



Hugh, Third Duke of Northumberland, K.G.

HISTORY

OF

THE NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

OF

NORTHUMBERLAND, DURHAM

AND

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

1829—1929

By

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ANDREW REID & COMPANY, LIMITED,
STRAWBERRY HOUSE, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE.

“Study the book of nature that God hath spread out before thee; so thou wilt store up knowledge within thy brain and peace within thy heart.”—EURIPIDES.

FOREWORD

The Natural History Society of Northumberland, Durham and of Newcastle-upon-Tyne has achieved a Centenary. It is a fitting moment to publish a record of its origin and its life. This has been written by Mr. T. Russell Goddard. I think that the members of the Society must be satisfied and pleased with the way in which the work has been done, and that everyone who reads it will be well repaid by the interest and information imparted therein.

The collection of information, and the making of observations in Natural History is one of the most sure recreations and most refreshing pleasures that mankind can possess. Those who have the temperament and natural inclination to enjoy such things are fortunate. For such persons the Natural History Society has for a hundred years provided a focus and a gathering ground for the exchange of ideas, and has by its publications distributed interest and knowledge.

The Hancock Museum as a building is evidence of the generosity and public spirit of some of Newcastle's most distinguished citizens; its contents, as far as Natural History, especially that of British Birds is concerned, equal, if they

FOREWORD

do not exceed in importance and interest those of any other provincial Museum; and by its title it perpetuates a name of great and distinguished reputation in the annals of Natural History in the last century.

I would respectfully commend this volume to those who are interested in the subject of it, and to all who care for things of good repute that are specially associated with Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

Gay & Palladin.

PREFACE

The Natural History Society of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle-upon-Tyne attains its Centenary on August 19th, 1929. In order to commemorate this happy event the Council decided to publish a history of the Society and the Museum. The task of compiling it has been entrusted to me and I am anxious to express my appreciation of the honour which has been thus conferred upon me.

Owing to financial and other circumstances the size of the book is limited; consequently little more than outstanding landmarks in the Society's history have been dealt with and anecdote and personal comment have been reduced to a minimum. I believe the book is none the worse for that.

The materials from which the history has been compiled are:—the minute books and annual reports of the Society from 1829 to 1929, the Transactions, the correspondence files, account books and receipts dating back to the formation of the Society, and many other documents preserved in the archives. I am much indebted to George Townshend Fox's "Synopsis of the Newcastle Museum" for information concerning Marmaduke Tunstall, George Allan, and

PREFACE

the early history of the museum. I have to thank the Honorary Secretaries of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and Mr. Austin Hinton, the Librarian, for allowing me to examine the annual reports of that Society.

In some instances I have found two or more printed statements relating to the same event which were at variance. In such cases I have been careful to refer to the original letters, minutes, or other manuscripts in order to verify the facts. I believe, therefore, that error has been reduced to a minimum. Altogether I have examined thousands of manuscripts and other documents and consulted many published volumes. It has been a great task but one which I have enjoyed.

Quotations throughout the book are strictly literal, that is to say the original punctuation, capital letters, spelling and abbreviations have been retained.

I have to thank His Grace the Duke of Northumberland, Lady John Joicey-Cecil, The Right Honourable Sir Charles Trevelyan, Bart., M.P., Sir Geoffrey Church, Bart., Canon Henry Ellershaw, Master of University College, Durham, Dr. Arthur W. Hill, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, and the Council of the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers, for permission to reproduce portraits. I have obtained much valuable help in preparing the

PREFACE

biographical sketches from the Dictionary of National Biography, from memoirs and obituary notices by various authors which have been published in the Society's Transactions, and Mr. Charles J. Richardson has kindly supplied me with notes concerning William Hutton.

For obvious reasons I have said very little about the work of present members of the Society, and have introduced no portraits of living persons, other than those of the Patron and President. Nevertheless the Society still includes many eminent men of science and generous benefactors, whose activities are well known and appreciated.

Mr. C. E. Robson, the senior Honorary Secretary of the Society, has been most helpful and encouraging throughout the whole period during which the book has been in preparation, and I offer him my grateful thanks.

I wish also to take this opportunity to express my indebtedness to Miss Gladys M. Scott for her help in the compilation of the lists of New Species and Reference Collections, and for her valuable assistance in the arduous task of correcting proofs and seeing the volume through the press.

T. RUSSELL GODDARD.

The Hancock Museum,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne.
July 12th, 1929.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
SURVEY OF THE WORK OF THE SOCIETY 1829-1929 ..	I
EARLY HISTORY OF THE MUSEUM COLLECTIONS	12
HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY AND THE MUSEUM 1829-1839..	27
HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY AND THE MUSEUM 1840-1879..	50
HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY AND THE MUSEUM 1880-1889..	77
HISTORY OF THE SOCIETY AND THE MUSEUM 1890-1929..	94
MUSEUM COLLECTIONS AT THE PRESENT TIME, 1929 ..	132
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES :—	
HUGH, THIRD DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND, K.G.	
1785-1847	139
WILLIAM VAN MILDERT, BISHOP OF DURHAM,	
1765-1836	140
MARMADUKE TUNSTALL, 1743-1790	
1743-1790	142
GEORGE ALLAN, 1736-1800	
1736-1800	146
NATHANIEL J. WINCH, 1768-1838	
1768-1838	149
GEORGE TOWNSHEND FOX, 1782-1848	
1782-1848	151
JOHN ADAMSON, 1787-1855	
1787-1855	152
PRIDEAUX JOHN SELBY, 1788-1867	
1788-1867	154
JOSHUA ALDER, 1792-1867	
1792-1867	157
WILLIAM HUTTON, 1797-1860	
1797-1860	160
SIR WALTER C. TREVELYAN, BART., 1797-1879 ..	
1797-1879	161
WILLIAM CHAPMAN HEWITSON, 1806-1878 ..	
1806-1878	163
ALBANY HANCOCK, 1808-1873	
1808-1873	167
JOHN HANCOCK, 1814-1890	
1814-1890	171
EPILOGUE	177

APPENDIX

LIST OF OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY 1829	180
LIST OF OFFICERS OF THE SOCIETY 1929	181
LIST OF SPECIAL AND REFERENCE COLLECTIONS IN THE MUSEUM	183
TRANSACTIONS OF THE SOCIETY	185
LIST OF NEW GENERA AND SPECIES DESCRIBED IN THE TRANSACTIONS	188

ILLUSTRATIONS

- HUGH, THIRD DUKE OF NORTHUMBERLAND, K.G.,
 FIRST PATRON *Frontispiece*
 from a full length oil painting by Thomas Phillips,
 R.A., in Alnwick Castle ; size of canvas 8 ft. 6 ins. by
 4 ft. 6 ins. *to face page*
- MARMADUKE TUNSTALL 12
 from an engraving made by Mark Lambert from a
 poker-drawing formerly at Wycliffe.
- WILLIAM VAN MILDERT, BISHOP OF DURHAM, FIRST
 PRESIDENT 27
 from a three-quarter length oil painting by Sir Thomas
 Lawrence, R.A., in Durham Castle ; size of canvas,
 6 ft. by 4 ft. To obviate further reduction of the
 features the whole of the canvas is not reproduced
 in the plate.
- THE BARON ARMSTRONG, C.B., F.R.S. 77
 from an oil painting by W. B. Richmond, R.A., in
 the possession of The Right Hon. Lord Armstrong.
- COLONEL JOHN JOICEY, M.P. 85
 from a three-quarter length oil painting by Sir Daniel
 Macnee, P.R.S.A., in the possession of Lady John
 Joicey-Cecil ; size of canvas 3 ft. 4½ ins. by 2 ft. 6½ ins.
- THE HANCOCK MUSEUM.. .. . 94
 from a photograph.
- THE BARON ARMSTRONG, M.A., D.C.L., PATRON 1929 110
 from a three-quarter length oil painting by George
 Harcourt, R.A., in the possession of the Right Hon.
 Lord Armstrong ; size of canvas, 4 ft. by 3 ft. 4 ins.
- THE VISCOUNT GREY OF FALLODON, K.G., PRESIDENT,
 1929.. .. . 123
 from a photographic portrait by Elliott and Fry., Ltd.,
 London, W.1.

ILLUSTRATIONS

	<i>to face page</i>
NATHANIEL J. WINCH	149
from a miniature in oils on marble by an unknown artist in the museum at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew; size of original, 5½ ins. by 4½ ins.	
WILLIAM HUTTON	149
from a water-colour portrait by an unknown artist, in the possession of the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers; size of original, 5½ ins. by 5½ ins.	
PRIDEAUX J. SELBY	154
from an oil painting by Edward Hastings, in the possession of Sir Geoffrey Church, Bart.	
JOSHUA ALDER	154
from an engraving made from a photograph by Maull and Polyblank.	
SIR WALTER C. TREVELYAN, BART.	161
from a photograph by Maull & Co., London, in the possession of The Right Hon. Sir Charles Trevelyan, Bart., M.P.	
WILLIAM C. HEWITSON	161
from an old photograph.	
ALBANY HANCOCK	167
from a photograph by R. B. Bowman.	
JOHN HANCOCK	167
from a photograph by Joseph W. Swan taken about 1874.	

SURVEY OF THE WORK OF THE SOCIETY 1829—1929

THE record of the Natural History Society of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle-upon-Tyne during the past hundred years is a proud one. The Society was founded by men who achieved permanent distinction by reason of their enthusiasm for scientific research, and many of its subsequent members have gained international reputations.

During the past hundred years the Society has issued many volumes of Transactions which contain valuable contributions to knowledge.¹ The first volume appeared in 1831 and since then descriptions of one order, one family, forty-nine genera and two hundred and eighteen species new to science have been published.² The fauna and flora of the two counties and of the adjoining waters of the North Sea have also been comprehensively dealt with, and catalogues of the local mammals, birds, mollusca, coleoptera, lepidoptera, hemiptera, diptera, spiders, mites, crustacea and other groups of invertebrates have been carefully compiled by competent and distinguished members of the Society.

¹ A list of the Transactions appears on page 185

² A complete list of these is printed at page 188

The "Preliminary List of Durham Diptera with Analytical Tables" by the Revd. W. J. Wingate, which was published as a separate volume of the Transactions in 1906, was the first analytical work upon this important group of insects to be published in the English language. Authoritative reports upon dredging operations in the North Sea which were commenced by the Society nearly seventy years ago have appeared from time to time, and have added much to our knowledge of marine life.

Two valuable contributions to local botany have been published by the Society; the first, a paper entitled "Remarks on the Distribution of the Indigenous Plants of Northumberland and Durham, as connected with the Geological Structure of those Counties" by Nathaniel J. Winch, appeared in the first part of the Transactions published in 1830; the second, "A New Flora of Northumberland and Durham with Sketches of its Climate and Physical Geography, with a Map" by J. G. Baker, F.L.S. and G. R. Tate, M.D. was published in 1868. Many papers of outstanding merit upon local palæontology and physical geology have also been published by the Society. Probably no other provincial natural history society has published such a comprehensive series of authoritative contributions to local fauna and flora than has the Natural History Society of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

In addition to the scientific literature which has appeared in the Transactions, other valuable works by distinguished members of the Society have been published elsewhere. Foremost amongst these may be mentioned Lindley and Hutton's "Fossil Flora,"¹ a work which is one of the foundations of the science of fossil botany. William Hutton, who was largely responsible for the formation of the Society in 1829, was one of its first Honorary Secretaries, and John Lindley, F.R.S., was made an Honorary Member in 1831.

Another original member of the Society and one of its first Vice-Presidents, Prideaux John Selby, made a valuable contribution to ornithological literature with his "Illustrations of British Ornithology" consisting of two octavo volumes of text and two folio volumes containing over two hundred plates published between 1821 and 1834. Between the years 1845 and 1855 "A Monograph of the British Nudibranchiate Mollusca" by Joshua Alder and Albany Hancock² was published by the Ray Society. Another valuable work by the same authors, also published by the Ray Society, is "The British Tunicata, an Unfinished Monograph" edited and prepared for publication by John Hopkinson, F.L.S., F.G.S., Secretary of the Ray Society. This work consists

¹ Published by subscription in London 1831-33. Many of the original members of the Natural History Society of Northumberland, Durham and Newcastle-upon-Tyne were subscribers.

² Seven folio parts of this work were published up to 1855. Part 8 completing the work was published after the authors' deaths under the editorship of Sir Charles Elliot in 1910.

of three volumes. Two thirds of the text was complete at the time of Albany Hancock's death in 1873, but owing to a number of difficulties publication was delayed until 1904 when the first volume was issued; the third and final volume appeared in 1911. With the exception of two text figures which were re-drawn, all the illustrations are photographic reproductions of the original drawings of Alder and Hancock. The drawings of the nudibranchs are amongst the most valued possessions of the Society, and they are framed and exhibited in the gallery of the Zoological Room. The clarity and exquisite finish of the intricate anatomical details are remarkable, and these drawings have never been surpassed by any others of the same kind. Furthermore, it is extremely unlikely, now that speed is such an important factor in human affairs, that any drawings intended for illustration will ever again reach the same high standard.

George Johnston, M.D., one of the original members of the Society, wrote "A History of the British Zoophytes," "A History of British Sponges and Lithophytes" and "A Catalogue of the British Non-parasitical Worms" which were published by the Trustees of the British Museum between the years 1838 and 1865. George Johnston in addition to founding the Berwickshire Naturalists' Club in 1831, was responsible for the institution of the Ray Society in 1844. The Ray Society has published some of the most valuable

contributions to biological literature in the English language. Another eminent member of the Society, George Stewardson Brady, M.D., F.R.S., wrote "A Monograph of the Free and Semi-parasitic Copepoda of the British Islands," which was published in three volumes by the Ray Society in 1878. "A Monograph of the Recent British Ostracoda" published in the Transactions of the Linnean Society in 1868; Reports of the Challenger Expedition 1. on the Ostracoda, 1880, 2, on the Copepoda 1884; "Ostracoda of the National Antarctic Expedition" published by the Trustees of the British Museum in 1907; and a paper "On the Copepoda of the Transit of Venus Expedition" in the Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London are only a few of the more important of George Stewardson Brady's contributions to science.¹

Valuable contributions to entomological and ornithological literature were made by William Chapman Hewitson, another original member of the Society. His "British Oology, being illustrations of the Eggs of British Birds" in two volumes ran to three editions.² [Another of his works "Illustrations of Exotic Butterflies" was published in five quarto volumes. Furthermore, many papers containing descriptions of species

¹ Prof. A. Meek in his Obituary of G. S. Brady, Natural History Society Transactions, vol. vi., p. 8, gives a list of one hundred and nineteen published works.

² First edition, 1831-38. Second edition, 1843-44. Third edition, 1856. In the second edition the title of the work was changed to "Coloured Illustrations of the Eggs of British Birds."