2011]

²⁶³ *Ibid.*

perceived as unbiased. This is probably best summed up by Sir Joseph Littledale, a judge, who when questioned about his political viewpoint was renowned for having answered ‘my politics are the politics of a special pleader’.²⁶⁴ Of course, away from the public eye they were as likely to hold strong political views as anyone else; Edward Vernon Utterson, another lawyer, did not have a political career but was a Tory by persuasion, and in fact was described by his son in his biography of his father as an ‘uncompromising old tory’.²⁶⁵

Turning to the clerical members of the Club, the Venerable Archdeacon Francis Wrangham appears to have been a sincere and cheerfully religious man who held strongly practical political views in support of what he saw as his Christian duty, leading to what Barker calls ‘a career of great promise at Cambridge [...] warped by the suspicion of radical politics’.²⁶⁶ He took no part in public politics, a point that he makes in a letter to Egerton Brydges:

from politics, like you, I abstain – not only on the ground upon which you do it of the unfair surveillance of foreign post offices – but also because I understand them far less as a science – as matter of party, hold them in equal disesteem – and in every respect think them the least suitable exercise of declassement for a clergyman.²⁶⁷

Wrangham’s already mentioned propensity for social programmes included starting a saving scheme for his parishioners, a free dispensary, a lending library and lending the money to purchase a village cow.²⁶⁸ His politics obviously displayed themselves in his low-key social activism, which he was keen to encourage amongst other clergymen. Although Wrangham may have abstained

²⁶⁴ Times, 20th June, 1842 (*Biographia Juridica*).

²⁶⁵ *Letters of a Literary Antiquary*, ed. by A .T. Utterson (NP: Privately printed, 1938), p. 12.

²⁶⁶ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, p. 46.

²⁶⁷ Michael Sadleir, ‘Archdeacon Francis Wrangham: A Supplement’, *Library*, 4 (1939), p. 437.

²⁶⁸ Trevor Beeson, *The Canons: Cathedral Close Encounters* (London: William Clowes Ltd., 2006), p. 26.

from party politics, politics showed no inclination to avoid him, and excerpts from his letters show him to have felt himself to be hampered materially by his views on social justice and upholding of the rights of the underprivileged:

Not that my life has not upon the whole been a very happy one, for my disposition is naturally a buoyant one and my fortunes have been gradually and slowly mounting. That they would have risen more rapidly I can well believe if my opinions had been more in unison – actually or ostensibly – with those of the governing powers in the country. But I was bred a Whig. The lessons of Greece and Rome have no tendency to correct this propensity.²⁶⁹

From this excerpt Wrangham appears to be a perfect example of the type of Anglican clergyman that Conser has in mind when he writes that:

Religious liberals among early nineteenth-century English churchmen comprised an extraordinarily diverse group for whom political sympathy for the Whigs acted as an important bond.²⁷⁰

Wrangham himself appears to have been unlucky, in that his diocese fell within the boundaries of an administrative district that was unsympathetic overall to his liberal politics and religious tolerance. This variance of outlook appears to have led to him being in some conflict with his fellow deacons. At least one of the ways in which he seems to have ‘marked his card’ with his superiors, and indeed the media of the time, was in his support for Catholic emancipation. He explains to Egerton Brydges that:

against the anti-Catholicism of my Cleveland Archdeaconry I have ventured to oppose myself, and at a meeting of about 30 had ten hands in favour of toleration [...] I trust your continental experience of Catholic toleration will lead you to think me justified in meditating this retribution to an oppressed portion of our fellow Christians.²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 438.

²⁷⁰ Walter H. Conser Jr., *Church and Confession* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), p. 129.

²⁷¹ Sadleir, ‘Archdeacon Francis Wrangham: A Supplement’, p. 437.

Although he may have abstained from public politics, this Whig background showed itself through his interpretation of Christian duty. Wrangham was committed to social programmes designed to alleviate poverty and promote self sufficiency amongst the disadvantaged of his diocese. He attempted to promulgate these ideas among other clergy and was forthright in support for those whom he considered to be fighting the same fight:

His sermons expressed a liberal and tolerant understanding of the Christian faith which was uncommon in his time, and he could be courageous, as when he encouraged the editors of *The Examiner*, the brothers John and Leigh Hunt, and promoted subscriptions to their lively weekly literary magazine. This had a radical political section, strongly supporting social and political reform and frequently ridiculing the Prince of Wales, and future Prince Regent. All of which often got the editors into trouble with the law and both were fined £500 and sent to prison for two years following a libel action initiated by the Prince. There were few country clergymen, apart from Wrangham, among their backers.²⁷²

The courage he displayed in supporting ideals of social justice is especially striking because in his letters and other writings Wrangham appears to be a mild mannered and humble man, certainly not an obvious candidate to be a social campaigner. Wrangham's mixture of politics and religion also highlights the fact that many of the Roxburghe Club, whether overtly political or not, were clergymen, a vocation which often carried with it implicit notions of social duty for those who were sincere in their calling.

The Reverend T. F. Dibdin, having at first trained for law, found himself dissatisfied with his career choice and instead took a divinity degree. Although he could not be said to have lived the life of an ascetic, he did appear to be

²⁷² Trevor Beeson, *The Canons: Cathedral Close Encounters* (London: William Clowes, 2006), p.26.

sincere and well meaning in his duties as vicar of the valuable living of Exning in Suffolk and later additionally as the Rector of the newly built St. Mary's in Bryanstone Square and as Chaplain in Ordinary to her Majesty.²⁷³ A high church protestant, he published sermons which are straightforward, realistic, tolerant and kind in tone. While it is easy to imagine that, because he dedicated so much time to the pursuit of books his clerical duties may have suffered accordingly, he certainly was not an absentee cleric and appears to have had a genuine vocation to the Church.

Rev. Edward Craven Hawtrey was the son of a vicar and educated at Eton, becoming in turn assistant master, headmaster and later provost of the school. In 1854 he also became the vicar of Mapledurham.²⁷⁴ Rev. Hawtrey is discussed at some length, and with affection, in the memoir *Eton in the Forties* which gives an interesting insight into his religious views, especially concerning Anglo-Catholicism, and the influence that those beliefs had on his administrative methods:

Besides this universal generosity, bearing on all varieties of character, Dr. Hawtrey displayed a special liberality in dealing with that which of all things most shapes the character — religion. He was not a theologian, though he could deliver short sermons that were at once orthodox and eloquent. He could no more fathom the controversies of the age in which men were swayed by Newman or by Arnold, than he could take the measure of the new philosophies growing up by the side of the new theologies. Had he been suspicious, narrow-minded, or cold-hearted, he would certainly have quarrelled with three or four of the best of his assistants in the first ten years of his government. As it was, he became the faithful friend and moderate supporter of several Anglo-Catholic colleagues. Had he set his authority against them, had he even let them be thwarted, more than they were thwarted, by the alarmed Protestantism of Eton College, he would have lost the services of

²⁷³ 'Rev. T. F. Dibdin, D.D.', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 29 (1848), 87-92 (p.87).

²⁷⁴ 'Hawtrey, Edward Craven', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 13 (New York: Encyclopaedia Britannica Inc, 1910), p. 104.

men who could not be replaced. But it must be understood that nothing could be further from his mind than a cool calculation of such results. He obeyed his good heart. He knew by a heavenly instinct when he had a truly good man at his side; he was sagacious enough to perceive that certain tastes might lead to Rome, but he was not to be scared by such a danger. He stuck to his friend, he backed up his colleague, because he knew and cherished goodness.

²⁷⁵

As well as underlining his religious tolerance, this excerpt illustrates the degree to which the views of clerical masters within the public schools could impact upon the careers of their subordinates, and by extension to the day-to-day teaching of pupils and the viewpoints to which they were exposed within the school environment. In a more straightforward sense, his personality and love of learning and desire to encourage academic ability in his charges, even though his own abilities were sometimes outshone by his pupils, were viewed by former pupils as formative in their later careers:

year after year Hawtrey's beloved young men went to the Universities, better read and better trained than their predecessors, even if not so well read or well trained as many representatives of less fashionable schools. To put the case broadly, he lived to see (If he had eyes to see it) whole tribes of Eton men seasoned with the accurate philology which he had never himself acquired — men who knew his defects, and were, notwithstanding, indebted to him, and consciously grateful to him for their better schooling.²⁷⁶

What Hawtrey lacked as a teacher in terms of specialisation he made up for in breadth of interest and enthusiastic pursuit of knowledge from a wide range of sources, many of which one might presume proceeded from his own extensive library:

Of this Headmaster's teaching and influence over his division I have always thought highly. The willing and intelligent boys gained much,

²⁷⁵ Arthur Duke Coleridge, *Eton in the Forties by an Old Colleger* (London: Richard Bentley, 1896), pp. 288-289.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 284-285.

learnt to take wider views of things, heard illustrations from many a language and literature.²⁷⁷

Apparently less sincere in his vocation was the Hon. and Rev. George Neville Grenville who was a successful clergyman, at least in monetary terms and who, from the distance of time, appears to have been more interested in the career aspect of his calling than the religious element. Certainly, if the obituaries of the time are anything to go by he was considered to be a man who had made unfair use of his family's connections to advance his own advancement. As this article icily phrases it:

In 1813 he was nominated to the Mastership of Magdalene College, Cambridge by his father Lord Braybrooke, in whose gift the office was. The fellows seriously objected, at the time, to the appointment of so young a man. He presented himself to the rectories of Butleigh, in Somersetshire, and Ellingham in Norfolk; and in 1840 he was appointed Dean of Windsor. He was a singular instance of family preferment.²⁷⁸

However, it should also be noted that after his death he was praised for great generosity towards the poor. The Rev. William Holwell Carr was another man of the cloth with no obvious religious calling. His only interests appear to have been collecting and he is described as being 'an assertive man, obsessed with prices and provenance' and as having possessed 'no small talk'.²⁷⁹ He hurriedly acquired a degree in divinity in order to gain a valuable living at Menheniot in Cornwall. On gaining the desired post he immediately employed a curate at £100 per year, retained the remaining £1034 income and never visited the living preferring to spend his time collecting books and art work.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 388.

²⁷⁸ 'Obituary of the Year', *The Church of England Quarterly Review*, 36 (London: Sampson Low, 1854), p. 525.

²⁷⁹ Judy Egerton, 'William Holwell Carr', *ODNB* [accessed 25 June 2011]

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

There were other schoolmaster clerics among Club members, but who apparently remained aloof from either political controversy or public religious comment, including Rev. Henry Drury, the son of Joseph Drury the Headmaster of Harrow. Drury became assistant master at Harrow from 1801, and master of the lower school from 1833 to 1841.²⁸¹ He was ordained in 1811 and in 1820 presented to the rectory of Fingest.²⁸² Drury was friends with Byron, and conducted the funeral for Byron's daughter Allegra.²⁸³ He was a close friend of Dibdin's and apparently socially popular but appears to have left little record of either his political or religious views. Similarly, the Rev. Cuthbert Heber, a half brother to Richard has left little record of his character. He died young in 1816 at the age of thirty-two, but had been the Curate at Hodnet with Weston under Redcastle between 1809 and 1810, before becoming Rector at Marton in Craven where he remained until his death.²⁸⁴

Rev. James William Dodd, second Usher at Westminster, again leaves little indication of his character or beliefs apart from being one of the Westminster staff blamed by Southey for his expulsion from the school and mentioned several times in his poem *To Ignorance*:

Had I been ignorant I had been blest
 Unmarkd by Vice by Calumny & Dodd —
 The fire of Freedom had not warmd my breast
 And I had bowd submiss beneath the rod —
 Yes I had pass'd with credit thro' the school
 An ignorant, contented, favor'd fool.

²⁸¹ L.C. Sanders, 'Henry Joseph Thomas Drury', *ODNB* [accessed 25 June, 2011]

²⁸² 'Rev. Henry Drury', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 170 (September 1841), p. 323.

²⁸³ Thomas Moore, *Life, Letters, and Journals of Lord Byron* (London: John Murray, 1839), p. 559. For further information of the somewhat stormy friendship between Byron and Drury see Paul Ellege, *Lord Byron at Harrow School: Speaking Out, Talking Back, Acting Up, Bowing Out* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2000).

²⁸⁴ Heber, Thomas Cuthbert (1809 - 1816)

<<http://db.theclergydatabase.org.uk/jsp/persons/DisplayPerson.jsp?PersonID=11713>> [accessed 26 May 2014]

[...]
 Lo where the Wigs assemble in debate —
 Where Canterbury whets the butcher knife —
 Where Markham reassumes his birchen state —
 And Wingfield reembarks in legal strife —
 Revenge & Infamy & Hell & Dodd
 With ghastly smile await the Doctor's nod.
 [...]
 See Persecution lifts her hated rod
 Resentment deepens in the Doctors frown
 Revenge with ghastly pleasure smiles on Dodd
 And Malice lurks beneath the sacred gown —²⁸⁵

To what extent Southey's obviously negative view of Dodd's character was a true portrayal is difficult to evaluate; Southey certainly bore a somewhat obsessive grudge against all the staff of Westminster for what he considered his unfair expulsion following his creation of a magazine called the *Flagellant* which criticised the practise of corporal punishment in schools, but whether the conditions were worse at Westminster than at other public schools is questionable.

The Venerable Archdeacon Butler, Lord Bishop of Lichfield, was head master of the Royal Free Grammar School at Shrewsbury and the grandfather of the author Samuel Butler who wrote the Archdeacon's memoir, *Life and Letters of Dr Samuel Butler* in 1896.²⁸⁶ Butler appears to have had a positive effect on education in the public schools of that period, and a letter written to him by Henry Drury states:

The advance of learning among the young has decidedly, at all English schools of any note, generally taken its impulse from you, and where it has not, as at Westminster, the decadence has been doleful. Whatever Eton and

²⁸⁵ Robert Southey, 'To Ignorance', *The Collected Letters of Robert Southey Part 1 1791-1797* <http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions/southey_letters/Part_One/HTML/letterEEEd.26.6.html> [accessed 20/12/2013]

²⁸⁶ Samuel Butler, *Life and Letters of Dr Samuel Butler* (London: John Murray, 1896).

Harrow may be, I can safely say they would not have reached even any moderate excellence if you had not been the agitator.²⁸⁷

Furthermore, Butler appears to have shared the sympathy towards Catholic emancipation expressed by many other Roxburghe members and this formed the greater part of a controversial sermon preached by him:

On June 30th, 1811, Dr. Butler preached at St. Mary's, Cambridge, before H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester and the University of Cambridge, on the occasion of the Duke's installation as Chancellor of the University. The sermon was printed at Shrewsbury in the same year under the title of *Christian Liberty*; it was directed against the gloomy views of religion taken by the Methodists, and borrowed from them by the Evangelical party then dominant in the Church. The notes are longer than the sermon, and are mainly in support of Catholic emancipation, a cause warmly espoused by Dr. Butler at a time when English Churchmen generally were opposed to it.²⁸⁸

Religious beliefs among non-clerical Club members seem to encompass the usual unremarked Church of England range: some were pious, others presumably dutiful but not zealous, and none were vociferously atheist or agnostic – such a thing would have been unlikely in the early nineteenth century. Of those for whom distinct religious beliefs are discernable a significant number of the Whig aristocrats became Evangelical: Morpeth was evangelical, the Duke of Devonshire became evangelical in later life and Viscount Althorp was described as being evangelical in all but name.²⁸⁹ This connection between Whig families and evangelicalism has been noted by historians including Abraham D. Kriegel who writes:

One may, finally, object to the juxtaposition of Saints and Whigs by observing that the two were not necessarily exclusive of one another. Some younger aristocratic Whigs, after all, were themselves influenced by evangelicalism, although they did not use the term. Many were active in

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

²⁸⁹ David R. Fisher, 'John Charles Spencer', *HP* [Accessed 07 05 2015]

Bible societies and held chapel for the servants of their households long before these practices became Victorian conventions.²⁹⁰

Kriegel says of Morpeth:

Morpeth kept a journal of devotions and distributed Bibles among the cottagers on his estates. That he was not typical of Whigs, even as late as the 1830s, is evident in his correspondence with the pious Lord Chichester [who] wrote, “For God’s sake... remember that some of your leaders are not much influenced by the fear of God”.²⁹¹

Something in the staunch Whig upbringing with its emphasis on public duty, self denial and service to others appears to have made the members of these great families more susceptible to evangelical thinking. Irrespective of personal belief, Whigs in general were more tolerant of religious difference for practical reasons.

As Conser writes:

The Whig commitment to religious liberty was prominent and indiscriminating. Members hoped that with the amelioration of religious strife, energies might be turned to serving the state.²⁹²

The predominance of Whigs within the Roxburghe, and their dedication to religious freedom, may therefore be one explanation behind the ease with which Peregrine Townseley, a member of the prominent Catholic recusant family, could comfortably belong to such a largely Protestant group at a period when religious equality was not yet legally endorsed, and may also help to explain why the Club was happy to publish texts with a pre-Reformation, Catholic history, possibly in contrast to biases at large in antiquarian circles. This subject and its context are covered in section 2.4.

²⁹⁰ Abraham D. Kriegel, ‘A Convergence of Ethics: Saints and Whigs in British Antislavery’, *Journal of British Studies*, 26, 4 (Oct., 1987), 423-450 (pp. 424-5).

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 425.

²⁹² Conser, p. 108.

Overall, a picture starts to form of a group of men who are a long way from being the frivolous, superficial dilettantes they have been previously painted. These are not empty-headed fops, playing at publishing and concerned only with the fashionable and superficial pursuits available to their rank; rather it becomes clear that they were often deeply serious men who were profoundly involved in the most important and difficult events of their time. Many members were influential, hard-working political actors of the period who are striking for their obvious sense of social responsibility and conscientious in their duties as men of authority and power.

It is interesting to consider whether these widely disparate men who were brought together through a love of books, often to socialise with people that they would have been unlikely to encounter under other circumstances, were creating a platform for the exchange of ideas, literary, political and religious, that could not have failed to form a unique Club outlook on the books that they collected and reprinted. The Roxburghe Club, in a world before methods of cheap mass communication such as the telephone or even cheap postage rates, acted, in the way of many such societies, as a forum for the exchange of ideas. Through the eighteenth century on to the period of the early Roxburghe literary activities often took place in social settings, including coffee house groups, dining societies and taverns.²⁹³ James Mee's detailed survey confirms the centrality of such sociable forums for the discussion and study of older literature: 'print culture was being disseminated and dispersed into sociable forms of reading like

²⁹³ For a full discussion of this form of sociability see James Mee, *Conversable Worlds: Literature, Contention, and Community 1762 to 1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

book clubs and literary and philosophical societies'.²⁹⁴ The Roxburghe, formed by men whose own formative years often lay several decades earlier, unsurprisingly continued in this Georgian tradition. As Frank Swinnerton writes of contemporary literary figures including Scott, Coleridge, Lamb and Leigh Hunt, 'although they were the new generation, their social and intellectual background was that of the eighteenth century'.²⁹⁵ The same can be said of the men who created the Roxburghe Club. No mere meeting place for wealthy high-status men, the Roxburghe created a social mix that brought together people with scholarship and people with money and power (and often considerable education, scholarship and intellect in their own right). Susan Manning points to a similar heterogeneity among the wider context of antiquarianism:

Amateur pursuit of antiquarian interests performed a number of socially cohesive functions [...] a shared passion for collection and classification brought men of widely divergent social status and political sympathies into friendly – and sometimes rivalrous – correspondence'.²⁹⁶

The Club allowed ideas to be exchanged but also disseminated back to members' country estates, parishes and their schools and from there perhaps to their provincial friends and neighbours. The Roxburghe, and eventually other book societies and clubs like it, had the potential to be a vehicle for new ideas about publishing, the importance of protecting and promoting what had gone before and the creation of a national literature. Many members, although not influential politically were, as schoolmasters and clerics, responsible for the education of the new generation and instrumental in forming the shape of current education. Many ideas raised at these dinners must thus have filtered into the processes that have created modern literary scholarship. The Club provided an environment

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²⁹⁵ Frank Swinnerton, *The Bookman's London* (London: A Wingate, 1951), p. 119.

²⁹⁶ Manning, p. 46.

admirably suited to fruitful interaction between ideas of public duty, national heritage and nationalism and literary appreciation to create something that important nineteenth-century editors such as Madden, whose methods have seemed more acceptable to modern academic eyes could build on when it came to reprinting and popularising our older national literature.

2.2 CLUB MEMBERS AND THEIR BOOK COLLECTIONS

‘Everybody knows that if a shabby tract may be lost or thrown away, a book once handsomely clothed in morocco is practically safe from destruction’.²⁹⁷

This quotation from Seymour de Ricci underlines the importance of the act of placing a book into a collection, that is, the degree of safety imparted by the ennoblement of a text through its proximity to other equally beautifully preserved volumes. This is a frank admission of the case that, however much scholars might stress the intrinsic value of a text over the aesthetic value placed on it by many book collectors, everyone in the end loves a beautiful book in a handsome binding. Such binding will ensure that a text might last long enough to be appreciated for its intrinsic value. On this level alone it can be said that the Roxburghe founding members provided a solid service to literature by preserving between them a vast quantity of early printed books and manuscripts within their personal collections as well as helping to create the wider appetite for and awareness of such items. That would be faint praise if they are viewed as

²⁹⁷ De Ricci, pp. 71.

mere bibliomaniacs, collecting indiscriminately and purely aesthetic grounds. Much information is available about the collections owned by these men because most of them are catalogued, if not for their own use and the convenience of friends, then certainly when they came to auction. Looking at the books contained within these collections reveals that their owners were not only collecting books that fell within the usual collector's remit such as rarities, first editions, large paper copies etc., but that most of these bibliophiles were also constructing libraries that reflected their personal intellectual interests and expertise. This section gives an unavoidably brief outline of the books being collected by the Roxburghe Club members in order to illustrate how diverse and specialised these collections really were.

One of the less well-known names amongst early Roxburghers was Robert Lang, whose library, when auctioned in 1828, raised £2837 and contained volumes of sufficient interest as to ensure that a number were bought for the Royal Library at Paris.²⁹⁸ This library reflected its owner's expertise in ancient French poetry.

His collection was described by Dibdin as:

Not only one of the most curious and beautiful libraries in the kingdom – thoroughly *sui generis* – but he was intimately conversant with their contents. [...]Mr. Lang's earlier French poetry was matchless in quality and condition; and it is no small commendation of their owner to say, that Mr. Douce affirmed he had a more intimate knowledge of early French literature than any individual (not even excepting himself) with whom he was acquainted.²⁹⁹

Similarly, Haslewood owned an interesting and significant collection that absolutely reflected his own personal interests. A partner in his uncle's legal firm, he inhabited 'two rooms (of the size of a housekeeper's china closet), on

²⁹⁸ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, p. 373.

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 372.

the second and third floors at the back of his house'.³⁰⁰ Here he lived among his collections of books, broadsheets and theatre memorabilia. A quiet, very religious man, his enthusiasm and knowledge, on a wide range of literary subjects, led him to write and edit books and a bewildering number and variety of articles. Despite his relatively limited means he accumulated several important collections notably of ephemera, early poetry, and books on hunting, hawking and fishing. On his death his collection raised around £2,500 at auction.³⁰¹ The auction catalogue describes his library as containing, among other items 'a very curious, extensive and extraordinary collection of proclamations from the year 1590 to 1710, including that against Milton and many others of great rarity'.³⁰²

Another member who collected with an undeviating eye to their own intellectual interests was James Boswell, a talented poet and a writer with a strong sense of fun, described by Dibdin as being 'a happy vein of the broadest humour'.³⁰³ His library was sold in 1825 and was thoroughly catalogued.³⁰⁴ Turnbull observes:

the sale catalogue of his impressive library, [...] shows Boswell to have had, among much else, a knowledgeable interest in opera, music and continental literature, and to have been a capable Hispanist, and indicates the depth and range of his intellectual and collecting interests, as well as the breadth of his acquaintance with books, both old and current, and eminent literary people.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 418.

³⁰¹ Ibid., p. 425.

³⁰² *Catalogue of the Curious and Valuable Library of the late Joseph Haslewood, Esq, FSA*, (W.Nicol, 1833).

³⁰³ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, p. 388.

³⁰⁴ *Bibliotheca Boswelliana; A Catalogue of the Entire Library of the Late James Boswell, Esq.*, (London: J Compton, 1825).

³⁰⁵ Gordon Turnbull, 'James Boswell', *ODNB* [accessed 25 June 2011]

His elder brother, Alexander who inherited the Auckinleck Library, possessed a personal, eclectic taste in literature, including a special interest in Scottish verse and ballads. A Victorian commentator writes:

Of the famous family library Sir Alexander was pardonably proud. In its rich repositories he had gratified his strong literary tastes, and he was so unwearied in his efforts to repay the debt by increasing its treasures, that at *belles lettres* auctions he was the terror of every book-hunter.³⁰⁶

The classical scholar Henry Drury somewhat predictably, collected classical works in Greek and Latin.³⁰⁷ At his death, these constituted the greater part of his library, the rest made up predominantly by Roxburghe volumes, editions printed by Alexander Boswell at the Auckinleck press and other works privately printed by friends and acquaintances. Drury possessed more than 250 medieval manuscripts.³⁰⁸ His collection was sold in 1827 in 4,729 lots.³⁰⁹ Another bibliophile educator, Hawtrey, was described by Dibdin as ‘Priscian, the classical and the accomplished’.³¹⁰ It is unclear whether William Roberts classed Hawtrey among those book-collectors whom he considered

Literary men, who aimed rather at getting together a useful library than one of rarities. The sale of all such libraries makes a very sorry show beside that of the more ostentatious collections.³¹¹

That description would fit the disposal of Hawtrey’s books, which sold for sums Roberts considered to be ‘far below their worth’.³¹² Dibdin, however, considered Drury’s collection to have contained rarities, writing in *Bibliophobia* of Hawtrey:

³⁰⁶ *The Poetical Works of Sir Alexander Boswell*. ed. by Robert Howie Smith (Glasgow: Maurice Ogle, 1871), p. xxvii.

³⁰⁷ *A Catalogue of the Library of the late Rev. Henry Drury* (London: W. Nicol, 1841).

³⁰⁸ De Ricci, p. 98.

³⁰⁹ Roberts, p. 70.

³¹⁰ Dibdin, *Bibliophobia* (London: Henry Bohn, 1832), p. 59.

³¹¹ Roberts, p. 71.

³¹² *Ibid.*, p. 71.

Books are his 'dear delight': and Bibles, among those books, the primary object of attraction. The owner has a rare set of them – such as, in a private collection, are eclipsed only by those at Kensington and Althorp³¹³

Probably Dibdin is using 'rare' in a colloquial sense, elements in Drury's collection as equal to the best. In *Reminiscences* he writes 'I know of few libraries which compete with that of our newly elected member. It is at once choice and copious, learned and resplendent'.³¹⁴ Hawtrey's library certainly mirrored his interest in linguistics, and Thackery, the author of his memoir, says:

Comparative philology was only in its infancy in Hawtrey's time, but it was represented by such authors as Bopp and Benfey ; and there was a host of Grammars : Arabic, Hindustani, Persian, Caribee, etc., a Basque Catechism printed at Bayonne, and monographs in all the different Italian dialects, Ferrarese, Milanese, Bolognese, the Maltese and Neapolitan, and the patois of Rome. Nothing of linguistic interest escaped his notice; recent issues were there from the continental presses of Dijon, Turin, Florence, Vienna, a Romaic-English Lexicon, and a collection of Sicilian poems printed respectively at Corfu and Palermo.³¹⁵

Thackery gives what is perhaps the simplest and truest explanation of why Hawtrey and many other Roxburghe members were not the superficial bibliomaniacs of the popular imagination:

It may be granted that he was not a profound scholar. To combine great erudition with the labour inseparable from the government of a large Public School is next to impossible, one of the two must give way. But neither was he a mere dilettante and amateur lover of books, and for every volume on his shelves he could give an excellent reason why it was there, and say something in connection with it of real interest and instruction, that was well worth listening to. He encouraged the love of literature, not only by his munificent gifts, but by the very fact of his amassing literary treasures in a princely spirit, and imparting to others the pleasure they bestow.³¹⁶

The study of linguistics is a common thread running through the Club members' collections and Roger Wilbraham, characterised as Sempronius in Dibdin's

³¹³ Dibdin, *Bibliophobia*, p. 59.

³¹⁴ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, Vol 1, p. 411.

³¹⁵ Francis St. John Thackery, *Memoir of Edward Craven Hawtrey* (London: George Bell, 1896), pp. 177-178.

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 175-176.

Decameron, focused much of his collection on early works printed in southern European languages. William Clarke described it:

Mr. Wilbraham's fine collection of Italian and Spanish books includes an assemblage of all that is rare and curious in the classes of early poetry, novels, and romances. [He] is also in possession of many of the works of the Italian dramatic writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; facetiae, numerous volumes of old English poetry and plays; and most of the ancient and modern lexicographers.³¹⁷

Dibdin, however, felt that 'the strength of Mr. Wilbraham's library lay in his books on voyages and travels, of which he owned some very rare pieces'.³¹⁸

Both commentators agreed on Mr. Wilbraham's keen interest in lexicography, a subject in which Dibdin calls him 'as eminently rich as he was confessedly learned'.³¹⁹

In contrast, John Dent was almost certainly a collector whose primary interest lay in the rarity, beauty and financial value of books rather than in the intellectual importance of their texts. There is little proof of him possessing any specific literary interests beyond the normal pursuits of an educated man of the time. His apparently somewhat unsympathetic personality led him to often be the butt of jokes, and occasionally these were targeted at his book collecting. One such story is recounted by Francis Hitchman who says that 'Mr. Canning used to tell a story of Mr. Dent – a bibliomaniac of the true Dibdin type – whom he once caught with a book before him "upside down"'.³²⁰ Whether this was true or not (it certainly sounds apocryphal), and whatever his own feelings were towards

³¹⁷ William Clarke, *Repertorium Bibliographicum; or, Some Account of the Most Celebrated British Libraries*, 2 Vols (London: William Clarke, 1819), II, p. 383.

³¹⁸ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 407.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 406.

³²⁰ Hitchman, p.272. William Roberts, p. 69. also mentions this anecdote, without reference but possibly based on the account in Hitchman's essay.

reading, his personal love of books did not extend to the desire for them to be generally available beyond the confines of his own library. As Styles recounts:

During a debate in Parliament on the subject of slavery, Dent (who was the M.P. for Lancaster, a slave-trading port and who therefore was arguing for the continuation of the existing exportation of slaves from Africa to the West Indies) was incensed by an argument put forward by Wilberforce. The abolitionist had asserted that Africans must be considered to be civilised people as in some areas they were known to possess books. Dent answered by saying 'Books! The blackamoors have books! and this the hon. mover gives as a reason for not exporting them as slaves! I think if the hon. gentleman had recollected all the mischief that books have done, especially of late years, in the world, he might have spared this argument at least. What produced the French revolution? Books! The house will not be induced to put a stop to the slave trade, in order that the inhabitants of Africa might stay at home to be corrupted by reading books.'³²¹

Putting aside his personality, nonetheless his collection of printed and manuscript items was considered to be one of the most valuable libraries, for its size, of this period.³²² It was greatly augmented by his purchase of the Heathcote library which Dent bought in its entirety in 1807.³²³ The duplicates arising from this purchase were sold in two sales held in 1808.³²⁴ Dent's collection was sold in 1827 at two auctions held on the 29th March and the 25th April and raised only £15,040.³²⁵ Dibdin notes the lowered prices commanded by choice items in this sale as the first indicator of the end of the golden period of bibliomania.³²⁶ He wrote that during the auction:

The GREAT GUN in the library was the first Livy of 1469, upon vellum – which had been successively in the libraries of Mr. Edwards and Sir Mark Sykes – and when the hammer fell upon *that* book, how fell its *price* too! It had been obtained by Mr. Dent at the sale of Sir Mark's library for about the half of its original cost to

³²¹ Related by John Styles, *Memoirs of the life of the Right Honourable George Canning* (London: T. Tegg, 1828), I, pp. 156 -157.

³²² *A Catalogue of the Library of John Dent Esq.*, (London: William Nicol, 1825).

³²³ Roberts, p. 68.

³²⁴ De Ricci, p. 99.

³²⁵ Roberts, p. 68.

³²⁶ Dibdin, *Bibliomania*, III, p. 587.

that Baronet – namely 9031.; and it was sold for little more than one quarter.³²⁷

Barker credits Dent as having ‘a pioneering interest in illuminated manuscripts’.³²⁸ De Ricci also remarks on Dent’s interest in manuscripts and described the collection as:

containing numerous volumes of the greatest beauty, several remarkable illuminated manuscripts, the second volume of the first Homer, on vellum (afterwards in the Phillips Collection), the 1462 Bible and a number of other books printed on vellum, such as the 1469 Livy from the Canonici, Edwards and Sykes collections (now in the Grenville Library).³²⁹

Dent seems, then, to have had a sophisticated awareness of visual aspects of some of his volumes, even if his literary interests may have been slighter than some other members’. The more general, less individualistic collections such as Dent’s reveal themselves to be the largest collections, presumably because they often belonged to the richest Club members who could afford to compete for the rare or more sought-after items at auction. Book-collector without particular specialist tastes often acquired a large range of volumes. Large collections did not necessarily mean that the owner had any less intellectual interest in their collection. One of the foremost collections, in sheer numbers, was that of Richard Heber, a classical scholar and an extremely wealthy man who owned at least eight houses throughout Europe, all at the time of his death apparently filled to capacity with his books. As his obituary described:

Some years ago he built a new library at his house at Hodnet; which is said to be full. His residence in Pimlico, where he died, is filled like Magliabechi’s at Florence, with books from the top to the bottom – every chair, every table, every passage, containing piles of erudition. He had another house in York-street, leading to St James-street, Westminster, laden from the ground floor to the garret, with

³²⁷ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 409.

³²⁸ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, p. 42.

³²⁹ De Ricci, p. 99.

curious books. He had a library in the High-street, Oxford, an immense library at Paris, another at Antwerp, another at Brussels, another at Ghent, and at other places in the Low Countries and in Germany.³³⁰

In retrospect, the vast quantities of books that he owned are unsurprising; he had been buying nearly every item of interest to himself that had come onto the market over the previous thirty years.³³¹ The obsessive scale of his collection only became apparent, even it seems to his friends, following his death, when the disposal of his estate became a vast undertaking. The sale of Heber's collection is described by Hill Burton as being 'the largest book-sale probably that ever was in the world'.³³² He goes on to say that estimates of the collection containing 'books in six figures' may well have been correct as the sales catalogue filled 'five thick octavo volumes'.³³³ This is confirmed by Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald, who on examining the copy of the sales catalogue held in the Athenaeum Library, wrote that 'it would seem that there were 119, 613 volumes sold! which it required no less than two hundred and two days, or nearly seven months, to sell; and the sum realised was £56, 774'.³³⁴ Heber is reported to have often said:

"Well you see, Sir, no man can comfortably do without three copies of a book. One he must have for a show copy, and he will probably keep it at his country-house; another he will require for his own use and reference; and unless he is inclined to part with this, which is very inconvenient, or risk the injury of his best copy, he must needs have a third at the service of his friends".³³⁵

³³⁰ 'Richard Heber, Esq.', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 155 (London: Jan 1834), p. 109.

³³¹ De Ricci, p. 104.

³³² Hill Burton, p. 98.

³³³ Hill Burton, p.98, although Hetherington Fitzgerald states that it was 6 volumes (*Book Fancier*, p. 231).

³³⁴ Percy Hetherington Fitzgerald, *The Book Fancier* (London: S.Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1887), p.231.

³³⁵ 'Richard Heber, Esq.', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 155 (London: Jan 1834), pp. 107.

This may have been an ‘after the fact’ justification for his own obsessive approach to book collecting, which saw him purchasing large quantities of duplicate volumes. He was, however, a generous lender of books and willing to allow scholars and authors the use of his library, so duplicates may have been required.

This immense collection had originated with the perfectly reasonable desire to assemble a library of Latin poetry.³³⁶ That quickly turned into a passion for buying books of all types, to the extent that even Dibdin felt himself unable to say how Heber should be classified as a book-collector. The Latin poetry collection led to an extensive collection of Greek and Latin classics, which he extended into Spanish (including a collection of Mexican books), French, Italian and Portuguese volumes.³³⁷ Thereafter Heber’s collection expanded in limitless directions, although De Ricci rightly describes its strongest vein as lying ‘in the field of early English literature, especially poetry and the drama’.³³⁸ He did not restrict himself to collecting printed books: part four of the sale of his library consisted of ‘1717 manuscripts, many of the greatest value and interest, mainly purchased by the British Museum, the Bodleian and Sir Thomas Phillipps’.³³⁹

Sadly his later life was marred by scandal; in 1825 he had allegedly made sexual advances at the Athenaeum Club to two young men, one of whom had threatened to bring the matter to court. Heber made a partial confession to his friend Henry Hobhouse who advised him to go into exile abroad where he would be safe from

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 105-106.

³³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

³³⁸ De Ricci, p. 104.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*

prosecution and public scandal. While Heber was still out of the country, a piece appeared in the *John Bull Magazine*, alluding to his close attachment to Charles Henry Hartshorne and implying this was a homosexual relationship. Hartshorne prosecuted Edward Shackell, the editor for libel and eventually, with financial aid from Heber, won the case. Heber, however, did not return to Britain until 1831 and lived the life of a recluse until his death in 1833, suffering social exclusion, ill health and the eventual dwindling of his wealth through his obsessive book collecting.³⁴⁰ Barker attributes Heber's reclusiveness to his book obsession rather than to social condemnation: 'as his collection grew its maintenance took more and more time, to the point where it filled his life to the exclusion of other concerns'.³⁴¹ Dibdin remained his friend and was instrumental in finding Heber's will which had been missing for several months after his death and inevitably, turned up on a bookshelf hidden between two volumes.³⁴² Perhaps one of the best descriptions written of Heber was by Leon. H. Vincent:

The name of Heber suggests the thought that all men who buy books are not bibliophiles. He alone is worthy the title who acquires his volumes with something like passion. One may buy books like a gentleman, and that is very well. One may buy books like a gentleman and a scholar, which counts for something more. But to be truly of the elect one must resemble Richard Heber, and buy books like a gentleman, a scholar, and a madman.³⁴³

Earl Spencer, the Club President, also bought books on a prodigious scale, but in a purposeful and orderly process of acquisition, and he held a number of sales to dispose of duplicates when necessary and to recoup money to offset his debts.³⁴⁴

³⁴⁰ 'Richard Heber', *HP* [accessed 21/06/2012].

³⁴¹ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, pp. 35-36.

³⁴² Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, pp .444-445.

³⁴³ Leon H. Vincent, *The Bibliotaph and Other People* (Boston and New York: Houghton and Mifflin, 1899), p. 2.

³⁴⁴ For an interesting discussion of Earl Spencer's financial position see Kristian Jensen, *Revolution and the Antiquarian Book* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 43.

This process of distillation was essential; as well as his constant ongoing purchasing, carried out with the intention of owning every volume in as perfect a condition as possible, Spencer also bought a number of complete library collections. These included Count Karoly Reiczky's library in 1789 bought for £2,500, Stanesby Alchorne's library in 1813 for £3,400 and the Duke di Cassano Serra's collection purchased in 1820. One sale, held by Spencer to dispose of, among other items, duplicates resulting from his purchase of the Alchorne library, raised £1769.³⁴⁵

The Spencer Library has been catalogued, analysed and described in far greater detail than can be attempted here, but the barest outline suffices to give an impression of the scale and importance of this famous collection.³⁴⁶ Along with his title, Earl Spencer inherited an already extensive library, which he added to and improved throughout much of his life. He succeeded in gathering together an important collection of early and rare editions which were later purchased from his grandson in 1892 by Henriqueta Rylands, the widow of John Rylands, a wealthy industrialist. She installed the collection at the public library she had endowed in Manchester in the memory of her husband. She paid £210,000 for the collection, at that time, the highest price ever paid for a private collection.

³⁴⁵ De Ricci, pp. 74.

³⁴⁶ Among works covering the contents of this massive library see T.F. Dibdin, *Book Rarities, or a Descriptive Catalogue of Some of the most Curious Rare and Valuable Books of Early Date, Chiefly in the Collection of George John, Earl Spencer, K.G.* (N.P., 1811); T.F. Dibdin, *Bibliotheca Spenceriana* (1814 -15); T.F. Dibdin, *Aedes Althorpianae* (1822) ;T.F. Dibdin, *Catalogue of the Books Printed in the Fifteenth Century Formerly in the Library of the Duke de Cassano Serra and now in Earl Spencer's Collection*, (1823); Samuel Timmins, *Lord Spencer's Library: A Sketch of a Visit to Althorp, Northamptonshire* (Northampton: Taylor, 1870).

Principally Spencer collected early printed items, and his collection contained entire series of the works that had proceeded from the early presses, including by 1864, fifty-seven separate works by Caxton; this figure included three items believed to be sole surviving copies (out of twenty-seven Caxton items existing in unique copies that were known of). This was at a time when the British Museum owned fifty-five works by Caxton, although to be fair, eleven of the Museum's volumes were considered unique copies.³⁴⁷

It is difficult to grasp the scale of Earl Spencer's collection, or the financial and cultural value of the books it contained. As de Ricci writes:

No other collector ever owned all the first editions of the classics, both the Mayence Bibles (42-line and 36-line editions), both the Fust and Schoeffer Psalters (1457 and 1459), nearly all the rarest incunabula, including impressions by Pfister and no less than fifty-six Caxtons (more than the British Museum, until a quite recent date), the finest Bibles, the first editions of all the great Italian authors, books in splendid bindings, the rarest English Bibles, fourteen block-books, about 100 books printed on vellum, beautiful Elzevirs and the choicest collection of Aldines existing in any library.³⁴⁸

He describes Earl Spencer as 'one of the greatest book-collectors, not only in English history, but even in the history of the world'.³⁴⁹ That claim seems reasonable given that by 1814 the collection contained 45,000 volumes, many of extraordinary value.³⁵⁰ A long excerpt, but worth quoting in its entirety from Edward Edwards neatly summarises the benefits to the wider literary world:

Ebert [...] was once pleased to ask, "of what utility to literature is the Spencer library?" The question admits of very many and very conclusive answers. Many enduring works have drawn largely on its stores. Many pleasurable associations in literary biography connect

³⁴⁷ Edwards, *Libraries and Founders of Libraries*, pp. 440-441.

³⁴⁸ De Ricci, pp. 76.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 73.

³⁵⁰ Dibdin, *Bibliotheca Spenceriana*, p. ii. 'Nearly every one [...] is a treasure to literature', Timmins, p. 8.

themselves inseparably with its history. Gibbon commemorated, seventy years ago, the delight with which he had examined its primitive treasures, “exhausting a whole morning among the early editions of Cicero.” The author of that useful contribution to the curiosities of literature, as well as to the history of printing, the *Principia Typographia*, recorded, but the other day, the great and repeated obligations he lay under to the Althorp library, not only for the use of books, indispensable to his task yet elsewhere unattainable, but for that conspicuous liberality with which Lord Spencer sent them more than once from Northamptonshire to London, merely for his accommodation. This Wygfair Caxton affords an individual, but not an exceptional, example of another kind. Its entire transcription enabled Southey to give to the public, in 1817, his *Byrth, Lyfe, and Actes of Kyng Arthur*. To make a list of the obligations acknowledged by other authors would be to tell a very long story.³⁵¹

Timmins in 1870 similarly voiced appreciation of the Cicero series:

Here are the seventy editions of Cicero – memorable for Gibbon’s morning among them, as well as for their classic value and literary worth – nearly fifty of which were printed before 1473, mostly representing different “texts,” and thus practically as valuable as manuscripts now lost for ever.³⁵²

Dibdin listed the Spencer collection’s 23 Latin Bibles printed before 1500, a further 12 printed between 1500 and 1600, 9 German Bibles printed before 1500 and 5 printed in the following century besides numerous early Bibles printed in other languages:

There are also twenty-three more Bibles (and perhaps of late still more) in all the other languages of Europe. Be it remembered, too, that these Bibles have been selected, not with a view to number, but to critical importance and rarity.³⁵³

Some of Earl Spencer’s methods of collecting may appear morally dubious to modern eyes, causing many early books to pass from the ecclesiastic collections that had preserved them, to his own private collection. One specific example occurred in 1811 when Spencer, or rather Dibdin on his behalf, negotiated with

³⁵¹ Edwards, *Libraries and Founders of Libraries*, pp. 409-410.

³⁵² Timmins, p. 9.

³⁵³ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 579-580.

the Chapter of Lincoln Cathedral for the purchase of several Caxtons bequeathed to the cathedral by Dean Michael Honywood in 1681.³⁵⁴ Hazlitt, not mincing words, describes it as ‘the precious Honywood bequest, improperly sold to Dibdin for 500 guineas’.³⁵⁵ This type of transaction was far from rare in the early nineteenth century, and certainly not rare among the members of the Roxburghe Club. William Roberts comments on a typically discerning purchase by William Bolland:

One of the greatest bargains which this distinguished collector [Bolland] secured during his career became his property through the medium of Benjamin Wheatley, who purchased a bundle of poetical tracts from the Chapter Library at Lincoln for 80 guineas. When the inevitable sale came, one of these trifles, ‘The Rape of Lucrece,’ alone realized 100 guineas.³⁵⁶

A justification of sorts can be found for the practice if, as Edwards says of the Earl Spencer’s purchases:

the guardians of a public or semi-public library were of opinion that they better discharged their duty, as trustees, by parting with some extremely rare but, in their present habitation, unused books, and by applying the proceeds to the acquisition of common, but much wanted works of modern dates, he was always willing to acquire the rarities at their full value, and so to supply the means of multiplying the desired books of reference and of reading.³⁵⁷

Whether this was generally the case in such undertakings it seems likely in the case of Earl Spencer that his public profile and wealth might have often brought more pressure to bear on trustees than the financial position regarding the collections they guarded.

³⁵⁴ De Ricci, pp. 95-96.

³⁵⁵ Quoted in W. Carew, *Book Collector* (London: John Grant, 1904), p. 34.

³⁵⁶ Roberts, p. 69.

³⁵⁷ Edwards, *Libraries and Founders of Libraries*, p. 410.

Although the Earl at the height of the bibliomania was one of the most prolific purchasers of that time it would do him a grave disservice to call him a bibliomaniac. He spent vast sums but not indiscriminately, as demonstrated by his refusal to continue to bid for the famous Valdarfer at the Roxburghe sale after the Marquis of Blandford had raised his bid by the final £10. The Earl was content to let the volume go, and although he could not have foreseen it, to later purchase the same book for £900 after the auction of Blandford's library. As Leigh Hunt, a spectator at the Roxburghe Sale, later wrote:

What satisfaction the Marquis got out of his victory I cannot say. The Earl, who I believe, was a genuine lover of books, could go home and reconcile himself to his defeat by reading the work in a cheaper edition.³⁵⁸

Moving on from the high-powered world of Earl Spencer we come to Sir Mark Masterman Sykes, the possessor of another inherited library, although one of more modest dimensions. As with so many Roxburghe members, his library had been amassed over a long period of time and predated the high tide of bibliomania. His father, Sir Christopher Sykes, had built the family library at Sledmere.³⁵⁹ Thereafter Sir Mark had, for more than thirty years, supplemented its resources through 'unremitting and careful work'.³⁶⁰ The Sykes collection was particularly focused on first editions of classical works.³⁶¹ He owned early works printed by Fust and Schöeffer, Sweynheym and Pannartz.³⁶² Like most Roxburghe members he collected early English poetry, but also more varied

³⁵⁸ Leigh Hunt, *The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt* (London: Smith, Elder, 1870), p. 124.

³⁵⁹ William Clarke, *Repertorium bibliographicum*, p.374.

³⁶⁰ William Younger Fletcher, *English Book Collectors* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Trübner, 1902), p. 331.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 331.

³⁶² Alan Bell, 'Sir Mark Masterman Sykes', *ODNB*, [accessed 25 June 2011]

works produced by the early printers, especially those from the Aldine press of which he owned a number of perfect copies.³⁶³ De Ricci singles out:

a wonderful array of the finest incunabula, the Gutenberg *Bible*, the 1459 Psalter, the 1462 *Bible*, the 1469 Livy on vellum and other books of the same class. Sykes had also collected Elizabethan literature and secured some of the choicest items from the Bibliotheca Anglo-Poetica.³⁶⁴

Though not a committed collector of manuscripts, the small number he did purchase included:

A beautiful illuminated Office, on vellum, of the Virgin Mary, executed for Francis I., King of France; the original Report of Convocation to Henry VIII. On the Legality of his proposed Divorce from Anne of Cleves, subscribed with the autograph signatures of the Archbishop and all the Bishops and Clergy assembled in Convocation, dated July 9th, 1540; and an autograph manuscript of Dugdale's Visitation of the county of Yourk in 1665-66.³⁶⁵

Taken as a whole his library was a rich but unsurprising collection, which eventually raised £18,700 at auction.³⁶⁶

More surprising is Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges who although known as an author, poet and critic is not - interestingly given his membership of the Roxburghe Club - widely regarded as a book collector. He must, presumably, as a reasonably wealthy man of letters with a passion for seventeenth-century poetry, have owned a private library of some sort, but there is no mention other than in his own letters, of him haunting the auction rooms or scouring the book-sellers' shops and he is not mentioned in any of the usual volumes on book-collectors. Probably he had no interest in the acquisition of particular volumes except as reference material and equally possibly, little spare money for

³⁶³ Roberts, p. 58.

³⁶⁴ De Ricci, pp. 95-96.

³⁶⁵ Fletcher, p. 332.

³⁶⁶ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 461.

collecting. He certainly haunted the reading room of the British Museum a great deal. His literary interests lay in other directions, especially towards the redemption of early English works in danger of extinction due to their rarity and authors at risk of being forgotten by modern readers.³⁶⁷ His inclusion in the Club confirms that it was not intended to be merely a meeting of book-collectors but rather, as Dibdin stated, of enthusiasts for early literature who wished to reproduce rare pieces of poetry. Possibly too, Brydges simply knew enough of the men who congregated for dinner to make his membership viable without any substantial collection of his own.

In complete contrast to Brydges' apparent lack of collecting passion, stood Thomas Frognall Dibdin who was arguably the driving force behind 'bibliomania' or at the very least, its most noteworthy chronicler. W. Powell Jones, 1940 stated that 'the Oxford English Dictionary credits Dibdin with the earliest usage of most of the biblio compounds in English'.³⁶⁸ Never wealthy, although with a good income from his clerical positions, and towards the end of his life suffering from dementia he became largely reliant on the generosity of his friends. The difficult combination of an obsession with books with a moderate income apparently created problems for others beyond his family circle. He made full use of the early nineteenth-century gentleman's prerogative to live on credit to the detriment of tradesmen. Thomas Rees records:

It was unfortunate for the honest bookseller [John Major, a book-seller of Fleet Street] to be too familiar and confiding in the unprincipled parson. The former accepted bills to a large amount drawn by the latter, who failed to honour them, and the consequence was bankruptcy and total ruin.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁷ See comments in Sadleir, 'Archdeacon Francis Wrangham: a supplement', p. 449.

³⁶⁸ Powell Jones, p. 477, fn. 2.

³⁶⁹ Dr. Thomas Rees, John Britton, *Reminiscences of Literary London, from 1779 to 1853* (London: Suckling & Galloway, 1896) rep. (New York & London: Garland, 1974), pp. 94-95.

He had collected from a relatively early age and often acted as a book agent for others, most notably for Earl Spencer, being described as ‘an adviser and agent of remarkable ability, taste, and knowledge’.³⁷⁰ It is unclear whether he acted in this capacity for financial gain, out of friendship and to gain patronage, or because it allowed him to attend auctions and visit booksellers, buying beautiful books and being involved in the arena he loved, but without expense to himself. It became necessary in 1817 for him to sell his library to cover the printing costs of his lavish volumes on book collecting and it is notable that, when he presented a reprint as his contribution to the Roxburghe Club, it was a reproduction of a book taken, not from his own collection which may perhaps not by that point have contained anything that he considered of sufficient rarity or significance, but an item from the Duke of Devonshire’s library.³⁷¹ He was artistic by nature, and naturally drawn to the typographic and decorative elements of printing; what Michael Edward Robinson refers to as a ‘camp aesthetic’.³⁷² Dibdin himself, however, argued strongly for the curbing of merely fashionable and superficial bibliomaniacal enthusiasms by calling for a concentration on the intellectual elements of texts alongside the aesthetic.

Sir William Bolland, the host of the dinner party the night before the auction of the Valdarfer Boccaccio, was a lawyer, a Recorder of Reading and an amateur poet. Although his obituary in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* describes him as ‘an ardent admirer of the literature of the olden times’, and duly noted his membership of the Roxburghe Club, the obituarist is more preoccupied with

³⁷⁰ Hetherington Fitzgerald, p. 226.

³⁷¹ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, II, p. 920.

³⁷² Robinson, p. 12.

listing his collection of paintings than his library.³⁷³ Yet Bolland's library 'comprised 2,940 lots, and realized £3,019, was sold by Evans, and included many choice books'.³⁷⁴ He owned items originating from the Lincoln collection, obtained, as described above, in one of those purchases from ancient archives which appear somewhat unpalatable to the modern mind. Bolland's bundle of texts including the valuable, *Rape of Lucrece* had already attracted Dibdin.³⁷⁵ Indeed, Dibdin says he had assembled with a view to purchasing them himself:

Entwined some whip-cord around – setting them apart for the consideration of the Dean and Chapter, whether, a *second* time, I might not become a purchaser of some of their book-treasures? I had valued them at fourscore guineas.³⁷⁶

He comments that he had considered at the time how interested 'Hortensius' (William Bolland's alter ego in Dibdin's works) would be in these tracts only to find later that the Chapter had sold them to Wheatley and Bolland now owned them.³⁷⁷ Bolland's interest in books was serious and well-informed, free from the taint of bibliomania, as a contemporary noted:

Next to Heber, he is the best judge of old books in the kingdom; he is one of the pillars of the famous Roxburghe Club, some notice of which will appear in a future part of these sketches. Nor is Bolland a laborious trifler, tinctured with no reading but black letter, and holding no writer classical but "The classics of an age that knew of none."

For I know that no man despises more the mere catalogue student. If he loves old books (no man loves them more), it is not from the mere vanity of the collector, but that they are often depositories in which the treasures of deep thought are enshrined; and for their fresh, youthful, herculean English, their strength of reason, their tone of sincere and heartfelt eloquence. Often have I heard him express his contempt for the coxcomb who computes

³⁷³ 'Sir William Bolland', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 14 (1840), pp. 433-434.

³⁷⁴ Roberts, p. 69.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁷⁶ Dibdin, *Bibliomania*, III, pp. 588-9.

³⁷⁷ Hortensius, a friend and orator, appears in Cicero's *Hortensius*, which argues for the pre-eminence of philosophy: the name doubtless compliments Boland's profession as advocate.

the value of a book by its mere rarity. And of all maladies, that which is called the bibliomania is the worst, - the most estranged from the rational and liberal pursuit of a scholar. Nothing provokes his spleen and laughter more; and though he is a thorough-bred book-hunter, he has too genuine a taste, and too much literature, to tolerate the laboured nothingness of certain books, stamped with an artificial exorbitance of value by the quackery of a limited impression.³⁷⁸

It is striking how many individual members of the Club, were clearly and are recognised as, unsympathetic to the excesses of bibliomania, a corrective to the myth that the Club as a whole represents the apex of bibliomania.

Moving on, Francis Freeling had, as Dibdin's lengthy account shows a typical, if particularly well-appointed, book collection for that period.³⁷⁹ It did, however, have a particular area of splendour, which was that of witchcraft and demonology, in which Dibdin describes it as being so well represented that 'even the late Sir Walter Scott might have gathered more than one relic wherewith to enrich the many shrines of this description which he has erected within his fascinating performances'.³⁸⁰ Hazlitt says, rather cryptically, that 'through his official connection with the Post-Office he procured many prizes from the country districts'.³⁸¹ Did Freeling make legal if unorthodox use of his position? Did he get reports from Post Office employees of likely documents or rural informants?

Edward Utterson, a barrister, appointed a Clerk in the Court of Chancery in 1815, is mostly remembered as an accomplished amateur artist who produced

³⁷⁸ Thomas Campbell, 'The Philosophy of Clubs', *New Monthly Magazine*, 22 (Jan 1828), 261-73 (p. 270).

³⁷⁹ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, II, pp. 919-937.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 936.

³⁸¹ Hazlitt, *Book Collector*, p. 269.

some attractive landscapes in watercolour.³⁸² He owned the private Beldornie Press, situated at his home on the Isle of Wight which he employed to reprint examples of sixteenth-century poetry, especially works by Sam Rowlands. As well interests in English early poetry he collected Italian, Spanish and French chivalric romances.³⁸³ His bookish activities inspired the poet Charles Townsend to write the following verses:

A man of taste and learning he,
And manners well refined,
And what was best and worth them all,
A heart most warm and kind.

His books were choice – and very old,
(By Pynson and de Worde)
And bound so well they opened flat,
Almost of their own accord.

And from his own Beldornie Press,
What treasures we obtain!
'Sam Rowlands' buried years in dust,
Comes into life again.

His ancient prints in Gothic style,
Old Ballads in black letter,
With wood-cuts, and the more grotesque
He loved them all the better.³⁸⁴

His library was sold in two lots, the first being auctioned in 1852, the second after a long gap in 1857; the two sales raised around £8800 in total.³⁸⁵

Examining the collection of the sixth Duke of Devonshire takes us again to another of the vast, inherited libraries owned by the aristocrats of the Roxburghe Club. The Duke acceded to his title and a vast fortune (as well as the massive gambling debts of his mother, the scandalous beauty Georgiana) in 1811 at the

³⁸² Utterson, *Letters*, p. 9.

³⁸³ De Ricci, p. 139.

³⁸⁴ Charles Townsend, 'Ballad', in *Letters of a Literary Antiquary*, p. 14.

³⁸⁵ De Ricci, p. 139.

age of 21. He immediately set about collecting Italian marbles, art and a massive library of rare books that would eventually rival that of his uncle, Earl Spencer. An unknown to the collecting world then, his purchases at the Roxburghe sale made both in person and by an agent instructed by him were so great as to lead to rumours that his agent was buying on the behalf of Napoleon Bonaparte.³⁸⁶

According to Dibdin these purchases included ‘clusters of Caxtons’ including the *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy* for which he paid £1060. 10s.³⁸⁷

The Duke, like many of the period’s wealthiest book collectors, purchased entire libraries to speed up the onerous task of building up his own cabinet. In 1812 he purchased the library of Dr. Damper, Bishop of Ely, for ‘a sum little short of £10,000’, whisking it from under the nose of Earl Spencer who had prevaricated during the negotiations Dibdin was carrying on, on his behalf.³⁸⁸ Another already formed library was the collection of dramatic works amassed by Kemble, the actor and playwright; this was not the famous actor’s entire library but rather a selection of the rarest items cherry-picked by the Duke before the remainder went to auction. This portion of the collection cost the Duke 2000 guineas.³⁸⁹ He continued to add to the collection, and the most important volume later purchased was the first edition, 1603, of *Hamlet* believed at the time to be the only one in existence.³⁹⁰ Like Earl Spencer, the Duke was generous with his library, welcoming its use by authors and saying of the Kemble collection that it was:

³⁸⁶ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 357.

³⁸⁷ De Ricci, p. 72.

³⁸⁸ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 362.

³⁸⁹ Fitzgerald, p. 266.

³⁹⁰ De Ricci, pp. 78-80.

on my first acquiring it placed [at Chatsworth House]; but for the sake of reference by living authors, as well as for convenience in attempting to complete the series as much as possible, they were removed to Devonshire House [i.e. in London].³⁹¹

Describing the formation of his entire collection, the Duke wrote:

In that attempt, the unwearied diligence and unexampled knowledge of this subject displayed by Mr. J. Payne Collier have been of invaluable service to me; and the pleasure has indeed been great (besides that of possessing so many treasures) of finding that a pursuit, which may have had a good deal of bibliomania in its composition has been of real use to several men of letters, and especially that it has assisted in the completion of the best and most satisfactory edition of Shakespeare that exists.³⁹²

This presumably refers to the *Works of William Shakespeare* edited by John Payne Collier with the dedication:

To his Grace the Duke of Devonshire, K.G. This edition of the works of the greatest dramatic poet of the world, which could not have been completed without the aid of His Grace's matchless collection of the original impressions of Shakespeare's plays, is, with permission, inscribed, by his devoted and grateful servant, The Editor'.³⁹³

In the preface Collier describes the Duke's collection of early Shakespeare editions as:

Notoriously the most complete in the world: his Grace has a perfect series, including, of course, every first edition, several of which are neither at Oxford, Cambridge, nor in the British Museum.³⁹⁴

Collier later became notorious himself when he stood accused of a number of literary forgeries concerning 'discoveries' that he had made about Shakespeare's life and works.³⁹⁵ The Duke, however, had died before the accusations of forgery came to light.³⁹⁶ He may have been a little self-deprecating when writing

³⁹¹ Fitzgerald, p. 266.

³⁹² Duke of Devonshire, *Hand Book of Chatsworth, Hardwick and Kemp Town, MS. and Proofs* (Devonshire Collection, 1844, CH1/2/48).

³⁹³ John Payne Collier, *The Works of William Shakespeare* (London: Whittaker, 1844).

³⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. v-vi.

³⁹⁵ James Lees-Milne, *The Bachelor Duke* (London: John Murray, 1991), p. 97.

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

of his indebtedness to Payne Collier; while there may have been ‘a good deal of bibliomania’ in his collecting he was also a committed and knowledgeable collector who accumulated with a purpose rather than indiscriminately. As

Dibdin wrote:

[The Duke’s] book-propensities had been scarcely developed to the public knowledge, but his more intimate acquaintance were well aware of his zealous attachment to the pages of DeBure, Renouard, and Herbert. How frequently he would turn his back upon the gaities of the “flaunting town,” and consume the midnight oil in making himself acquainted with such *libri desiderati* as might at once add to the splendour and value of the library left him by his ancestors.³⁹⁷

Back on less exalted ground, George Hibbert’s library has been aptly characterised by Fitzgerald as ‘a collection formed to illustrate the history of printing, and therefore offering the most splendid and unique examples’, though this could apply to most of the Roxburghe members’ collections.³⁹⁸ Hibbert’s collection contained the familiar rollcall of early printed Bibles, including a *Gutenberg Bible*, *Fust and Schoeffer’s 1462 Latin Bible*, the *Complutensian Polyglot Bible* reported to have belonged to Cardinal Ximenes, the first edition of Luther’s copy of his translation of the *Bible* with his own autograph and the 1479 *Bible* printed by Jenson. He was also a collector of block-books.³⁹⁹ According to Dibdin, Hibbert’s library sold for 21,700l.⁴⁰⁰ De Ricci, however, says that the sum raised was ‘over £23,000’: given the large discrepancy between these sums it is possible that Dibdin in 1836 was unaware of an auction that had yet to take place at the time of his writing.⁴⁰¹

³⁹⁷ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, pp. 356-7.

³⁹⁸ Fitzgerald, p. 233.

³⁹⁹ Fletcher, p. 300.

⁴⁰⁰ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 461.

⁴⁰¹ De Ricci, p. 100.

John Arthur Lloyd, another unfamiliar name today, was a wealthy landowner who had inherited a country estate at Leaton Knolls in Shropshire. He was proposed to the club by Henry Drury, his former tutor at Harrow.⁴⁰² Dibdin described Lloyd as ‘a gentleman in all respects qualified by his scholarship and attainments – and, above all, by his unwarpd and unwarpable attachment to the *Bibliomania*’.⁴⁰³ Dibdin also writes: ‘I scarcely know, for its limits, so choice and so enviable a collection as his’.⁴⁰⁴ This is confirmed by the details of his library which included:

The *Mazarine Latin Bible*, 1455- Larcher’s copy. The *Bible* of 1642, upon vellum: made up out of two copies by the late Mr. Edwards. The *Aldine Bible* of 1518, thick paper. The *Constitutions of Pope Clement V.* 1467, upon vellum. The *first Homer* of 1488, large, in original boards and clasps; with two leaves of the *Odyssey* upon vellum. The *Lactantius* of 1465. The *Apollonius Rhodius* of 1496. The Thomas Aquinas of 1467. And the Aldine Editions Principes of *Herodotus*; *Thucydides*, and *Pausanius*; to which add, the Aldine *Theocritus* of 1495.⁴⁰⁵

In other words, it contained the same rare, expensive and irreplaceable sorts of volumes that appear in so many of the collections of this period, volumes that are now mostly and fittingly held in public collections, and that a modern collector, however wealthy, could only ever dream of owning.

At this period clergymen seem to have been disproportionately represented among book-collectors. One such, the Venerable Archdeacon Wrangham was an avid reader, a prolific writer, a respected scholar and a passionate collector of books on a wide variety of subjects. According to De Ricci, at his death Wrangham’s library contained around 300 manuscripts and a ‘nearly perfect set

⁴⁰² Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 391.

⁴⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 396.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 396.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 396-397.

of Aldines, largely based on the famous Renouard collection'.⁴⁰⁶ Following the sale of much of Wrangham's library at auction, the British Museum purchased the manuscript collection for £2000 following private negotiation with the executors of his estate.⁴⁰⁷ A keen writer and collector of pamphlets, in 1842 he donated 10,000 pamphlets to Trinity College, Cambridge.⁴⁰⁸ Alongside the books that he collected out of personal intellectual interest and to further his studies, Wrangham, in the spirit of a true bibliomaniac, loved collecting rare books just for the sake of their rarity.⁴⁰⁹ The elusiveness of these volumes was for him the sport and apparently 'the harder they were to obtain (almost irrespective of their contents) the better he liked them'.⁴¹⁰ His approach to book collecting illustrates the problem inherent in dismissing a collector as a bibliomaniac with all the derogatory assumptions inherent in that term; a love for the trivialities of the book chase can, and in most cases does, dwell alongside a love for the text, without any contradiction at all. One volume may be bought for its contents, another for its rarity or binding and a happy third for containing all the admired qualities, and this holistic approach to books was the defining characteristic of the men who made up the Roxburghe Club.

The Archdeacon was a correspondent of long-standing with Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges and a series of letters that span from 1812-1829 display both his ardent collecting spirit and his equally fervent desire to be a member of the Roxburghe Club.⁴¹¹ He writes:

⁴⁰⁶ De Ricci, pp. 114-115.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., pp. 114-115.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 107.

⁴⁰⁹ Sadleir, 'Archdeacon Francis Wrangham: a supplement', p.447.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Ibid., pp. 422-461.

I wish my friend Heber and yourself would one day find a niche for me in the Roxburghe. I go on collecting with unabated ardour, and have really some curious books. In number my shelves hold about 12,000.⁴¹²

Later he writes, ‘if I belonged to the Roxburghe – an ambition I hinted when I last wrote to Mr. Heber – I should think Hornby would be a good subject for a reprint’.⁴¹³ His rate of purchasing is apparent from yet another letter to Egerton Brydges, written in 1821 which states that ‘I go on collecting with undiminished industry, my present number of volumes must be near 15,000.’⁴¹⁴ This indicates that in five years alone he had bought 3000 books. He evidently had the required book-collecting credentials and he was elected a member of the Club in 1822.

Another example of the susceptibility of a man of the cloth to coveting the rare volume of his neighbour was that of the Venerable Archdeacon Butler, the Master of the Royal Free Grammar School of Shrewsbury.⁴¹⁵ A respected classical scholar:

[he] combined extensive, and accurate, scholarship, with peculiar excellence in composition, both in prose and verse, in classical literature, and a remarkable knowledge of history, and antiquities. He might have had his equals among his contemporise in the study of the dead languages; but probably no schoolmaster of his day had the same aptitude, or taste, for Latin, and Greek composition.⁴¹⁶

Unsurprisingly his collection contained a great many editions of classical works, but he also collected more widely and was, judging from the descriptions given of his collection in *Reminiscences*, a collector after Dibdin’s own heart with a

⁴¹² Sadleir, p. 432.

⁴¹³ Ibid., p. 431.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., p. 436.

⁴¹⁵ Powys-Land Club, ‘The Right Rev. Samuel Butler, D.D.’, *Collections Historical and Archaeological relating to Montgomeryshire and its Borders*, 23 (London: Whiting, 1861), 2 – 12 (p .2).

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., p. 3.

library full of rare early printed books and fragments. Furthermore, he apparently had tastes that ran to areas of collecting that even Dibdin could not appreciate:

If Dr. Butler have not the *finest* Collection of Aldines – in regard to *vellums* and *large papers* – he has certainly the largest and most complete; [...] this Aldine passion is carried to extravagant, and to me unintelligible, limits. I cannot comprehend why forgeries are to be mixed up with genuine commodities. I cannot comprehend why the authors of such base stuff are to sit down upon the same bench with the original manufacturers. Would you knowingly travel one post in the same chaise with a notorious forger? And yet, my excellent friend, the Archdeacon, stuffs the pockets and seats of his own carriage with a very host of *Lyonese Counterfeits!*⁴¹⁷

Sir Walter Scott needs little introduction as a man, a writer or as a book-collector. As a bibliophile he assembled, as might be expected from his own works, a library comprising books on Scottish and Irish history, chivalry and romance, folklore, witchcraft, English and Scottish poetry and early literature from a variety of traditions.⁴¹⁸ There is little in the catalogue of his library, presented to the Bannatyne Club by his son-in-law John Gibson Lockhart after Scott's death, to indicate that he had any interest in collecting what was fashionable, but rather that in many ways he had collected together his library as a resource for his imagination and writing. That is borne out by the brief introduction to the catalogue which includes a quote, attributed to Lockhart:

The nature and extent of the Collection throw light, in a remarkable manner, on the history of its founder. The reader has before him a faithful inventory of the materials with which the National Poet and Novelist had stored his mind before he began his public career.⁴¹⁹

His library which is retained intact at Abbotsford contains around 7000 volumes.

⁴¹⁷ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, II, p. 970.

⁴¹⁸ J. G. Cochrane, *Catalogue of the Library at Abbotsford* (Edinburgh: Constable for the Bannatyne Club, 1838).

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid.*

These libraries were amassed during the golden age of collecting, and by the mid 1830s it was all but over. Gradually the rare volumes were making their way into public collections, and overseas to the new collections being created in America and other countries where new money was plentiful. Discussing Heber's vast collection, after his death, Dibdin describes the dispersal in a melancholy tone that could have equally described the bibliomaniac age of book-collecting itself:

It is now fast melting away. Seven successive snow-balls of enormous dimensions have already disappeared; and four more of equal size are quickly to fall into dissolution. Within six months to come, every volume will have also probably taken its departure for ever.⁴²⁰

2.3 THE LITERARY WORKS OF THE ROXBURGHE CLUB MEMBERS

The early nineteenth century was an age of letters; the written word was everywhere, in both published and private form. The construction of a reliable postal service made personal communication easier than ever before. On the wider public stage, the increase in the production of books, newspapers, periodicals and other printed matter created a heady atmosphere in which ideas and opinions could be made concrete with relative ease and swiftly transmitted to a public eager for the newest information. In this fertile environment of literary possibilities it is perhaps unsurprising to find that the men who made up the Roxburghe Club were authors, almost to a man, although this aspect of its membership has seemingly been ignored by previous writing about the Club. In this section I will examine the texts written by Club members in some detail, and illustrate how many of the men who belonged to the Roxburghe Club were not

⁴²⁰ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, II, pp. 938-939.

simply consumers of printed matter but also the producers of a variety of publications.

It is to be expected that in any large group of individuals, there will be a distribution of abilities across a given spectrum and the Roxburghe Club was no exception. The literary distinction of the members ranged from professional authors like Sir Walter Scott through to enthusiastic and often surprisingly talented, but strictly private writers, like the Duke of Devonshire. Between these extremes were gentlemanly semi-professionals, scholars writing on academic subjects, professional men writing poetry as a hobby. There were also men, like Dibdin and Haslewood, who were employed in other fields, but who made a significant part of their income or reputation from literary pursuits. Some members of the club, such as E.V. Utterson, did not write anything themselves (beyond introductory material) but instead preferred to act as editor, on their own behalf or in the employ of others. Sometimes these literary offerings inhabited the interesting area that lay between personal letters and commercial publication, in which pieces of writing that originated in private correspondence, or formed open-letters, were published for public consumption, often as part of an ongoing intellectual dialogue.

Dibdin, without doubt the foremost chronicler of the book-collecting circles, is familiar as the author of books such as *Bibliomania; The Bibliographical Decameron* and *Reminiscences of a Literary Life*. Other titles by him are less familiar and include *Poems; Sermons, Doctrinal and Practical; preached in King Street, Brompton; Quebec and Fitzroy Chapels; Sermons;* and the *Sunday*

*Library; or the Protestant's manual for the Sabbath-day.*⁴²¹ While his bibliographic texts have often been criticised or ridiculed for his hyperbolic, baroque style of writing, his abilities as an author go beyond these works and show very different sides to his personality. His sermons, for instance, show him to be capable of writing in a clear and robust manner, devoid of the flowery mannerisms and affectations. Far from being the foolishly excitable cataloguer of superficialities that he is often painted, he instead appears to have been a skilfully versatile author who knew his target audiences and adapted his style accordingly. If the fashionable collectors of the day were pleased to speak in the ornate slang of the 'ton' then his books were equally pleased to reflect that language and tone. This elite usage of language delineated the world of the fashionable and excluded those who languished amongst the hopelessly outré as effectively as a 'cut' from a nobleman or being omitted from the list at Almack's. The difference here was that not only did the aspirant need to understand the fashionable vernacular, but they also needed to be familiar with the jargon of book collecting, making entrance to this rarefied world doubly exclusive. This desire to prove his credentials as one who exists on the inside of the fashionable world can be seen in the subject matter of Dibdin's bibliographical books as well as the language used to write them. He repeatedly mentions the beautiful libraries and homes of his friends and acquaintances, and by implicit or explicit suggestion, his frequent entry into those areas reserved for the personal use of those who orbit within the owners' exclusive social circles. His obvious pride

⁴²¹ T. F. Dibdin, *Poems* (London: Murray, 1797); T.F. Dibdin, *Sermons, Doctrinal and Practical: preached in King Street, Brompton; Quebec and Fitzroy Chapels* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1820); T.F. Dibdin, *Sermons* (London: Harding, Triphook and Lepard, 1825); T.F. Dibdin, *The Sunday Library; or The Protestant's Manual for the Sabbath-day* (London: Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown and Green, 1831).

and pleasure in these social connections is noted by Deidre Lynch who remarks that:

Dibdin's eagerness to hint at how many aristocrats he knows – or, better still, his habit of only half-revealing their identities, in pseudonyms decipherable only by the cognoscenti – can make *The Library Companion* read like a contemporary silver fork novel.⁴²²

Dibdin's excitable gush of enthusiasm towards the more superficial or aesthetic attractions of rare books did not mean that he placed no value on the contents of the volumes that he collected. It is, of course, possible that this accusation could be levelled at other collectors who caught the 'bibliomania' from his paeans to the auction room. Rather than reflecting a superficial approach to books, Dibdin's writing is a consciously fey expression of what was for him a deeply held passion for every facet of books, in other words treating a subject that he believed in wholeheartedly, in a lightly entertaining way that would appeal to a society that expected to be amused. For Dibdin, the extrinsic and aesthetic values of a volume's surface beauty and rarity, was in addition to its intrinsic textual value, not instead of it. If people mistook his point then it was not for want of his having made this clearly enough in his writing:

In the first place, the disease of the Bibliomania is materially softened, or rendered mild, by directing our studies to useful and profitable works; whether these be printed upon small or large paper, in the gothic, roman or italic type. To consider merely the intrinsic excellence and not the exterior splendor or adventitious value, of any production, will keep us perhaps wholly free from this disease. Let the midnight lamp be burnt to illuminate the stores of antiquity – whether they be romances, or chronicles, or legends, and whether they be printed by ALDUS or CAXTON – if a brighter lustre can thence be thrown upon the pages of modern learning! To trace genius to its source, or to see how she has been influenced or modified, by the lore of past times, is both a pleasing and profitable pursuit.⁴²³

⁴²²Deidre Lynch, "'Wedded to Books': Bibliomania and the Romantic Essayists", *Praxis*, Indiana University, <www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/libraries/lynch/lynch.html> [Accessed 25/06/2011]

⁴²³ Dibdin, *Bibliomania* (1811), pp. 607 – 608.

As unscholarly or lacking in rigour as his works often appear to the eye of the modern bibliographer, he can nevertheless be credited with making pioneering contributions to the interface between bibliophilic and literary interests, as Lauren Braswell-Means has commented in her instructive article ‘Antiquarian or Bibliographer? The Dilemma of Thomas Frognall Dibdin’:

Dibdin’s real contribution lies in the fact that he articulates so well this transitional stage. He remains unashamedly an antiquary, delighting in the feel of vellum and the sad image of “days that are gone.” But he is also a bibliographer who sees the necessity for careful research and an assessment of library resources, a scholar who recognizes the value of distinguishing between texts and who feels strongly that critical editions make vital contributions to future knowledge.⁴²⁴

Dibdin has always polarised opinion among other writers, book collectors and especially academics. Many have dismissed his works, emphasising the innumerable errors and omissions that they contain. Others have praised his writing and ignored the message, by highlighting the style rather than the content, as this example demonstrates:

It is pleasant, as it is interesting, to read the amiable ravings of this honest collector, who by living in one long dream came at last to persuade himself that he was dealing with precious stones, and all that was rare and costly in the world! His style, from this generous ardour, was passionately expressive – full of quaint and gorgeous turns, with a power of delineating character that wins his readers. His career and story is valuable as exhibiting the very highest and most expressive form of which bibliophilism is capable.⁴²⁵

Whatever the final judgement on Dibdin’s bibliographical writing, the books themselves were beautifully printed and illustrated. They were expensive, often limited edition items when new, and are still much sought after by collectors today. As Edwards pungently phrased it, ‘his well-known books have had the curious fortune to keep their price, without keeping their reputation. They are

⁴²⁴ Laurel Braswell-Means, ‘Antiquarian or Bibliographer? The Dilemma of Thomas Frognall Dibdin’, *Medievalism in England*, ed. by Leslie J. Workman and Kathleen Verduin (Cambridge: Brewer, 1992), IV, 103-112 (p. 111).

⁴²⁵ Hetherington Fitzgerald, p. 227.

lustily abused, and eagerly bought'.⁴²⁶ Dibdin's less frivolous writings, however, have not fared so well. Although free of the ornate linguistic tics that have caused so much criticism of his bibliographical works, they are conversely perhaps too staid, too commonplace, to interest the modern reader, or even perhaps many of his own contemporaries. His sermons are sensible, high-minded but tolerant of human weakness in common with so many sermons published at that time, and although obviously written with sincerity do not carry the same spark of lunatic enthusiasm that makes his bibliophilic writing so compelling. Similarly, he made occasional unsuccessful forays into journalism that failed to make any significant mark, either at the time of writing or on posterity. One such attempt was a short-lived venture as the editor of the *Director*, a weekly magazine launched in 1807 which only ran to two editions. Overall his writing did not secure him any regular financial support, and even with his ecclesiastical income his financial position was one of extreme difficulty, especially in later life.

Sir Walter Scott's literary career is too well documented to need much elaboration here. He was already the most popular writer of his age by 1823 when he took up the invitation to join the Club, coyly addressed to 'the author of the Waverley novels'. His books often contained references to antiquarians and book collectors, and he displayed an intimate knowledge of the world of the bibliomaniac in works including the *Antiquary* in which a character expounds on the anxieties of book-collecting:

“How often have I stood haggling on a halfpenny, lest, by a too ready acquiescence in the dealer's first price, he should be led to suspect the

⁴²⁶ Edwards, *Libraries and Founders of Libraries*, p. 418.

value I set upon the article! – how have I trembled, lest some passing stranger should chop in between me and the prize, and regarded each poor student of divinity that stopped to turn over the books at the stall, as a rival amateur, or prowling bookseller in disguise! – And then, Mr. Lovel, the sly satisfaction with which one pays the consideration, and pockets the article, affecting a cold indifference, while the hand is trembling with pleasure! – Then to dazzle the eyes of our wealthier and emulous rivals by showing them such a treasure as this” (displaying a little black smoked book about the size of a primer); “to enjoy their surprise and envy, shrouding meanwhile, under a veil of mysterious consciousness, our own superior knowledge and dexterity these, my young friend, these are the white moments of life, that repay the toil, and pains, and sedulous attention, which our profession, above all others, so peculiarly demands!”⁴²⁷

He was acquainted with a number of the Roxburghe members before he joined the Club and was especially a close friend of Richard Heber, to whom he had dedicated the sixth canto of *Marmion*.⁴²⁸ Heber was also mentioned in the introduction where he writes, ‘Adieu dear Heber! life and health, And store of literary wealth’ which neatly encapsulates those qualities most necessary to the bibliophile.⁴²⁹

Dibdin’s close friend Joseph Haslewood, although largely overlooked now, was during this period a well-known name in circles as one who appreciated early English texts and the editor of a significant number of reprints, especially of Elizabethan poetry, including *A Paradise of Dainty Devices*, by Richard Edwards, *The Italian Taylor and his Boy*, by Robert Armin and the Puttenham/ Webster *Arte of English Poesie*. His choice of texts reveals the expertise that made him such a suitable, and valuable, member of the Roxburghe Club; for example, in 1813 Haslewood edited *Palace of Pleasure*, by Robert Painter, a

⁴²⁷ Walter Scott, *The Antiquary*, ed. David Hewitt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), p. 31.

⁴²⁸ Walter Scott, *Marmion; A Tale of Flodden Field, Works of Sir Walter Scott* (Edinburgh: James Ballantyne, 1813), V, p. 299.

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

collection of stories from which Shakespeare is believed to have taken inspiration, and Haslewood's reprinting of this volume provides further evidence that the Roxburghe Club, both collectively and individually, took a special interest in the topic of literary influences and sources. In 1810, Haslewood published *Tusser's Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry*, a treatise, in rhyming couplets, with a long printing history dating from 1557.⁴³⁰ Haslewood's 1818, *Barnabae Itinerarium: Or Drunken Barnaby's Four Journeys to the North of England* sometimes also known as *Drunken Barnabee's Journal*.⁴³¹ Haslewood was apparently the first researcher to attribute this work correctly to Richard Brathwaite and not surprisingly it appears to be a text that he took a great deal of pride in, and with which his name is most often linked.⁴³²

In 1811, Haslewood published his edition of the *Book of St. Albans*, a collection of treatises on blood sports and heraldry, attributed to Dame Juliana Berners in 1486.⁴³³ In the introduction, Haslewood assigns only the treatise on angling to Berners, believing the other parts of the text to be collected from other sources.

A later owner of Haslewood's manuscript copy of the text writes:

George Isted [...] presented it to Mr. Haslewood, a few months before he died in 1821. Mr. Haslewood added a paginary transcript for the convenience of reading this ancient MSS., and it was bound by C. Lewis in 1823.⁴³⁴

⁴³⁰ William Mavor, 'Biographical Sketch of Tusser' in Thomas Tusser, *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry* (London: Lackington and Allen, 1812), p. 10.

⁴³¹ Richard Brathwaite, *Barnabae Itinerarium* (London: Harding, 1818).

⁴³² *Drunken Barnaby's Four Journeys to the North of England, in Latin and by Richard Brathwaite*

⁴³³ Juliana Berners, *Book of St. Albans*, ed. by Joseph Haslewood, (London: White, Cochran, and Triphook, 1810).

⁴³⁴ Edward Jesse, 'Dame Juliana Berners and her "Boke of Venerie"', *Once a Week: An Illustrated Miscellany*, 4 (London: Bradbury Evans, 1867), p. 386.

This short extract illustrates two important points; firstly, that the members of the Roxburghe Club maintained close and amiable relationships, most significantly (in light of the Roxburghe Revels accusations) with Haslewood, and secondly that Haslewood, in producing a ‘paginated transcript’, was obviously familiar with scholarly frameworks and was highly capable in his handling of an early manuscript, producing a workable, more accessible, modern edition, and at the very least making an attempt to protect the original document while still being able to work with the text.

Haslewood made several forays into reprinting Elizabethan translations in English of medieval works originally in Latin or Middle English. Moreover, in 1814 he was involved in the publication of the early fifteenth-century Lollard work *Pierce the Plowman’s Crede*, edited by Dr. Whitaker, and included the *Plowman’s Vision*. This was a medieval text, an anti-clerical set of verses composed in the style of *Piers Plowman*. Whitaker had already published an edition of the *Creed* in the previous year which was reprinted as a companion to the *Vision* and although it is unclear what Haslewood’s connection was exactly with this enterprise, it is possible that he was involved with overseeing the printing:

No other edition of this popular poem appeared, until it was published by Dr. Whitaker, in 1813, from a manuscript then in the possession of Mr. Heber, which contained the second text, written in a rather broad provincial dialect. This edition was printed in black-letter, in a very large and expensive form. In 1814, a reprint of the old edition of the *Creed* was published in the same form, as a companion to the *Vision*. It is not generally known that Dr. Whitaker projected an edition of the same text and paraphrase which are given in his 4to edition, in 8vo, with Roman type instead of black-letter. After a few sheets had been composed, the design was abandoned, as it is said, in favour of the larger form. A copy of the

proof sheets, formerly belonging to Mr. Haslewood, is now in the possession of Sir Frederick Madden.⁴³⁵

Another reprint is his 1816 edition of *Dialogues of Creatures Moralised*, which although far from a perfect copy, containing according to Kratzmann and Gee, ‘some startling errors’, was nonetheless an important link in the publishing history of the long-neglected English translation of this work:

There was no subsequent edition of the complete text until nearly three hundred years later, when in 1816 John [sic] Haslewood edited it for Robert Triphook [...] Haslewood’s edition has a helpful Introduction, although its value is impeded by his belief that no perfect copy of the book existed.⁴³⁶

In 1815 Haslewood compiled a two-volume anthology of Elizabethan criticism, *Ancient Critical essays upon the English Poets and Poesy by Webbe, King James the First, Sir John Harrington etc.*⁴³⁷ He also in that year published an edition of the important mid sixteenth-century anthology, *Mirror for magistrates*, cautionary tales of famous lives.⁴³⁸ In 1820 he published *Two interludes: Jack Jugler and Thersytes*, his presentation to the Roxburghe Club.⁴³⁹ In 1827 he reprinted *Wyl Bucke, his Testament, a poem*, first published by Copland without date, but probably around 1560, described by Bruce W. Holsinger as a ‘little discussed English poem written in rhyme royal by an otherwise unknown author

⁴³⁵ Thomas Wright, *The Vision and Creed of Piers Ploughman* (London: Reeves and Turner, 1887), pp. xxxvii-xxxviii.

⁴³⁶ Gregory C. Kratzmann, Elizabeth Gee, *The Dialogues of Creatures Moralised: A Critical Edition* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988), p. xi.

⁴³⁷ Joseph Haslewood, *Ancient and Critical Essays upon the English Poets and Poesy*, (London: Bensley, 1815).

⁴³⁸ Ferrers, Cavyll, Chaloner, Phaer, Baldwin, Skelton, Dolman, Sackville, Segar, Dingley, Churchyard, Drayton and Niccols, *Mirror for magistrates: in five parts*, ed. Joseph Haslewood (London: Lackington, Allen and Co., 1815).

⁴³⁹ William Copland, *Two Interludes: Jack Jugler and Thersytes*, ed. by Joseph Haslewood (Ickham: Lee Priory, 1820).

named John Lacy' and which 'presents itself in large part as the last will and testament of a dying buck'.⁴⁴⁰

Haslewood seems to have been involved with a number of publications that relate to Ritson's work; *Gammer Gurton's Garland*, an anthology of nursery rhymes collected by Ritson and published in 1784, was edited and reprinted in 1810 by Haslewood, and this second edition contained additional material provided by Douce.⁴⁴¹ In 1824 he published *Some Account of the Life and Publications of the Late Joseph Ritson, Esq.*⁴⁴² Along with Egerton Brydges, with whom he had been friendly since contributing to *Censura Literaria* between 1807 and 1809, he edited a reprint of *England's Helicon*, the great Elizabethan lyric anthology.⁴⁴³ Haslewood's interests were not restricted to poetry and early criticism: in 1795 he had published the two-volume *Secret History of the Green Room*, the 'authentic and entertaining memoirs of the actors and actresses in the three theatres royal' and which included a short essay on the history of the English stage.⁴⁴⁴ Theatre life and the established field of 'greenroom' books was a subject matter that obviously interested him, at the very least for the financial gains to be made from such a popular genre, but his personal enthusiasm was also reflected in his collection of theatre ephemera. In 1809 he published *Green room gossip*, a mixture of true and fictional back-stage anecdotes and comical

⁴⁴⁰ Bruce W. Holsinger, *Music, Body, and Desire in Medieval Culture: Hildegard of Bingen to Chaucer* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), p. 345.

⁴⁴¹ Joseph Ritson, *Gammer Gurton's Garland* (London, R. Triphook by Harding and Wright, 1810).

⁴⁴² Joseph Haslewood, *Some Account of the Life and Publications of the Late Joseph Ritson, Esq.*, (London: Triphook, 1824).

⁴⁴³ Joseph Haslewood, Sir Egerton Brydges, *England's Helicon* (London: Triphook, 1812).

⁴⁴⁴ Joseph Haslewood, *The Secret History of the Green Room: Containing Authentic and Entertaining Memoirs of the Actors and Actresses in the Three Theatres Royal* (London: J. Owen, 1795).

stories.⁴⁴⁵ Surprisingly, as well as earning his living as a partner in his Uncle's legal practice, editing manuscripts and early books for publishing, writing a high percentage of the articles used in the magazines that were nominally under the editorship of Egerton Brydges and trading as an agent for booksellers, he also found time to contribute regularly to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, using the pseudonyms 'Eugenius Hood' E. Hood, EU, Cristofer Valdarfer or J.H.⁴⁴⁶ Under the first alias he contributed a series of articles entitled 'Fly Leaves', beginning July 1822.⁴⁴⁷ He continued to produce these pieces until around 1829, besides keeping up a spirited correspondence in the letters pages on a variety of subjects: the topics include, but are certainly not limited to, 'Remarks on Fairs,' 'A Lullaby,' 'Forde's Apothegmes,' 'Notitia Dramatica' and 'Winstanley's Water-works'.⁴⁴⁸

Haslewood appears to have been a more familiar name within the world of books than outside it. He received an entry in the 1816 *Biographical Dictionary of the Living Authors of Great Britain and Ireland* which refers to him as 'an editor of new editions of old works'.⁴⁴⁹ Even the *Athenaeum*, which only a few months later ran such a scurrilous attack on his memory, carried an obituary in which he was described as being 'generally admitted to have few superiors in what is called bibliographical knowledge, especially in all that related to our early poets and dramatists'.⁴⁵⁰ The posthumous attack by the *Athenaeum* did some lasting

⁴⁴⁵ Gridiron Gabble (Pseud. for Haslewood), *Green Room Gossip* (London: J. .Barker, 1809).

⁴⁴⁶ Emily Lorraine de Montluzin, An Electronic Version of James M. Kuist's *The Nichols File of the Gentleman's Magazine* <<http://etext.virginia.edu/bsuva/gm/gm3.html>> [Accessed 23/01/12]

⁴⁴⁷ E.U. Hood (Joseph Haslewood), *Gentleman's Magazine*, (July 1822), pp. 15-17.

⁴⁴⁸ E.U. Hood (Joseph Haslewood), *Gentleman's Magazine*, (April 1816), pp. 309-312; (Jan 1828), p. 36; (Dec 1821), p. 603; (Aug 1813), p. 121; (Dec 1813), p. 648.

⁴⁴⁹ John Watkins, Frederick Shoberl and William Upcott, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Living Authors of Great Britain and Ireland* (London: Henry Colburn, 1816), p. 148.

⁴⁵⁰ *Athenaeum*, (Sept 28, 1833), p. 652.

damage to Haslewood's reputation, although researchers within his areas of expertise continued to value the editions that he was instrumental in reprinting. Where assessments exist of his various reprints, the verdict seems to be largely positive, usually mentioning the thorough scholarship of 'that careful student' and acknowledging his expertise in his field.⁴⁵¹ His general reputation, however, does not seem to have recovered and it would be interesting to know to what extent his humble origin, as designated by the *Athenaeum* and echoed by so many later critics, has led to his bibliographic achievements being underestimated or eclipsed by the reputations of the well-born company with whom he sometimes collaborated.⁴⁵² Jane Campbell refers to Haslewood as 'the virtual co-editor of the *British Bibliographer*', implying that he inhabited an important but still subsidiary role.⁴⁵³ Dibdin, on the other hand, in reference to the same publication, wrote that 'the professed editor was Sir S. Egerton Brydges but the real staff of its support was held by my deceased friend [i.e. Haslewood]', wording which makes clear that Dibdin considered the publication to be more Haslewood's work than Egerton Brydges.⁴⁵⁴ The four volumes of the *British Bibliographer* certainly carry Sir Egerton Brydges' name on the title page, and an introduction written by him but in that same introduction he himself explicitly states that:

It is to Mr. HASLEWOOD that the work owes the care of constant superintendence, and a most copious and never-failing supply of articles, as remarkable for their rarity, as for the curious matter in which they abound. The keenness of his researches, his industry, his accuracy, his memory, his opportunities, his extensive

⁴⁵¹ 'Richard Brathwaite', *Saturday Review of Politics, Literature, Science and Art*, 47 (Jan 25, 1879), p.122.

⁴⁵² *Athenaeum* (Sept 28, 1833), p. 652.

⁴⁵³ Jane Campbell, *The Retrospective Review (1820-1828) and the Revival of Seventeenth Century Poetry* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier Univ. Press, 1974), p. 6.

⁴⁵⁴ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, p. 295.

acquaintance, give a value to his numerous articles which cannot be too highly rated.⁴⁵⁵

A survey of the volumes confirms that the greater part of the articles carry the signature of 'J.H.' His work retained its reputation for precision and for its attempt to retain the original presentation of the text. Rodney M. Baine comments that 'Haslewood followed Malone in the tradition of scholarly accuracy and on some points was even more meticulous than his predecessor had been'.⁴⁵⁶

Egerton Brydges was involved in many areas of literature; he wrote poetry, romances, criticism and edited rare pieces of early English poetry. He was also, unfortunately, a man of very uneven talents and unstable emotional foundations. He was certainly instrumental in printing editions of many neglected pieces of poetry dating from the sixteenth century, mostly through the medium of his private printing press at Lee Priory.⁴⁵⁷ Lockhart, reviewing Egerton Brydges' autobiography, laments the lack of diligence and steadfastness that prevented Brydges from using his literary gifts, but also writes of 'his antiquarian pursuits, in which he really did so much service to literature'.⁴⁵⁸ These Brydges had more or less dismissed as dull to produce, saying that:

The books in which I was engaged for the press occupied much of my time; and the long transcripts necessary were laborious and fatiguing. They were enough to suppress my imagination and deaden my powers of original thought. [...] Meanwhile, I was not at all satisfied with the way I was making in the literary world: I was pursuing a humble path not suited to my fiery ambition, and this produced a self-abasement which had an evil effect upon my energies.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁵ Samuel Egerton Brydges, *The British Bibliographer*, 4 vols (London: Triphook, 1810), rep. (New York: AMS, 1966), I, p. v.

⁴⁵⁶ Rodney M. Baine, 'The First Anthologies of English Literary Criticism, Warton to Haslewood', *Studies in Bibliography*, 3 (1950-51), 262-65 (p. 262).

⁴⁵⁷ For more detail on Brydges' Lee Priory Press see section 2.5.

⁴⁵⁸ Lockhart, 'Autobiography of Sir Egerton Brydges', *Quarterly Review*, 51 (June 1834), 342-65 (p.356).

⁴⁵⁹ Quoted in Lockhart, 'Autobiography of Sir Egerton Brydges', *Quarterly Review*, p.356

His lack of enthusiasm for methodical, solid work and preference for more celebrated and instant forms of recognition have, perhaps inevitably, meant that he failed to leave any lasting impression on the literary world as a poet, but with Haslewood's assistance did produce some interesting and valuable additions to the reprinting of early poetry.

Henry Drury, the son of Joseph Drury the Headmaster of Harrow was himself a master at the same school. A respected classical scholar, he edited several editions of the classics specifically for use at Harrow.⁴⁶⁰ Although this sort of editing and publishing, by its nature leaves little impression on the world of literary studies, his work was considered valuable by contemporaries and his obituary alludes to these works, saying that 'Mr. Drury's literary attainments were very great'.⁴⁶¹ Dibdin wrote with approval that 'his Latinity was perspicuity and accuracy itself'.⁴⁶² While it is easy to overlook these works, confined as they were to the education of schoolboys, it is important to remember that they would have been well known texts, familiar to generations of students which in itself allots them a certain degree of influence. Drury perhaps also contributed to journals anonymously: an article in the *Quarterly Review* of 1814 is provisionally attributed to Drury on the basis of pencil notes carried in John Murray's archives; there is, unfortunately, no further evidence to support this attribution.⁴⁶³ Dibdin does, however, refer to another article, saying 'how

⁴⁶⁰ 'Rev. Henry Drury', *Gentleman's Magazine*, 16, (September 1841), p. 323.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Dibdin, *Bibliomania*, p.607.

⁴⁶³ Thomas Busby, 'The Nature of Things, a Didascalical Poem, translated from the Latin of Titus Lucretius Carus, accompanied with Commentaries, comparative, illustrative, and scientific, and the Life of Epicurus', *Quarterly Review*, 11 (April 1814), 88-103.

[Drury] *could* criticise, sufficiently appears in an article on the *Musae Edinburgenses* in an early number of the Quarterly Review'.⁴⁶⁴

The Duke of Devonshire unexpectedly turned his hand to writing with the *Handbook of Chatsworth and Hardwick*.⁴⁶⁵ This is no mere factual handbook of the houses, but what Lees-Milne describes as a 'delightful book [which] is a minor classic and in a sense the progenitor of those social histories of country houses so popular with our own generation'.⁴⁶⁶ As implied by this quotation, the book is as much a memoir of recollected personal events connected with the two grand houses, as it is a simple guidebook in the modern sense. The volume takes the form of letters written from the Duke to his sister Harriet, describing the renovation and improvements that he had made to Chatsworth, and how it now differed from the house in which they had spent their childhood. The Handbook contains gentle humour and an engagingly chatty style; to give a brief example, the Duke writes of one room 'from this description it might be supposed that this was not so bad a room and decoration; but my sister must know better, - and you, posterity, take my word for it, it was atrocious'.⁴⁶⁷ The Duke obviously relished the process of writing the *Handbook*, although he at one points complains that:

I like my task; but at times it turns upon me, and I feel exceedingly ridiculous, and like an auctioneer when he makes his inventory, and puts the striking features into capital letters.⁴⁶⁸

Edward Vernon Utterson, the editor and publisher of a number of reprints of early pieces, covered in more detail in the section 'private printing presses', is

⁴⁶⁴ Dibdin, *Bibliomania*, p.607.

⁴⁶⁵ William Spencer Cavendish, *Handbook of Chatsworth and Hardwick* (London: Privately printed, 1845).

⁴⁶⁶ Lees-Milne, p. 164.

⁴⁶⁷ William Spencer Cavendish, *Handbook of Chatsworth and Hardwick*, manuscript in the Chatsworth archives (1844), p. 36.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

more widely known, however, for his work as a landscape artist of some ability. George Isted, on the other hand, had apparently nurtured some short-lived aspirations to literary or journalistic attainments and had been in his youth the co-writer and editor of the *Literary Fly*, a magazine published in partnership with the author Sir Herbert Croft in 1779.⁴⁶⁹ This venture unfortunately only ran to 17 issues between the January and May of that year. Another Roxburghe member who showed early literary promise was Sir William Bolland, and who while at Trinity College, Cambridge enjoyed some success as a poet.⁴⁷⁰ In 1796 he had won the Seatonian prize with his poem *The Epiphany*.⁴⁷¹ In 1797 he won the prize again for *Miracles*.⁴⁷² In 1798 his *St. Paul at Athens* won it again and was described as ‘another academic exercise in blank verse that reflects credit on the talents which the author displays and affords fair promise of excellence in his future poetical undertakings’.⁴⁷³ The same article goes on to say that ‘Mr Bolland's versification is correct and smooth his language in general chaste and animated and the sentiments which he inculcates rational and edifying’.⁴⁷⁴ Bolland later wrote a satire, *The Campaign, to his Royal Highness the Duke of York, Britannia in the Year 1800 to C. J. Fox*.⁴⁷⁵ This was published privately and anonymously.⁴⁷⁶ His satirical abilities were perhaps less developed, or at least less warmly received, than his religious verse if the review from the *British Critic and Quarterly Theological Review* of 1802 is to be believed:

⁴⁶⁹ *The Literary Fly* (London: 1779).

⁴⁷⁰ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 14 (1840), pp. 433-4.

⁴⁷¹ William Bolland, *The Epiphany* (London: Rivington, 1799).

⁴⁷² William Bolland, *Miracles* (London: Rivington, 1797).

⁴⁷³ Andrew Kippis and William Godwin, *New Annual Register or General Repository of History, Politics and Literature for the year 1800* (London: G. and J. Robinson, 1801), p. 327.

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷⁵ William Bolland, *The Campaign, to his Royal Highness the Duke of York, Britannia in the Year 1800 to C. J. Fox: a poem in two cantos*, (London: Bensley, 1800).

⁴⁷⁶ W. P. Courtney, ‘Sir William Bolland’, *ODNB*. [accessed 19 Jan 2012]

As this poem is printed for the author who is unknown and is not by any publisher its sale is *properly* provided for. The first Canto is a very lame and bungling satire on the Royal Commander in chief; the second is still ironical both in praise and satire but is no less unpoetical than the former. The first Canto is about the war; the second about every body and every thing; but without connection in the sense or harmony in the verse. To justify what we have said and remove all suspicion of biased [sic] opinion let us take the first ten lines that present themselves

The chinking gold no more our bankers tell,
Since the House votes - that paper does as well;
Pitt asks no vote - but ships the precious ore,
To sharp the sword, and bid the cannon roar.
What miracles our banish'd guineas work,
Shar'd by the Russ, the Portuguese, and Turk,
Faithful allies, though in discordant spheres,
The Mufti, Pope, Grand Lama, and Algiers;
All leagu'd by reason, on religion's plan,
Louis to crown, and crush the rights of man.

Of this skimble skamble stuff there are more than a thousand lines.⁴⁷⁷

It is, of course, possible that the reviewer may have objected to the poem's potential pro-Fox political tendencies rather more than to the structure of the verse itself.

Less controversially, Roger Wilbraham was an antiquarian with a keen interest in etymology and the author of *An Attempt at a Glossary of some Words used in Cheshire*.⁴⁷⁸ A member of the Antiquarian Society, he only appears to have published this one book which reflected his life-long interest in the subject. Similarly, James William Dodd also published one work which collected together his fascination with Robin Hood and Archery (he was noted by Dibdin

⁴⁷⁷ 'Art. 17', *British Critic and Quarterly Theological Review*, 19 (London: Rivington, 1802), pp. 83-84.

⁴⁷⁸ Roger Wilbraham, *An Attempt at a Glossary of some Words used in Cheshire* (London: Bulmer and Nicol, 1820).

as singing Robin Hood ballads at midnight after a Club meeting).⁴⁷⁹ Dodd was the son of the Drury Lane actors James and Martha Dodd, who were both members of David Garrick's company. The younger James Dodd, moving away from his theatrical background, was a clergyman and Usher at Westminster School. He was the author of a volume of poetry *Ballads of Archery, Sonnets &c* which as well as the various anthology items, contains an extensive preface covering the general subject of archery and the history of the Royal Kentish Bowmen.⁴⁸⁰

James Heywood Markland was a much more prolific author. In 1818 he presented the Roxburghe Club with an edition of the *Chester Mysteries*.⁴⁸¹ His edition is accompanied by a detailed preface which David Matthews describes as 'a lengthy and erudite introduction showing a real depth of knowledge'.⁴⁸² Markland indicates that he had originally intended this introductory material to be considerably more substantial:

It was the Editor's intention to have prefixed to Plays a concise history of the origin and of religious dramas in Europe, with a view to ascertain, if possible, the precise period of their introduction into this country; and also to have some account of the several series of Mysteries acted at York, Coventry, and other places. In the prosecution of this interesting inquiry, he had collected a considerable mass of materials, but each day's research tended to convince him that a still larger portion remained unexplored, and that the subject had hitherto received far less attention than it deserved. Sensible therefore of the impossibility of affording it common justice, within any fixed period, or of rendering his observations at all worthy the perusal of that body for which they were immediately designed, he has been reluctantly compelled to abridge his plan, and to content himself with giving some particulars of the collection from which the present specimens are

⁴⁷⁹ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 380.

⁴⁸⁰ James William Dodd, *Ballads of Archery, Sonnets &c*. (London: R. H. Evans, 1818).

⁴⁸¹ *Chester Mysteries. De Deluvio Noe. De Occisione Innocentium*, ed. by James H. Markland (London: Bensley, 1818).

⁴⁸² Matthews, p. 94.

selected, with a few incidental remarks on others of a similar class.⁴⁸³

This depth of knowledge and attention to scholarly detail can be seen to be typical of Markland's writing, which ranges over his wide antiquarian and religious interests. He was an active churchman who was well known for his published works on antiquarian and ecclesiastical subjects and in most cases the titles of his works speak for themselves: *A Few Plain Reasons for Adhering to the Church; Remarks on the Sepulchral Memorials of past and present times, with some suggestions for improving the condition of our churches; On the Reverence due to Holy Places; Remarks on English Churches & on the Expediency of Rendering Sepulchral Memorials Subservient to Pious & Christian Uses; On the Ecclesiastical Architecture of England in Past and Present Times: Read at the Annual Meeting of the Worcester Eng. Diocesan Architectural Society, Sept. 25th, 1854; The Offertory the Best Way of Contributing Money for Christian Purposes; and An Inscription Upon a Chimney-piece, Recently Discovered in the Governor's House in the Tower of London.*⁴⁸⁴ He belonged to a wide variety of antiquarian organisations beyond the Roxburghe and was active in contributing essays and articles to their magazines. His primary interest was the journal *Archaeologia*, published by the Society of Antiquaries of London, of which he was director in charge of

⁴⁸³ Markland, *Chester Mysteries*. p. i.

⁴⁸⁴ J.H. Markland, *Remarks on the Sepulchral Memorials of past and present times, with some suggestions for improving the condition of our churches* (Oxford: Rivington, 1840); Markland, *On the Reverence due to Holy Places* (London: John Murray, 1846); Markland, *Remarks on English Churches & on the Expediency of Rendering Sepulchral Memorials Subservient to Pious & Christian Uses* (Oxford: Rivington, 1842); Markland, *On the Ecclesiastical Architecture of England in Past and Present Times: Read at the Annual Meeting of the Worcester Eng. Diocesan Architectural Society, Sept. 25th, 1854*; Markland, *The Offertory the Best Way of Contributing Money for Christian Purposes*; Markland, 'An Inscription Upon a Chimney-piece, Recently Discovered in the Governor's House in the Tower of London', *Archaeologia*, 23 (1831), pp. 405-410.

publications from 1827 – 9.⁴⁸⁵ One article contributed by him to *Archaeologia* was *Some Remarks on the early use of Carriages in England, and on the modes of Travelling adopted by our Ancestors*.⁴⁸⁶ He also contributed to the *Archaeological Journal* (the publication of the Royal Archaeological Institute) and the *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*. In later life he retired to Bath and became president of the Literary Club of Bath in 1858. His varied publications were acknowledged in a paper read before the club in 1854:

while we can walk, hand-in-hand, through our venerable “English Churches,” with our erudite, worthy, and excellent President, hear his judicious remarks on their architecture and archaeological histories, view their sepulchral memorials, and be charmed with his Christian Commentaries thereon, or learn how to live and how to die from his interesting memoir of the good, the wise, but persecuted Bishop Ken.⁴⁸⁷

He occasionally wrote on literary subjects as well and contributed an article examining the life of the poet William Mason to *Censura Literaria*, the periodical published by Egerton Brydges for the discussion of old English books.⁴⁸⁸ Markland was a regular contributor to the same publication of a continuous stream of brief descriptive articles and reviews of various rare books which continued throughout the existence of the journal.⁴⁸⁹ In the same period

⁴⁸⁵ W. P. Courtney, ‘James Heywood Markland’, *ODNB* [accessed 24 Feb 2008]

⁴⁸⁶ J.H. Markland, ‘Some Remarks on the early use of Carriages in England, and on the modes of Travelling adopted by our Ancestors’, *Archaeologia: or Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity Published by the Society of Antiquaries of London*, 20 (London: Nicols, 1824), pp. 443 – 476.

⁴⁸⁷ G. Monkland, *Monkland’s Literature and Literati of Bath: An Essay, read at the Literary Club, November 13, 1852* (Bath: R.E. Peach, London: J.H. Parker, 1854), pp. 90-1. The essay is also dedicated to Markland.

⁴⁸⁸ J.H. Markland, ‘Lives of Modern Poets. No. VI. William Mason, A.M.’, *Censura Literaria*, 5 (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1807), pp. 299- 308.

⁴⁸⁹ These include among many other examples: ‘ART. XIV. Newes of Sir Walter Rauleigh, with the true Description of Guiana’, *Censura Literaria*, 5 (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1807), pp.169-71; ‘ART. XVIII. The Booke of Honor and Armes’, *Censura Literaria*, 5 (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1807), pp.287-9; ‘ART.IV. A Choice of Emblemes, and other Devises, for the moste parte gathered out of sundrie writers’, *Censura Literaria*, 5 (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1807), pp.233-5; ‘ART.XIX. Ideas Mirrour Amours in quatorzains.’ *Censura Literaria*, 5 (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1807), pp.289-90; ‘ART. III. The benefit of the auncient bathes of Buckstones, which cureth most greivous

Notes and Queries published numerous articles from him on aspects of literary history.⁴⁹⁰ In 1837 he wrote a memoir of his father-in-law and fellow Roxburghe member, *A sketch of the life and character of George Hibbert, Esq.*, privately published following Hibbert's death.⁴⁹¹

George Watson Taylor's publications included two plays. One is *England Preserved*, a highly political work already discussed above on p.112.⁴⁹² His second play was a comedy, the *Profligate*, which was privately printed in 1820 for distribution to members of the Roxburghe Club.⁴⁹³ It is obviously not considered an official Roxburghe volume as it does not fit the criteria for the member contributions, and is not mentioned in the catalogue of club books.⁴⁹⁴ This interestingly points to the possibility that members used the Club to distribute their own work in addition to making their more 'official' contribution.

Other pieces of writing by Watson Taylor include a poem titled *Equanimity in Death*, 1813, reprinted in *Pieces of Poetry: With Two Dramas*.⁴⁹⁵ This collection of Watson Taylor's work included a reprint of his satirical poem 'The old Hag in a Red Cloak, a Romance'.⁴⁹⁶ This was a parody of Matthew Lewis' popular

sicknesses, never before published', *Censura Literaria*, 10 (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1809), pp. 274-81; 'ART.X. Paradoxical Assertions and philosophical problems,' *Censura Literaria*, 10 (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1809), pp. 383-8.

⁴⁹⁰ 'James Heywood Markland', *ODNB*.

⁴⁹¹ J.H. Markland, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of George Hibbert, Esq., F.R.S., S.A., and L.S* (London: John W. Parker, 1837).

⁴⁹² George Watson, *England Preserved* (London: Longman, 1795).

⁴⁹³ George Watson, *The Profligate* (London: Bulmer and Nicol, 1820).

⁴⁹⁴ S. Austin Allibone, *A Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1871), III, p. 2343.

⁴⁹⁵ George Watson Taylor, *Pieces of Poetry: With Two Dramas* (Chiswick: Whittingham, 1830).

⁴⁹⁶ George Watson Taylor, 'The Old Hag in a Red Cloak, A Romance', *Pieces of Poetry: With Two Dramas* (Chiswick: Whittingham, 1830).

Gothic Romantic poem the 'Grim White Woman'.⁴⁹⁷ Lewis' original poem had, coincidentally appeared in the collection *Tales of Wonder*, to which Sir Walter Scott had also contributed a number of ballads.⁴⁹⁸ Although he makes no direct criticism any other writer's work, Watson Taylor, evidently no follower of the fashion for Gothic Romance, states in his foreword to his amusing parody:

As they have acquired this degree of publicity, he thinks it also right to state, that no personal motives whatever dictated their composition. They were directed against the new creation of poetical romances in general; and the Author of the Grim White Woman having taken the lead in that department, he consequently became the chief object of criticism. A lively imagination, and an easy and elegant flow of versification, are worthy of higher subjects, and of nobler exertions, than those of vitiating the taste of the Public, or of supplying it, if already vitiated, with a species of composition, which has its principal, and, perhaps, only merit, in creating wonder, and which, by repetition, ceases even to be wonderful.⁴⁹⁹

Another satirical piece written is his *Cross-Bath Guide; being the correspondence of a respectable family upon the subject of a late unexpected dispensation of honours. Collected by Sir Joseph Cheakill*.⁵⁰⁰ This poem takes the form of a series of family letters and is a humorous treatment of what the author perceives as the social obsession with advancement. It mocks the abundance of new baronets appearing among the middle classes, especially those financially ill-equipped to support their new positions in life, and he may have felt it wise to write under a pseudonym on this occasion, as so many of his own social circle are represented in the poem. The story ends with the financial ruin of the recipient of the title, which proved to be sadly prophetic for Watson

⁴⁹⁷ M G Lewis, 'The Grim White Woman', *Tales of Wonder* (London: Bulmer, 1801), pp. 101-112.

⁴⁹⁸ Walter Scott et al, *Tales of Wonder* (London: Bulmer, 1801).

⁴⁹⁹ Watson Taylor, 'The Old Hag in a Red Cloak', pp. 67-68.

⁵⁰⁰ George Watson Taylor, *The Cross-Bath Guide; being the correspondence of a respectable family upon the subject of a late unexpected dispensation of honours. Collected by Sir Joseph Cheakill* (London: Underwood, 1815).

Taylor. By 1832 he had, through a combination of the devaluation of Jamaican property and extravagant spending, lost much of the wealth that he had controlled through his wife's property in the West Indies, and was forced to sell many of his possessions. He had not, however, accepted a baronetcy.

James Boswell is probably best known (apart from being his famous father's namesake) for his editing of Malone's extensive work on Shakespeare after Malone's death.⁵⁰¹ Edmond Malone, through his connection with Johnson, had become a friend of the elder James Boswell, and had provided assistance with his *Life of Johnson*.⁵⁰² In turn, Malone at his death bequeathed to the younger James Boswell the immense undertaking of collating and completing his amended second edition of Shakespeare, from the vast quantity of material that Malone had already prepared. Malone died in 1812 and Boswell completed the 21 volume work in 1821. It was a groundbreaking and extensive piece of research and Sherbo describes it as 'easily the most complete and valuable edition of Shakespeare yet to be published'.⁵⁰³ That in large part was due to the Herculean task that James Boswell undertook on the behalf of his deceased friend; as S. Schoenbaum writes, 'that Malone's life of Shakespeare is available to us in any form we owe to Boswell. He coped heroically with an impossible task'.⁵⁰⁴ Boswell died in the year following the publication of the work and his obituary states that 'Mr. Malone's papers were left in a state scarcely intelligible;

⁵⁰¹ William Shakespeare, *Plays and Poems*, ed. by E. Malone and J. Boswell (London: Rivington, 1821), 21 volumes.

⁵⁰² Arthur Sherbo, *Shakespeare's Midwives: Some neglected Shakespeareans* (Newark, NJ; London; Cranbury: University of Delaware Press, 1992), p. 154.

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁴ S. Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p.176.

and no individual probably, excepting Mr. Boswell, could have rendered them available'. It goes on to describe his contributions at some length:

To this edition, Mr Boswell contributed many notes, and collated the text with the earlier copies. In the first volume, he has stepped forwards to defend the literary reputation of Mr. Malone, against the severe attacks made by a writer of distinguished eminence, upon many of his critical opinions and statements; a task of great delicacy, and which Mr. Boswell has performed in so spirited and gentlemanly a manner, that his preface may be fairly quoted as a model of controversial writing. In the same volume, are inserted the memoirs of Mr. Malone, originally printed by Mr. Boswell for private distribution; and a valuable essay on the metre and phraseology of Shakespeare, the materials for which were partly collected by Mr. Malone; but the arrangement and completion of them were the work of Mr. Boswell; and upon these he is known to have bestowed considerable labour and attention.⁵⁰⁵

On the subject of Boswell's own authorial abilities (as distinct from his editorial talents) he is described as possessing:

Talents of a superior order, sound classical scholarship, and a most extensive and intimate knowledge of our early literature. In the investigation of every subject that he pursued, his industry, judgment, and discrimination were equally remarkable; his memory was unusually tenacious and accurate.⁵⁰⁶

Boswell was only forty-three when he died but it is tempting to believe that he would have produced a great deal more useful scholarship in the field of literature had he lived longer.

Alexander Boswell, Lord Auchinleck and elder brother to James, was a prominent figure in Scottish literature. He wrote poetry, mostly in Scottish dialect and using traditional forms and subjects, described in one account of his work as 'that kind of familiar vernacular poetry which Burns again brought into fashion'.⁵⁰⁷ This was a description that would have pleased him as he was an

⁵⁰⁵ 'James Boswell', *Gentleman's Magazine* (March, 1822), p.277.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁷ Robert Chambers, *A Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen* (Glasgow: Blackie, 1835), I, p. 279.

ardent devotee of Burns' work. Boswell's poetry included *Spirit of Tintoc*.⁵⁰⁸ Published anonymously in 1803, this is based on the legend of the Tintock Mountain. This is the highest peak in Lanarkshire and apparently had a large stone at its summit that collected rain water in a depression said to have been caused by the imprint of William Wallace's thumb.⁵⁰⁹ Boswell's poem takes its theme from a nursery rhyme about this legend.⁵¹⁰ Although in the introduction Boswell asserts that the verses were found among his family papers, James Paterson writes that 'there is little doubt, however, that it is one of his own'.⁵¹¹ Walter Scott mentions Boswell's poem *Clan-Alpin's Vow*, an inspiration for his own novel, in the introduction to *A Legend of Montrose* saying that it was 'printed, but not I believe, published in 1811'.⁵¹² This was the first of Boswell's works not to be printed anonymously.⁵¹³ Also connected to his friendship with Scott was the poem *Sir Albon*, 1811. Paterson, who reprints the entire piece, suggests 'this poem is intended as a satire on Sir Walter Scott's poetical romances' but it was also apparently 'subsequently suppressed', although no reason for this is given by Paterson.⁵¹⁴ *Skeldon Haughs; or, The Sow is Flitted*, 1816, tells the story of a feud between two landowning families and ends with the death of the son of the defender.⁵¹⁵ On a lighter note, *The Woo' Creel or the Bill O' Bashan*, described by Boswell in the dedication as 'a versification of an

⁵⁰⁸ Alexander Boswell, *The Spirit of Tintoc; a Ballad* (Edinburgh: Manners & Miller, 1803).

⁵⁰⁹ 'Some of the Rhymes and Superstitions of Lanarkshire', *Scottish Journal of Topography, Antiquities, Traditions &c*, 1, March 4, 1848), pp. 148-149.

⁵¹⁰ James Paterson, *The Contemporaries of Burns: and the more Recent Poets of Ayrshire* (Edinburgh: 1840), p. 311.

⁵¹¹ *Ibid.*

⁵¹² Sir Walter Scott, *A Legend of Montrose*, Waverley Novels (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1844), IV, p. 222.

⁵¹³ Paterson, p. 313.

⁵¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 313-314.

⁵¹⁵ Robert Chambers, *A Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen* (Glasgow: Blackie, 1835), I, p. 280.

old story' (as were many of his poems), is the humorous telling of a cuckolded husband and his sly wife who hides her lover in the wool creel.⁵¹⁶

Among Boswell's works that do not take their subject from Scottish traditional tales is his *Epistle to the Edinburgh Reviewers*, 1803.⁵¹⁷ The verses are written in the form of a letter to the eponymous reviewers, taking them to task for their rudeness, and overly critical approach to authors and their works. Similarly, in his later poem, *Edinburgh, or, The Ancient Royalty* which was written under the pseudonym Simon Gray, the author contrasts the past of Edinburgh with its present.⁵¹⁸ Boswell takes to task the commentators who 'cant against the moderns', at the same time relating anecdotes of the older city and remembering the characters and manners of the earlier time. The *Tyrant's Fall* is a short poem.⁵¹⁹ It was the first work printed at the Auchinleck Press after it was set up in 1815.⁵²⁰ The poem commemorates the fall of Boswell's friend Lieutenant-Colonel Miller at the battle of Waterloo.⁵²¹

Boswell composed many popular songs, including *Jennie's Bawbee*, *The Old Chieftain to his Sons* (most commonly known by its second line 'Goodnight and joy be with you all'), and *Jenny Dang the Weaver* which appeared in his book *Songs Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*.⁵²² A staunch supporter of the government and anti-liberal, he was a contributor to the *Beacon*, a Tory journal published in

⁵¹⁶ Alexander Boswell, *The Woo' Creel, or the Bill O' Bashan; a Tale* (Auchinleck: James Sutherland, 1816).

⁵¹⁷ Alexander Boswell, *Epistle to the Edinburgh Reviewers* (Edinburgh: Nundell, 1803).

⁵¹⁸ Alexander Boswell, *Edinburgh, or, The Ancient Royalty* (Edinburgh: Manners & Miller, 1810).

⁵¹⁹ Alexander Boswell, *The Tyrant's Fall*, (Auchinleck: A & J Boswell, 1815).

⁵²⁰ Martin, II, p. 350.

⁵²¹ Paterson, p. 318.

⁵²² Alexander Boswell, *Songs Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* (Edinburgh: Manners and Miller, 1803).

Edinburgh, and later to its successor the *Sentinel*. Unfortunately his penchant for writing anonymous defamatory political squibs led to his eventual involvement in the duel with James Stuart that left him with injuries that caused his death. He died within a week of the death of his younger brother and his final poem was a tribute to James:

ON THE DEATH OF JAMES BOSWELL

There is a pang when kindred spirits part,
And cold philosophy we must disown;
There is a thrilling spot in ev'ry heart,
For pulses beat not from a heart of stone.

Boswell! th' allotted earth has closed on thee;
Thy mild but gen'rous warmth is pass'd away;
A purer spirit never death set free,
And now the friend we honour'd is but clay.

His was the triumph of the heart and mind;
His was the lot which few are bless'd to know;
More proved, more valued – fervent, yet so kind;
He never lost one friend, nor found one foe.⁵²³

Rev. Edward Craven Hawtrey, provost (Chair of the governing body) of Eton, possessed a reputation as a linguist and translator of poetic works.

Contemporaries labelled him the 'English Mezzofanti'.⁵²⁴ Mezzofanti was a minor celebrity of the period, an Italian hyperpolyglot said to speak 39 languages perfectly plus an equivalent number imperfectly. Hawtrey certainly did not speak anywhere near as many languages as Mezzofanti, but it was alleged that his:

Standard was higher and his direction different. Cardinal Mezzofanti had a miraculous command of the colloquial speech of many lands, but he has left no literary memorial of his vast attainments. Dr. Hawtrey had the gift of metrical composition in Greek, Latin, German, and Italian.⁵²⁵

⁵²³ Paterson, p. 325.

⁵²⁴ William E. A. Axon, 'Dr. Hawtrey's 'Nugae', *Notes and Queries* (Oct. 4, 1902), 261-3 (p. 261).

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*

His publications were mostly privately printed for circulation amongst his friends and for distribution and use at Eton. They included a selection of Goethe's verse, with a preface by Hawtrey.⁵²⁶ There was also a multilingual collection *Il Trifoglio, ovvero Scherzi Metrici d'un Inglese*, translations of short poems and some original compositions in Greek, Italian and German, described in the *Quarterly Review* as:

All executed, if we may venture to judge on all these points, not merely with surprising accuracy of phrase, but with a graceful felicity in catching the turn and genius of each tongue.⁵²⁷

His 'Trochaics' were also included among the six Latin and Greek pieces he contributed to the first edition of *Arundines Cami*.⁵²⁸ Hawtrey also produced *Two Translations from Homer*.⁵²⁹ These led Matthew Arnold, in 1861, to describe Dr Hawtrey as 'one of the natural judges of a translation of Homer'.⁵³⁰ Hawtrey also produced volumes of sermons between 1846 and 1854.⁵³¹

Sir Stephen Richard Glynne is an interesting example of an author who did not publish any of their research during their lifetime, concentrating instead on producing the extensive source material which has formed the basis of works published posthumously. Glynne was an avid antiquarian and his copious notes on pre-Victorian ecclesiastical architecture run to some 106 volumes covering over 5500 churches.⁵³² The first work to be published based on these notes

⁵²⁶ Edward Craven Hawtrey, *Auswahl von Goethes Lyrischen Gedichten* (London: 1833).

⁵²⁷ 'Arundines Cami', *Quarterly Review*, 69 (March 1842), 237-256 (p. 248).

⁵²⁸ Henry Drury, *Arundines Cami* (London & Cambridge: Deighton and Parker, 1841).

⁵²⁹ Edward Craven Hawtrey, *Two Translations from Homer (Iliad, iii. 234-244, and vi. 394-502), in English Hexameters, and the War-song of Callinus in Elegiacs, with Prefatory Remarks on the Versification* (London: 1843).

⁵³⁰ Matthew Arnold, *On Translating Homer: Three Lectures Given at Oxford* (London, Longman, Green, Longman & Roberts, 1861), p.77.

⁵³¹ Francis St. John Thackeray, *Memoir of Edward Craven Hawtrey* (London: Bell, 1896), p. 189.

⁵³² A. Geoffrey Veysey 'Sir Stephen Richard, Glynne', *ODNB* [accessed 6 June 2013]

appeared in 1877, a volume titled *Notes on the Churches of Kent*.⁵³³ It was edited by Glynne's nephew W. H. Gladstone, the eldest son of the prime minister, with the considerable assistance of Archdeacon Harrison and Canon Scott Robertson of the Kent Archaeological Society. In his preface Gladstone points out that 'neither is it known whether Sir Stephen Glynne intended to publish his Notes; but inasmuch as they were left in a state as to make publication possible, his relations have not hesitated to embark, at any rate by way of experiment, upon that enterprise'.⁵³⁴ It appears that the notes are presented as written by Glynne; Gladstone refers to his Uncle's working method, saying:

a very short time usually sufficed for the jotting down of brief memoranda respecting the fabric and appurtenances, to be afterwards drawn up into the full but compendious form in which they are here presented.⁵³⁵

This implies that little editing was carried out on the notes themselves, but that the exercise was rather one of collating the various short articles left by the author. Glynne's writing style is plain and precise, purely descriptive rather than poetic, and displays a depth of technical architectural and historical knowledge in a style described by one reviewer of the *Yorkshire Church Notes of Sir Stephen Glynne* as 'agonisingly factual and concise; yet reliably meticulous'.⁵³⁶

Where footnotes have been added, usually to refer to architectural changes carried out after Glynne's death but occasionally to add information that Glynne had omitted, they carry the identifying initial of the supplementary author. Since that initial publication there appears to have been sporadic interest in Glynne's works. Two editions of his 'notes' were published at the end of the nineteenth

⁵³³ Stephen R Glynne, *Notes on the Churches of Kent* (London: John Murray, 1877).

⁵³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.iv

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.v

⁵³⁶ Judith Frost, Review of Butler, Lawrence, 'The Yorkshire Church Notes of Sir Stephen Glynne (1825-1874)', *Medieval Review*, (November 2008), p. xxiv.

<<https://scholarworks.iu.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/2022/4186/08.11.01.html?sequence=1>> [accessed 08/06/2013]

century by the Chetham Society under the titles *Notes on the Churches of Lancashire* and *Notes on the Churches of Cheshire*.⁵³⁷ These were eventually followed in 1902 by an edition of *Gloucestershire Church Notes*.⁵³⁸ There then follows a long period during which the only interest shown in Glynne's work appears in articles published by various archaeological societies' journals and this situation continued until fairly recently when there has again been a revival of interest. In the present day the works appear largely to be produced by local antiquarian and archaeological societies and include *Sir Stephen Glynne's Church Notes for Somerset* published by the Somerset Record Society.⁵³⁹ *Sir Stephen Glynne's Church Notes for Shropshire* published by the University of Keele.⁵⁴⁰ *The Derbyshire Church Notes of Sir Stephen Glynne* published by the Derbyshire Record Society.⁵⁴¹ *Notes on the Older Churches in the Four Welsh Dioceses: Archdeanery of Cardigan* which is a facsimile reprint of articles from *Archaeologia Cambrensis*.⁵⁴² The most recent publication of Glynne's work is the *Church Notes of Sir Stephen Glynne for Cumbria* published by Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society.⁵⁴³

⁵³⁷ Stephen R. Glynne, *Notes on the Churches of Lancashire*, ed. by J. A. Atkinson (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1893).

Stephen R. Glynne, *Notes on the Churches of Cheshire*, ed. by J. A. Atkinson (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1894).

⁵³⁸ Stephen R Glynne, *Gloucestershire Church Notes*, ed. by W.P.W. Phillimore and J. Melland Hall (London: Phillimore, 1902).

⁵³⁹ Stephen Richard Glynne, *Sir Stephen Glynne's Church Notes for Somerset*, ed. by Michael, McGarvie (Taunton: Somerset Record Society, 1994).

⁵⁴⁰ Stephen Richard Glynne, *Sir Stephen Glynne's Church Notes for Shropshire*, ed. by D.C. Cox (Keele: University of Keele Press, 1997).

⁵⁴¹ Stephen Richard Glynne, *The Derbyshire Church Notes of Sir Stephen Glynne, 1825-1873*, ed. by Aileen Hopkinson, Vincent Hopkinson, Wendy Bateman (Chesterfield: Derbyshire Record Society 2004).

⁵⁴² Stephen Richard Glynne, *Notes on the Older Churches in the Four Welsh Dioceses: Archdeanery of Cardigan* (Cribyn: Llanerch Press, 2004), 2 vols, *Archaeologia Cambrensis*, series 5 vol. 1 – Series 6 vol. 2, (1884–1902).

⁵⁴³ Stephen Richard Glynne, *The Church Notes of Sir Stephen Glynne for Cumbria*, ed. by Lawrence Butler (Kendal: Cumberland & Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society, 2011).

The Venerable Archdeacon Wrangham was an active writer summed up by one biographer as ‘a reputable poet, an epigrammatist, a translator from Greek, Latin, French and Italian, and an editor of classical texts, as well as a prolific writer of pamphlets on church and social matters’.⁵⁴⁴ Unusually for a bibliophile (and in his case, almost certainly also a bibliomaniac), Wrangham had very little interest in typography, but rather favoured rarity and, when it came to his own works, he used a variety of undistinguished printers, presumably chosen on the basis of economy. The end results were predictably in many cases ‘poorly designed and printed’.⁵⁴⁵ He also had a predilection for books printed on coloured paper and often his own works appeared with some copies printed in this fashion against all the dictates of taste at this period.⁵⁴⁶ Wrangham may have possessed a whimsical side but he was also undoubtedly a scholarly and industrious man. He published a great many sermons and ecclesiastical treatises, including the *Advantages of Diffused Knowledge, a Sermon, Thirteen Practical Sermons, Earnest Contention for the True Faith, Leslie’s Short and Easy Method With the Deists, The Pleiad; or Evidences of Christianity* and *A Sermon on the Translation of the Scriptures Into the Oriental Languages*.⁵⁴⁷ The publishing of his sermons and essays was more than a vanity project and held concrete practical application, as many of

⁵⁴⁴ Trevor Beeson, *The Canons: Cathedral Close Encounters* (London: Clowes, 2006), p. 23.

⁵⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁵⁴⁶ Michael Sadleir, ‘Archdeacon Francis Wrangham (1769-1842) and his Books’, *The Library*, 17 (September 1936), 129-130, (p. 130).

⁵⁴⁷ Francis Wrangham, *The Advantages of Diffused Knowledge, a Sermon* (London: Mawman, Cambridge: Deighton, 1803).

Francis Wrangham, *Thirteen Practical Sermons: To Which are Annexed “Rome is Fallen!” and St. Peter”* (London: Mawman, 1800).

Francis Wrangham, *Earnest Contention for the True Faith, a Sermon* (London: Mawman, Cambridge: J Deighton, 1809).

Francis Wrangham, Charles Leslie, *Leslie’s Short and Easy Method with the Deists* (New Haven: Sidney’s Press, 1807).

Francis Wrangham, *The Pleiad; or Evidences of Christianity* in *Constable’s Miscellany*, II (Edinburgh: Constable; London: Hurst and Chance., 1828).

Francis Wrangham, *A Sermon on the Translation of the Scriptures Into the Oriental Languages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1807).

these sermons related to his committed work with the poor of his parish. His desire was to spread information about the various social programmes that he had created to assist his parishioners (see above p. 116). His hope was that by advertising the ideas they might be taken up by other clergymen to be used in their own parishes.⁵⁴⁸

Wrangham also published an extensive range of poetry, including his *Poems*, *The Sufferings of the Primitive Martyrs*, *The Restoration of the Jews*, *The Holy Land*, *Poetical Sketches of Scarborough*, *The Raising of Jäirus' Daughter*, and *Sertum Cantabrigiense; or the Cambridge Garland*.⁵⁴⁹ Many were winners of the Seaton Poetry Prize at Cambridge and printed at the University's request. He also produced translations of classical poetry, including *Sonnets from Petrarch*, and the *Lyrics of Horace*. His interest in classical authors extended beyond verse and he returned repeatedly to Plutarch. He contributed to a translation of *Plutarch's Lives* in 1811.⁵⁵⁰ In 1816 he published *Humble Contributions to a British Plutarch*.⁵⁵¹ Over a number of years he privately printed occasional volumes of *Centuria Mirabilis; or the Hundred Heroes of the British Plutarch Who Have Flourished Since the Reformation*.⁵⁵² In 1792 he had published *Reform: A Farce modernised from Aristophanes* under the pseudonym S. Foote

⁵⁴⁸ Beeson, p. 26.

⁵⁴⁹ Francis Wrangham, *Poems*, (London: Mawman, 1795).

Francis Wrangham, *The Suffering of the Primitive Martyrs: A Prize Poem* (Cambridge: J Smith, 1812).

Francis Wrangham, *The Restoration of the Jews* (Cambridge: Archdeacon and Burges, 1795).

Francis Wrangham, *The Holy Land, a Poem* (Cambridge: Burges, 1800).

J.B. Papworth, F. Wrangham and W. Combe, *Poetical Sketches of Scarborough* (London: Ackerman, 1813).

Francis Wrangham, *The Raising of Jäirus' Daughter* (Cambridge: Mawman, 1804).

Francis Wrangham, *Sertum Cantabrigiense; or the Cambridge Garland* (Malton: Smithson, 1824).

⁵⁵⁰ J. Langhorne, W. Langhorne and F. Wrangham, *Plutarch's Lives* (Philadelphia: Brannan and Morford, 1811).

⁵⁵¹ Francis Wrangham, *Humble Contributions to a British Plutarch* (London: Baldwin, 1816).

⁵⁵² 'The Venerable Francis Wrangham', *The Imperial Magazine*, 1 (1831), p. 203.

Jr.⁵⁵³ This work was described as ‘an anti-radical parody’, which is fitting, as Wrangham was extremely radical for a clergyman.⁵⁵⁴ Among his miscellaneous publications were *Scraps*, 1816.⁵⁵⁵ *The Works of the Rev. Thomas Zouch*, which included a memoir written by Wrangham, appeared in 1820.⁵⁵⁶ *The Virtuous Woman: A Tribute to the Memory of the Right Hon. Lady Anne Hudson, of Bessingby* was written in 1818.⁵⁵⁷ Wrangham’s acquaintance with Egerton Brydges began around the autumn of 1811 and so predated their connection through the Roxburghe Club by eleven years.⁵⁵⁸ He contributed two articles to volume two of Brydges’ the *Ruminator* in 1813, one on Mary Queen of Scots, the other on Sir William Jones.⁵⁵⁹

Despite the bewildering variety and quantity of his published works and his evident scholarship, Wrangham still judged his abilities to be lacking:

In truth I have never been able to write with fluency, and am at all times so little satisfied with what I do write, that if I were to transcribe one of my own compositions a hundred times I should make a hundred times a hundred alterations.⁵⁶⁰

By way of balance, a memoir of Wrangham, published anonymously in 1831, says:

Many and various as the productions of his pen have been, there is not one line which he need ever wish to blot, the whole being distinguished by

⁵⁵³ S. Foote Jr. (Wrangham), *Reform: a Farce, modernised from Aristophanes* (London: Edwards, 1792).

⁵⁵⁴ ‘The Venerable Francis Wrangham’, p. 203.

⁵⁵⁵ Francis Wrangham, *Scraps* (London: Baldwin, 1816).

⁵⁵⁶ Francis Wrangham, *The Works of The Rev. Thomas Zouch* (York: Rivington, 1820).

⁵⁵⁷ Francis Wrangham, *The Virtuous Woman: A Tribute to the Memory of the Right Hon. Lady Anne Hudson, of Bessingby* (Yorkshire: Galtrey, 1818).

⁵⁵⁸ Sadleir, ‘Archdeacon Francis Wrangham; A Supplement’, p. 423.

⁵⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 426.

⁵⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 435.

innocent gaiety, by an earnest desire to benefit his fellow-creatures, and by unaffected piety.⁵⁶¹

The pressures on Wrangham's time (and it must be supposed the time of most of the men listed in this chapter) are evident from a short excerpt from a letter from Wrangham to Egerton Brydges, quoted by Sadleir:

Though myself much occupied with various literary engagements, the care of my three parishes and the tuition of my five children, I cannot but accept with pleasure the offer you make me to contribute a paper to your excellent series of Ruminators.⁵⁶²

Looking at the group as a whole it is sobering to consider the level of literary activity that even the busiest of men managed to maintain at this time, especially when one considers the more mundane, but often prolific letter writing, both personal and professional, the keeping of journals and the score of other workaday writing that needed to be undertaken on a daily basis. Some of these books are banal in their subject matter or mediocre in the writing skills displayed, and occasionally it is obvious that the author did not have to concern themselves unduly with the taste of their readership or the necessity of turning a profit, freed by their personal wealth to follow their own interests irrespective of the market and its requirements. However, the fact that these books were written at all indicates firstly the primacy of the printed word at this time, and how common the desire was to communicate the rush of ideas going on in the literary world. Secondly, it indicates the exceptionally high percentage of the Roxburghe Club members who were, or at least felt themselves to be, sufficiently involved in the world of letters to consider it feasible to put their opinions, knowledge and creativity into print for the consumption of others. There is a vast chasm between

⁵⁶¹ Anon, *The Venerable Francis Wrangham*, reprinted and extended version of the article of the same name first published in *The Imperial Magazine*, 1831 – no publishing information is included, but the book is owned by the Bodleian.

⁵⁶² Sadleir, 'Archdeacon Francis Wrangham; A Supplement', p. 426.

being a mere bibliomaniac, as portrayed in the public imagination, and being a collector of rare books who also reads, writes and publishes books; the first position is an aesthetic, financial or competitive state, while the second implies an understanding and endorsement of the value of the intellectual contents of books, often coupled with an appreciation of the book as an artefact. It is especially noticeable that, apart from Dibdin, none of the club members were writing books about the collecting of books and as already discussed, even Dibdin's works were only partially about the more superficial values of book collecting.

2.4 THE BOOKS PRINTED BY THE CLUB

In the year that Roxburghe Club was established the first steam-driven printing press was being given its initial trial for *The Times* and the mass production of books was becoming a reality. At a time when men of letters, including Isaac Disraeli, were voicing their concerns about the avalanche of books that was threatening to overwhelm the discerning reader, the Roxburghe club were revelling in the printed word. While the Roxburghe members' collections did of course contain many rare and beautiful manuscripts, some of which later became important Roxburghe Volumes, the main focus of collecting for most of the members was black-letter books and, tellingly, the first items that they chose to reproduce were not manuscripts but reproductions of early printed volumes. Public opinion towards the collecting and study of black-letter items was not overall a positive one and a heated debate was carried on in magazines of the day with the Roxburghe club soon being seen as the epitome of this desire to 'grub

up all the trash’, as it was dismissively described by one detractor.⁵⁶³ James Beresford, in *Bibliosophia*, acknowledged the public view when he describes the features of black-letter type as ‘the uncouthly angular configuration – the obsoletely stiff, grim and bloated appearance of its characters’, while asserting that it is exactly this lack of appeal to the general reader which recommends it to the collector.⁵⁶⁴

There are a number of possible reasons for this antipathy towards early texts, especially those reproduced in black-letter facsimile. It is possible that, at a time when Catholic emancipation was a highly contentious subject, black-letter volumes could be seen as somehow too reminiscent of medieval Catholic hegemony. Although Dorson asserts that ‘anti-catholic rage’ is ‘an emotion that is characteristic of the early antiquarians’, this is a point that is challenged, at least in the case of the Roxburghe Club, by the fact that so many of the club, as shown in section 2.1, were politically sympathetic to Catholic emancipation, even (or especially) among the clergy members.⁵⁶⁵ Rachel Dressler sees the prejudice as largely originating outside of antiquarian circles but as being nonetheless problematic, leaving antiquarians open to attack from anti-Catholics.⁵⁶⁶ Certainly the Roxburghe Club as a group produced a number of reprints of books and manuscripts of Catholic origin, i.e. pre-Reformation, including the excerpts from Mystery cycles: the *Chester Mysteries*, edited and presented by James Markland and *Judicium, a Pageant* presented to the Club by

⁵⁶³ J.K., Letter, *Gentleman’s Magazine* (1813: Dec), p. 544.

⁵⁶⁴ James Beresford, *Bibliosophia*, pp. 62-3.

⁵⁶⁵ Richard M. Dorson, *The British Folklorists* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 65.

⁵⁶⁶ Rachel Dressler, ‘“Those Effigies which belonged to the English Nation”: Antiquarianism, Nationalism and Charles Alfred Stothard’s Monumental Effigies of Great Britain’, *Correspondences: Medievalism in Scholarship and the Arts*, ed. by Tom Shippey and Martin Arnold (Cambridge: Brewer, 2005), p. 159.

Peregrine Towneley.⁵⁶⁷ Both of these editions were volumes that the Club was rightfully proud of, with the *Chester Mysteries* being described by Dibdin as:

A beautiful specimen of united graphical elegance [...] The introduction to this work upon our earliest dramas, and which does so much credit to Mr. Markland, was reprinted in Mr. Boswell's edition of Malone's Shakespeare⁵⁶⁸

Indeed, Martin asserted that it is 'certainly one of the most valuable works that has emanated from this club' and mentions that:

The Essay prefixed to the *Mysteries* has been reprinted by Mr. Boswell in the Prolegomena to his edition of Shakespeare, who there observes, - "[It was] printed for private distribution among a select circle of his friends, in a volume remarkable for its typographical elegance, and the beauty of its embellishments, but deriving a much higher value from the acuteness and skilful research which enabled him to throw so much light on this very curious branch of our early literature".⁵⁶⁹

Boswell's work as an editor and literary critic was already widely respected and, even allowing for the partiality of friendship, he must have held Markland's scholarship in high regard to risk including it in his important edition of Malone's *Shakespeare*.⁵⁷⁰ Markland's edition has also found some favour among modern commentators and Matthews describes it as having 'a lengthy and erudite introduction showing a real depth of knowledge' and as being 'scholarly in a way that looks ahead to the format of scholarship later in the century'.⁵⁷¹

The other mystery play presented in this period of the club's history is *Judicium, a Pageant* which is an extract from a Wakefield mystery play the *Last Judgement*, taken from the unique Towneley manuscript of the Wakefield Cycle.

⁵⁶⁷ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, p. 70.

⁵⁶⁸ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 467.

⁵⁶⁹ Martin, p. 475.

⁵⁷⁰ William Shakespeare, *Plays and Poems*, edited by E. Malone and J. Boswell (London: Rivington, 1821).

⁵⁷¹ Matthews, pp. 94 & 99.

The Towneleys were a Catholic recusant family whose library had sheltered the manuscript after the dissolution of the monasteries had necessitated its removal from Whalley Abbey in 1537.⁵⁷² As a member of this family, Peregrine Towneley's very inclusion in the Roxburghe Club itself further weighs against the possibility of any deep-seated anti-Catholic bias among the Roxburghe. This edition carries a preface written by Francis Douce, a folklorist praised by Dorson as one who 'shows the breadth of a catholic folklorist', although this time he is using catholic in the more general sense.⁵⁷³

Previously in 1817 Viscount Althorp had presented the Club with an edition of *A proper new Interlude of the World and the Child, otherwise called Mundus et Infans*. This item is a morality play (an 'interlude') rather than a mystery play, but it is possible that he inspired Markland and Towneley in their own choices or perhaps it indicates that such works were a topic of discussion among the group. It is based on a poem from the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, called *The Mirror of the Periods of Man's Life*, and may have influenced Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part 1*.⁵⁷⁴ The edition presented to the Roxburghe is taken from a unique copy printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1522, the earliest surviving printed edition.

Further early presentations to the Club with obvious Catholic provenance include *Diana; or the excellent conceitful Sonnets of Henry Constable* and *The Lyvys of Seyntes; translated into Englysh be a Doctour of Dyuynite clepyd Osbern*

⁵⁷² John Martin, *A Bibliographical Catalogue of Books Privately Printed*, p. 478.

⁵⁷³ Dorson, p. 61.

⁵⁷⁴ Geoffrey Bullough, *Narrative and dramatic sources of Shakespeare: King John, Henry IV, Henry V, Henry VIII Vol.4, Later English history plays* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 173.

Bokenam, frer Austyn of the Convent of Stocklare. The first, *Diana*, which originally dates from 1592, was reprinted for presentation in 1818 by Edward Littledale.⁵⁷⁵ Henry Constable was an Elizabethan convert to Catholicism who was imprisoned twice, and eventually exiled for his personal conviction and public testimony that being Catholic did not prevent loyalty to the English Crown.⁵⁷⁶ The collection is important in literary terms, since, as Ceri Sullivan argues, Constable was ‘at the forefront of the development of the sonnet in English literature: the second English poet after Sidney to publish a sonnet sequence.’⁵⁷⁷ *The Lyvys of Seyntes* was the offering of Viscount Clive in 1835, the year in which he became president of the Club.⁵⁷⁸ This text is a fifteenth-century collection of verses in Latin and English, recounting the lives of twelve female saints, adapted by Osborn Bokenham from the famous thirteenth-century *Legenda Aurea* by Jacobus de Voragine.⁵⁷⁹ There is of course nothing to imply that the Club members were choosing these works expressly because of the Catholic origin (except perhaps in the case of Towneley’s personal choice of text), but it does strongly indicate that they were not avoiding works through any anti-Catholic feeling or political consideration, even though a number of members were opponents of Catholic emancipation.

A striking feature of the early days of the Club is the extent to which the Club members were, beyond the usual bibliomaniac aesthetic preoccupations, conscious of and focussed towards the appreciation of books as artefacts that

⁵⁷⁵ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 467.

⁵⁷⁶ Martin, p. 474.

⁵⁷⁷ Ceri Sullivan, ‘Henry Constable’, *ODNB*. [Accessed 03 02 2015]

⁵⁷⁸ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 463.

⁵⁷⁹ Osborn Bokenham, *Legenda Aurea*, ed. by M. J. Serjeantson (Early English Texts Society, OS 2016, 1938).

contained important information for the reader, beyond the text itself. This consideration of books as artefacts is a commonplace idea in modern scholarship, but did not yet have such widespread currency in the early nineteenth century. During the Club's early days it was the focus of much criticism regarding its reprints and facsimiles of early printed books: their critics were unable to understand their desire to reproduce works in a form that was visually as close as possible to the originals as early nineteenth century technology allowed and it was considered by many to be a sign of their lack of scholarly discipline and knowledge of literature that they would waste their time doing this, rather than producing modern editions of the early printed works or better still, manuscripts. Of course, in this period 'modern edition' typically meant a readable text and eighteenth and early nineteenth-century editions were often cavalier in their verbal and graphological representation of the original. As Edwards, however, has pointed out, early printed books often represent the only surviving evidence of 'many precious manuscripts'.⁵⁸⁰ That the case in Lord Spencer's first offering to the club, *The First Three Books of Ovid De Tristibus*, printed in 1578 and at that time believed to be the only surviving copy of Churchyard's translation.⁵⁸¹ Its future survival certainly became more assured once another thirty-six copies had been printed. Ovid had written what is now usually referred to as *Tristia ex Ponto* while in exile from the court of Emperor Augustus for reasons that are today unclear.⁵⁸² Churchyard was a skilful poet and

⁵⁸⁰ Edwards, *Libraries and Founders of Libraries*, p. 435.

⁵⁸¹ Frederick Adolphus Ebert, *A General Bibliographical Dictionary* (Oxford: OUP, 1838), III, p. 1258.

⁵⁸² The verses begin with a plea to his 'little book' to fly back to the city without him and beg for his pardon, see Ovid, *Tristia Ex Ponto*, ed. Arthur Leslie Wheeler (London: Heinemann, 1924), pp. 3-5.

in his translation personalised Ovid's melancholy verses.⁵⁸³ Caroline Jameson points out that during the sixteenth century, translations of Ovid were common, reflecting its continuing popularity in schools and use for teaching poetry, letter-writing and rhetoric.⁵⁸⁴ The publication of this work by the Roxburghe Club can be viewed, further, as fitting with their exploration of texts that provide literary context and relevant background to the works of Shakespeare, already noted.

For the members of the group, however, as pioneering lovers of early typographic practices, there would have been little joy to be gained from producing their period's standard, modern editions that could easily have been provided by the normal publishing channels. Their motives and methods, because of their access to private funding, could also be free from the constraints of profit and intellectual property, to serve literary (and embryonic academic) projects not often provided for my contemporary commercial publishing. As Hill Burton pointed out,

Without interfering either with the author who seeks in his copyrights the reward of his genius and labour, or with the publisher who calculates on a return for his capital, skill and industry, the book clubs have ministered to literary wants, which these legitimate sources of supply have been unable to meet.⁵⁸⁵

The opportunity remained for mainstream publishers to print modern accessible editions of any of the works if they believed that the readership existed to make it worth their while and the club members were mostly very generous in lending items from their collections to authors, editors and publishers who required access to the original texts; Richard Heber especially, with his massive collection

⁵⁸³ Caroline Jameson, 'Ovid in the Sixteenth Century', in *Ovid*, ed. by J.W. Binns (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 210-242 (p. 214).

⁵⁸⁴ Jameson, pp. 212-13.

⁵⁸⁵ Hill Burton, p. 251.

was a generous lender of rare volumes to needy scholars and black-letter editors. For their own publications they were interested in doing something very different, that is, very often to reproduce the books as they had first appeared.

In this pursuit the Roxburghe were embracing and celebrating the printer's art while insisting on retaining the individuality and personal eccentricities of each volume and maintaining an artisan approach to the creation of a book in direct contrast to the methods of mass book production that were just developing. Each book had its individual personality which was to be maintained and reproduced as far as possible; the literary content was certainly important but so too were the typography, the woodcuts, the mistakes and the oddities; even blank pages were sometimes retained in order to create copies that appeared as similar as possible to the original. Why produce a copy in a modern, unvarying roman type when you could have atmospheric black-letter? Why force the text into an unhistorical uniformity when with a little effort you could experience the book as its first readers experienced it in all its idiosyncratic and authentic glory, printer's contractions and all? Today, undertakings such as Google books display digital reproductions of volumes which have been scanned in by the libraries that own them, allowing a wide readership to gain access to rare or expensive books and to study and appreciate many of the features of older book production, and the representation of texts without the necessity of travelling to the actual library. While there can be many criticisms and reservations regarding the Google project, it undeniably does allow the reader to view the book as a digital representation of the physical object, rather than just the disembodied text. It allows the observation of many details that might otherwise remain hidden from

the online reader: ownership and library stamps, page numbering and illustrations, size of margins, the type used and much more is available from the original book in a way that is not available from a modern edition of the same text. Modern scholarly digitisations provide even more reliably accurate and finely-detailed representations of manuscripts and early printed books (e.g. the Gallica Project at the Bibliothèque National, the British Library digitisation Projects and EEBO).

When the Roxburghe Club reproduced their rare volumes they also attempted to reproduce as much information from the original item as they could, given the restrictions imposed by the available technology. They were not just reprinting early works; they were reproducing or cloning them, which to some degree, although in no way attempting to pass them off as the genuine early artefact, entailed a blurring of perception between the original book and its recreated modern version. As David McKitterick points out:

Some of the assumptions implicit in the acceptance of copies created by the several different processes employed at various times in the nineteenth century have their direct descendants in the presuppositions of early twenty-first century viewers of scans on computer screens.⁵⁸⁶

As mentioned, the Club made no attempt to pass their facsimiles off as rarities, and in fact went out of their way to limit access to the reprints to the membership of the Club but in so doing, somewhat consciously, created a new variety of rarity, that of the Roxburghe Volume. McKitterick also points out the complexity of motives that may exist behind the creation of a facsimile, writing that:

⁵⁸⁶ McKitterick, p. 73.

In the most obvious sense, of a reproduction of an entire book, facsimiles can serve various purposes – scholarly as well as nefarious. The boundary between a fake and a forgery can often be expressed in economic terms, though this is not adequate for all circumstances: history offers a wealth of examples of fraud for theological, political or scholarly purposes. Facsimiles can include both fakes and forgeries, though neither may necessarily be a likeness of something else.⁵⁸⁷

Certainly in the case of the Roxburghe facsimiles they were neither fake nor forgery, as they do not pretend to be the original in any way and the consideration was not commercial (in several cases the Club members willingly allowed their editions to become the basis for later editions produced for a wider commercial circulation available freely for purchase), although Dibdin certainly took satisfaction from the value of their editions when they did occasionally come to auction.

They were in love with typography and early technology – the late-medieval innovators of movable type whose names they honour in their annual toast, the practical workmanship of the press, not the idealised bucolic or chivalric dreams of mainstream Romanticism. Dibdin certainly wrote in an overblown romantic style when he was gushing about his ‘book-knights’ but this was his own literary tic, and not representative of how the interests of the Roxburghe collectors presented themselves when it came to their own productions or even illustrative of how the other members approached the black-letter books that they collected. Theirs was the romance of discovering and appreciating the authentic talent both literary and artisanal that was largely going unrecognised by other people at this time, combined with an excitement about the invention of the technology of

⁵⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 76.

printing, verging on what would now be summed up as ‘boys and their toys’. Alongside the love of the traditional they were simultaneously keen, when advantageous to their aims, to embrace the newest, most cutting-edge technologies of the day such as lithography which now allowed them to reproduce more exactly the workmanship that they loved. This was not a politically and socially reactionary notion of creating romanticised visions of feudal times, but a highly personal reaction to the literature and technology that came together in the black-letter volumes.

Club members were obviously involved with and supportive of the incipient area of facsimile production, employing those printers who were leading the field in such work. One instance was the firm of Joseph and George Smeaton, with whom McKitterick tells us ‘the world of type facsimiles entered a new phase [in which] both father and son produced close typographic imitations of early English books. For this, Joseph was employed by Joseph Haslewood’.⁵⁸⁸ Here again we see Haslewood’s close association with the important developments of early English, and (more usually with Haslewood) Elizabethan texts.

McKitterick also shows that the Club members were not just instrumental in producing facsimile editions outside the Club circle but concerned with facsimiles being created by non-Club members. One such text was published by John Fry who in 1814 collated a collection of verses taken from manuscripts and early editions and published 120 copies under the title *Pieces of Ancient Poetry*, of which five copies were received by Roxburghe members.⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁸ McKitterick, p. 88.

⁵⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 90-1.

Another example of this willingness on the behalf of the Club to look forward technologically, while seeking to retain the authentic qualities of the early printers, can be seen in the volume presented to the Club by John Dent in 1818. His offering was *Solemnities and Triumphes doon and made at the Spousells and Marriage of the King's Daughter the Ladye Marye to the Prynce of Castile, Archduke of Austrige*.⁵⁹⁰ This was a facsimile reprint of a tract originally printed by Richard Pynson in 1508.⁵⁹¹ It was another instance where a Club member arranged for the reprinting of a unique copy, the publishing of which safeguarded its future and made it more available (although obviously still to a restricted number of people) through its presence in at least thirty one libraries.⁵⁹² Rarity aside, however, the real significance of this reprint in the context of the club publications is that of the cutting-edge methods that Dent utilised in having it printed by lithograph at Ackermann's Press. Barker says of the methods used to produce this facsimile:

The newly invented process of lithography had great advantages for facsimile work; the original could be traced and the image transferred directly to the printing stones, a considerable advance in speed and accuracy over the laborious business of copper-engraving, which had previously been used for most facsimiles. Ackermann had only set up his press a year before, when he had printed a facsimile of Maximilian I's prayer-book with Dürer's marginal drawings, so Dent had been very quick to see its possibilities.⁵⁹³

Obviously the Roxburghe membership had their finger on the pulse of modern developments in publishing. This is significant because not only does it support

⁵⁹⁰ *The Solemnities and Triumphes doon and made at the Spousells and Marriage of the King's Daughter the Ladye Marye to the Prynce of Castile, Archduke of Austrige*, (London: Roxburghe Club, 1818).

⁵⁹¹ Sidney Anglo, *The Court Festivals of Henry VII: A Study Based Upon the Account Books of John Heron Treasurer of the Chamber*, p.18.

<<https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/api/datastream?publicationPid=uk-ac-man-scw:1m2839&datastreamId=POST-PEER-REVIEW-PUBLISHERS-DOCUMENT.PDF>> [accessed 15/07/2014]

⁵⁹² Martin, p. 476.

⁵⁹³ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, pp. 68-9.

the argument that they were not simply backward-looking nostalgics, over-romanticising the past and dabbling in amateur recreations of relics of chivalry, but that they were firmly entrenched in the onward progression of the printing arts and had an intelligent, up-to-date knowledge of the state of the art during their period. Dent was by no means a trend-setter in the rest of his life; he was generally agreed to be a staid, rather dull man, a pillar of the banking world and in no way likely to be at the cutting-edge of new crazes. When it came, however, to his passion for books, he was keeping up with the very latest developments in the printing world. It should also be noted that it can have only have been advantageous to the development of printing techniques at this time to have had the backing of the significant wealth available to the men of the Roxburghe.

It was also certainly not the case that the founders of the Roxburghe Club failed to understand the utility, readability and scholarly importance of more modern, accessible, Roman type editions of black-letter books. Many members were also instrumental in editing and publishing editions of early English literature that conform much more closely to modern standards. The methods of production used for early Roxburghe volumes were not, it seems, being used because of lack of knowledge of alternatives, but rather as a rejection of the mass-produced aesthetic, and the cultural push towards the mechanisation of the printing process, where the printer became simply the operator of the machine rather than the craftsman whose aesthetic values and skill is reflected in the volume produced. For the collector early printed books had never been just books but took on the personality of the printer, becoming a Caxton, a Valdarfer or an Aldine, and that identity needed to be preserved and expressed if the book was to

be reprinted. This was a conscious act, designed to reproduce the works as closely as possible to the originals and in so doing ensuring the continued existence and reading of rare works, increasing the number of readers who could in effect access the original as an artefact in all ways that mattered, and also giving back to the book its identity as a valued artefact in its own right, rather than just the carrier of the text, interchangeable with any other bundle of paper that could hold the ink.

With respect to their contribution to the knowledge of literary history, too, their publications show concerns beyond mere enjoyment of quaint books. They show a pioneering and informed mission to extend awareness of a number of areas of literature. These included poetry from the fifteenth century and the early Tudor period, and drama from the same period. They were far ahead of its period: it is only in the last twenty years or so that the world of literary criticism as a whole (there have always been enthusiasts) has taken seriously the achievements of Lydgate and Gower, for example. That appreciation of literature between Chaucer and Shakespeare's lifetimes shows the Roxburghe as rejecting the then conventional picture of English literary history as beginning with these two peaks. Instead, they brought back to the light of day much writing that was both important in its own right and also represented major genres of the intervening period, such as morality drama and English saints lives. The latter also reveal their readiness in many cases to reprint works that if not technically Catholic, since composed before the Reformation, nevertheless represent the religious culture that the Reformation swept away. The reprinting of plays from mystery cycles is another example of this. Their publications also include works with

Catholic associations from the period after the English Reformation. This raises very interesting questions in the context of the controversies surrounding the question of Catholic Emancipation.

The Club's desire to look at the literary context preceding and surrounding Shakespeare emerges as a very strong impetus throughout the period in question. Reproducing texts which provided contexts, analogues and sources for Shakespeare, particularly, but also other writers, was an explicit aim, as articulated by Dibdin, in one of a series of lectures on literature that he gave at the Royal Institution in three series; in 1806, 1807 and 1808, and again at the London Institution in 1823.⁵⁹⁴ He defended the devotee of black-letter volumes by asserting that the 'black-lettered student – if he must be so denominated' had an important part to play in the tracing of earlier works which may have influenced better-known authors such as Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden and Sterne (he is here thinking of Sterne's typographical additions to *Tristram Shandy*) and furthermore that:

If he be not the discoverer of absolute and hitherto unknown merit, he oftentimes points out to us how a hint, or a sentiment, of one writer has been expanded into imagery, or strengthened into a maxim by another.⁵⁹⁵

Making an additional practical point, he argued that it allowed the reader of black-letter works to search out plagiaristic tendencies in contemporary authors as by reading early authors 'he [the early author] shows us the slender and subtle materials of others, with which later poets and writers have built up a precarious reputation'.⁵⁹⁶ Greater familiarity with the printed conventions of early books

⁵⁹⁴ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, II, p.244.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 236

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 236.

would assist in detecting not only plagiarism and fraudulent styles of writing but also the counterfeit paratextual features, the styling of titles and so on, that forgers frequently added to their compositions. This series of lectures, given before the Roxburghe Club was conceived, highlight how serious Dibdin was in his approach to promoting early British literature. Jon Klancher views Dibdin's lectures as showing 'little attention to authors, periods, or phases of national development', believing that he:

Focused his roughly 500 listeners every week on a lengthy chronology of rare or unique editions, publication-dates, hot-blooded book auctions, or reasons why they should not fear the book collector's mania for the 'black-letter'.⁵⁹⁷

It is difficult to reach any similar conclusion, however, on reading the list given by Dibdin himself outlining his lectures.⁵⁹⁸ During the twenty-eight lecture series he covers the work of writers such as Lydgate and Gower, writers who would eventually take their places as canon, but who were yet to be appreciated. One lecture addressed the 'Importance of preserving national literature', taking as its example the works of the Earl of Surrey, a writer whose *Certaine Bokes of Virgiles Aenaeis, turned into English Meter* was soon to be the first text published by the Roxburghe Club.⁵⁹⁹ Looking at the outline of Dibdin's lectures it is easy to see already the blueprint of a programme that the Roxburghe Club would unofficially follow in its printing activities, underlining the argument that the Club was not haphazardly printing items due to their rarity in book-collecting terms, but rather creating a modern series of early British literature, albeit one that does not meet the standards of uniform, scholarly framework we might expect to see today in a similar undertaking. This vision was, incidentally,

⁵⁹⁷ Klancher, p.24.

⁵⁹⁸ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, II, pp. 239-244.

⁵⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.243

definitely about the literature of Great Britain, and not restricted to works of English literature; Dibdin's second lecture covered the topic of 'druidical learning' and he later covered Scottish ballads and the 'influence of the Welch and Scottish languages'. Dibdin did not claim to be the first to examine these authors, explicitly referencing previous critics such as Ritson and Wharton, who had been pioneers of the recognition and study of national literature as a serious historical investigation and narrative. But he did extend the reach of this school of thought, carrying it to a fashionable and influential audience at a period when these literary tastes and scholarly respect for vernacular literary texts were not widely accepted or appreciated. These issues were being addressed by Dibdin at a time when Coleridge, a fellow lecturer at the Royal Institution, in his public lecture tours of 1808-9 was largely restricting his subject matter to Shakespeare, Milton and Chaucer and showed no interest in other early modern dramatists or poets.⁶⁰⁰ Coleridge gives little historical context to Shakespeare's work, preferring to attribute all to Shakespeare's 'imagination', the interior source of genius.⁶⁰¹ Dibdin (and the Roxburghe Club) prefers to emphasise the cultural and literary history into which such works of genius can be seen in context and not as exemplars of an ahistorical creative genius.

One of the Club's publishing programme's greatest achievements was a widening of the received canon of English literature. As David Matthews, Alice Chandler and others have acknowledged, the Roxburghe Club displayed an interest in early English literature at a time when it was receiving relatively little

⁶⁰⁰ Jon Klancher mentions that before Coleridge started his series of lectures he was present at the last lecture given by Dibdin at the Institution, p. 24.

⁶⁰¹ Terence Hawkes, *Coleridge on Shakespeare: a selection of the essays, notes and lectures of Samuel Taylor Coleridge on the poems and plays of Shakespeare* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1959).

attention and the club were instrumental in preserving and giving value to many early works that might otherwise have failed to come to the attention of scholars and readers. Under the weight of public indifference, or even hostility, unique copies of works were in a precarious position, both physically and in terms of acceptance. Despite this a recurrent criticism of the Club has been that the volumes produced during the early years of its existence, that is the books printed and presented by individual members rather than the later volumes paid for by subscription, are lacking in significance. One example of this viewpoint is displayed by Steeves who in 1913 asserted that:

Indeed it must probably be admitted that John Hill Burton was substantially correct when he declared that the Roxburghe Club Scheme was, from the standpoint of the members, one of purely personal advantage. It was inevitable that under these conditions much of the output of the club should be relatively worthless, for most of the members were wanting in the ability, the wherewithal, or the inclination to produce really important literary works for gratuitous distribution. The publications of this period were, therefore frequently far from valuable, and often lacking in scholarly significance.⁶⁰²

It is difficult to see the justification for this attack, since it goes against the types of literature deemed of worth by this time, and the established respect for Renaissance lyrics, medieval romances and other texts, already recognised by academic research and courses, as well as publications by 1913.

Dibdin, writing in 1836, had obviously already heard this criticism many times and defends the Club's publications with grace, if a little wearily:

Such are the Flowers of which I consider the Roxburghe Garland to be composed. These flowers doubtless vary both in colour and in quality; and the Garland is as doubtless more picturesque in consequence. But considering these forty-four volumes as the

⁶⁰² Steeves, pp. 103-104.

production of a society of noblemen and gentlemen of only twenty-three years standing, put forth without the slightest probability of any *profit* but that of the satisfaction of adding to the Archaeological Curiosities of their country, they ought to stand well in the estimation of all honourable minds. Whatever may be the ultimate “sway” of fashion, the Roxburghe Club – if it rest only upon its present oars of distinction – will have deserved well of the Republic of Literature.⁶⁰³

‘Curiosities’ at this period meant ‘an object of interest’, with qualities of intricacy and/or rarity (*OED* curiosity, sense III, 15), without the more pejorative and superficial senses the word would have today. He also concurred with the decision to produce club editions as a joint expense with the intention of increasing the overall standard of publication produced, saying that:

I adhere to the opinion expressed in a previous page, that it will be better to contribute our respective quotas to the supply of some such other performance as HAVELOK’.⁶⁰⁴

This acquiescence may have been the consequence of seeing the quality of *Havelok* and his eventual acceptance of the benefits to be gained from a more organised approach to Roxburghe editions, especially in light of the advances being made by newer book clubs, even if that involved bringing in ‘outsiders’ and losing some of the Club traditions. Alternatively, it may have been the results of his, never affluent but now painfully straightened, financial situation which possibly would have inclined him to consider the prospect of shared expenditure as looking considerably more attractive than it may have previously.

Turning again from the means of production to the texts reproduced, of the first volumes presented to the club most had more than rarity value to their credit and contained intrinsic literary and historic worth. William Bolland’s donation to the club was the first club edition to be produced and he presented a black-letter

⁶⁰³ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, pp. 469- 470.

⁶⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 470.

reprint of Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey's translation in verse of the second and fourth books of the *Aeneid*.⁶⁰⁵ This is from several points of view a landmark in English literature. It is the first experiment in blank verse (the form Shakespeare used and developed so successfully and influentially in his plays). Just as Chaucer invented the iambic pentameter, which he used in couplets and stanzas, Surry moved on to invent blank verse. He intended this to imitate the classical Latin unrhymed hexameters (for example in the *Aeneid* itself). For the late eighteenth century and the era of the Roxburghe edition, Surrey was also a major humanist pioneer in English literature, in Thomas Warton's words 'the first English classical poet'.⁶⁰⁶ While this Roxburghe choice can be fully justified as both a powerfully beautiful translation, and a major document of the history of English poetry, it is intriguing to note that it also seems to have a connection with that interest in writings and writers with links to Catholicism that can arguably be traced in several Roxburghe choices. Surrey was beheaded by Henry VIII in 1547, and the second printed text came out in 1557 by Tottel. W.A. Sessions says that Tottel 'was shrewd enough...' Surrey could be presented as himself a martyr in the Catholic cause.⁶⁰⁷ By printing *Aeneid* II and IV, with their famous descriptions of Dido, Tottel was perhaps implying a flattering analogy between Queen Mary and Queen Dido.⁶⁰⁸

⁶⁰⁵ Henry Earl of Surrey, *Certaine Bokes of Virgiles Aenaeis, turned into English Meter*, ed. by William Bolland (London: Valpy, 1814).

⁶⁰⁶ Thomas Warton, *History of English Poetry* (London: Ward, Lock and Tyler, 1781), section xxxviii.

On the significance of Surrey's translation see pp.260-87 in W. A. Sessions, *Henry Howard the Poet, Earl of Surrey* (Oxford, OUP, 1999) and also Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, *Poems*, ed. by Emrys Jones (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1964), pp. 35-62.

⁶⁰⁷ W. A. Sessions, *Henry Howard the Poet, Earl of Surrey* (Oxford, OUP, 1999), p. 273.

⁶⁰⁸ Sessions, pp. 273-275.

The Roxburghe edition was reprinted from the 1557 edition by Tottel, now in Dulwich College library.⁶⁰⁹ That the literary-historical significance of a text of this nature was for so long largely overlooked is underlined by Harold Williams, who in 1929 says of this volume that:

If, as a series, the first forty five volumes are unsubstantial, there are redeeming exceptions. [*Certaine Bokes of Virgiles Aeneais, turned into English Meter*] appeared in quarto form and was printed in black-letter. Although in these days, when period-printing and type-facsimile reproduction have become practised arts, it is possible to do these things better, the venture, as a beginning for the club is of interest and not discreditable. A larger type and better spacing would have given the page more distinction.⁶¹⁰

If intended to defend the volume against accusations of insubstantiality this defence raises a strangely discordant note of aesthetic disdain, especially in the last line, which reminds us that a large percentage of the analysis of the club carried out since its foundation has been carried out from the criteria of book collecting rather than literary studies. Williams goes on to describe the second book produced by the club, *Caltha Poetarum; or, The Bumble Bee* by T. Cutwode, saying that it ‘despite the *Athenaeum* editor’s scorn, was worth reprinting’, although he does not substantiate this view. *The Bumble Bee* was a reprint of a poem from 1599 and was Richard Heber’s first presentation to the Roxburghe. This poem had an interesting history as it had been one of the works banned by the Archbishop of Canterbury on publication during the ‘Bishop’s Ban’ against satirical works in 1599.⁶¹¹ Cutwode appears to be a pseudonym. It

⁶⁰⁹ Martin, p. 468.

⁶¹⁰ Harold Williams, *Book Clubs and Printing Societies of Great Britain and Ireland* (London: Curwen Press, 1929), p. 24.

⁶¹¹ Cliff Forshaw, “‘Cease Cease to bawle, thou wasp-stung Satyryst:” Writers, Printers and the Bishops’ Ban of 1599’ *Entertext* 3.1, (pp. 101-131) <http://www.brunel.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/111020/Cliff-Forshaw,-Cease-Cease-to-bawle,-thou-wasp-stung-Satyryst-Writers,-Printers-and-the-Bishops-Ban-of-1599.pdf> [accessed 13 02 2015]

is an allegorical poem and, though salacious, it is also, as Richard McCabe argues, more likely to have been banned because of its political satire.⁶¹²

The printing of the *Bumble Bee* was stopped and any existing copies found were taken to be burnt along with a number of other works banned under the same edict.⁶¹³ The Bishops' Ban would have had interest too for the Club members because of its role in the history of printing and publishing: Forshaw argues that printers tended to ignore the ban, as did satirists; the start of the seventeenth century marked the end of the Anglican Church's power in censoring printing and literature.⁶¹⁴ In Club lore terms the item was also interesting because it was the subject of a bet, as related by Dibdin:

The cause of the above reprint was this. A bet was laid (the winner of the bet to give the Roxburghe Club a dinner) between Sir M.M. Sykes and Mr. Dent, whether the Anniversary Meeting of 1815 were the third or fourth of the Club? Mr. Dent was the loser; when Mr. Heber promised to present the Club with a reprint of the above poem at the extra dinner in contemplation. Only nine days intervened; but within that period the reprint was transcribed, superintended at the press by Mr. Haslewood (without a single error), bound by Charles Lewis, and presented to the Members on sitting down to dinner. Mr. Haslewood was reported to have walked in his sleep, with a pen in his hand, during the whole period of its preparation.⁶¹⁵

It should also be noted at this point that the majority of the first books presented by the members were verse, in keeping with the ethos which had been agreed at the first anniversary dinner: 'It was proposed for each member, in turn, according to the order of his name in the alphabet, to furnish the Society with a reprint of some rare old tract, or composition — chiefly of poetry'.⁶¹⁶ Whether this concentration on poetry at the beginning contributed to the perceived

⁶¹² Richard A. McCabe, "'Right Puisante and Terrible Priests:': the Role of the Anglican Church in State Censorship' in Forshaw, p. 105.

⁶¹³ Martin, p. 468.

⁶¹⁴ Forshaw, pp. 125-126.

⁶¹⁵ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 465.

⁶¹⁶ Dibdin, *Bibliographical Decameron*, p. 72.

insubstantiality of the volumes is open to debate but it would certainly have circumscribed the type of books being reprinted. Additionally it may well have been the case, that when members later chose to present a second volume to the Club, it was perhaps because the restraint had been lifted and a greater choice of work to reproduce was by then an option. This is of course merely conjecture.

Among the many items of poetry making up the Club volumes in the early years were *Poems* by Richard Barnfield, first printed in 1598 and presented in 1816 by James Boswell. Barnfield's poems are sensual, often eccentric, some of them expressing homosexual love. The text was reprinted by Alexander Boswell at the Auchinleck Press from a volume contained in Malone's collection.⁶¹⁷ In the same year *Dolarny's Primerose or the First part of the Passionate Hermit* from 1606 was reprinted by Francis Freeling from a rare edition in his own collection.⁶¹⁸ This poem had been previously discussed by Joseph Haslewood in the *British Bibliographer* and later by Payne Collier in *The Poetical Decameron* and attributed to Raynold, a contemporary of Shakespeare (Dolarny being an anagram of Raynold).⁶¹⁹ This again shows the Club's interest in revealing contexts, analogues and sources for Shakespeare. Collier alludes to what he calls plagiarism within the poem, because motifs were taken from the gravedigger scene in *Hamlet* (1600).⁶²⁰

La Contenance de la Table, contributed by George Freeling, represents the first move away from pieces of Elizabethan poetry and is a fifteenth-century French

⁶¹⁷ Martin, p. 470.

⁶¹⁸ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 464.

⁶¹⁹ John Payne Collier, *The Poetical Decameron* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1820), II, p. 15.

⁶²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.16.

guide for children, offering advice in verse on table manners. It was a humorous supplement to his more serious club offering of *Newes from Scotland, declaring the Damnable Life of Doctor Fian, a notable Sorcerer, who was burned at Edenbrough in Ianuarie last*, which was presented at the same dinner. Although provided wrapped in a napkin and with a tongue-in-cheek dedication ('To the Roxburghe Club, this reprint of a rare Manual for the BEHAVIOUR OF YOUTH AT TABLE, is dedicated and presented for their Edification and Improvement by their faithful and obedient Servant, A Member'), this is a black-letter reprint of a rare pamphlet.⁶²¹ The light-hearted nature of the extra volume was obviously not appreciated by everyone; Dibdin refers to 'a spiteful notice of it, irrelevantly introduced, in a number of the *Quarterly Review* for 1825'.⁶²² As his more serious offering of the same year, George Freeling presented his copy of *Newes from Scotland*, a pamphlet describing a notorious witch trial, written by King James VI of Scotland and originally printed in 1591. Though at first sight this may be largely of historical rather than literary value, Sonntag cites it as a possible source for Shakespeare's portrayal of the witches in *Macbeth*.⁶²³ It illustrates the recurring interest in the reprinting of early texts that hold some influence on the works of Shakespeare.

1817 was equally prolific in the presentation of verse. *Hagthorpe Revived; or Select Specimens of a Forgotten Poet* was edited and presented by Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges with a wood-cut inscription that reads 'a Roxburghe Apology

⁶²¹ Dibdin, *Bibliographical Decameron*, III, p. 73.

⁶²² Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 464.

⁶²³ Manuela Sonntag, *William Shakespeare: Subject of the Crown?* (Morrisville: Lulu Enterprises, 2010), pp. 144-145.

in select Specimens of a Forgotten Poet'.⁶²⁴ 'Apology' here presumably means a justification for printing a forgotten poet and is an extract taken from the poet Hagthorpe's work *Divine Meditations and Elegies* and printed at Egerton Brydges' Lee Priory Press.⁶²⁵ Hagthorpe lived in the early 1600s and produced several works including the *Visions of Things, or foure Poems* and an elegy for Prince Henry.⁶²⁶ At the same dinner William Holwell Carr presented a poetic text, *Istoria novellamente ritrovata di due nobili Amanti, &c., da Luigi Porto*, which was first printed in Venice in 1535 under the title *La Giulietta*, and is the source for Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.⁶²⁷ Also in 1817 another sixteenth-century verse text, a piece of Elizabethan poetry, *The Funeralles of King Edward the Sixt* by William Baldwin, was contributed by James William Dodd. This rare example of Baldwin's work was reprinted from an edition dating from 1560, when it had been printed in London by Thomas Marshe and, according to Martin, the original carried a portrait of King Edward.⁶²⁸ This piece is a fitting presentation for a protestant clergyman, in an era of controversy about Catholic emancipation and fear of the effects of Catholic power on national safety and stability. Baldwin was a protestant author whose work combines moral and political themes. His poem looks at the death of Edward VI and lays the blame for his demise on the sins of the country, including the greed of the Catholic Church and abuses of justice. Excerpts from the poem are to be found in an article in the *British Bibliographer*, 1834, written by Joseph Haslewood. This suggests the possibility that many of the items being reprinted by the club were part of a wider ongoing literary conversation surrounding works of early and

⁶²⁴ Martin, p. 470.

⁶²⁵ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 462.

⁶²⁶ Martin, p. 470.

⁶²⁷ Malone, *Shakespeare*, vi, referenced in Martin, *Bibliographical Catalogue*, p. 473.

⁶²⁸ Martin, p. 471.

Elizabethan poetry among members of the Roxburghe, rather than randomly selected items from individuals' collections.⁶²⁹ James Boswell produced his anthology volume *A Roxburghe Garland*, containing a number of pieces of drinking-related verse from seventeenth-century poets, together with a poem written by himself titled *L'Envoi*.

Henry Drury presented *Cock Lorell's Boat, a Fragment*, an early sixteenth-century satirical poem, from the unique surviving print contained in the Garrick Collection.⁶³⁰ Beloe gives an outline of this witty poem in his *Anecdotes of Literature* explaining that:

Cock Lorell is represented, in a rare old tract, as the head of a gang of thieves, in the time of Henry VIII.; and his rule appears to have lasted twenty-two years. By trade he was a tinker, 'often carrying a panne and a hammer for a show;' but when he came to a good booty, he would cast his profession in a ditch, and play the padder, and then would away; and as hee passed through the towne, would crie, 'Hae you any worke for a tinker.'⁶³¹

Presented next in 1817 was *Le Livre du Faulcon* and was the contribution of Robert Lang and taken from Lang's own collection.⁶³² Dibdin was later slighting about this offering and wrote that 'this contribution was hardly in accordance with the calibre of [Lang's] library, and a better thing might perhaps have been expected of him' but does not expand on this opinion.⁶³³ As the item was a black-letter reprint of a very rare tract, previously printed by Verard it might be presumed that Dibdin was criticising the choice interestingly on terms of its literary value rather than collectability. Lastly, *The Glutton's Feaver*, written by

⁶²⁹ Joseph Haslewood, *The British Bibliographer*, (London: Triphook, 1812) II, pp. 97-101.

⁶³⁰ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 464.

⁶³¹ Beloe in Martin, p. 471.

⁶³² Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 466.

⁶³³ *Ibid.*, p. 403.

Thomas Bancroft and originally printed in London in 1633, was the offering of John Delafield Phelps.⁶³⁴ It is described by McKitterick as ‘an old-style type facsimile [...] notable for the care that its printer Thomas Bensley took over its fidelity to the original’.⁶³⁵

The following year continued in the same prolific manner for poetry, with a number of texts illustrating appreciation of fifteenth-century and early Tudor poetry. Lydgate’s *The Chorle and the Birde*, Thomas Feylde’s *The Complaint of a Lover’s Life*. John Gower’s *Balades and other Poems* and *The Life of St Ursula and Guiscard and Sigismund*. Also presented was the early seventeenth-century *Daiphantus, or the Passions of Love*. These were all presented at the annual dinner. Sir Mark Masterman Sykes presented Lydgate’s Middle English translation from French, *The Chorle and the Birde*, which had originally been printed by both Caxton and later, Wynkyn de Worde.⁶³⁶ It is a dialogue between a peasant and a bird discussing the role of peasants in society. In 1822 he went on to present a companion Lydgate fable *The Hors, the Shepe, and the Ghoos*. The Antony Scoloker poem *Daiphantus, or the Passions of Love* had originally been printed in or after 1604.⁶³⁷ This was the contribution of Roger Wilbraham, and Dibdin rather censoriously says that ‘what led a half-way septuagenarian and octogenarian to the production of *such* a work as “Daiphantus,” it were difficult to conjecture’.⁶³⁸ Dibdin’s own gift in this year was *The Complaint of a Lover’s*

⁶³⁴ Martin, p. 472.

⁶³⁵ McKitterick, p. 91.

⁶³⁶ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 468.

⁶³⁷ *Ibid.*, p.408. Dibdin states that ‘it could not have been published before 1604, as an allusion is made in it to Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*’. This logic appears questionable and perhaps Dibdin meant to say that it could not have been published *later* than 1604.

⁶³⁸ *Ibid.*

Life. Controversy between a Lover and a Jay by T. Feylde.⁶³⁹ This is a Tudor ‘love aunter’ or dit amouruex, a late example of the popular medieval genre of debate. The subject is the nature of women. This year also saw the presentation by Earl Gower of John Gower’s *Balades and other Poems*. As discussed in section 2.1, this choice was not without controversy among critics, but Gower’s verses, printed here for the first time, contain considerable literary and historic value. They date from around 1400 when they were presented to Henry IV.⁶⁴⁰ Gower, a contemporary of Chaucer, wrote in English, Latin and Anglo-Norman. He has only in the last fifteen years or so attracted much critical attention and the Roxburghe printing marks a step towards that very slow recognition. The first modern and complete edition of Gower’s works would not appear until that by Macauley in 1899.⁶⁴¹ The last piece of poetry contributed in 1818 was a volume containing two texts, *The Life of St Ursula* and *Guiscard and Sigismund* which was the gift of the Duke of Devonshire. This was a black-letter reprint from a volume originally printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1532. ‘Guiscardo and Sigismonda’ is a tragic tale of love from Boccaccio’s *Decameron*. Dibdin comments that the 1818 reprint is ‘two exceedingly rare pieces of early English poetry’ and that the original was contained in the Duke’s own collection.⁶⁴² The text had a long history, being more than once rewritten both in the Early Modern period and the eighteenth century.⁶⁴³ John Martin comments:

Dryden has a poem entitled Sigismonda and Guiscardo, on which Sir Walter Scott remarks, that this celebrated tale was probably taken by

⁶³⁹ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 463.

⁶⁴⁰ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, pp. 464 - 465.

⁶⁴¹ *The Complete Works of John Gower*, ed. by G. C. Macauley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899), 4 Vols.

⁶⁴² Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 463.

⁶⁴³ Helen Phillips, ‘Aesthetic and Commercial Aspects of Framing Devices. Fifteenth and Sixteenth Century Printers’ Frames; Bradshaw, Roos and Copland’, *Poetica*, 43 (1995), pp. 37-65.

Boccaccio from some ancient chronicle, or traditional legend. It excited great attention among the learned of his time, and was translated into Latin by Leonardo Aretino. In England the story was translated and versified in the octave stanza, by William Walter, a follower of Sir Henry Marney, chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster. A prose translation is to be found in Painter's Palace of Pleasure; and the tale being wrought into a Tragedy by Robert Wilmot and others, was presented before Queen Elizabeth, at the Inner Temple, in 1568.⁶⁴⁴

Here we see the same recurrent preoccupation, not merely with private book-collecting and book-printing but with tracing the origins and alterations in works that have made their way from early texts to more recent literary works and writers; these concerns reflect the themes explored by Dibdin in his lectures at the Royal Institute. The only non-poetical offering of 1818 was *Ceremonial at the Marriage of Mary Queen of Scots with the Dauphin of France*, dating from 1557 and presented by William Bentham, reprinted from the original in the British Museum.⁶⁴⁵

Le Morte Arthur, presented to the club in 1819, was the offering of Thomas Ponton and was printed from British Library Harley MS. No. 2252.⁶⁴⁶ This is the so-called *Stanzaic Morte Arthure*, a fourteenth-century romance. It is a lively work, going back to the French thirteenth-century romance the *Morte Artus* which relates the last part of the story of Arthur and the Round Table. In the fifteenth century Sir Thomas Malory used the *Stanzaic Morte* as the basis for the later part of his own *Morte d'Arthur*. This shows the Club printing a lengthy text from a manuscript. Dibdin recorded that it was produced 'with a fac-simile of the original text by Mr. R. Thomson, by whom the work was superintended at the

⁶⁴⁴ Martin, p. 476.

⁶⁴⁵ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 462.

⁶⁴⁶ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, pp. 69.

press'.⁶⁴⁷ Barker describes the appearance of the book in more detail saying that 'there is a woodcut on the title-page, and the text opens with an initial printed in four colours from wood-blocks, the first example of colour printing in the Club's books'.⁶⁴⁸ The woodcut is based on a drawing created by a fellow club member E.V. Utterson who, although a lawyer by profession was also an artist of some renown.⁶⁴⁹

The only other text presented that year was a facsimile reprint of *Six Bookes of Metamorphoseos in whyche ben conteyned the Fables of Ovyde, translated out of Frensshe into Englysshe by William Caxton* which was printed from a manuscript in the Pepys collection in the Library of Magdalene College, Cambridge. It was the contribution of George Hibbert and includes an introduction written by him and also a woodcut picture of Orpheus. Dibdin in *Reminiscences*, referring to an article previously written for his revision of *Typographical Antiquities of Great Britain* notes that he had said of this text that:

it is a little singular, that this should not only be the *only* MS. with which I am acquainted, incorporating the name of Caxton as "Translator and Finisher," but the only presumed performance of that venerable Printer of which *no printed* copy is known.

Returning to the present, he continues:

Little could I have anticipated, at the period of making this remark, of the treat afforded to all lovers of curious literature by the publication of Mr. Hibbert.⁶⁵⁰

⁶⁴⁷ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 467.

⁶⁴⁸ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, pp. 69.

⁶⁴⁹ Martin, p. 477.

⁶⁵⁰ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 466.

Here is an indication that, sometimes, even fellow members of the Club, and knowledgeable ones at that, could be taken by surprise by the rarity and significance of the items that were being printed by their colleagues.

1820 saw four pieces of verse being put forward at the annual meeting.

Cheuelere Assigne, a Middle English romance translation from the French, was printed from a manuscript in the Cotton Collection in the British Museum and was presented by E.V. Utterson with an introduction written by him as well.⁶⁵¹

Two Interludes: Jack Jugler and Thersytes was the contribution of Joseph Haslewood and was an amalgamation of unique copies of each Interlude'.⁶⁵² *The New Notborune Mayd. The Boke of Mayd Emlyn* was a publication created from two poems contained in the Caldecott Collection and presented to the Club by George Isted.⁶⁵³ Martin describes the first poem as 'a parody on the beautiful poem of that name, published at Antwerp.'⁶⁵⁴ The original 'Nut Brown Maid' was a late medieval debate poem between a man and a woman. The man pleads his love and says he must go into the woods as a banished man, an outlaw. He claims all women are unfaithful. The woman replies that women are not all unfaithful and that she herself will accompany him in his outlaw life. Satisfied about her sincerity he reveals that he is really an earl's son and she reveals that she is also of high birth. The *New Nutbrown Maid* was a Catholic reworking of this popular piece. In it the banished man is Christ and the faithful woman is the Virgin Mary.⁶⁵⁵ The century before its reprinting by the Club had seen the

⁶⁵¹ Martin, p. 477.

⁶⁵² Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 465.

⁶⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 466.

⁶⁵⁴ Martin, p. 478.

⁶⁵⁵ Emily A. Ransom, *The New Notborune Mayd Vpon the Passion of Cryste: The Nubrown Maid Converted [with text]* (Oxford: John Wiley & Sons, 2015), p. 6.

(original) story of the Nutbrown maid becoming the basis of several popular compositions: a poem by Prior, *Henry and Emma*, and a play based on this *Henry and Emma or the Nut Brown Maid*, by Sir Henry Bate, performed in 1774 with music by Thomas Arne. Additionally, a song ‘Ho Ro My Nutbrown Maiden’ was made popular from the early 1800s onwards when it was performed on the London stage.⁶⁵⁶ It was an English translation of a Gaelic song ‘Ho Ro Mo Nighean Donn Bhoidhach’, still well known today. This means that the term ‘Nut Brown Maid’, and the romantic story of a girl willing to follow her lover into an outcast’s life, would be familiar to people of the Club members’ generation. The reprinting of a hitherto unknown sixteenth-century religious allegory of this work must therefore have been particularly interesting, especially as Emily A. Ransom describes it as having ‘dwelt in obscurity, even among scholars with a proclivity for antiquarianism’.⁶⁵⁷ The last item presented this year was the *Book of Life; a bibliographical Melody*. This item is unusual as it was not the gift of a Club member, but of Richard Thomson an apparently rather eccentric antiquary and librarian of private means who during his lifetime published a number of books relating to antiquarian topics.⁶⁵⁸ The publication carries the words ‘dedicated to the Roxburghe Club’.

The only contribution made in 1821 was a copy of the allegorical verse play *Magnyfycence: an Interlude*, written in around 1519 or perhaps slightly earlier (there is some dispute among scholars and regardless of the date of creation it does not appear to have been printed until 1533) by John Skelton the Poet

⁶⁵⁶ Dudley, H. Bate, *Henry and Emma, a new Poetical Interlude: altered from Prior’s Nut Brown Maid, with additions and a new air and chorus*,

<<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/ecco/004846791.0001.000?view=toc>> [accessed 17 January 2015]

⁶⁵⁷ Ransom, p. 3.

⁶⁵⁸ K. A. Manley, ‘Richard Thomson’, *ODNB* [accessed 1 Jan 2015]

Laureate to Henry VIII, edited and presented to the Club by Joseph Littledale. The Roxburghe edition is printed in black-letter and is based on two copies of the play, one held by the British Museum and the other by the Cambridge University Library.⁶⁵⁹ According to the introduction, only the title page and the page following it were taken from the Cambridge copy. As an early example of an ‘interlude’ the play has significance both in historical and literary terms and, as Happé points out, ‘*Magnyfycence* still stands almost at the beginning of what was to become a powerful literary and theatrical genre’.⁶⁶⁰ Although Skelton died in 1529, before the Reformation, he had allied himself publically with the enemies of Cardinal Wolsey, writing powerful satires against Wolsey. Therefore it might be possible to add this author to other signs of the easy acceptance within the Club of reproducing Catholic texts during a time when Catholicism was a political hot potato.⁶⁶¹ *Magnyfycence* links with the other morality plays printed by the Club in this early period. It is abundantly clear already in the publications that there are threads of particular interest running through a number of the texts published by the Club, which argues against criticisms that have been levelled at the Roxburghe implying a scattered and unfocused nature to the works reproduced in the early period of its existence.

The first contribution of 1822 was presented by Viscount Morpeth: *An Elegiacal Poem on the Death of Thomas Lord Grey, of Wilton*, written by Robert Marston and printed from a MS. in the library of Thomas Grenville. The subject of the poem was, as the title implies, an elegy on the life and death of Thomas Grey, a

⁶⁵⁹ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 467.

⁶⁶⁰ Peter Happé, Wim N. M. Hüsken, ‘Skelton’s *Magnyfycence*’, *Interludes and Early Modern Society: Studies in Gender, Power and Theatricality*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), p. 72.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

puritan layman, drawn into the Catholic Bye Plot the unrealised conspiracy to kidnap James I of England with a view to forcing him to agree to religious tolerance. Raleigh was also implicated in the plot. Thomas Grey, the 15th Baron Grey de Wilton, eventually died in the Tower in 1614. The second item given out to the members in this year was *Selections from the Works of Thomas Ravenscroft; a Musical Composer of the time of King James the First* which was the gift of the Duke of Marlborough. At first glance a collection of songs may seem to be a strange selection to present to the Club but that would be to overlook Ravenscroft's significance to the preservation of the history of Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre and our subsequent knowledge of theatrical staging of that period. Ravenscroft was an English musician, composer, choral singer and publisher who was active from the beginning of the seventeenth century to 1635.⁶⁶²

Alongside the composition of his own works Ravenscroft was active in assembling, editing and publishing collections of the earliest printed English folk songs, broadside ballads, nursery rhymes and rounds.⁶⁶³ Austern explains that from Ravenscroft's original publications, modern scholars have been able to identify eleven pieces of music for songs that were used in contemporary plays and as a result of his work:

Since wordbooks of the era did not include music, and collections of exclusively theatrical music were never printed, most songs from Elizabethan and Jacobean plays have been irrevocably lost. Ravenscroft's eleven represent a large share of those that do survive.⁶⁶⁴

⁶⁶² Martin, p. 479.

⁶⁶³ Linda Phyllis Austern, 'Thomas Ravenscroft: Musical Chronicler of an Elizabethan Theater Company' *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 38 (Summer 1985), 238-263 (p. 238).

⁶⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, (pp. 238-239).

One of these surviving songs appears in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*.⁶⁶⁵ The collection of Ravenscroft items represented in the Roxburghe edition features lyrics in most cases but sometimes the musical score as well. Lastly, Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges presented *Laelii Peregrini Oratio in Obitum Torquati Tassi. Editio Secunda*, an oration by Laelius Peregrinus on the life of Torquato Tasso, the 16th century Italian poet who is best known for his epic poem *La Gerusalemme liberata*. Of Peregrinus Martin says he 'was the author of several other elegant Latin Orations, and translated the Ethics of Aristotle'.⁶⁶⁶

1824 brought the *Metrical Life of Saint Robert of Knaresborough* presented by Rev. Henry Drury and printed from a MS. in his own collection. This is a Middle English life of the Yorkshire hermit saint, a renowned holy man, written by the head of the house of Trinitarian friars established on the site of Robert's hermitage. In the Middle Ages Robert was a popular saint; Knaresborough attracted many pilgrims.⁶⁶⁷ After the Reformation other, but equally widely known fame was attached to it. A healing 'dropping' well attracted visitors and from the seventeenth centuries on a spa was established which rivalled the popularity of Harrogate. It was noted in the seventeenth century as a place where many Catholic families settled. Knaresborough was also associated with the prophetess Mother Shipwell. At the time of the Roxburghe edition, therefore, this text was both a medieval poem with considerable interest in itself and associated with a still-well known tourist venue with quaint folkloric associations. The manuscript itself contained numerous Latin prayers to Robert,

⁶⁶⁵ Austern, p. 239.

⁶⁶⁶ Martin, pp. 479-80.

⁶⁶⁷ There is a good account of St Robert and his cult in Brian Golding, 'The Hermit and the Hunter', in *The Cloister and the World: Essays in Honour of Barbara Harvey*, ed. John Blair and Brian Golding (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 95-117.

a prose Latin Life and accounts of his miracles, confirming how large his following was in the medieval period. The dedication describes the manuscripts as being ‘presumed to be unique’ and the modern editor Joyce Bazire confirms this.⁶⁶⁸ Haslewood transcribed the manuscript and oversaw the printing and it contains an introduction and annotations provided by Francis Douce.⁶⁶⁹ There were four extra copies printed which were donated to public libraries.⁶⁷⁰ Next was William Wey’s *Informacōn for Pylgrymes unto the Holy Londe*, described as being taken ‘from a rare Tract in the Library of the Faculty of Advocates, Edinburgh’ and presented by George Freeling.⁶⁷¹ The original text dates from 1498 and was printed by Wynkyn de Worde. William Wey had travelled across Europe, in 1456, 1458 and 1462, noting customs, currencies, languages and places of interest, while on pilgrimages to Jerusalem and St James’ shrine at Compostela. Wey, a Fellow of Eton College, had died in 1474.⁶⁷² This is another example of the high quality of many of the Roxburghe choices. Wey’s book is now regarded as one of the most important early accounts of pilgrimage. The modern editor suggests very plausibly that Wey may have been a spy for the government of Henry VI.⁶⁷³

The final volume this year was *The Cuck-Queanes and Cuckolds Errants or the Bearing Down the Inne, a Comædie. The Faery Pastorall or Forrest of Elues*.

By W – P –, Esq and the contribution of John Arthur Lloyd although it was taken

⁶⁶⁸ Joyce Bazire, ed., *The Metrical Life of St. Robert of Knaresborough*, (London: Early English Text Society, 1953), p. 1.

⁶⁶⁹ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, pp. 463- 464.

⁶⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁷¹ Ibid., p. 462.

⁶⁷² Martin, p. 481.

⁶⁷³ *The Itineraries of William Wey*, ed. by Francis Davey, (London: Oxford University Press, 2010).

from a MS. belonging to Joseph Haslewood and again was another text that he had ‘superintended’ and for which he had written the introduction.⁶⁷⁴ ‘W P’ is stated by Dibdin to be William Percy and he describes the work as ‘a somewhat quaintly devised volume’.⁶⁷⁵ It is a comic play from 1601.

In 1825 all four items presented once again complied with the original ideal of rare pieces of poetry and the first item was *The Garden Plot, an Allegorical Poem, inscribed to Queen Elizabeth* written by Henry Goldingham and donated by Archdeacon Wrangham who also contributed an introduction to the volume. It had not previously been printed and was taken from a MS. contained in the Harleian Collection in the British Museum and was produced with the addition of a brief account of the author and a reprint of his *Goldingham’s Masques* which had been performed before the Queen at Norwich on Thursday, August 21, 1578. Dibdin is jovially scathing of the work, describing it as ‘unworthy of the “Elizabethan Chair” and its adjuncts’, but as an allegorical poem it seems entirely in keeping with the recurring motif of such texts among the early works of the Club.⁶⁷⁶ The next text was the second offering of Earl Spencer: *La Rotta de Francciosi a Terroana novamente facta. La Rotta de Scocesi* is a reprint of two Italian poems dealing with the battles of Terrovane and Flodden Field.⁶⁷⁷ The author is unknown, but the poems date from around 1513 and are reproduced with prefatory comments by Earl Spencer. The other items presented in 1825, although pieces of poetry were unusual because they were the contributions of members of La Societe Des Bibliophiles Francais of Paris which

⁶⁷⁴ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 397.

⁶⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 396.

⁶⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 468.

Dibdin describes as ‘another graft from our parent stem, planted in a foreign soil.’⁶⁷⁸ *Novelle Édition d’un Poème sur la Journée de Guinegate* was presented by the Marquis De Fortia and *Zuléima*, written by C. Pichler was presented by H. De Chateaugiron.

1827 witnessed only one contribution but it was a significant one: *Poems written in English, by Charles, Duke of Orleans, during his Captivity in England after the Battle of Azincourt* was the gift of George Watson Taylor and was printed from the Harleian MS. No. 682 in the British Museum. It carried an introduction by Mr. Taylor and Dibdin tells us that as well as the normal quantity of copies for distribution among the members, four copies were printed on vellum:

One, splendidly bound in Morocco, was destined for Charles X. late king of France; a second is in the library of Earl Spencer; a third in the British Museum; and the fourth, in the possession of the Contributor. A curious, singular and most acceptable volume.⁶⁷⁹

This, however, was not the real significance of the volume. As Barker writes:

This, as well as being one of the largest books presented to the Club so far, with 304 pages, was one of the most important in terms of literary merit. It was the first edition of any of the Duke’s works, in French or English, and anticipated the first edition of his poetry in French by fifteen years.⁶⁸⁰

Its reception, however, was mixed; Sir Thomas Croft, writing in the

Retrospective Review in 1827, says:

A few words are first necessary on the volume printed by Mr. Watson Taylor. That gentleman has entitled his book, “English Poems by Charles Duke of Orleans:” but there can be little doubt, that not a single line of them was the production of that distinguished individual. It will be seen from our extracts, that they are close, nay, almost literal translations of the French poems; hence, to assign them in their English dress to the duke, and to call them, as Mr. Watson Taylor has done in his preface, “imitations,” are unequalled

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 476.

⁶⁷⁹ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, pp. 468-9.

⁶⁸⁰ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, p. 72.

specimens of critical acumen. We have done what we do not believe that gentleman or the person he employed ever took the trouble to do – carefully examine a MS. of selections from Orleans’ works in the British Museum, among which are three original “Rondels” in English, but they are so decidedly inferior to the translations in the MS. printed by Mr. Watson Taylor, that it is scarcely possible the duke could have been the translator of his own writings.⁶⁸¹

The manuscript that Croft refers to is Harley MS. No. 682, the MS. that Watson Taylor’s edition originated from and it is difficult to see why he should believe that the editor of the volume would not have viewed the MS. in detail. It must be pointed out, however, that Sir Thomas begins his article by setting out his views on the Roxburghe Club in an apparently unprovoked attack on both the members and their activities:

It may be unnecessary to state that the “Roxburghe Club” is a society of gentlemen many of who are “to fame unknown” and whose principle literary pretensions consist of a *soi disant* attachment to early literature and scarce books in its members; the one manifested by an absurd veneration for useless volumes, simply because they cannot be easily procured; and the latter by occasionally reprinting an old author, not, however, with the liberal and honourable view of extending the knowledge of his merits by an impression accessible to the public, but by confining it to the members of the club, few of whom have the disposition, and fewer still the ability, to make the least practical use of the contents of the precious gift, even, which is but rarely the case, if the article itself be deserving of a higher destiny than to light a fire.⁶⁸²

Given the virulence of his dislike for the Club it is perhaps not so surprising that he appears eager to dismiss the abilities and research of one of its members. Irrespective of the personal animosity displayed in this article, the controversy regarding the authorship of the English poems of Orleans continued well into the twentieth century but eventually it appears that the weight of academic opinion

⁶⁸¹ Sir Thomas Croft, ‘Early English Poetry’, *Retrospective Review*, 2 (1827), pp. 148-9.

⁶⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 147.

has largely sided with Watson Taylor and the Roxburghe Club.⁶⁸³ Coldiron

points out that:

[In the nineteenth century] there is a strangely persistent desire on both sides of the channel to keep the poet as French-only, or at least, to deny that the poetry belongs or could belong to both canons. Literary nationalism is, in this case at least, a powerful force for marginalizing bicultural texts.⁶⁸⁴

It is extremely interesting that Watson Taylor should have taken the opposite course, going so far as to anglicise the Duke d'Orléans' name in what Coldiron refers to as a 'perhaps deliberately inclusive orthography', especially when considered in the context of Watson Taylor's anti-French political sentiments.⁶⁸⁵

The first item distributed to Club members in 1828 was the volume *Proceedings in the Court Martial held upon John, Master of Sinclair, Captain-Lieutenant in Preston's Regiment, for the Murder of Ensign Schaw of the same Regiment, and Captain Schaw, of the Royals, 17 October 1708; with Correspondence respecting that Transaction* presented by Sir Walter Scott. It appears to have been a lack-lustre contribution that failed to kindle much enthusiasm among the members and Dibdin later wrote that 'Sir Walter Scott's book-contribution as a member of the Club is, strangely enough, among the least interesting and valuable in our Garland'.⁶⁸⁶ The text is an account by the Clan leader John Sinclair of his life as a soldier and a Jacobite. The lively narrative may have appealed to Scott and Sinclair was a Tory before his court martial and exile to Prussia for the killing of two men in duels, which ended his political career.

⁶⁸³ For an outline of the main areas of contention see Norma Lorre Goodrich's *Charles of Orleans: A Study of Themes in His French and in His English Poetry* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1967), pp. 20-31.

⁶⁸⁴ A. E.B. Coldiron, *Canon, Period, and the Poetry of Charles of Orleans* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2000), p.106.

⁶⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 105, fn. 81.

⁶⁸⁶ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, pp. 401-2.

Scott's offering, despite his fame and the social cachet generated by his membership of the Club, was in any case eclipsed by the publication of the first of the Club's editions to gain general critical approval; *The Ancient English Romance of Havelok the Dane: Accompanied by the French Text*. This important Middle English text was edited by Frederick Madden and included an introduction, notes, and a glossary also provided by him. This was the first book printed for the Club rather than as the contribution of any one individual and the first to bring in an editor from outside of the ranks of the members. Nicolas Barker gives the number printed as eighty copies with six being given to Madden in appreciation of his work, as well as his payment of £100.⁶⁸⁷ Dibdin's description of the work, written in 1836, apart from referring to sixty rather than eighty copies being printed, is interesting because it indicates his acceptance of a Club edition being produced by Madden for general commercial purposes:

Sixty-two copies printed; of which Earl Spencer purchased six. Intrinsically considered this is perhaps the most valuable, as well as curious, volume among those of which the ROXBURGHE GARLAND is composed. A whisper is abroad, that, with permission of the Club, and of Earl Cawdor, it is the intention of Sir Frederic Madden, the able editor of this work and of the Werwolf, to reprint them, with notes and an index, in an octavo form, as a companion to his forthcoming edition of the Brut of Wace – a rare treat for lovers of early English romance and history.⁶⁸⁸

There is no indication here of the Club attempting to limit the numbers of the commercially published edition or jealously restricting Madden's access to the work he had previously been paid to carry out for the Club. There is also no hint of the bad feelings supposedly held by Dibdin and Haslewood towards a non-member poaching on their editorial ground. This alleged bad-feeling, first

⁶⁸⁷ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, p. 72.

⁶⁸⁸ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, pp. 467-468.

asserted in the *Roxburghe Revels* article, is referred to by Barker when he states that: ‘Buckingham suggests that Haslewood was disappointed not to be selected as editor himself, and he is probably right’ and also that ‘Dibdin, too, is unexpectedly silent.’⁶⁸⁹ Whether Haslewood felt put out by the hire of an outside editor is difficult to say, but on the evidence of this paragraph from Dibdin’s *Reminiscences* it would appear that if Dibdin had felt uneasy at the development he had recovered from his animosity in the intervening eight years.

Havelok was printed at the joint expense of the members and was taken from the MS. Laud Misc. 108 which is dated c. 1300-25 and held in the Bodleian Library.⁶⁹⁰ In the introduction, Madden describes the manuscript as having been ‘discovered by accident’ among the large quantity of manuscripts that made up that particular collection. Until the point of discovery, the text, although alluded to by a number of historical accounts, had been presumed lost for good.⁶⁹¹

This volume is one of the most valuable of the Roxburghe series: its introduction displays, in an eminent degree, an extensive acquaintance with the history, poetry, and language of the olden time, and evinces the most careful and laborious research.⁶⁹²

The Roxburghe edition of the text was popular enough to be reprinted by antiquarians in France in 1833 with a French translation of the introduction written by Francisque Michel.⁶⁹³ The praise was not without an element of critical attention and Martin writes that:

⁶⁸⁹ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, p. 73.

⁶⁹⁰ *Four Romances of England: King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton, Athelston*, ed. by Graham Drake, Eve Salisbury, Ronald B Herzman (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1997).

⁶⁹¹ *The Ancient English Romance of Havelok the Dane*, ed. by Frederick Madden (London: W. Nicol, 1828), pp. iii-iv.

⁶⁹² Martin, pp. 483-484.

⁶⁹³ *Ibid.*

Shortly after its appearance, Mr. Samuel Weller Singer printed some “Remarks on the Glossary” attached to it, in a letter to Francis Douce, Esq. The impression was limited, and its circulation very restricted. Those remarks produced an able reply from the Editor of *Havelok*, entitled “Examination of the Remarks upon the Glossary to the Ancient Romance of Havelok the Dane, &c.” addressed to Henry Petrie, Esq., Keeper of the Records in the Tower; wherein he observes, that he could not allow charges of errors made with so little reason, to pass unnoticed; his vindication was complete and satisfactory.⁶⁹⁴

Understandably, the Club rested on its laurels in 1829 and *Havelok* would have been a difficult act to follow for any individual member, but at the dinner of the following year *Gaufridi Arthurii Monemuthensis Archidiaconi, postea vero Episcopi Asaphensis, de Vita et Vaticiniis Merlini Calidonii Carmen Heroicum* was presented by George Neville Grenville who had recently joined the Club to replace John Dent. This is the ‘Prophecies of Merlin’, written in the early 1130s and, around 1136, incorporated into the *Historia Regum Britanniae*. It is the earliest and most renowned of the tradition of political prophecies, of which many circulated during the medieval and early modern period.⁶⁹⁵ It was transcribed and printed from MS. Cotton Claudius B VII f. 224 in the British Library.⁶⁹⁶ This is a manuscript from c. 1150 – 1170, with elegant decoration and illustrations which are unfortunately not reproduced in the Roxburghe edition. Ancient prophecies fascinated early antiquarians: Robert E. Lerner has shown this enthusiasm for them, strong through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries but declining after around 1700.⁶⁹⁷ Described by Dibdin as ‘an heroic Latin

⁶⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁹⁵ James Dean, ‘Poems of Political Prophecy: Introduction’, *Medieval English Political Writings* (Kalamazoo: Middle English Texts Series, 1996) < <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/dean-medieval-english-political-writings-poems-of-political-prophecy-introduction> > [accessed 12 February 2015]

⁶⁹⁶ For a modern translation of the text see Ibid.

⁶⁹⁷ Robert E. Lerner, *The Powers of Prophecy: The Cedar of Lebanon Vision from the Mongol Onslaught to the Dawn of the Enlightenment* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), pp. 176-77.

poem (from a MS. in the Cotton collection) by Geoffrey Arthur, Archdeacon of Monmouth [...] on the Life and Prophecies of the Welch Merlin'.⁶⁹⁸ Geoffrey of Monmouth produced 'three Arthurian texts: *Prophetiae Merlini*, *Historia Regum Britanniae*, and *Vita Merlini*'.⁶⁹⁹

Mr. Haslewood's copy contained a cancelled preface, pp. xx., signed William Henry Black, accompanied with the following note by Mr. Haslewood:- "Not any copies of the following Preface were delivered to Lewis the binder; and it appears as of the analysis by Ellis of the original work, was the substitute. What occasioned the suppression of these pages, I have not at present ascertained. J.H. 27 June, 1830."⁷⁰⁰

Dibdin mentions the change of preface but does not shed any light on the matter, saying only that:

The transcription was made by Mr. Black, who wrote a preface of some twenty pages, which was afterwards cancelled; and an analysis of the poem by Ellis was substituted.⁷⁰¹

And alluding to the previously mentioned fact that Haslewood was unable to ascertain why it was substituted.

Following the success of *Havelok*, in 1832 the Club was presented with the *Ancient English Romance of William and the Werewolf* which was reprinted from a unique copy in King's College Library, Cambridge and which was also edited by Madden and carried an introduction and glossary also written by him. This volume was the contribution of Earl Cawdor rather than a Club publication. The werewolf theme was obviously one that held personal interest for the Earl and at least one of his friends, the Hon. Algernon Herbert, as the volume also contains two letters written by Herbert to Cawdor which explore the werewolf myths in

⁶⁹⁸ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, pp. 409-10.

⁶⁹⁹ Emily Rebekah Huber, 'Geoffrey of Monmouth: Introduction', The Camelot Project 2007 <<http://d.lib.rochester.edu/camelot/text/geoffrey>> [accessed 12 February 2015]

⁷⁰⁰ Martin, p. 484.

⁷⁰¹ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 410.

some depth. Herbert was an antiquary and author on a number of eclectic subjects and as Martin writes:

These Letters, written in an unassuming style, exhibit considerable learning and ingenuity. The antiquarian reader will find them worthy of his perusal. The volume is altogether an interesting one, and ranks deservedly high in the series.⁷⁰²

In 1833 Edward Craven Hawtrey presented the *Private Diary of William first Earl Cowper, Lord Chancellor of England* which is described by Dibdin as ‘being an early transcript of the original Diary in the possession of the late Earl of Hardwicke.’⁷⁰³

The final two texts to be discussed here are described by Barker as being ‘the last two books of the original pattern’.⁷⁰⁴ The first of these volumes was printed in 1836 and is titled *A little Boke of Ballads* and was E.V. Utterson’s second offering to the Club, selected by him from black-letter copies from his own collection. The last item contributed during this period was *The Love of Wales to their Soueraign Prince, expressed in a true Relation of the Solemnity held at Ludlow, in the Countie of Salop, upon the fourth of November last past, Anno Domini 1616, being the day of the Creation of the high and mighty Charles, Prince of Wales, and Earle of Chester, in his Maiesties Palace of White-Hall* which was presented in 1837 by the Hon. R.H. Clive, the brother of the incumbent president, and which, as described in the section ‘Politics, Money, Religion’ was a choice of submission that carried far from subtle political overtones. The President’s own choice, presented three years earlier, was, as has already been discussed earlier in this section, the considerably less controversial

⁷⁰² Martin, p. 485.

⁷⁰³ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, I, p. 412.

⁷⁰⁴ Barker, *History of the Roxburghe Club*, p. 74.

text *The Lyvys of Seyntes; translated into Englys be a Doctour of Dyvynite clepyd Osbern Bokenam, frer Austyn of the Convent of Stocklare.*

From this point onward, in common with so much else that was changing within the Club, the items being presented started to branch out to include a wider variety of texts including items of historical political and social interest. There were still many items of poetry being printed or reprinted, but following the example set by the printing of *Havelok* the focus was increasingly on items, especially manuscripts, perceived to be acceptable to the demands of modern scholarship and amenable to being edited by hired scholars. It is, however, as shown in this section, oversimplifying the matter, if not entirely wrong, to say that the early Roxburghe volumes were without value and as Williams pointed out in 1929:

The unfeeling jest, at the club's expense, that if the originals of its reprints were unique there was already one copy too many in existence, has, in these days, lost its sting. Hardly anything printed has not some value for historical and literary research. In the end the Roxburghe Club and its disciples have been vindicated by their works.⁷⁰⁵

The last word, as ever when it came to the early Roxburghe Club and their activities, has to go to Dibdin, addressing the question of black-letter research versus contemporary scholarship and negating the polemic nature of the issue when he wrote:

Let the midnight lamp be burnt to illuminate the stores of antiquity – whether they be romances, or chronicles, or legends, and whether they be printed by Aldus or Caxton – if a brighter lustre can thence be thrown upon the pages of modern learning! To trace genius to its

⁷⁰⁵ Harold Williams, p. 23.

source, or to see how she has been influenced or modified by the lore of past times, is both a pleasing and profitable pursuit.⁷⁰⁶

2.5 THE PRIVATE PRINTING PRESSES

The possession of a private printing-press is, no doubt, a very appalling type of bibliomania. Much, as has been told us of the awful scale in which drunkards consume their favored poison, one is not accustomed to hear of their setting up private stills for their own individual consumption. There is a Sardanapalitan excess in this bibliographical luxuriousness which refuses to partake with other vulgar mortals in the common harvest of the public press, but must itself minister to its own tastes and demands.⁷⁰⁷

When John Hill Burton made this tongue-in-cheek observation, he swiftly followed it up with a number of bibliophilic names to illustrate his point, including those of Sir Alexander Boswell and Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges. In fact the early Roxburghe Club contained among its members three men who were drawn to the ownership of a private printing press and the freedom that it gave them to pursue their own literary interests, both in terms of printing their own original work and of reproducing rare, largely forgotten works of early literature. As Hill Burton points out, the ownership of a private press perhaps indicates an interest in books that extends beyond the mere dilettante concern with novelty or the collector's obsession with fine bindings and auction prices; it certainly goes beyond a taste for the 'classics' or any literature that could be termed mainstream as such tastes are amply catered for by the standard printing houses with their business eye on the requirements of the average consumer. While each owner will have his unique reasons for entering the printing world, it often indicates a deeper than average interest in unrepresented literature and in the art of typography, a desire to create, reproduce and broadcast literature – an

⁷⁰⁶ Dibdin, *Bibliomania* (1809), p. 76.

⁷⁰⁷ Hill Burton, p. 285.

aspiration to control the means of print production which goes beyond even that of employing a printer to work under the patronage of the customer at the printer's own establishment. These undertakings wholeheartedly fulfilled the description coined by Ransom when he wrote that 'freed from the confining strictures of details, a private press may be defined as the typographic expression of a personal ideal, conceived in freedom and maintained in independence'.⁷⁰⁸

Among the three early Roxburghe members who owned private printing presses, there is a range of apparently widely differing reasons for their forays into press ownership, but none of the three appear to have been driven by financial considerations. At least one printing entrepreneur, Sir Egerton Brydges, seems to have found the experience to be an expensive mixture of vanity publishing and patronage during the short lived adventures of his Lee Priory Press. At the other end of the scale was Sir Alexander Boswell, who appears to have been successful both financially and in literary terms in his endeavours at the Auchinleck Press, an undertaking cut short only by his untimely death. The Beldornie Press, the personal project of E.V. Utterson is of the three perhaps the most hobbyist, and provides an intimate reflection of the literary tastes of its owner. It served to provide both himself and a close circle of like-minded friends with reproductions of relatively unknown seventeenth-century poems and satires, and apparently only ran during the Summer months.

⁷⁰⁸ Will Ransom, *Private Presses and Their Books* (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1929), p. 22.

THE LEE PRIORY PRESS

Samuel Egerton Brydges established the Lee Priory Press in 1813, at a house belonging to his eldest son, T.B. Brydges Barrett, at Ickham, near Canterbury.⁷⁰⁹ It remained in production until 1823, printing according to Ransom ‘forty-odd’ books and pamphlets during that time.⁷¹⁰ According to his own accounts, he did not start out with the express intention of owning a printing press, but was rather attempting to support two printers in their endeavours, while presumably also hoping to enjoy the benefits and enhancement of status that might proceed from an extended act of patronage. One of the master printers associated with the Lee Priory Press was the compositor John Johnson, the author of *Typographia: or the Printer’s Instructor*, published in 1824 and dedicated to the President and members of the Roxburghe Club.⁷¹¹ The other was the ‘pressman’ John Warwick.⁷¹² Both were previously known to Sir Egerton Brydges through their long-standing employment in the offices of Thomas Bensley, a respected printer who had produced a number of the early items presented by members to the

⁷⁰⁹ Martin, p. 379.

⁷¹⁰ Will Ransom, p. 29 describes these publications as being ‘under the editorial direction of Sir Egerton Brydges and most of them were his own writings.’

⁷¹¹ J. Johnson, *Typographia: or the Printer’s Instructor* (1824).

The dedication of the two-volume work to the Club can be seen as proof of the Club’s recognition as experts and proponents of historical typographical skills. The first volume carries not only the dedication but an engraving which portrays the coats of arms belonging to Roxburghe members surrounding a bust of Caxton. The bust sits upon a plinth bearing the date of the first Roxburghe dinner and the Club’s name. This is obviously an expensive, commissioned engraving. While this could be viewed as Johnson’s attempt to gain work from the Club (which in itself would indicate how prominent the Club must have been in the field to make it worth Johnson putting all his advertising eggs in one basket), it seems unlikely that this was his primary purpose: Johnson, as mentioned above, worked for Egerton Brydges, and would have been well known to the Club already through his work for Bensley.

⁷¹² Lee, p. 20.

Roxburghe Club: *Caltha Poetarum* in 1815; *A Roxburghe Garland* in 1817; *The Glutton's Feaver* in 1817; and the *Chester Mysteries* also published in 1817.⁷¹³

Brydges had supplied the premises, which he described as a 'vacant room at the extremity of the offices and looking into a spacious stable-yard' and kept the printers regularly supplied with material to print.⁷¹⁴ This took the form of literary items written by Brydges himself, or selected items of interest to antiquarian book collectors for the printers to reproduce. The 'types, paper and ornaments' were to be their own responsibility to provide.⁷¹⁵ The press was not a financial success:

[h]is first intention was to assume no financial responsibility, insisting that the printers, Johnson and Warwick, "must run all hazards, and, of course, rely on such profits as they could get," but he later admitted the necessity of supplying funds to keep the press in operation.⁷¹⁶

It did stay in operation, at least temporarily anyway, producing regular work until in 1818 Brydges left England to live on the continent and was no longer able (or perhaps willing) to supervise the working of the press room. He was also experiencing financial difficulties that would have made underwriting the costs of the press difficult. The demise of the press is ascribed to the printers no longer having ready copy to work upon and instead spending their copious free time in drinking.⁷¹⁷ During the press's most productive period, however, the work produced was acknowledged to have been of a fine standard, and even at the

⁷¹³ Peter Isaac, 'Thomas Bensley', *ODNB* [accessed 25 Nov 2008]

⁷¹⁴ Dibdin, *Bibliographical Decameron*, II, p. 464.

⁷¹⁵ Martin, p. 380.

⁷¹⁶ Dibdin, *Library Companion*, p. xix.

⁷¹⁷ Martin, p. 380 writes 'The flavour of the Kentish hop became perhaps too familiar a consolation for inaction, to one at least of the worthy typographers; and the little that was done at the press, was not always so well executed as before'.

later and less productive period the output was still of a sufficient standard that it could elicit the admiration of John Martin:

The volume called “wood-cuts and verses” is, however, good evidence of the justice of a qualification to such censure – or a proof, in spite of Dr. Franklin, that tippling is not always injurious to the craft of men of type.⁷¹⁸

In 1817, when this volume was produced, Johnson had already left the press, citing ‘cruel and unjust treatment’ which was presumably connected to John Warwick’s drinking.⁷¹⁹ Edward Quillinan provided Warwick with the verses to accompany the woodcut illustrations for the volume.⁷²⁰ Quillinan was a poet and the husband of Egerton Brydges’ daughter Jemima until her death in 1822, after which he married Dora Wordsworth. He was the author of *Dunluce Castle, a poem; Stanzas by the Author of Dunluce Castle; Consolation; Elegiac Verses* and *Woodcuts and verses*, which were all printed at the Lee Priory Press. The press eventually closed down in 1823. During its short existence the press produced what Manley hails as ‘an important service to English literature’ by:

Reprinting over thirty rare works, chiefly poetical, including poems of Nicholas Breton, William Browne, Raleigh, Margaret, duchess of Newcastle, and Robert Greene.⁷²¹

Lee Priory publications were usually limited to 100 copies or less. The first book printed at the press, but not made available for purchase, was the *Poems of Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle*.⁷²² It was a royal octavo edition and only 25 copies were printed partly as a personal favour to the author and partly to display the quality of production from the press.⁷²³ Haslewood’s contribution to the

⁷¹⁸ Ibid.

⁷¹⁹ Johnson, *Typographia*, p. viii.

⁷²⁰ Pamela Woof and Robert Woof, ‘Edward Quillinan,’ *ODNB* [accessed 26 Nov 2008]

⁷²¹ K. A. Manley, ‘Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges,’ *ODNB* [accessed 24 Feb 2008]

⁷²² Margaret Cavendish, *Poems of Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle* (Ickham: Lee Priory Press, 1813).

⁷²³ Sir Samuel Egerton Brydges, *A Catalogue of All the Works Printed at the Private Press at Lee Priory in Kent : from Its Commencement in July 1813, Till Its Termination in Jan. 1823. [With a*

Roxburghe Club, *Two interludes: Jack Jugler and Tersites*, was printed at Lee Priory in 1820 by John Warwick.

It appears that Egerton Brydges also gained some personal amusement from the operation of the press, beyond that of the more worthy literary pursuits. John Martin repeats an anecdote, allegedly told by Edward Quillinan, that occasionally items were printed that were not intended for circulation:

Among them was a little pungent moral of four octosyllabic quatrains, addressed by a very lovely young lady, the daughter of an amicable and venerable bishop, ‘to him who will best understand them’ a spruce, grey-headed gentleman, whose gallantry was rewarded by this effusion, ending with the flattering proverb, ‘A fool at fifty is a fool indeed’. Only two rough proofs, and one copy were struck off; Sir Egerton Brydges and a friend stood by, to witness the whole process and saw the letters dispersed and restored to their several alphabetical places in the printers’ boxes. The single impression was sent to the fair author, and the two rough proofs carried off by Sir Egerton Brydges and his friend.⁷²⁴

Egerton Brydges, in a letter to Dibdin in July, 1817, admitted to having difficulty in maintaining his original enthusiasm in the press:

As to what little I have done myself, either in original composition, or in the way of prefaces, &c. from this press, it is not such as I could wish. The variety of my concerns and pursuits always brings to every subject a distracted mind, and a wild and fugitive memory. My spirit evaporates with the violence of its first ardours. My fancy catches flame; and is almost immediately out again. [...] It has always been with me a main aim to bring taste and sentiment in aid of the heaviness of literary antiquities.⁷²⁵

In the *Bibliographical Decameron*, Dibdin makes the following assessment of the works that had proceeded from the Lee Priory Press by that time:

Ms. Letter from Geneva by Sir E. Brydges, Dated March 29, 1824, Respecting the Difficulty of Transmitting Books to England], (London: John Warwick, 1824).

⁷²⁴ Martin, p. 381.

⁷²⁵ Dibdin, *Bibliographical Decameron*, p. 465.

The larger types of the press under consideration are perhaps too bold and heavy: and the ink has frequently too foggy a surface. The *paginary borders* are also objectionable, for they remind us of the manner of printing funeral sermons of old; while, in the red ink, it must be confessed there is too uniform a failure. To compensate these defects, there is consummate taste in the setting up of *title-pages*, and perhaps unrivalled beauty in the working of the wood-cuts: although there may be there may be thought to be too great an air of splendour, in many of the productions, of which the contents do not seem to warrant the pains bestowed upon them.

Upon the whole, however, the beauties infinitely counterbalance the defects of the productions of the *Lee Priory press*; and we may compliment the amiable and able conductor of it, upon setting an example worthy of being more generally followed⁷²⁶

THE AUCHINLECK PRESS

If Sir Egerton Brydges was apparently a somewhat reluctant and beleaguered owner of a printing press, Sir Alexander Boswell was by his own admission ‘infected with the *type fever*’.⁷²⁷ Boswell took a keen interest in the running of the press, which was in operation from 1815 to 1818 at Auchinleck House in Dumfriesshire, Scotland though Ransom describes Boswell’s involvement as ‘an intermittent avocation’.⁷²⁸ Boswell’s account of the setting up of his the press is quoted in the *Biographical Decameron* and ascribes his initial impulse to the desire to produce a facsimile reprint of a black-letter volume from his own collection, titled *The Disputation between John Knox and the Abbot of Crossraguel*.⁷²⁹ Apparently this was one of a number of texts that Boswell printed before the press was officially established in 1815.⁷³⁰ At this point he owned a ‘portable press’ which he chose to exchange in 1815 for ‘one of Mr.

⁷²⁶ Ibid., p. 467.

⁷²⁷ Ibid., p. 454.

⁷²⁸ Will Ransom, p. 207.

⁷²⁹ Martin, II, p. 357.

⁷³⁰ Ibid., p. 357.

Ruthven's full sized ones', an upgrade necessitated by the wish of his brother James to have his Roxburghe Club contribution printed at the press.⁷³¹ James' presentation volume was an edition of *Poems* by Richard Barnfield, a collection which included the *Encomion of Lady Pecunia, or The Praise of Money*, printed in 1598, and considered to be an accurate reprint of the earliest impression of the work.⁷³² Alexander Boswell used the press to print editions of his own compositions, including 'The Tyrant's Fall' in 1815 and 'Skeldon Haughs; or, The Sow is Flitted' in 1816.

In all, the products of the press amounted to:

about forty distinct publications, from the most recondite treatises to rare old chap ballads besides a multitude of scarce tractates and leaflets bearing on history, social economy, philosophy &c, the number and titles of which it is almost impossible now to trace.⁷³³

Boswell employed 'Jamie' Sutherland, as compositor and printer, and Patrick Simpson to correct proofs in his absence.⁷³⁴ According to Dibdin, Sutherland came to Boswell 'by the obliging accommodation of Mr. George Ramsay, one of our most respectable printers'.⁷³⁵ Alexander Boswell also carried out some of the printing work himself, and is on record as having presented to Scott a book that was "written, printed and bound by himself".⁷³⁶ The Auchinleck Press inevitably closed with Alexander's death in 1822.

⁷³¹ Dibdin, *Bibliographical Decameron*, p. 454.

⁷³² John Payne Collier, *Bibliographical and Critical Account of the Rarest Books* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1866), pp. 58-62.

⁷³³ Robert Howie Smith, *The Poetical Works of Sir Alexander Boswell* (Glasgow: Maurice Ogle, 1871), p. xxxiii.

⁷³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. xxxiv.

⁷³⁵ Dibdin, *Bibliographical Decameron*, p. 455.

⁷³⁶ Joseph Train, in Howie Smith, p. xxxiv.

THE BELDORNIE PRESS

The third Roxburghe member who was moved to own a press was Edward Vernon Utterson, who founded the Beldornie Press at one of his residences, Beldornie Tower, on the Isle of Wight.⁷³⁷ Utterson was well-known as a barrister, a book editor and an accomplished artist, as well as an antiquarian book-collector, and he was married to the author Sarah Elizabeth Utterson who, in 1812, had translated and published the collection of gothic stories *Tales of the Dead* from the French and German editions. As well as translating the stories she had undertaken to edit the collection, leaving out a number of stories and including a story written by herself titled *The Storm*.⁷³⁸

According to Henry Cotton, the first proof-sheet produced by the press was printed on June 21, 1840 and it continued production only until 1843.⁷³⁹ During its short existence four printers were employed: J.N. Lydall, George Butler, G.E. Palmer and James Jolliffe.⁷⁴⁰ The Beldornie press was largely used by Utterson to reprint rare pieces of sixteenth and seventeenth-century poetry which Payne Collier describes as ‘highly curious poetical tracts’.⁷⁴¹ These he presented to his friends, rarely producing more than twenty copies of each item. They were described as ‘highly valued by the possessors, not only for their rarity, but also for their intrinsic value’.⁷⁴² The publication *Catalogue of Books Printed at the*

⁷³⁷ Henry Cotton, *The Typographical Gazetteer* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1866), p. 19.

⁷³⁸ Arthur Sherbo, ‘Edward Vernon Utterson’, *ODNB* [accessed 3 Jan 2009]

⁷³⁹ Cotton, p. 19.

⁷⁴⁰ Will Ransom, p. 213.

⁷⁴¹ Payne Collier, ‘Reprints of early English Poetry’, *Notes and Queries*, 2 (1856), pp. 6-7.

⁷⁴² Ransom, p. 213.

Beldornie Press, lists 16 printed items plus a number of pamphlets and what are described as ‘other minor pieces’.⁷⁴³

During 1841 Utterson’s press got off to a prolific start. Of the sixteen items printed at the Beldornie press in total, seven were reprints of works by Samuel Rowlands, a writer of pamphlets, usually employing satirical verse, who lived between 1598 and 1628.⁷⁴⁴ These works by Rowlands were all printed in the first year, starting with the *Knave of Harts. Haile Fellow well met*, of which 15 copies were printed and distributed to friends, a typically representative number for editions from this press.⁷⁴⁵ Two more Rowlands texts, also with playing-card motifs, followed quickly: *The Knave of Clubbs* from 1609 and *More Knaves yet? The knaves of Spades and Diamonds* first published in 1620.⁷⁴⁶ Other works by Rowlands printed in this year were *The Night-Raven*, *Looke to it: for, Ile stabbe ye*, and *The Melancholie Knight*.⁷⁴⁷ Rowlands was a writer who evidently also interested other Roxburghe members and Walter Scott had also edited an edition of his work in 1814.⁷⁴⁸ In 1841 Utterson also produced an edition of *Cynthia; and the legend of Cassandra* by Richard Barnfield and printed from a version held in the Malone Collection at Oxford.⁷⁴⁹ *The Catalogue of Books Printed at*

⁷⁴³ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁴ Reavley Gair, ‘Samuel Rowlands’, *ODNB* [accessed 19 Oct 2008]

⁷⁴⁵ Samuel Rowlands, *The Knave of Harts. Haile Fellow, well met*, ed. by E.V. Utterson (London: Beldornie Press, 1840).

⁷⁴⁶ Samuel Rowlands, *The Knave of Clubbs*, ed. by E.V. Utterson (London: Beldornie Press, 1841).

Samuel Rowlands, *More Knaves Yet? The Knaves of Spades and Diamond*, ed. by E.V. Utterson (London: Beldornie Press, 1841).

⁷⁴⁷ Samuel Rowlands, *The Night-Raven*, ed. by E.V. Utterson (London: Beldornie Press, 1841).

Samuel Rowlands, *Looke to it: for, Ile stabbe ye*, ed. by E.V. Utterson (London: Beldornie Press, 1841).

Samuel Rowlands, *The Melancholie Knight*, ed. by E.V. Utterson (London: Beldornie Press, 1841).

⁷⁴⁸ Samuel Rowlands, *The Letting of Humours Blood in the Head Vaine*. ed. by Walter Scott (Edinburgh: Laing and Blackwood, 1814).

⁷⁴⁹ Collier ‘Reprints of Early English Poetry’, pp. 6-7.

the Beldornie Press states that it was the same version ‘from which the Auchinleck Press No.3 was derived and in which they [the two poems contained in *Cynthia: and the legend of Cassandra*] do not appear’.⁷⁵⁰ Payne Collier says of the collection:

I was the more obliged to him for the reprint of *Cynthia*, because it contains the twenty sonnets, which were addressed by Barnfield to a person he calls *Ganymede*. Most of these are of a questionable character, and were cancelled by Mr. Utterson, after they had been composed by his printer; so that, at least, twelve of the copies struck off were without them. Moreover, unusual mechanical care was evinced about them, — a circumstance which may be attributed to the fact, that Mr. Utterson himself looked over the press, before he decided that he would not insert them. He sent them to me with a separate note, and wrote "cancelled" upon them.⁷⁵¹

Margaret Christian notes a copy of ‘Zepheria’, produced on the Beldornie Press in 1843, but found it to be ‘riddled with mistakes and his emendations unhelpful’.⁷⁵² John Payne Collier, in an article of 1856, also mentioned the inaccuracies contained in many of Utterson’s volumes and sheds some light on the cause of the errors:

They were either from unique, or from very rare copies, in public or private libraries; and, in some instances, I have not been able to collate my reprints with the originals. It was my general rule to do so; and I am sorry to say that, the service Mr. Utterson thus rendered to the students of our old poetry, was in some degree neutralized by inaccuracies I discovered. The mistakes, I am aware, grew out of the circumstance, that he usually employed a scribe to copy the original; who (like most scribes with whom I have had to do) was not as accurate as he ought to have been, and Mr. Utterson trusted too much to his fidelity. Many allowances ought, in such cases, to be made.⁷⁵³

In part due to the difficulties of travel, it was common practice at this time for editors to employ a researcher who would visit the collection where the original

⁷⁵⁰ Catalogue list reprinted in Ransom, *Private Presses*, pp. 212-213.

⁷⁵¹ Collier ‘Reprints of Early English Poetry’, pp. 6-7.

⁷⁵² Margaret, Christian, ‘Zepheria (1594; STC 26124): a critical edition’ *Studies in Philology* 100 (Spring 2003), 177-243.

⁷⁵³ Collier ‘Reprints of Early English Poetry’, pp. 6-7.

manuscript or volume was held, in order to make a copy, but, as Collier points out, this left the editor somewhat at the mercy of the conscientiousness and accuracy of the transcriber. This was not the only factor; Collier continues:

Of course the printer too was now and then in fault, and I do not think that Mr. Utterson engaged a very good compositor. Those are commonly the best compositors who have most to do; and the person or persons who put together the letters for a private press, were not very likely to have enough work to keep them in constant employment. Hence they did not acquire a habit of accuracy.⁷⁵⁴

Collier later mentions, in reference to *Cynthia; and the legend of Cassandra*, that while there are errors in the censored version that was distributed, the full, uncensored version that Payne Collier received had benefited from Utterson's more careful adherence to the original text:

Utterson himself took particular pains with this little work is clear, because, in my copy, he has introduced more than one MS. emendation, to remedy the inaccuracy of his printer.⁷⁵⁵

It appears that Utterson considered there to be different levels of readership for whom he was producing texts; the more learned, and perhaps sophisticated friend who would appreciate an accurate, unaltered reprint of the original and a more general readership, less discerning perhaps, who would be more suited to receive a censored, more socially acceptable if less accurate, edition. Utterson's most controversial choice of text was *Micro-cynicon: Sixe snarling satyres*, a satire first published in 1599 and sometimes attributed to Thomas Middleton because it is signed T.M.⁷⁵⁶ This dealt with various socially dangerous themes,

⁷⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁵⁶ A.W. Ward, A.R. Waller, W.P. Trent, J. Erskine, S.P. Sherman, and C. Van Doren ed, *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature in 18 Volumes (1907–21)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907–21), Vol 6, *The Drama to 1642*, Part Two.

included that of homosexuality.⁷⁵⁷ It is a curious piece that has accrued a superstitious reputation since its creation claiming madness, death and general bad luck for anyone who has appeared in the play or had a connection with it, but it has also elicited the wry observation that:

Utterson did not seem to suffer any ill effects from the book's production, and a series of mysterious ship wrecks around the [Isle of Wight] in the middle of the 19th century is not generally attributed to any known *Micro-Cynicon* performances.⁷⁵⁸

Whatever the shortcomings of the editions published at the Beldornie press, it does appear that Utterson's impetus for printing them was a genuine love of the poetry he reproduced and a desire to share this literature with like-minded enthusiasts. In Collier's opinion:

Mr. Utterson's sole object was to benefit others by the communication of valuable materials, within the reach of few, I am confident that his first wish would have been that defects of the kind should, as far as possible, be cured; and when I have formerly made him aware of their existence, he always expressed his obligation and his regret: adding a desire, that if I ever made any public use of his little volume, I would take care not to omit the correction of errors. In my intercourse with him, I always found him kind, liberal, and disinterested.⁷⁵⁹

⁷⁵⁷ Rictor Norton, 'Lovely Lad and Shame-Faced Catamite', *The Homosexual Pastoral Tradition*, <<http://rictornorton.co.uk/pastor05.htm>> [accessed 20 June 2008]

⁷⁵⁸ Lavie Tidhar, 'The Curious History of the Micro-Cynicon', Fortean Bureau available at <<http://www.forteanbureau.com/jan2004/Tidhar/index.html>>

⁷⁵⁹ Collier 'Reprints of Early English Poetry', pp. 6-7.

2.6 THE LEGACIES OF THE CLUB

While it is difficult to prove categorically the effects on literature or culture that have proceeded directly from the activities of the Roxburghe Club, it can, at the very least be stated that the Club was in the vanguard of a number of changes that were going on at that time and in some cases acted as the blueprint or inspiration for other pioneers in these fields. The most obvious, but also most easily overlooked way in which the early Roxburghe Club has influenced the modern literary world is in its longevity and continuity. Since its acclaimed publication of *Havelok the Dane*, despite a rocky period during which the Club came perilously close to ending, it has attracted increasing praise for its volumes and continued to build on the legacy of the pioneers of its early days, gradually evolving into the more recognisably modern face of a Club which produces editions acclaimed equally for their literary significance, scholarly value and typographic beauty.

The Club acted as a role model and trailblazer inspiring many subsequent printing clubs and societies, and by extension has influenced the types of books being published, the methods employed to disseminate early and special interest texts and to some extent the manner in which literature has developed as a specific area of study. As Nicolas Barker remarks:

[The first Roxburghe dinner] looks forward over the development in the study and collection of books that has taken place since. In this development the publications of the Roxburghe Club have had a distinct influence, and influence limited by the small number of members of the Club and by the principles of publication which that has entailed, but perhaps all the more felt for being on this restricted scale. The list of publications over the last two centuries provides a peculiarly fascinating cross-section of the changes in the study of books that have taken place during this period. The choice of works

printed and the methods of editing have been frequently in advance of the taste of their generations.⁷⁶⁰

Yet Matthews writes: ‘It was not scholarship but belonging that mattered in the clubs. Antiquarian literature was an excuse for belonging to a club’.⁷⁶¹ This not only assumes shallow self-interest to be the prime motivation among club members but is also strangely dismissive of the possibility that individuals might create a club for the express purpose that they have themselves stated. The Georgian era, including its intellectual and scholarly life, was one of sociability and it would be a mistake to overlook the multitude of easily accessible, fully established and socially approved clubs available to wealthy men in the early nineteenth century: antiquarian societies, professional guilds, drinking clubs, sporting and gambling clubs, dining societies and clubs built solely on the qualification of class were all available and were indeed already frequented by the members of the Roxburghe. There was little reason to go to the expense and effort required to create a new club unless it specifically catered to an interest and answered a need not already being met by existing means. That these needs were not being met, either by clubs or by commercial printing, was later underlined by Benjamin Disraeli who reminded the critics of his period that:

the sources of secret history at the present day are so rich and various; there is such an eagerness among their possessors to publish family papers, even sometimes in shapes and at dates so recent, as scarcely to justify their appearance; that modern critics, in their embarrassment of manuscript wealth, are apt to view with too depreciating an eye the more limited resources of men of letters at the commencement of the century.⁷⁶²

⁷⁶⁰ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, p. 55.

⁷⁶¹ Matthews, p. 102.

⁷⁶² Benjamin Disraeli, *Life and Writings of the Author* (1848) in Isaac Disraeli, *Curiosities of Literature* (London: Routledge, Warnes and Routledge, 1859), I, p. xxviii.

Once the Roxburghe Club had shown the way, making mistakes and falling short of perfection as leaders into unknown territory so often do, other printing clubs and societies were quick to follow its lead into such promising country. Each new club had its own area of specialist interest and its own agenda to be promoted through the printing and distribution of its club editions. That the Roxburghe was the inspiration and example to the clubs that came after has been freely acknowledged both by their contemporaries and by later critics, and by extension the benefits that have accrued to the literary world by this indirect path. As pointed out in 1861:

The well-known Roxburghe Club [...] which undoubtedly has suggested the host of printing-clubs that have arisen in later years – the Bannatyne, the Maitland, the Spalding, the Camden, the Shakespeare, the Percy, the Hakluyt, and a score more of like learned associations for the preservation of such rare information as stand in likelihood of loss or destruction by reason of its being in a unique copy. Certainly, whatever opinion a philosopher may entertain of bibliomania in the abstract, no one will deny that, in many of its results, it has been practically of the first service to the cause of letters.⁷⁶³

Harold Williams more succinctly refers to the Club as ‘the prototype of all its kind’.⁷⁶⁴ He characterised a book club in the following way:

The book club may have some, or nearly all, the characteristics more naturally to be associated with the learned academy or the printing society, or it may possess very few. But the true book club, whatever else its attributes, may be taken as regarding the book as an end in and for itself. It is not merely a tool, nor yet, as with the printing society, a text upon which to base further progress.⁷⁶⁵

This is an important distinction and many of the later clubs that formed in the wake of the Roxburghe, while branching out into valuable and useful forms of publishing, cannot be said to be book clubs in this sense.

⁷⁶³ ‘Bibliomania’, *Chamber’s Journal of Popular Literature, Science and Arts*, 407 (1861: Oct), p. 251.

⁷⁶⁴ Harold Williams, p. 22.

⁷⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, P. 8.

While this was the generation that witnessed the founding of the Club in 1812, the Club was not identical with those who took an interest in such literature. Its limitation to thirty-one members ensured one kind of exclusivity. While the Club – some of whose members dominated the most remarkable saleroom prices over the next few years – has come to define the age of book collecting, it was only part of a larger movement whose roots can be traced well before the Roxburghe sale of 1812. The circles of friendship among those who promoted these various facsimiles and imitations ensured the founding of other bibliophile publishing societies.⁷⁶⁶

Scott, writing to Dibdin in 1823 to accept membership into the Roxburghe, mentions the formation of the Bannatyne Club which is ‘to be established here something on the plan of the Roxburghe Club’, and says that ‘their first meeting is to be held on Thursday when the health of the Roxburghe Club will not fail to be drank’.⁷⁶⁷ Again, in a letter dated 1827, he indicates that he considers the Bannatyne to owe its existence, at least in part, to the example set by the Roxburghe, writing: ‘you will I hope find we have not failed to let the lamp which we lighted at that of the Roxburgh [sic] shine forth to the best of our power.’⁷⁶⁸ Dibdin obviously admired the methods used by the Bannatyne Club and wrote approvingly of their advances in publishing, admitting that their more systematic approach was reaping benefits. He also incidentally, in the same paragraph, mentions *Havelok* and seems to lay to rest any ideas held by critics that he was against the printing of this work or its method of production:

Havelok was the last performance of any note; and I am not singular in the expression of my regret that the plan adopted which led to that publication has not been rigidly followed up in subsequent efforts. The BANNATYNE CLUB seem, in this respect, to be very much shooting ahead of the parent-Society.⁷⁶⁹

Although the Bannatyne is sometimes held up as being superior to the Roxburghe in terms of scholarship (and that may be true of the formatting of the

⁷⁶⁶ McKitterick, p. 91.

⁷⁶⁷ Grierson, p. 342.

⁷⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 285.

⁷⁶⁹ Dibdin, *Bibliophobia*, pp. 47-8.

publications themselves which were professionally edited) it does not appear that the membership of the Bannatyne had the same expertise or interest in early books as that displayed by the Roxburghe membership: Robert Pitcairn, the editor responsible for the Bannatyne editions, later wrote:

The committees are apt to swamp [their funds] by editing costly and often (with reverence be it spoken) useless books, which more than nine-tenths of the members do not relish, and fully as many cannot read.⁷⁷⁰

This opinion was also voiced by Lord Cockburn, who in 1832 wrote in his journal:

very few of us can read our books, and still fewer can understand them, yet type, morocco and the corporation spirit make us print on, and this quite independently of the temptation arising from the marketable worth of what we get being far beyond what we pay.⁷⁷¹

This is a clear indication that many of the Bannatyne members, rather than being more scholarly or discerning in their literary activities, instead cheerfully admitting to the faults for which the Roxburghe were often (and erroneously) placed in the critical pillory.

There is insufficient space here to cover in any detail the many diverse book clubs and societies that followed the example of the Roxburghe Club, and as Laurel Braswell points out, later groups quickly started to designate themselves as societies rather than clubs.⁷⁷² ‘Society’ probably carried a suggestion of professional gravitas, and helped to disassociate them from the connotations of sociability inherent in the word ‘club’. New clubs appeared which like the Bannatyne concentrated on aspects of Scottish literature: The Maitland, founded

⁷⁷⁰ Robert Pitcairn in Padmini Ray Murray, ‘The Diversity of Print: Antiquarianism’, *The Edinburgh History of the Book in Scotland*, ed. Bill Bell (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), III, p. 282.

⁷⁷¹ Lord Cockburn, *Ibid.*, p. 282.

⁷⁷² Braswell, ‘The Influence of Romantic Antiquarianism’, p. 283.

in 1828 and containing much of the same membership as the Bannatyne; The Abbotsford which similarly shared many names from the other two registers; The Iona Club, printing items of Scottish history, literature and antiquities, and the Spalding Club, founded in 1839 to cater to the literature of the north-east of Scotland.⁷⁷³ In England a wide variety of societies started appearing, catering to every taste in historical, topographical and literary material but in practice none were focussed on literary texts in a similar way to the Roxburghe Club and the Scottish clubs and even the latter are described by Harold Williams as having ‘fell quickly into the hands of the archaeologist and historian’.⁷⁷⁴

Not until 1840, which saw the founding of the Percy, the Shakespeare, and the Parker Societies, were any other clubs inaugurated that were directly concerned with printing early literature. The Percy Society, named after Thomas Percy, editor of *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, was unsurprisingly committed to ‘the discovery and publication of ancient and obscure specimens of ballad poetry’.⁷⁷⁵ The Shakespeare Club was especially interesting in the context of the pioneering activities of the Roxburghe because, rather than (as the name might imply) printing the works of Shakespeare himself, the Club proposed to ‘print and distribute books illustrative of Shakespeare and the history of his time’. As argued above (p. 208), the Roxburghe, almost thirty years earlier, had displayed a strong interest in exploring and illustrating the context against which Shakespeare produced his works. Unfortunately, the first director of the Shakespeare Club was John Payne Collier who was also responsible for the closing of the Club, due to the resulting lack of public confidence in its

⁷⁷³ Harold Williams, pp. 28-30.

⁷⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

publications, following the forgery accusations which blighted the end of Collier's career. Finally, the Parker Club, named after Archbishop Parker, the Elizabethan antiquary and manuscript collector, also founded in this year, concentrated solely on publishing literary and theological works by early Church of England divines.

The most interesting and influential literary society to be established on the lines of the Roxburghe Club is the Early English Text Society, founded by Frederick Furnivall (who edited several texts for the Roxburghe in the 1860s) in 1864. This society marked the turning point which Williams describes as 'a new date in the story of printing societies' and is largely credited with overseeing the process by which literary studies and editing in Britain gained its modern scholarly methods.⁷⁷⁶ Derek Pearsall evaluates Furnivall's position in the world of literary studies as being:

Like a Victorian explorer or empire builder, mapping out territories, building railways and bridges, improving, facilitation access, preparing the way for others.⁷⁷⁷

Most of these clubs (with the obvious exception of EETS) failed to last the course, often finding that the public had little taste for the works that they published; the limited numbers of copies printed by the Roxburghe, combined with the members' acceptance of covering expenses out of their own pockets, allowed volumes to be printed without having to raise public subscription, enabled its longevity, and as Harold Williams noted, 'the Roxburghe Club has consistently maintained its purpose and function; it has witnessed the birth and

⁷⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 72-76.

⁷⁷⁷ Derek Pearsall, 'Frederick James Furnivall' in *Medieval Scholarship: Biographical Studies on the Formation of a Discipline*, ed. by Helen Damico and Joseph B. Zavadil (London: Routledge, 1998) II, pp. 125-138, (p.135).

the dissolution of many societies founded upon its model'.⁷⁷⁸ This is an important point because, as Williams indicates, other clubs, otherwise similar in framework, foundered on the shores of public indifference, not least it may be assumed because the need for public subscription would have entailed both substantial administrative requirements and more damagingly, the need to publish works that would appeal to the most common denominator among the target audience. The necessity of both appealing to a wide enough readership, while simultaneously offending the fewest possible potential subscribers, must have been a tricky line to walk, ensuring that few boundaries of established popular taste could be pushed but also perhaps eventually sapping the pleasure out of the venture for the founders of the particular publishing venture. The men who made up the Roxburghe, however, through their ability and willingness to fund the venture entirely, coupled with each individual's utter freedom to present whatever item appealed to their own tastes without the need to comply with a set of rules laid down by committee, were able to retain their interest and passion for the books that had brought them together in the first place. The act of presenting volumes retained its joy without the necessity for planning meetings, advertising budgets, lengthy debates about the difficulties of distribution or adherence to club standards and deadlines. Nobody had to collect public money or sell the idea of an unusual volume to a sceptical public. Even when times (and personal fortunes) changed and the Club started altered its method to one of annual subscription and organisational financing of the club publications, these subscriptions were still limited to within the group itself and all that had to be agreed was the question of a volume to print that appealed to the majority of the

⁷⁷⁸ Harold Williams, p. 27.

members themselves. The fact that the club publications have continued to be sought after is evidence perhaps that the public is not always the best judge of what it wants or needs until it is presented with a *fait accompli*. This freedom of expression guarded by the club, especially in the founding years, allowed the books published to cover a range of literary and historical significance which it is difficult to imagine occurring under any other publishing mechanism. It may not have lent itself to a systematic dissemination of the works of a particular author or period, but it did preserve and promulgate a wide variety of rare and all but forgotten works that otherwise may have permanently disappeared from literary culture and helped to give impetus to the emergence of a national literature and the appreciation of early English works. Nicolas Barker asserts that during the early years of the club ‘there was no question of the ‘scholarly value’ that was to preoccupy the club in later years; the first books served to commemorate a famous victory won, and also to remind members that the time was not long past when the poems, plays and tracts now reprinted might have silently vanished’⁷⁷⁹ The question of whether scholarly value was a preoccupation of the early Roxburghe is, of course, a different question to that of whether such scholarly value was inherent in the early volumes. Dibdin was certainly preoccupied with the idea of scholarly value, and as already illustrated, enough of the Club members were themselves sufficiently scholarly to appreciate the difference between a facsimile reproduction and a scholarly edition. If they chose one method over the other, it was an informed choice, and not the consequence of ignorance. The answer to the second question has been

⁷⁷⁹ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, p. 56.

illustrated at length in section 2.4 which outlines the literary value of the texts published by the Club.

The Bibliomania as a general social phenomenon had largely ended by 1832, with book prices plummeting and celebrated collections being sold for a tiny fraction of the amount that they had cost to purchase. Dibdin, in his melancholy sequel *Bibliophobia*, attributes this sad ebb of bibliographic fortunes to the combined effects of concerns about upcoming reform and the cholera epidemic which made people unwilling to appear in public places, and even less keen to gather together in confined auction rooms and booksellers' stores:

In short, FEAR is the order of the day. To those very natural and long-established fears of bailiffs and tax-gatherers must now be added the fear of *Reform*, of *Cholera*, and of Books.⁷⁸⁰

The Roxburghe managed to hold on, although Dibdin says that many of the members at this point had either retired to their estates (they were, after all, an ageing group), were busy with other concerns of life or, in the case of Heber (under his guise as *Atticus*) had gone abroad.⁷⁸¹ It could be argued that the withdrawing tide of high book prices now made it possible for scholars and public institutions to afford to buy the volumes that the bibliomania had brought to the public's attention. The taste for early English works had been created and now the raw materials were becoming affordable, and as importantly, accessible.

Barker points out that

Although discoveries were made in old libraries throughout the nineteenth century, it may be said that, in 1810, the bulk of our present store of early English books and manuscripts had already passed through the collectors' hands. The material on which future bibliographers were going to work had already to a large extent

⁷⁸⁰ T.F. Dibdin, *Bibliophobia* (London: Henry Bohn, 1832), p. 6.

⁷⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

become sorted and sifted. The next generation, that of Lord Spencer, Heber, Dibdin and the Roxburghe Club, was destined to see book-collecting placed on a proper pedestal. The black-letter book, after having passed from the country hall to the scholar's study, passed back from the scholar's study to the country hall.⁷⁸²

However it could be claimed that from the country hall the volumes often later made their way to the British Library, the Bodleian, the John Rylands Library and other institutions where they were once more available for scholars' use. Dibdin himself saw that the bibliomania had perhaps created the perfect conditions for these books to make their way to public institutions and in fact welcomed it. In *Bibliophobia* he poignantly mentions that following the auction of a friend's collection, 'If I look back at the sale of any one article, out of this extraordinary collection, with more satisfaction than another, it is in the acquisition of the Luther Bible by the British Museum.'⁷⁸³ He frequently displayed frustration at the inability or unwillingness of the British Museum to make the most of these opportunities to buy texts he considered to be important at auction, writing in 1834:

How the British Museum missed No. 4637 [a lot from the sale of the library of Dr. Kloss], in the same collection is painfully incomprehensible! And how that National Library, attached to the most knowing and the richest set of human beings upon earth, can let so many opportunities slip of essential aggrandisement to their book-treasures, is as unaccountable as lamentable. Can an establishment like that plead poverty? Forbid it, every succeeding Prime Minister.⁷⁸⁴

A damning verdict on the state of British public collections during the early nineteenth century is displayed in this letter from 1816:

⁷⁸² De Ricci in Nicolas Barker, *Bicentenary History*, p. 70.

⁷⁸³ Dibdin, *Bibliophobia*, p. 42.

⁷⁸⁴ Dibdin, *Reminiscences*, p. 412.

Of public libraries in London we have none worth mentioning, except the British Museum; the library of which is undoubtedly a huge collection of books, brought together without plan or arrangement.⁷⁸⁵

Sometimes, luckily for the public collections, the works made their way directly to their stacks without the need to enter the auction room and it is clear that the antiquarians of this period often acted in the interests of posterity, at least where financially viable for their heirs, as Laurel Braswell points out:

Also growing in the acquisition of medieval manuscripts and early printed books were institutional libraries such as the Advocates, the Bodleian, and the British Library, the direct result of bequeathed and purchased acquisitions from antiquarian collections or from the direct recommendations of antiquarian collectors.⁷⁸⁶

Looking at the purchasing methods described in section 2.2, although there may be something morally questionable in the thought of Earl Spencer procuring items from cathedral collections, it can also be argued that if the guardians of those libraries had decided to sell the volumes in question, then it was preferable that they should be bought for a British collection rather than possibly being sold to foreign collectors. This is one of the many morally grey areas in which book collectors and their agents, not to mention the administrators of public and venerable collections, operated within during this period. Kristian Jensen has also described the ways in which books, newly liberated from French aristocratic collections and libraries looted during the revolution and succeeding wars were making their way to British private collections through sometimes questionable channels.⁷⁸⁷ Again, as reprehensible as such profiteering appear, it has to be

⁷⁸⁵ 'Of Libraries, Both Public and Private, Foreign and Domestic', *The European Magazine, and London Review*, 69 (1816), p. 203.

⁷⁸⁶ Braswell-Means, *The Influence of Romantic Antiquarianism*, p. 280-281.

⁷⁸⁷ Jensen, p. 41, relates how 'a French bookseller bought the Aldine Homer printed on vellum for 2,900 francs, that is about £116. The dealer was congratulated by a delighted public: at least

acknowledged that France's loss was Britain's gain. The flow was definitely not all in Britain's favour; as the book-collecting frenzy reached its end, there came the risk of an even greater flow of volumes to foreign institutions and collectors than previously experienced, especially with the creation of new and extravagantly endowed institutions in America. Peter Reid writes of the Roxburghe:

They (and almost they alone) attached tremendous value to their books which were prized works to be cherished and definitely not sold. Their heirs, however, often viewed things differently. With the sale of material to Huntington, the trend of bibliographic treasures leaving Britain had commenced its inexorable progress.⁷⁸⁸

Early books had long been flowing out of Britain and it can be argued that the massive collections belonging to the members of the Roxburghe Club, by virtue of their unwillingness to stop collecting simply because the fad had moved on, retained many of these works long enough for cultural tastes to catch up and for public collections to be in a position to purchase many of the rare items either through direct purchase from the owner or at auction after the collector's death. Even the Roxburghe club could not hold back the tide of foreign buyers, but they could delay the inevitable and ensure that a large number of items remained for national collections to buy.

Indeed, before many of these large collections went to auction they were available for the use of authors and scholars. This relationship between the collector and the scholar was acknowledged by F.A. Pottle who wrote:

this treasure would remain in France. But he was wounded by the delight of his colleagues who did not know his secret: he acted for Spencer. The bookseller was none other than Renouard, the opponent of England's aristocratic war against the France of letters. He had to operate in a market presided over by the God of Gold, even when embodied in an English aristocratic war leader'.

⁷⁸⁸ Peter H. Reid, 'The Decline and Fall of the British Country House Library', *Libraries and Culture*, 22 (2001), 345-366 (p. 345).

I have the greatest respect for [dealers and collectors] and I consider that the scholar of today who makes remarks about “mere collectors” is talking nonsense. Our science of bibliography would be sadly hampered indeed were it not for the generous and largely disinterested service which private collectors perform by buying and putting freely at our disposal books which our public libraries cannot or will not purchase.⁷⁸⁹

It can be argued that they were making them more available to scholars than to collectors as most were willing to allow access to their collections, but there were no copies made available for purchase by collectors outside the Club.

Richard Heber was well known for allowing a wide range of people access to his vast libraries, not only scholars but also authors such as ‘Robert Southey, Sir Walter Scott, William Wordsworth, Charles Burney, Thomas Park, and Martin Routh’.⁷⁹⁰ Similarly, the Duke of Devonshire bought the important Kemble collection which included around 4000 plays on its purchase in 1821 and greatly added to it until it contained around 7500 plays. He later chose to have it moved from his main library at Chatsworth in the Peak District to Devonshire House in London ‘for the sake of reference by living authors and bibliophiles’.⁷⁹¹ While it is obvious that these collections were not being thrown open to the general public and there was inevitably a highly selective approach regarding who was allowed access to the books and manuscripts (and as these libraries were stored within the private residences of their owners it is not really surprising because who would throw open their home and expensive private possessions to the general public), the value of this access for authors and scholars and by extension, literary and academic culture, was still immense.

⁷⁸⁹ F. A. Pottle, *The Literary Career of James Boswell*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929) p. b.

⁷⁹⁰ Arthur Sherbo, ‘Richard Heber’, *ODNB* [accessed 31 Oct 2014]

⁷⁹¹ William Cavendish Devonshire, *Catalogue of the Library at Chatsworth*, (London: Chiswick Press, 1879), I, p. xvii.

Restricted as they were by the technology available to them, the Roxburghe were recreating facsimile copies of rare or unique books and thereby safeguarding their future and extending their availability to collector and scholar alike. They were using the means available to them, including the cutting edge lithographic process when it was first developed, and creating copies that adhered to the original in every way possible. They did not, however, make any attempt to pass these copies off as the original article and no question of forgery ever appeared to arise from the production of these items.

One criticism, often levelled against the club during its early years, was that they were reproducing texts that had become rare due to lack of popularity, and therefore were not worth reproducing. In some cases, these texts were most useful specifically because they were not the types of items that general publishers were printing. A lack of popularity does not necessarily equate to a lack of value, and as Hill Burton points out:

Without interfering either with the author who seeks in his copyrights the reward of his genius and labour, or with the publisher who calculates on a return for his capital, skill, and industry, the book clubs have ministered to literary wants, which these legitimate sources of supply have been unable to meet.⁷⁹²

Book clubs, from the Roxburghe Club onwards, filled a necessary position in the publishing world by producing books that contain a great deal of value to scholars and other interested parties, without necessarily having the potential to turn a profit for the publisher of that text. Hill Burton describes these books as including

old state papers and letters – old chronicles – specimens of poetic, dramatic and other literature, more valuable as vestiges of the style

⁷⁹² Hill Burton, and Grant White, *Book Hunter*, p. 251.

and customs of their age than for their absolute worth as works of genius – massive volumes of old divinity – disquisitions on obsolete science, and the like.⁷⁹³

Obviously such items, without any prospect of financial returns, will not be published by any commercial venture, and if such material is to be saved for future research or interest, or indeed, as has occurred with a number of the authors reprinted by the Roxburghe Club, for a posterity that may have revised its opinions on the literary value of those works, then the undertaking of a club such as the Roxburghe to ensure the texts' longevity is obviously of great value. The value of such an undertaking can be obscured by contemporary prejudice or ignorance and may only become apparent at a much later date.

Another of the often voiced criticisms of the Roxburghe Club (and those perceived to be bibliomaniacs in general) was that, apart from superficial aesthetics, they were only interested in the rarity of the items they collected. This accusation was doubly vehement against the Roxburghe as they also stood accused of only reprinting texts in extremely limited numbers, thereby restricting the availability and retaining the rarity value of the items. Rosenbach addressed this viewpoint when he wrote that:

‘Rarity’ can of course be read in different ways – at its most shallow and self-serving, it may indicate a love of exclusivity and the ability to possess something that is not available to any other person, but at its most useful it can symbolise the desire to take that which is so rare as to be endangered and to protect it and perhaps multiply it to ensure its continuation.⁷⁹⁴

As I have already discussed in earlier sections, a number of the items reprinted by the Club were unique copies which meant that even once stored in a private

⁷⁹³ Ibid., p.252.

⁷⁹⁴ A.S.W. Rosenbach, *Books and Bidders: The Adventures of a Bibliophile* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1927), p. 256.

collection, safe from the cheese-shop or the degradations of decay, they were still essentially only one house fire away from extinction. Thirty copies of a text, while not ideal, is a significant improvement of the odds for survival. It must also be taken into account that there was an extremely limited readership during this period and even popular books such as novels published through more normal, commercial routes were produced in quantities of only 500 – 800 units.⁷⁹⁵ The Roxburghe were not coming even close to producing impressions of this size, but in relative terms the numbers of books printed for each item was not so very small either.

Turning to the value of the texts presented to the Roxburghe Club, it is important to retain a clear understanding that all volumes, until the club started producing ‘club’ editions were indeed presented *to*, not *by* the Roxburghe Club as it was a group of individuals acting autonomously within a rough framework, not an organisation working to rules designed to produce a uniform item attaining consensual standards.

The Roxburghe members of the early days were not acting without scholarly intentions; Dibdin, so often held up as the epitome of superficial aesthetic obsession, was intellectually a far more complex character than he is often given credit for, who understood and passionately cared about the necessity of creating a book science to examine and categorise what had previously been overlooked and neglected. In *The Bibliomania* he had argued that

⁷⁹⁵ Adrian Johns, ‘Changes in the World of Publishing’, *The Cambridge History of English Romantic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 377-402 (p. 378).

to place competent Librarians over the several departments of a large library; or to submit a library on a more confined scale to one diligent, enthusiastic, well-informed, and well bred Bibliographer or Librarian, (of which in this metropolis we have so many examples) is doing a vast deal towards directing the channels of literature to flow in their proper courses.⁷⁹⁶

Far from being a plea for dilettante cultural practices, this is an explicit call for a greater degree of professionalism and specialisation. During his own lifetime, although his writing style frustrated many critics, he was taken very seriously in some circles as a knowledgeable advocate of literature and had given a series of lectures at the Royal Society on the history of literature. Much of Dibdin's work was in the area of cataloguing and categorising, with much useful fruit of his labour going on to form a basis for later work to build upon. In 1824 he published his *Library Companion*, often derided for its frequent inaccuracies and over-estimation of his own abilities, but in it, among other useful information, he described twenty-six Shakespeare First Folios which is considered to be the 'first such published description of extant copies' and surely a vital building block in any scholarly examination of the history of the printing of the works of the playwright, not to mention forming part of the fossil record of modern bibliography.⁷⁹⁷ This deeply held belief in the value of indexing and cataloguing, while still in its infant stage, has been one of the foundations that modern scholarship has been built upon and without such systematic forms of searchable listings the worth of large collections of volumes to the academic who wishes to access it is severely limited.⁷⁹⁸

⁷⁹⁶ Dibdin, *Bibliomania*, p.741.

⁷⁹⁷ Harold M. Otners, *The Shakespeare Folio Handbook and census* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1990), p. 13.

⁷⁹⁸ 'The increasing availability for scholars of large libraries and private collections was aided considerably by the advent of more systematic cataloguing.' Braswell-Means, *The Influence of*

EDITING AND PUBLISHING

The years of Romanticism saw the English book trade change from a craft to something that might plausibly be called an industry. The trade expanded enormously, adopted new business techniques, embraced specialization, addressed a far larger and more diverse readership, and toward the end of the period embraced major technical change.⁷⁹⁹

The Roxburghe Club were fighting a rear-guard action against the loss of traditional printer's arts in an age of increasing mechanisation. This was not from a fear of progress but a love of, and desire to retain what was valuable, and far from being Luddite in their outlook they were simultaneously cherishing and supporting the traditional printer's arts while embracing new technologies such as lithographic reproduction. The Club appears to have been willing and eager to use whatever technologies, whether traditional or cutting-edge, to attain their goals in the area of reproducing early books in a manner that came close to the original experience of the contemporary reader of early texts. This desire appears to have applied only to the contents of the book rather than the binding.

The first steam-driven printing press had its inaugural run in 1814; it had been commissioned by John Walter II and was installed in Printing House Square at the headquarters of *The Times* and where it produced its first commercial print run on the 29th of November.⁸⁰⁰ Johns, discussing this transitional period comments that:

Lee Priory press shared the artisans' commitment to craft skill and was managed by a dedicated opponent of steam and stereotyping, John

Romantic Antiquarianism Upon Medieval English Studies, *University of Ottawa Quarterly*, 52 (1982), p. 281.

⁷⁹⁹ Johns, p. 377.

⁸⁰⁰ Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *Social History of the Media: From Gutenberg to the Internet* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), p. 106.

Johnson. That valuation of craftsmanship and community became all the more accentuated when the new technologies were taking hold in the 1820s.⁸⁰¹

Edwards acknowledges the trickle down effect of cultural pursuits and the diffusion and dissemination of the original texts through society, saying that:

The common books which pass into the hands of almost the humblest owe something of their merit and vitality to the hoarding up of rare and costly books in such collections as the Spencer Library - created with a liberal hand, and imparted with a liberal heart.⁸⁰²

Although the presentation of the early Roxburghe volumes were not as uniform or consistent as would later be the case, many of the works published at that time by the club showed an awareness of scholarly apparatus and displayed introductions, indexes, glossaries etc. The Roxburghe members themselves apparently believed that there was sufficient uniformity in the early volumes as to be readily ascertainable to a new member. This assurance is evident from the letter sent by Francis Freeling to Scott in which he states that ‘every Member shall print, that the form shall be such as the Books now sent will point out’, which instruction, vague as it was, indicated that Freeling was confident that merely seeing the books already printed would be sufficient guidance in the printing of Scott’s own offering.⁸⁰³

Although often criticised for their lack of scholarly editing (criticism, it should be stressed, which is made from the comfortable position of easy access to both source materials and documented knowledge of methods), the Roxburghe Club were commonly using editing methods and scholarly frameworks that had not become common practice. As Nicolas Barker writes, ‘the choice of works

⁸⁰¹ Johns, p. 391.

⁸⁰² Edwards, *Libraries and Founders of Libraries*, p. 446.

⁸⁰³ Grierson, p. 285.

printed and the methods of editing have been frequently in advance of the taste of their generations'.⁸⁰⁴ Some members possessed considerable ability and skill, and the editing of a text such as *The Owl and the Nightingale*, presented by Sir Stephen Glynne, represented quite an undertaking. It was edited from two manuscripts, and the poem is written in Early Middle English from around the late thirteenth century. The language would have been far more difficult for a nineteenth-century reader to understand than that of Chaucer, and the poem itself is a difficult piece to unravel. Glynne's willingness to address a difficult text of this nature indicates that the Club were operating at a far more committed level of editorship than that for which they have been given credit. A lack of recorded guidelines or Club rules has been held up as proof that the Club was amateur and unfocused in its editing and printing. This may be more an omission of documentation than of philosophy; Markland, writing in *Notes and Queries* said that 'it was declared by the Roxburghe Club that "The omission of an Index where essential, should be an indictable offence!"'.⁸⁰⁵ This comment indicates that certain rules of editing had been discussed and agreed upon, even if they were not written down or formalised for posterity.

INFLUENCE ON LATER PRINTING

As previously mentioned, the printing activities of the Roxburghe Club can be viewed as inhabiting an early pre-Arts and Crafts area of Romanticism. Although it would be another 60 years before William Morris and the Pre-Raphaelites gave a definite shape to the movement, many of the underlying tenets can already be seen to be present in the early nineteenth century. Augustus Pugin and John

⁸⁰⁴ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, p. 55.

⁸⁰⁵ J.H. Markland, 'Spence's Polymetis: Indexes', *Notes and Queries*, 7, 180 (June 11 1859), p.469.

Ruskin, key theorists, were both born during this formative, turbulently changing period. As the industrial revolution gathered momentum, so did the desire to hold on to what was human and creative in the increasingly mechanised world and the typographic aesthetic of the Roxburghe reprints provided a window to the more human-scale work of the early printers. From the first Roxburghe dinner, where the toasts were proposed to the seminal printers, the Club's dual aims were set down: promoting early literature and equally, promoting early typographic skills. The Club placed a pioneering value on the craftsmanship and artistry of the early printers, which laid an important foundation for later nineteenth and twentieth-century acceptance of printing as a central aesthetic educative model. This burgeoning interest in printed books is reflected by the Cardiff Books Collection deposited with SCOLAR at Cardiff University. This collection reflects the ambitions of the Cardiff City Council and its benefactors, to provide books of the highest quality, representing the whole history of the printer's art, to help train and educate young printers at Cardiff College of Art between the 1890s and 1920s.

Private presses including the Beldornie, Lee Priory and Auchinleck sustained a thread of practical typographical and artistic endeavour during a period when private presses were scarce, that could link the artisan of the pre-mechanised era with the idealistic art printer of the Victorian age and beyond. The Roxburghe Club, in their reprints of early books and initial concentration on facsimile reproduction, provided not only concrete examples of the early methods of book production but also helped to form an aesthetic of artisan authenticity that would later inspire and inform people involved in the small printing press movement

and the Arts and Crafts movement, influencing in turn artists such as Eric Gill and David Jones. The catalogue of William Morris' library mentions a copy of Haslewood's edition of *Dialogues of Creatures Moralised*, highlighting the interest displayed by the later Arts and Crafts movement in these volumes produced by the early nineteenth-century antiquarians, and the link created by the editors of these texts between the early printed or manuscript forms of these texts and the later influential cultural movement.⁸⁰⁶

Development of a National Literary Identity

The Roxburghe Club did not have an overtly stated nationalistic intention behind the printing of their books, although Dibdin certainly writes in terms of patriotism in connection with the early English texts that the group were collecting, and, as Deirdre Lynch says of his *Library Companion*, it:

Seizes every opportunity to parade its credentials as a work of public spirit, showing how taste is a patriotic duty and proposing that private consumption might advance the project of national definition.⁸⁰⁷

It is not, however, possible to look at the Club's activities without setting them within the context of an interest in nationalist literature that was a growing cultural energy during this period. Because English traditions represented the dominant culture of the period (in relation to the other countries of the British Isles), it is easy to overlook the fact that the predominant culture was the product of an education that took its values from classical texts and that the early works in the English vernacular were, at this time, overlooked and often disapproved of

⁸⁰⁶ *The Library of William Morris; a Catalogue*

<<https://williammorrislibrary.wordpress.com/2014/04/24/%C2%B6-haslewood-dialogues-of-creatures-moralised-1816/>> [accessed 01/02 2015]

⁸⁰⁷ Lynch, 'Wedded to Books', p.13.

as barbaric or uncultured. That the Roxburghe Club was exerting a positive effect on the cultural acceptance of English literature is borne out by Scott's remark in a letter to a friend that 'I flatter myself the [Bannatyne] Club has placed the old Scottish literature very high and that it may match even the Roxburgh [sic] of London in its beneficial effect on the old literature of the country'.⁸⁰⁸ It is interesting that as nationalistically Scottish as Scott may have been, he is here using 'the country' to signify Britain as a whole and viewing the early literature of the British Isles to be a common wealth of culture. The history of printing itself could be adapted into a form of national heritage and Seth Lerer describes Caxton in the nineteenth century as the 'focus of a new spirit of bibliographic nationalism'.⁸⁰⁹ This is borne out by the Club's actions in the raising of a monument to Caxton, as discussed in section 1.3, and their unfulfilled desire to see it installed in Westminster Abbey, not only the original site of Caxton's press but also of course a sacred space for the veneration of the national literary heroes whose memorials are displayed there.

The Club's activities in this period do not, however, point only to the development of a purely English literary identity, but rather to an interest in a more cohesively British literature. Dibdin, as we have seen, made a point in his lectures for the Royal Institution of discussing the literary traditions of Wales, Ireland and Scotland, as well as those of England and a similarly broad interpretation of national literature can be seen in the Club publications. The interests of the Roxburghe Club towards medieval balladry can be seen to link them, at least in broad terms, back to the work of Robert Burns and the wider

⁸⁰⁸ Grierson, p. 63.

⁸⁰⁹ Seth Lerer, 'Caxton in the Nineteenth Century', in *Caxton's Trace*, ed. by William Kuskin (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame, 2006), pp.325-370 (p. 327).

concerns of the Romantic movement with its divergence of focus from the 'dominant 'Augustan' eighteenth-century literary tradition'.⁸¹⁰ Jane Moore and John Strachan view Robert Burns' *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect* published in 1786, as signalling 'the existence of a more fluid concept of national identity during the Romantic era than our modern age is often prepared to admit'.⁸¹¹ Furthermore, Susan Manning views this interest in ballads as a positive force in the growing cohesion of the British Isles. She writes:

Ballad collection, particularly in Scotland and Wales, allowed for the simultaneous expression of tradition-based cultural difference and a new construction of Britishness.⁸¹²

Other groups of antiquaries were forming around the focal points of national literatures. The Scottish book clubs have already been mentioned, and similar groups coalesced around the literary heritage of Wales and Ireland. Welsh literature had lost its visibility as a formative part of British literary history, not only through the decline of the Welsh language but also through its perceived political undesirability within the union.⁸¹³ Existing Welsh Societies in London, including the Cymmrodorion, the Gyneddigion and the Cymreigyddion, all founded in the second half of the eighteenth century as social and charitable groups, now began to take an increasing antiquarian interest in the literary

⁸¹⁰ Jane Moore and John Strachan, *Key Concepts in Romantic Literature* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 189.

⁸¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 195-196.

⁸¹² Manning, p. 56.

⁸¹³ Sarah Prescott writes that 'While English and Welsh writers continued to share broader aspects of the British nationalism of previous ages (the Arthurian myth would be a case in point), the myths and traditions on which a specifically Welsh identity relied were increasingly disregarded [...], reinterpreted to fit different political contexts, or simply replaced by narratives of Britishness that were increasingly English in focus', "'What Foes More Dangerous Than Too Strong Allies?": Anglo-Welsh Relations in Eighteenth-Century London', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 69 (December 2006), 353-554 (p. 553).

history of Wales and often in editing older texts.⁸¹⁴ Glanmor Williams traces the currents running between antiquarianism, nationalism and Romanticism during the period, saying that:

Later in the century this antiquarian interest was injected with a potent infusion of romanticism, notably from Iolo Morganwg and William Owen-Pughe [...] They shared the preoccupations and predilections of romantics everywhere: The discovery of ancient poetry (and even fabrication of it); a passion for medieval literature and an urge to publish it.⁸¹⁵

Phillip Connell, while endorsing the view of antiquarians as creating a national literary identity, see the process in a less positive light, as a cultural subversion of national heritage by aristocratic mores:

The acquisitive mania of the wealthiest aristocratic collectors can be seen to have represented something more than dilettantism or self-aggrandizement: The bibliomania symbolised an attempt to promote the participation of distinctively aristocratic cultural practices within a broader emergent idea of the literary past as a collective national heritage.⁸¹⁶

As discussed above, at the period when the Roxburghe Club was founded early English texts were not universally valued as literature, failing as they did to conform to the taste formed by a classical education, and perhaps on some level holding too much association with forms of education considered as suitable for the lower classes. Although never overtly stated in criticisms of the Roxburghe Club's choices of works to reprint, it is difficult to shake the impression that at least some of the vehemence with which their lack of taste is attacked is due to the association of early English texts with the tastes considered useful educational material for the moral development of the mercantile classes.

Whether this is perceived as a perverse affectation of the tastes of classes below

⁸¹⁴ Glanmor Williams, 'Language, Literacy and Nationality in Wales', in *Religion, Language and Nationality in Wales: Historical Essays*, ed. by Glanmor Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1979), pp. 127-147 (p. 138).

⁸¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁸¹⁶ Connell, p.28

their status is not clear, but Susan Manning raises an interesting possibility when she says that:

The presence, indeed the prevalence, of a taste for antiquarian collection amongst booksellers, clergymen, squires and earls, suggested that the middle and upper echelons of society might be pervaded by an unarticulated discontent (across denominational, political and educational boundaries) with the adequacy of the cultural system to which they subscribed and contributed.⁸¹⁷

Yet not every early author had suffered the fate of obscurity, and as Nicolas Barker points out, ‘the idea of reprinting earlier English texts was nothing new in 1812’, but he also admits this is only true of Chaucer and Shakespeare.⁸¹⁸ Both of these authors had continued to be printed through well established channels and had escaped the censure meted out to other early vernacular authors and their works. For Chaucer this channel had been assisted by the championing of his works by Henry VIII who had viewed Chaucer’s anti-Catholic attitudes with approval and considered him to be an early Protestant poet.

The Roxburghe Club’s readiness to tackle daunting texts meant that some old works both saw the light of day for the first time since the 16th century and also, as a result, came into prominence as part of the canon of English literature; although no such thing as a Department of English Literature existed yet in universities, histories of English literature were certainly being published and the Roxburghe Club’s efforts helped to give a boost to an awareness of a wider range of English literature than had generally been known hitherto. Obviously, although the interest in early English literature existed before the Roxburghe Club itself, many of the members of the Club were the very people who had been

⁸¹⁷ Susan Manning, ‘Antiquarianism, Balladry and the Rehabilitation of Romance’ in *The Cambridge History of English Romantic Literature*, ed. by James Chandler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 45-70 (p. 50).

⁸¹⁸ Barker, *Bicentenary History*, p. 36.

operating in this area of literature during the past twenty years or more, and in some ways the Club can be seen as the culmination of their drive and purpose rather than the beginning. Much emphasis is understandably placed on *Havelok*, and it tends to be held up as the first important work produced by the Club:

The value of [*Havelok*] as a contribution to English literature has been attested by the extensive critical examination it has received, and by its being reprinted for sale. And this by the way, suggests a practical answer to those who complain of the arrangement, essential to the club system, of limiting the number of the impression of each volume. There is, in the general case, no copyright in the book, and it is free to any one who thinks the public at large will buy it, to reprint it, and supply the market.⁸¹⁹

This does not detract from the value contained in earlier works published by the Club, and it is striking that Madden, the brilliant young scholar brought in to edit *Havelok* for the Roxburghe, had initially approached them with the manuscript that he had discovered. Madden already knew Earl Spencer and it was no surprise that he should approach such a wealthy bibliophile for funding, but he did not ask Spencer to act as his patron, instead soliciting the Roxburghe Club's patronage.⁸²⁰ It is telling that he considered them to be the most receptive, influential and knowledgeable audience for his discovery. He recognised that the Club were the men most willing and able to underwrite the publishing of this significant text. He understood their dedication to early literature and trusted them to appreciate the significance of his find.

David Matthews observes that when it came to Middle English material 'the Roxburghe was alone in the field until 1823, and that even when a publication

⁸¹⁹ 'The Book Hunter's Club', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, 90 (Oct 1861). 440-462 (p. 448).

⁸²⁰ Matthews, p. 119.

came from elsewhere, it was typically done by someone who was a member of the club.⁸²¹

Despite their variations, the character of their publications was similar, editorially and critically. There were significant overlappings in personnel and in general a coherent character for Middle English was constructed in the period.⁸²²

Even when there is passionate and bitter disagreement between the men working in these areas of literature, leading to private argument and vitriolic public exchanges in the journals of the day, there is still a sense of shared common purpose and respect. Dibdin mentions, while discussing the publication of *Havelok*, that:

It provoked a little etymological controversy between the Librarian of the Royal Institution and its editor: men, both of too amiable a temper to take delight in literary fisty-cuffs. Mr. Madden stoutly replied to the attacks of his Critic. As stout a rejoinder was threatened – but never appeared. Of late, however, both Assailant and Defender were seen cordially shaking hands across the same MS. in the British Library.⁸²³

It is too easy perhaps, from the distance of two hundred years, to see the event in isolation, without putting it into the context of an ongoing relationship or collaboration. Overall, looking at the development of the field there is a sense of excitement in the discovery or rather rediscovery of these early English works and authors. There is the impression that these men, even or perhaps especially when not in agreement were enjoying the shared process of working on such fruitful and un-trodden ground in which, as Lagorio points out, they were to remain pioneers for several decades:

The importance and worth of the club's medieval publications were unrivalled until 1858, when the Rolls Series began its publications of English historical texts and records, and also until the Early English Text

⁸²¹ Ibid., p. 90

⁸²² Ibid.

⁸²³ Dibdin, *Bibliophobia*, p. 48

Society assumed the leadership for publishing Anglo-Saxon and medieval critical editions.⁸²⁴

Woolf comments on the antipathy displayed towards such early texts during this period:

Early modern conceptions of the Middle Ages were often negative: until at least the nineteenth century, the medieval was often defined simply as “that which is not classical”. It was all too easy to caricature an epoch whose society, culture, and beliefs stood in such apparent contrast to the language, values, and ideals of the ancient world.⁸²⁵

It is important to acknowledge that the attainments made by the early Roxburghe Club are not invalidated by the later achievements of their successors; each period of activity can only be judged in the context of its time and not by the later standards that perhaps owe much of their existence to the imperfect activities of pioneers in the field. The reluctance of later scholars to acknowledge the work carried out by antiquarians has been noted in other areas of research:

Historians have certainly not neglected the study of antiquarianism in recent years. Yet all too often the nature of the enquiry has been largely defined by the evident wish to distinguish good from bad historiographic practice, according to contemporary lights.⁸²⁶

A similar process of disassociation has been apparent in some modern literary scholarship, with the value of antiquarian research being devalued by an insistence on measuring its worth by more exacting modern standards. Richard Utz, writing on the gradual introduction and acceptance of Germanic methods of research and analysis, says that ‘during the 1840s, there is an increased demand for a clear separation of the academic and non-academic study of English historical texts’, a development that led to more precision, and a scientific

⁸²⁴ Lagorio, p. 14-18.

⁸²⁵ D.R. Woolf, ‘The Dawn of the Artifact: The Antiquarian Impulse in England, 1500 – 1730’, in *Medievalism in England*, ed. by Leslie J. Workman and Kathleen Verduin, (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1996) IV, 5-44 (p. 5).

⁸²⁶ *Producing the Past: Aspects of Antiquarian Culture and Practice 1700-1850*, ed. by Martin Myrone and Lucy Peltz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. xviii.

method that could be applied to scholarly activities.⁸²⁷ The role of the antiquarians in this process is acknowledged by Schröer who (rather patronisingly) writes:

How gratefully the English enthusiasts welcomed the old and young German academics and were ready to lend them a hand, full of joy that the “learned doctors” copied and edited their manuscripts. The English did not yet have an organised science in this field; everything was private initiative; the most astonishing and admirable thing was, however, the idealism and the energy with which these enthusiasts were capable of influencing the public interest. Thus, they received the means to publish the literary and linguistic treasures of English history via the founding of ‘Societies’.⁸²⁸

Laura Braswell also notes the antiquarians’ part in the development of modern methods, particularly in the field of medieval literature, through the efforts of the societies that had emerged from their studies, saying:

Eventually, by the middle of the century, new textual and philological concerns from the continent were to become influential in the publications of these societies, but by then, of course, the nature of medieval English studies had already been defined in more or less its modern sense through the efforts of the antiquarians.⁸²⁹

Antiquarians succeeded in their aims, but at the expense of being disowned and repudiated by the posterity who had built on their efforts. They were undone by their own success.

Romanticism

As well as the development of studies in Early English works, these early texts were set against the context of the growing movement of Romanticism which was heavily influenced both by the texts themselves but also by the style in which they were expressed. The beautiful illustrative themes of manuscripts

⁸²⁷ Richard Utz, *Chaucer and the Discourse of German Philology* (Sydney: University of Sydney, 2002), p. 37.

⁸²⁸ Arnold Schröer, ‘Aus der Frühzeit der Englischen Philologie’ (1925), p. 34 quoted in Utz, p. 117.

⁸²⁹ Braswell-Means, p. 284.

were obviously a huge influence on the Romanticists but the early printed page also played its part. Laura Braswell expresses a commonly-held view when she says that ‘the antiquarian interest during this early Romantic period was not scholarly so much as a fascination for the historical context of the scriptorium, producing as it did such marvels of mellowed vellum and jewel-like illumination’.⁸³⁰ This view, however, does not hold strong against what we know of the activities of the early Roxburghe Club; if antiquarianism was universally bound up with the romanticised picture of the religious scribe creating beauty by candlelight in his austere cell, then why was the early club so uniformly dedicated to reproducing early *printed* books? Most people, especially book collectors, will respond to the aesthetic appeal of illuminated manuscripts and the members of the Roxburghe Club were no exception, but that did not appear to be the impetus behind the activities of their founding years. As previously shown during the discussion of sociability during this period, there is always the temptation to classify early nineteenth-century antiquarian activities as uniformly belonging to the emergence of Romanticism when a closer reading of these activities shows a complexity of intent and opinion that cannot be easily classified. Commentators such as Ina Ferris have pointed to the emphasis placed on ‘feeling’ rather than intellect in many writings by the collectors of the bibliomania. Ferris views this willingness to deal with the physical nature of books as:

Refusing to books the transparency that would make them simply vehicles for a valorized and immaterial text, bibliophilic writing intersects with higher profile genres of Romantic writing in taking aim at the powers of

⁸³⁰ Laurel Braswell, ‘The Influence of Romantic Antiquarianism upon Medieval English Studies’, *University of Ottawa Quarterly*, vol. 52 (1982), p. 274.

dispersal and abstraction enabled by the forms of mechanical reproduction linked to modern print culture.⁸³¹

But as noted previously, the volumes collected and produced by the Roxburghe were viewed simultaneously as extremely physical, artisan objects but also as intellectual property and cultural wealth. There is no perceived dichotomy, merely facets of the same artefact. Dibdin can fawn over a title page and argue for a more organised book science without any sense of disjunction or contradiction. Braswell also asserts that ‘In the Romantic imagination, the notion of a simple and natural life was rarely associated with the historical pre-Classical period but rather with the Middle Ages’.⁸³² Certainly, from this point of view the activities of the Roxburghe Club can be seen as falling generally within the realms of Romanticism, although their preoccupation with the artisan and technical aspect of the desired volume as well as its literary and aesthetic qualities may perhaps indicate that if their activities can be classified in this way, they operated more in a pre-William Morris/ Arts and Crafts area of the Romantic imagination than at the sublime, poetical end of the spectrum. The Roxburghe’s love of the early, artisan printer’s craft can be seen as an expression of this celebration of the creative process with all its idiosyncrasies and difficulties over that of the uniform perfection of mass production. The Roxburghe Club can be seen as contributing both aesthetical appreciation and financial support to the techniques of hand printing that has continued to have an influence into the present day. At this pivotal time for the printer’s craft, when mechanisation was gathering

⁸³¹ Ina Ferris, *Bibliographic Romance: Bibliophilia and the Book-Object*, Romantic Circles, February 2004 <<http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/libraries/ferris/ferris.html>> [accessed 26th November, 2014]

⁸³² Braswell, ‘Influence of Romantic Antiquarianism’, p. 277.

momentum and poised to take over, and the skills necessary for the reproduction of these early works were already starting to die out, the Club utilised the enthusiasm and wealth available to its members not only to employ artisan printers and engravers to recreate the necessary methods but also started their own private printing presses motivated by an underlying ethos that would recognisably continue to underpin small printing ventures as far in the future as the Private Press Movement and William Morris' Kelsmcott Press. Laura Braswell notes this connection, writing:

From some of the early [antiquarian] preoccupations there later developed, perhaps somewhat ironically, more abstract notions which were to prove of considerable consequence for intellectual history. These were to be expressed directly in the aesthetic principles of Ruskin and the sociological views of William Morris, possibly indirectly in the religious tenets of the Oxford Movement.⁸³³

If this connection was apparent among antiquarians in general, then it was even more valid in the case of the Roxburghe Club, who not only valued the early works but were already active in the typographical appreciation and practical reproduction of the printing process from that time. Moving away again from the idea of Romanticism and its expression in the antiquarian activities of the early part of the century, it can also be noted that this interest in the artisan, when seen as an expression of honesty, integrity and the real can be seen as a very Georgian preoccupation. This insistence on the genuine and dismissal of pretence and 'cant' can be imagined to easily lend itself in practical terms to an idealisation of the artisan in the face of the burgeoning industrial revolution.

⁸³³ Braswell, 'Influence of Romantic Antiquarianism', p. 285.

English Literature in Education

The study of English literature only began to develop as an academic subject during the nineteenth century. Although through the 18th century the Dissenting Academies had become, according to Palmer, the ‘cradle of English studies’ where they ‘encouraged the study of English authors for their stylistic and literary qualities’, this interest in the vernacular literature did not spread to the wider educational curriculum.⁸³⁴ Previous to the mid nineteenth century, education in public schools was primarily based around the study of Latin and Greek, with emphasis on translation exercises and a concentration on the forms of writing found in the classical works.⁸³⁵ For the lower strata of society, the study of English literature was considered to be a positive way to teach boys from the mercantile (and later on the working) classes. It was considered to be morally bracing to study the classics, but for boys who would need to work for a living and had little use for Latin or Greek it would be a waste to teach them the classics. Instead, it was postulated that the same moral lessons could be gained by studying English literature, using the same methods used to study the classics and thereby hopefully gaining a socially useful degree of discipline and culture.⁸³⁶ D. J. Palmer describes the ascent of English literary studies as occurring in the vacuum being left by the decrease in demand for the traditional classical education; the mercantile classes were became the dominant force in society and the more practical mindset of the times meaning that a knowledge of classical languages became an ornament rather than a necessity. Palmer writes:

As Latin lost the practical value it once had, and as its place in education, with that of Greek, became purely literary, so the study of English

⁸³⁴ D.J. Palmer, *The Rise of English Studies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 7.

⁸³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 5

⁸³⁶ Palmer, pp. 12-13.

literature advanced, sometimes alongside the older subjects, and generally in imitation of them. Nevertheless English studies did not lose their original association with the more practical, anti-classical attitude to education, particularly where elocution and written composition were taught.⁸³⁷

When English literature was eventually, theoretically at least, being taught as a distinct subject at the University of London and Kings College it was still liable to be treated with distrust and a degree of moral outrage, and Palmer writes that ‘it is painful to have to record that the first Professor of English began his career with a vehement attack on literature’.⁸³⁸ This attack was delivered in the inaugural speech of T.D. Dale on taking up his role with the University of London in 1828, and includes assurances to the parents of the students he will be tutoring that although such early writing contains ‘gems with which it is so copiously adorned’ that he will be on his guard against any of the ‘pollution’, ‘profaneness’ or ‘disgusting wantonness in which [works of early English literature] are too often incruited’.⁸³⁹

In contrast to these social currents of distrust and antipathy towards English literature, we again see in the Roxburghe Club a willingness to cross cultural and class boundaries with regard to literary taste, and can perhaps detect another provocation for the anger and disapproval voiced in the letters pages of contemporary journals. Not only were the Club willing to tolerate a range of

⁸³⁷ Ibid., p. 13.

⁸³⁸ Ibid., p. 21.

⁸³⁹ T.D.Dale, quoted in Palmer, p. 20 ‘Nor to those parents who are acquainted with the earlier productions of English literature will such a declaration appear superfluous or misplaced. *They* know that the gems with which it is so copiously adorned, sometimes require to be abstracted and exhibited with a careful hand, lest they should convey pollution with the foul mass of daring profaneness or disgusting wantonness in which they are too often incruited. [...] never will I suffer the eye of inexperienced youth to be dazzled by the brilliancy of genius when its broad lustre obscures the deformity of vice; never will I affect to stifle the expression of a just indignation, when wit, taste, and talent, have been designedly prostituted by their unworthy possessors to the excitement of unholy passions, the palliation of guilty indulgences, the ridicule of virtue, or the disparagement of religion.’

social classes among their membership, but they were collecting and promoting that early English literature that was generally perceived as only suited to the education and tastes of the middle or mercantile classes. Their literary taste was one that was only just starting to find a foothold, and the sight of wealthy men of taste, possessed of classical educations, actually preferring to collect and reprint works considered to be worthless or at best vulgar. It must have been jarring to those less assured in their taste, and more familiar with judging literary matters according to their adherence to an accepted definition of refined taste. The changes in education were more than merely stylistic, and carried profound significance for the national psyche and can be seen as underpinning much of the Victorian era's preoccupation with moral evolution and national destiny:

The close association between reading and writing, the rhetorical tradition of studying those writers who are 'models of style', gives way in the course of the nineteenth century to the teaching of literature as cultural history; while the attitude to *Belles Lettres* as a polite acquisition, a mark of social refinement, is transformed to a profounder conception of the moral power of great literature, a belief in its humanising influence, counteracting malignant forces in a rapidly changing society.⁸⁴⁰

English literature, viewed as an historical record as well as a moral blueprint, becomes not only a shared national heritage but also the story of Britain's creation myth and the signpost towards forging the expanding empire, both geographically and as a stereotype of national character:

We are now encountering that view of the moral power of 'culture' which is so characteristic of the nineteenth century, and which provided the motive force behind the emergence of English studies in the reformed educational schemes of the future.⁸⁴¹

Against this context of developing acceptance of English literature within the British educational system, it becomes easy to see the significance of the

⁸⁴⁰ Palmer, p. 13

⁸⁴¹ Ibid.

Roxburghe Club members who worked, and more often, headed, some of the most popular public schools of the period. As shown, men who recalled their schooldays under the tutelage of Roxburghe members often mentioned their exposure to English literature through the examples set by these men and the effect of their encouragement on their education and later careers.

Widening the Public Debate

Laurel Braswell notes an ‘historical parallel’ between the antiquarians of this period and the Humanists of the 14th century who revived classical works saying that ‘just as the Humanists first assembled their collections and then published them, so the Romantic antiquarians promoted the publication, eventually the critical study, of medieval texts’.⁸⁴²

There is no doubt that compared with the later and more earnest functions of the Club under Sir Frederic Madden and Thomas Wright, the activities of those early days seem frivolous and superficial. But it cannot be ignored that with Dibdin as a leading spirit the first Roxburghians did a great deal in the way of resuscitating and preserving the names and reputations of many forgotten early printers, in reviving an interest in forgotten books and authors and in building up libraries some of which were to become the bases of great national collections.⁸⁴³

This disparagement of the activities of the early members when viewed against the example set by the subsequently more organised, and less boisterous incarnation of the club resurfaces in many commentaries on their history. There is a sense in which the dining, drinking and carousing is seen to negate any claim to serious intention and a disapproving notion that nothing of value or significance can have resulted from such proceedings. It can, however, be argued

⁸⁴² Braswell-Means, ‘Influence of Romantic Antiquarianism’, p. 280. makes some very good points about antiquarianism although her article does include an error regarding the Roxburghe as she asserts that *Havelok* was the first text published by the Club.

⁸⁴³ E.J. O’Dwyer, *Thomas Frognall Dibdin: Bibliographer and Bibliomaniac Extraordinary*, (Great Britain: Private Libraries Association, 1967), p. 23.

that the activities of the founding years look frivolous to the modern viewpoint only if we fail to take into account the way that serious, intellectual pursuits were framed within a social context during the early nineteenth century. Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite, in their work *Romantic Sociability*, have argued for the necessity of viewing such activities as ‘a text in its own right, a form of cultural work’.⁸⁴⁴ The Roxburghe dinners do not, however, easily fit into the context of Romanticism, and while in many ways reflecting the changing culture of the time, can also be viewed as belonging to the receding Georgian world of fashionable sociability as described by Peter Clark in *British Clubs and Societies*.⁸⁴⁵ There was certainly no question of the Roxburghe Club being inclusive to women or of allowing them access to the activities of the club in the ways becoming increasingly popular in Romantic circles, and the Club stayed firmly in the public or semi-public arena of taverns rather than the private spaces of the drawing room or clubhouse. The Club did, however, provide an important platform for the exchange of ideas and act as an interface between men of widely differing social standing and profession. It is tempting to view the Roxburghe Club as the almost perfect example of the process that Russell and Tuite, utilising arguments from Simmer and Habermas, are describing when they write:

What distinguishes the bourgeois public sphere from an aristocratic culture, where talk is its own medium, is the way in which an urban culture begins to ‘shed its dependence on the authority of the aristocratic noble hosts and to acquire that autonomy that turns conversation into criticism and *bon mots* into arguments’.⁸⁴⁶

⁸⁴⁴ Gillian Russell and Clara Tuite, *Romantic Sociability*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002) p. 4.

⁸⁴⁵ Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies*, referenced in *Romantic Sociability* and countered ‘It is one of the aims of this volume to re-examine this model in order to account for a more diverse range of sites of sociability, in particular, sites which are more inclusive of female modes of sociability, and to account for forms of female participation in the public sphere more generally.’ Russell & Tuite, p.5

⁸⁴⁶ Simmer, ‘Sociability’, p.52, Habermas, *Structural Transformation* cited p.31 in Russell and Tuite, p.13.

We see the Roxburghe Club, very literally carrying its private ‘aristocratic’ dinner table conversation into the semi-public environment of the tavern, and from there, extending the debate into the public sphere of literary criticism through books, periodicals, auction houses, schools, universities and learned societies.

Overall, looking at the activities of the early Roxburghe Club it appears that while the founders are seen by many commentators as being generally peripheral to all these various areas of literary culture, scholarship, education, national identity, literary heritage and the printing world, their activities during this period of rapid change and cultural evolution have at the very least carried the possibility of influence far beyond the narrow world of book collecting. It is easy to discount the activities of pioneers as amateurish and dilettante in comparison to the later gains made on the foundation of earlier exploration, but like any foundation, if it is serving its purpose well it will be invisible beneath the tower of achievements that it supports. The early Roxburghe Club members built that foundation upon which rest not only the achievements of the later club but also so many far reaching cultural and literary accomplishments.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has concentrated on researching and analysing the significance of the first two decades of the Roxburghe Club and has established a clearer, more factual account of this period than has previously been available. The methods used have been a combination of bibliographical research with critical analysis and historical contextualisation which I believe has provided a plausible counter-narrative to that formerly available and the results indicate the need for a more complex view of the Club demographic and motivation than previously acknowledged. The club membership, although mythologised as aristocratic, contained considerably more middle-class professionals and representatives of the gentry than nobles. The members were not dilettante playboys but men of serious intent, committed to books, especially early texts. They were also politically active in their various spheres, and this is sometimes reflected in their choice of texts. Although, as might be expected, some were Tories, a larger percentage of the club were Whig, a couple were radical, and most were sympathetic to reform and Catholic Emancipation. The Club displayed a willingness to reprint works of pre-reformation Catholic provenance during a period when this could be considered provocative, and despite what has been seen as the wider anti-Catholic conservatism of antiquarianism at this time (see above, p. 193).

The Club's genesis and the onset of its early members' association together for the investigation and discussion of early printing and texts are two other topics where the powerful existing myth – that their enthusiasm for old books was fired by an extravagant auction-price followed by an absurdly gluttonous dinner –

proves to be misleading, and not just for the lack of seriousness it conveys.

Research has shown that the men who would become the Roxburghe Club were in most cases already well known to each other and the formation of the Club can be seen as the *result* of their literary interests and expertises rather than the fortuitous and frivolous genesis. Dibdin was the focus of the group and already his interest and scholarship in bibliography had provided a nucleus around which a group interested in the collecting of early printed books had formed.

Almost every member of the Club was an author in some sphere and most had already published a number of works, ranging from poetry to guide books to antiquarian commentaries to novels.

Another major area in which the Club members represent valuable early nineteenth-century developments in book history is that of knowledge of early printing and printers. (Their meetings may have involved dining together, but their toasts were, famously, in honour of the great early printers of Western Europe.) The members of the Club were united by their fascination with and knowledge of, typography and printing. Three of the members owned private printing presses prior to the mid-nineteenth-century growth in interest in small presses. The Club's pioneering interest in early printing and facsimile copies of early books provide a clear link between the work of the early printers and the late nineteenth century revival of artisan printing exemplified by the Arts and Crafts movement.

The thesis dispels the myth that it was a group that fits easily into the centre of the 'Bibliomania' craze: The majority of the Club were collectors who had

collected books before it became a phenomenon and a fashion at the turn of the nineteenth century and who continued to collect them seriously after the craze had ended; some of the Roxburghe, it is true, collected books commonly regarded as the focus of bibliomaniacs but in almost all cases they did so in addition to their primary collecting of early texts and other books with literary, rather than merely collectible, value.

The early history of the Roxburghe Club turns out to confirm also what has been emerging in recent research currents into intellectual life in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, which have stressed the ‘conversable’, social and interactive nature of much debate and exchange of knowledge about literature and other subjects. This leads us to view as more serious the contributions of sociable networks to both knowledge and to the changing and expanding in taste. Looking back from a perspective of modern university-housed English Studies, it has been easy for commentators during the last century or more to discount the potential of a sociable network of connoisseurs for genuine advances in the subject of literary history. A similar retrospective blinker can be discerned when bibliographical scholars schooled in the laws of allegedly scientific methods of editing early texts, formulated in the nineteenth century and derived originally from Lachmann, dismissed early Roxburghe editions. It becomes possible in the modern age to respect the (varied) approaches taken by Roxburghe editions as productions of an era when principle and procedures for editing were in their infancy and subject to a variety of methods and experiments. The Club’s publications include some formidable scholarship, notably in some of the introductions and notes provided to editions. The waning, since the 1990s, of the

hegemony of traditional belief in ‘laws’ of editing (for example, in a renewed respect for best-text or single-text editions) makes the efforts of these early nineteenth-century editors, who often knew of only one surviving exemplar of a text, appear far more worthy of attention. It also becomes clear that some Roxburghe reprints of then virtually unknown and certainly uncanonical writers (examples include Gower and Skelton) should be taken seriously as small steps in the long march of widening out the canon of English literature from the received notion of the great peaks of Chaucer, Shakespeare and Milton, for the period covered by the Roxburghe’s interests.

The Club’s series of publications also had its own relationships with ideological and aesthetic currents of the period. While the Roxburghe Club was obviously formed against the background of Romanticism, their activities were not framed in the context of the chivalric medieval idealism found often in writings, visual arts and social attitudes in the Romantic Movement, but instead they approached early English literature in an avowedly practical and methodical manner.

Although, when the Club’s publishing has been lauded at all it has been usually for their medieval editions, most of the texts presented to the Club in the early years were Elizabethan, and usually poetry; that is the literary area in which the early Club excelled. The Club, as the study of its editions, I would argue, suggests, was not simply offering random quaintly antique items of purely rarity value, but rather displays a focused attention to early literature, which included tracing themes and authors, not yet commonly valued, which lay between the peaks of popularly recognised genius. Moreover, most of them had been doing so, and gaining recognition for doing so, among fellow antiquarians, long before

the Roxburghe sale. The Club at this time was interested in a number of themes, which included mystery and morality plays; allegorical works; sources that formed context for the works of Shakespeare; and works that had been previously censored. Romanticism was interested in the activities and texts of the Club far more than the Club was interested in Romanticism.

The myth which this research has combatted arose largely from a satire and a further endeavour of the thesis has been to try to bring clarification and investigation to bear on the history of misunderstandings and incorrect information about the early years of the Roxburghe which is largely the result of the *Athenaeum* article and its subsequent adoption as a source of information about the members and activities of the Club

The thesis has shown the members of the Club as themselves active in the flourishing satire of the bibliomania, producing many of the satirical works in circulation that helped to define and promulgate the bibliomania as a cultural force. This insider focus of the satire provided a widely read method by which, I would argue, the specialist knowledge of the collection of early books was passed into the general conversation of non book-collectors, providing a common understanding of the value of such texts and a language in which to discuss the codex as an artefact.

This research has necessarily been concerned with establishing basic biographical and literary facts regarding this period of the Club's history. These facts have, however, proved an extremely large, varied and challenging body of

material, hidden, often, in a multiplicity of types of record and archive, many still accessible only at a single repository. The researches have often involved investigated traces of the Roxburghe, its members and the Club's later reputation within documents or published accounts which themselves are concerned with completely unrelated topics. And the stories they have told have proved exceedingly complex, besides running counter to received (and simple) narratives about this subject. There are a number of obvious areas that would prove fertile for further research: in particular it would be valuable to examine more closely the relationships between the Club's choice of publications (viewed in the new lights that this research sheds upon them) and literary currents of the period, including Romanticism, the Gothic and more general medievalism. Though I have examined some aspects of, and implications of, the Club's publications in the literary areas of Tudor poetry and early drama, these areas, including the rediscovery of literature from between 1450 and 1550, are among several which could bear fruitful further examination. The research presented here about the literary work undertaken by both Dibdin and Haslewood also points towards a potential for further investigations to show how their activities fed back into the Club's literary and scholarly accomplishments. It is clearly important that this research and its rehabilitation of the Club's activities during its earlier period can be now added to the history of this institution.

The study of the history of the book has gained new momentum in the last twenty years. Gone, for many scholars, now is the traditional narrow focus exclusively on recording practical facts about volumes (printing types, binding, etc.). Book history has become a study of books, their origins, ownership and afterlives, as socio-cultural, political and economic, aesthetic and literary

phenomena, with much to tell us – about authorship, books production, readership and the history of taste

The early period of the Roxburghe has hitherto suffered from a lack of a kind of investigation that widens out from that species of narrowly bibliographical description of volumes to an investigation (using a mixed methodology) that takes in historical and socio-historical contexts, literary critical perspectives, and the possible results and effects of the Club's work. The intention of this thesis has been to try to open up a combinatorial investigation with multiple points of focus into the significance of the Roxburghe Club in its first 22 years.

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