A STUDY OF LENDING LIBRARIES IN

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY BRITAIN

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ABSTRACT

This research questions a number of untested assumptions concerning eighteenth-century lending libraries in Britain, particularly that the membership of circulating libraries was dominated by women and that the stock primarily consisted of novels. Current scholarship is reviewed and assessed in relation to a close reading of eighteenth-century catalogues from across the UK.

The aim of this research is to extend the understanding of how eighteenth-century libraries actually operated. The conclusions reached are based on the published rules and regulations of libraries, contents of stock and evidence of actual borrower behaviour, rather than contemporary commentary which may have been fuelled by wider social anxieties of the time.

Findings confirmed that circulating libraries and subscription libraries were viewed differently, with more anxiety surrounding commercial ventures and their stock. However, actual differences were exaggerated by an anxious segment of the eighteenth-century community and perpetuated in much modern scholarship.

It was discovered that financial, social, geographical and gender barriers all impaired use of libraries for certain groups, at certain times, for certain libraries. No universal picture emerged for the UK as a whole.

Questions surrounding access to the physical eighteenth-century library were explored and the importance of the catalogue in borrower's book selection established. A detailed exploration of three Glasgow libraries provided further evidence of these conclusions. The unexpected issue of works being falsely attributed to authors in eighteenth-century catalogues also came to light through this research.

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1. INTRODUCTION

A number of misconceptions and untested assumptions have been made by those researching and studying eighteenth-century lending libraries in Britain. In particular, the notion that women dominated the membership of circulating libraries, and that the stock primarily consisted of novels, seems to have been unquestioningly accepted.[1] The aim of this project is to question these assumptions and extend the understanding of how eighteenth-century libraries actually operated. The question of whether libraries impacted upon the availability of information will be addressed throughout. A range of secondary criticism will be reviewed and a number of eighteenth-century library catalogues closely examined. The conclusions reached are based on the published rules and regulations for libraries, contents of stock, and the facts gleaned about actual borrower behaviour, rather than contemporary commentary which may have been fuelled by wider social anxieties of the time. The key questions to be investigated are: what kinds of libraries existed in the eighteenth century; what were the restrictions on their use; what were contemporary attitudes towards these institutions; what effect did these attitudes have on the material available for lending; and what strategies did eighteenth-century borrowers employ to select their material.

Scholarly research on the topic of eighteenth-century libraries in Britain is extensive. Libraries as social and political venues have been considered by those researching the history of commercialism and the rise of the middling sort in the eighteenth century. Data on library stock and membership has been mined for information relating to the reading habits of the nation and the rise of the novel (particularly the middle-class woman's reading of the novel). Libraries also feature centrally in book history and studies on print and publication for the time period; in addition the history of libraries stands as an independent subject in its own right.[2] Much of this research indicates that there was great contemporary concern about the role of lending libraries in society, especially in relation to the

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[1] Some of these assumptions were challenged as early as the 1960s by Paul Kaufman, who analysed the account books of a circulating library in Bath to demonstrate that women did not dominate membership of the library. Serious doubt was also cast on assumptions that circulating libraries primarily stocked cheap fiction ('In Defence of Fair Readers', 1969). Yet, these misconceptions continue to be accepted by many. For example, Lee Erickson's interesting analysis of circulating libraries in Jane Austen's novels assumes that the stock was dominated by novels, and that the main readership was women ('The Economy of Novel Reading', 1990). See also Eric Glasgow's paper which epitomises these problems ('Circulating Libraries', 2002).

[2] See, for example, James Raven, Helen Small and Naomi Tadmor (eds) (1996) *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England;* James Raven (2007) *Business of Books;* Giles Mandelbrote and K.A. Manley (eds) (2006) *The Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland;* Ina Ferris and Paul Keen (eds) (2009) *Bookish Histories: Books, Literature, and Commercial Modernity, 1700-1900;* Paul Kaufman (1969) *Libraries and their Users;* K.A. Manley (2012) *Books, Borrowers, and Shareholders: Scottish Circulating and Subscription Libraries before 1825.*

quality of material being borrowed from commercial circulating libraries.[3] Some of the evidence for this is mined from works of fiction.[4] However, criticism of libraries placed in the mouth of a fictional character, cannot necessarily be taken as representative of the view of the author. Neither can we assume that concerns expressed in the media are representative of the general view of libraries in the eighteenth century. Diaries and memoirs of the time show that for many the use of circulating libraries was a normal and enjoyable experience, causing little or no anxiety.[5]

2. METHODOLOGY

A strength of this project is its multi-pronged approach, incorporating existing scholarship and extensive primary research. A range of primary material relating to lending libraries has been analysed. Both digitised historical resources and information from paper archives have been utilised. The database *Historical Texts* which includes the *Eighteenth Century Collection Online* was particularly useful. A search revealed a number of library catalogues for the period, often including rules and regulations for individual institutions. The extensive rules and regulations which library members had to adhere to can reveal much about social expectations. As Schurer demonstrates, the information contained in these catalogues can reveal much about the business model and intended readership of a library (2007, pp.336-346). This primary material will be analysed to ask what kind of clientele libraries were trying to attract, and who would have been able to access them.

Library Catalogues, Rules and Regulations Accessed			
Year	Library	Digital	Access Point
c.1759-1802	John Smith's Glasgow Circulating Library	X	Glasgow University Special Collection
c.1761	Lownds Circulating Library, London	✓	Historical Texts
c.1786	Edinburgh Circulating Library	✓	Historical Texts
c.1789	Palmer and Merrick's Circulating Library, Oxford.	✓	Historical Texts
c.1790	Meyler's Circulating Library, Bath	✓	Historical Texts
c.1790	Kelso Library	✓	Historical Texts
c.1791	Fisher's Circulating Library, Newcastle	✓	Historical Texts

[3] See, for example, J Pearson (*Women's Reading in Britain 1750-1835,* 1999, p.163).

[4] The description of circulating libraries as the 'evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge' in Richard Sheridan's play *The Rivals* (1775) is frequently quoted as evidence of contemporary contempt for these institutions. For other examples see Raven ('Libraries for Sociability', 2006, p.262).

[5] Jane Austen, for example, shows no concern or anxiety about using circulating libraries or reading novels. When assured that Mrs Martin's circulating library was to consist of all types of literature and not just novels, she writes to her sister that Mrs Martin 'might have spared this pretension to *our* family, who are great Novel-readers & not ashamed of being so' (*Jane Austen's Letters*, p.26).

Library Catalogues, Rules and Regulations Accessed			
Year	Library	Digital	Access Point
c.1793	Leightonian Library, Dunblane	✓	Historical Texts
1793	Lewes Library Society	✓	Historical Texts
1794	Amicable Society, Lancaster	✓	Historical Texts
c.1795	Minerva (Lane's) General Library, London	✓	Historical Texts
1796	Norwich Public Library	✓	Historical Texts
1796	Macclesfield Subscription Library	✓	Historical Texts
1797	London and Westminster Circulating Library	✓	Historical Texts
1798	Dalkeith Subscription	✓	Historical Texts
1805	Stirling's Library	X	Glasgow University Special Collection
1810	Glasgow Public Library	X	Glasgow University Special Collection
1820	Fort William	X	Glasgow University Special Collection

K A Manley's book on lending libraries in Scotland usefully provided references to where catalogues existed for early lending libraries (2012, pp.198-200). Catalogues for three Glasgow libraries can be accessed through the University of Glasgow's Special Collection and Research Annexe. Two of these were subscription libraries: Stirling's Library, established as a result of Walter Stirling's bequest in 1791 and the Glasgow Public Library established in 1804, both requiring users to pay an entry fee. The third set of catalogues is for John Smith's Circulating Library, established in 1753. Catalogues for this commercial venture stretch to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Consequently, the catalogues for two subscription and one circulating library, covering a similar geographical area and time period, may be compared. This should contribute to the understanding of whether for-profit commercial ventures differed greatly from subscription libraries in terms of stock held and membership aims and objectives.

Opportunities to investigate the reading habits of individuals can be identified through the *Reading Experience Database* which records a range of information about reading experiences between 1450 and 1945[6]. For the purposes of the project this database was particularly useful in enabling a reading list to be compiled which was used to measure the availability of information resources across the three Glasgow libraries. Two figures from eighteenth-century Scotland, who both had access to a range of literature, and whose reading habits could be tracked, were identified. Authors and texts which they had left evidence of reading were then compiled into lists which were

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[6] The Reading Experience Database (UK RED) is available at http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/reading/UK

compared to the stock of the three Glasgow libraries (appendices 1 and 2). The results provide insight into what information resources library users had access to, and to the continuities and differences between these three libraries.

Analysing primary data has certain risks. Catalogues, for example, may not label texts in exactly the same way. It is often impossible to categorically establish which text catalogues are referring to, while distinguishing between editions is more difficult still. Analysing stock content of the three Glasgow libraries also proved difficult because books were filed alphabetically in the catalogue, by author or title keyword, with no distinction between genres. The Glasgow Circulating Library changed the format of its catalogue c.1781, to use subject headings and this enabled analysis of the types of stock held over three catalogues between 1781 and 1796. The full stock listed in the Glasgow Public Library and Stirling's Library catalogues were too extensive to analyse and assign to genres within the time available but an 1805 *Abstract of Glasgow Public Library's Rules and Regulations*, kindly provided by the staff at the Mitchell Library Special Collection, lists the first 136 items purchased by the institution. This was a small enough number to analyse titles and gives some insight to collection development policies. A further difficulty emerged with the catalogues for the Glasgow Circulating Library. These consisted of a number of items bound together which were published over a forty year period. Unfortunately, there were no printed dates and each individual catalogue had to be assigned a speculative date based on the publication year of items in the catalogue.

Greater difficulties abound when analysing membership. For many eighteenth-century libraries no data has survived. For this project, research in the Glasgow Archives at the Mitchell revealed a subscription book for Glasgow Public Library which lists subscriber names and occupations. This has been analysed to provide insight into the social groups using the library. Unfortunately, no equivalent material has been found for the Glasgow Circulating Library or Stirling's Library. Assessment of whether these libraries catered to different clienteles, therefore, must be made on the basis of library rules, publicity and stock.

3. REVIEW OF UK LIBRARIES

3.1 Misconceptions and Assumptions

An article by Eric Glasgow on circulating libraries epitomises the misconceptions and untested assumptions which have been made by those researching and studying eighteenth-century lending libraries. Glasgow confidently states that these institutions were, for the most part, located in middle-class places and catered to frivolous young women. The stock, dismissed as consisting of light fiction and romantic novels, is found sadly inferior to the 'literary earnestness' of public libraries after 1850 (Glasgow, 2002, p.420). Unfortunately, little is presented in the way of evidence to support these suppositions about eighteenth-century libraries.

Crucially, Glasgow fails to acknowledge the rapid commercial development and increased social mobility of eighteenth-century Britain. Across a new range of publicly available leisure locations, including theatres, museums and lectures, anyone who could afford to pay could gain access. Consequently, the lower classes could brush shoulders with nobility and the resulting social anxiety extended to circulating libraries of the time. The fear which could be aroused by the close proximity and intermingling of the classes had little to do with the literary merit of a circulating library's stock. Furthermore, access to reading material for those further down the social scale attracted both approval and disapproval.[7] Answering questions about who used eighteenth-century libraries, the quality and range of the stock, and the possible impact on the reader requires the researcher to negotiate between complicated and sometimes contradictory information.

In 1820s Britain, influential libraries became available to the working classes through mechanic institutes. This paper is concerned with the provision of lending libraries in Britain before this period. According to Glasgow, before the appearance of mechanic institutes, the only choices were privately owned collections or commercial circulating libraries (2002, p.421). In fact a range of different types of library existed.

3.2 Defining Eighteenth-Century Libraries

Thomas Kelly's influential history of libraries offers a number of useful categories for distinguishing between the different types of library which existed in the eighteenth century (1966, pp.241-243). These include 'public libraries', 'institutional libraries', 'endowed libraries' and 'subscription

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[7] For example, the promotion of parish libraries in the eighteenth century by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge. See Best ('Libraries in the Parish', 2006, pp.343-4).

libraries'. Before 1850, 'public libraries', defined as freely accessible and without charge, were rare. Where they did exist usage was often restricted to reference only, with no borrowing of material. It should be noted, however, that libraries not conforming to this definition may refer to themselves as public. The Glasgow Public Library, which will be closely investigated for this project, was a subscription library requiring significant payment to gain entry. 'Institutional libraries' exist as an integral part of an institution, such as a church or university. The stock is likely to be specialised and access restricted to a select few. This research is investigating libraries which made material available for loan to a general eighteenth-century readership and, consequently, both 'public libraries' and 'institutional libraries' lie outside the scope of the current project.

'Endowed libraries' are libraries which have been created, and sometimes maintained, by the gift of an individual. As Kelly acknowledges, assigning libraries to just one of these categories is often difficult. When Walter Stirling left a bequest in 1791 for a library to be created for the people of Glasgow, he may have intended this to be a free public library. Unfortunately, the sum left proved insufficient and usage was restricted to those who could pay an entry fee. Few 'endowed libraries' were successfully maintained over the long term. Under the category of 'subscription libraries', Kelly includes 'private subscription libraries', 'book clubs' and 'circulating libraries'. The aim of 'private subscription libraries' was to create a permanent collection and could include individuals being asked to purchase a 'share' on entry, in addition to the annual subscription. 'Book clubs' had a strong social element, where books were disposed of once read. As there was no permanent collection, book clubs are deemed outside the remit of this work. 'Circulating libraries' were commercial ventures conducted for profit. According to Raven by 1800 there were ten times more commercial libraries than subscription libraries (1998, p.277). Despite the widespread presence of circulating libraries, St Clair takes a pessimistic view of their impact. He argues that 'membership never expanded beyond the aristocratic, professional, and business classes. Although they maintained a nationwide network they never reached more than one percent of the population' (St Clair, 2004, p.241). Undoubtedly, there were financial barriers to membership but St Clair's claim is contradicted by accounts of peasants taking Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* back to their hovels to read (Raven, 1996, p.180). Similarly, Jan Fergus's study of provincial servants' reading suggests that St Clair's conclusion requires further investigation (1996, pp.202-225).

'Subscription libraries' and 'Circulating libraries' will be the main focus of this research. It should be borne in mind that these labels have been adopted to enable the researcher to distinguish between

different libraries. Throughout the time period in question commercial circulating libraries were often called subscription libraries (as borrowers were required to pay a subscription) and subscription libraries were often referred to as circulating libraries.

In addition to the types of library set out by Kelly it must be noted that a variety of other arrangements existed for accessing books and other reading material in the eighteenth century. Lending was often informal, between friends or as a result of the wealthier making a private collection available to a wider community. The desire of people to access and exchange books can be seen in the range of unorthodox arrangements which existed. Around 1800 in Peebles, there was a bookshop and circulating library in a shed where the farmer kept his cows. The main stock may have been bibles, catechisms and chapbooks but there were also a number of the classics of English literature, including *Gulliver's Travels, Peregrine Pickle,* and works by Pope and Goldsmith (St Clair, 2004, p.242). Jonathan Rose notes that in the early nineteenth century, shepherds in the Cheviot Hills 'maintained a kind of circulating library, leaving books they had read in designated crannies in boundary walls' for the next shepherd passing to borrow (2001, p.60). Manley has pointed to the presence of libraries on boats. Passengers on a Packet-boat on the Forth and Clyde Canal in 1815 had access to a library carrying, among other things, Burns's works. In 1820 a steamer service to Fort Augustus advertised books and music, while in 1827 a passenger cruising around the Western Isles commented on the *S. S. United Kingdom*'s library (Manley, 2012, p.11). Many Inns of the time also had collections of material and although, as Manley notes, unlikely to be academic book collections, they could reveal unexpected riches (2012, p.14). Markman Ellis brings our attention to the libraries available within coffee-houses and provisionally suggests that at least thirty different coffee houses in London and the English university cities had book collections of some sort (2009, p.13). He notes that in addition to newspapers and periodicals there was poetry, satire in verse and prose, political pamphlets, and tracts on commerce and philosophy (2009, p.6). These items had to be read on the premises, but with an annual subscription of only a shilling, this may have been within the grasp of a greater number of individuals. Ellis cautions that the 395 items he has identified with coffee house endorsements is an undetermined fraction of the original collections and may not be representative. Nevertheless, of the recovered content of eighteenth-century coffee-house libraries, it is worth noting that poetry and entertainment dominated. As these were male-only institutions, these findings question assumptions that women were the main audience for light entertaining literature and demonstrate the need to evaluate existing evidence of women's reading choices.

3.3 The Membership of Eighteenth-Century Libraries

In her study of provincial readers in eighteenth-century England, Jan Fergus investigates the stock and membership of two circulating libraries of the period. Her findings contradict assumptions both that the majority of circulating library users were women, and that women were the main readers of novels. Fergus acknowledges that those women who borrowed from circulating libraries were more likely to select novels, but notes that women constituted such a small proportion of the total membership that men still represented at least 54% of novel borrowing (and 76% of novel buying) at the studied venues (2006, p.50, p.237). Furthermore, despite the contemporary concern that circulating libraries provided a central access point for novels, Fergus's analysis reveals that customers preferred to buy, not borrow these items. Available evidence indicates the need to look beyond the fearful rhetoric of contemporary commentators and instead to build a picture of actual borrower behaviour.

Jacqueline Pearson similarly finds that although women were involved in all the available types of borrowing networks in this period, they accounted only for a small number of total readers (1999, p.160). Circulating libraries are revealed to have been a contested space, with owners on the one hand trying to establish libraries as safe and appropriate environments for women, while on the other a range of media perpetuated an image of danger and scandal. Despite this, respectable women still made regular visits to commercial libraries, including Jane Austen and her family (Pearson,1999, p.163). Use of circulating libraries was clearly not restricted to the frivolous and uneducated and there is a need to recover details of actual borrowers from first-hand accounts in diaries and through analysis of subscription memberships.

Rose's findings question assumptions that the taste for novels was fuelled by the lower classes. He argues that the reading tastes of British working classes, lagging behind that of the educated middle classes, emphasised religious works. He quotes as an example a library established at the beginning of the nineteenth century in Langloan, Coatbridge. Set up by workingmen, farmers and school teachers, half of the books acquired were religious. Biography, travels, voyages, history and geography all featured but only one novel (Rose, 2001, p.117). It should be noted, however, that despite the seemingly democratic establishment of this library, the ten shillings and sixpence entrance fee (Hamilton, 1880, p.445) would have made this expensive investment less financially achievable for many than the commercial circulating library.

The civilising, socialising ambitions of subscription libraries often established their social exclusivity. Unfortunately, the details of the actual membership of libraries for this period is limited. Frequently, all that has survived is a list of names, without addresses or occupation. However, some contemporary accounts of subscription libraries have survived which suggest that they could have a positive impact on those struggling to pay at the lower end of the social scale. Scottish cotton spinner, Charles Campbell, set aside a few pennies for a subscription library and joined a club of twelve men, mainly artisans and mechanics, to discuss literary topics. The aim may have been the pursuit of knowledge, rather than worldly advancement but one of their members went on to become a philosophy lecturer and editor of a medical journal (Rose, 2001, p.21). This suggests that in the right circumstances library access could aid social mobility.

3.4 Borrowing Costs

The first cost of joining a library was the subscription fee. Circulating libraries usually offered a range of options about the length of membership. Annual, half-yearly and quarterly were the most common. Lownds Circulating Library in London had an annual subscription fee in 1761 of ten shillings and sixpence, but a quarterly fee of three shillings, indicating a saving for those able to subscribe yearly. Other timescales for borrowing items included monthly, weekly and nightly fees. Fisher's Circulating Library at Newcastle offered weekly rates of sixpence per folio, four pence per quarto and three pence for octavos or duodecimo. If returned within five days, the rate was discounted by two pence. More expensive subscriptions could also be paid to access the latest books and reviews, or to borrow a greater number of items at once. For instance, the 1797 London and Westminster catalogue offered two rates. The first, at an annual cost of one pound and a shilling, was for four books at a time and included access to new books, magazines and reviews. The second subscription rate was slightly cheaper, at sixteen shillings. This allowed only two books at once, and no access to new material. Certainly, for those who could afford it, the more expensive subscription offered better value for money. At Oxford Circulating Library sixteen shillings annually entitled the subscriber to four books; the more expensive annual payment of one pound and a shilling only offered the additional advantage of access to new material. The Minerva General Library was offering in 1795, five different subscription packages. The most expensive, at an annual cost of three pounds and three shillings, allowed town subscribers eighteen books at once; the cheapest at sixteen shillings was for two books. While these subscription fees are expensive, and those paying less had reduced choices, the ability to pay nightly or weekly, rather than annually, must have made library use more financially manageable for many.

Subscription libraries usually required an additional entry fee. At the Halifax Circulating Library, the entry fee was increased from one pound and one shilling to two pounds and two shillings in 1786. This increased rate was more expensive than many libraries, but the annual subscription of five shillings was cheaper than elsewhere. At the Lancaster Amicable Society, for example, the admission fee was one pound and eleven shillings, but the annual subscription was twelve shillings. There was an additional cost at this library, of one shilling, for a medal to be shown to the librarian when borrowing items. Membership at both Halifax and Lancaster could be transferred by sale, gift or will.

Dalkeith Subscription Library worked slightly differently with one shilling entry money plus a penny weekly to be paid. Lewes Library Society members paid a shilling annually plus a shilling at each monthly meeting. Prompt payment was expected and those delaying more than thirty days, were notified by the librarian and given 5 days to pay; if they failed to respond, they were reported at the next monthly meeting and faced the danger of being expelled from the society.

The rules set out by both circulating libraries and subscription libraries at this time indicate great awareness of the risks of late returned books and missing or damaged items. It is a common condition of borrowing that the value of a book may have to be deposited before it is lent. It is also common to reduce the borrowing allowance for more expensive items. Folios and Quartos were to be considered two books at the London and Westminster Library, meaning those on the cheaper subscription could borrow only one item.

The question of the affordability of circulating and subscription libraries must take into consideration more than the joining and subscription fee. As we have seen, the value for items borrowed could be demanded as a deposit and fines for material returned late could add up. More seriously, if an item is lost or damaged it must be paid for and if part of a set of books the whole set must be paid for. Nearly all libraries of the time have this written into their conditions and regulations, including the London and Westminster Circulating Library, Lownds Library, Minerva Library, Oxford Library and Dalkeith Library. Sometimes specific timescales are also set out for this repayment. The Amicable Society at Lancaster, for example, insists that a full set of books must be paid for within three months of the time it was due back at the library.

It may, of course, be that the loss of one volume makes the rest of a set worthless to a library. It was common, for example, for novels to stretch over several volumes. Yet, a moment's carelessness

could bear a significant financial cost and it seems reasonable to suggest that an individual struggling to pay membership fees may have refrained from borrowing the most expensive volumes in fear of accident leading to an unaffordable financial burden.

3.5 Town and Country

The question of whether libraries improved access to information may have depended to a great extent on where an individual lived. While some libraries actively catered for those in the country, others were not so welcoming. The Macclesfield Subscription Library, for example, refused membership to any person living more than five miles away and Sheffield Library banned membership to anyone more than two miles away.

Many libraries make no mention of country subscribers, and it may be presumed in these cases that no special arrangements existed. The short loan periods frequently in place, especially for new items, consequently would have made it impossible for many country users to utilise libraries, given the difficulties of transportation. Other libraries, such as Lewes Library Society make limited allowances for Members living more than five miles away. Those residing within five miles may borrow one item from the library for twenty days; but members who live more than five miles away may take two volumes for thirty days. However, reviews and magazines may be kept for only three days. Special acknowledgement is made of the importance of market day in the regulations for Norwich Public Library in 1796. These state that country subscribers may keep their books until the market day after they become due. In a similar arrangement, the 1786 catalogue and regulations of Halifax Circulating Library allow members living more than one mile away to keep borrowed items until the Saturday after the usual due date. However, at their annual meeting on 5th September 1787, a resolution was taken not to allow anyone living more than a mile from the library to subscribe. Clearly, the services available to those living in the country were subject to change and could be completely withdrawn. Lownds's library in London offers those living in the country a larger quantity of books but only on paying double subscription and defraying the price of carriage. The Minerva library offers country subscribers a greater number of books for no additional cost. However, additional cost for carriage will apply and there is a restriction on new books which would make it impossible for most country subscribers to access this material. R Fisher's Circulating Library at Newcastle offers three books instead of two, but no mention of extended loans.

The situation seems to have been more flexible for Scottish libraries. Kelso Library does not mention country subscribers but its longer loan periods of two months for folio and quarto volumes and one

month for octavo and duodecimo would have been more suitable for those travelling longer distances. Edinburgh Circulating Library does not advertise extended loans for those residing in the country but it notes that town subscribers must not keep new magazines or reviews more than one night, which Implies greater flexibility for country subscribers. Wigtown's library constitution gave country members an extra week (Towsey, 2009, p.459). Borrowers at Elgin Circulating Library were allowed twice the number of books for the same charge (Thomas, 2006, p.3). Fort William library allowed three weeks instead of two.

Those living in the country or at a distance from London would have also been disadvantaged by the length of time items took to be delivered from the capital. Raven notes that one consequence of an increase in printed material, was a faster turn-around time, especially with newspapers and magazines, where timely access to material became more important. This could be seen in the 'increasing exasperation expressed by library societies at some distance from London when their subscription periodical arrived months or even only weeks out of date' (Raven, 1998, p.282).

3.6 Social Aspirations of Eighteenth-Century Libraries

James Raven argues that the development of libraries in this period depended on the wealth of individuals, and their willingness to donate during their lifetime or bequest on their death collections of books or funds to create and/or maintain libraries (2006, p.242). The creation of various libraries in Scotland would appear to reinforce this point: for example, the free library created at Innerpeffray around 1680 and the 1791 bequest which established Stirling's Library in Glasgow. However, the establishment of a library through the generosity of a wealthy individual did not ensure the benefits would filter down the social ranks. According to Raven, subscription libraries did not just arm people with knowledge, they empowered through the creation of social networks and practices (2006, pp.247-8). Such social networks could aid social mobility but they could also exclude segments of the population.

Libraries could convey messages in different ways which placed expectations on readers and made statements about the clientele they were trying to attract. At the simplest and most obvious level this could be conveyed by collection development policies, but, as James Raven has pointed out, in larger and more prosperous libraries, these messages could also be conveyed through architectural features and furniture. 'Within the secluded, privileged and significantly furnished library, an intended function and meaning was displayed' (Raven, 1998, p.284). According to Lee Erickson, in leisure resorts, 'circulating libraries became fashionable daytime lounges where ladies could see

others and be seen, where raffles were held and games were played, and where expensive merchandise could be purchased' (1990, p.576).

3.6.1 Aspirations of Subscription Libraries

Eighteenth-century libraries often claimed they had a specific role to fulfil in society. The Fort William Subscription Library established in 1819 declares the worthy role access to literature will play in the lives of Highland soldiers returned from war:

> The public will readily believe, that those minds which kindled into action and energy, amid the din of arms and the tumult of battle, require some worthy object, in the inactive calm of peace, and the retirement of rural life, which have so happily succeeded the horrors and the dangers of warfare (1820, p.4).

Providing access to the literature being produced in the south is one way the national debt owed to Highland soldiers can and should be repaid. This library, however, will not merely entertain, it will promote religious principle and consequently morality and loyalty in its 'interesting' and 'intelligent' population. Even as the intended Highland subscribers for this library are identified and praised for their worthy characteristics, they are also brought into being as religious, moral and loyal to the Union and the benefits brought by the recently fought war.

The subscription library at Fort William articulates the belief that the people of their Highland community are entitled to access the range of literature available further south and aspires to make this possible. More usually, the social aspirations of libraries related to the rise of the middle-classes in society and an accompanying drive for self-improvement. In 1798, the Dalkeith subscription library declared its objective to provide those who wished to improve themselves with access to books which would 'inform the judgement and polish the manners' (p.3). The range of social objectives set out by subscription libraries is, perhaps, not surprising, given that these were often institutions organised by influential members of society with ambitions beyond improving their own access to literature. We see, for example, that on its creation in 1795, Wigtown Subscription Library had a number of members who despite paying their annual fee never utilised the library collection. Those wealthy enough could offer patronage to a worthy cause, while committee membership could offer opportunities for community leadership (Towsey, 2009, p.479). David Allan points to the Amicable Society, established in Lancaster in 1769, where the first members were local successful business men (2000, p.271). The social ambitions of subscription libraries extended beyond the provision of textual knowledge. They offered individuals opportunities to mix and socialise with society's elite members. Joining a committee was not, however, without its dangers.

Responsibilities were taken seriously and committee members failing to turn up for meetings could face fines. The Lancaster Amicable Society was meant to meet once a month; the fine for non-attendance was one shilling for the president and sixpence for every other committee member. The gentlemen of Lewes Library Society also met once a month. The fine for non-attendance for those living within a designated area was threepence, while those failing to turn up to the annual general meeting would be fined one shilling and sixpence.

A key question this research is asking, is whether the social ambitions of subscription libraries can be inferred from rules and regulations, and whether these ambitions impacted stock development choices. David Allan picks up on this question in his assessment of the relationship between Scottish Enlightenment texts and the borrowers of the Amicable Society (2000, pp.267-281). He argues that for an educated elite, the library extended cultural and economic boundaries by incorporating literary works from London and Europe. Scottish Enlightenment texts also generated huge interest and the texts purchased extended beyond the most popular works such as James MacPherson's purported translation of the epic Gaelic poem, *Ossian* to include less well-known works such as Blair's *Sermons.* The library also purchased an *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, so expensive it could not be borrowed. In 1812 the library had a membership of 155, 32 of which were female. Enlightenment writings considered to be of particular interest to women included James Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women* (famously satirised in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*) and *On the Character and Conduct of the Female Sex,* as well as William Alexander's *History of Women.* Interestingly, despite the number of challenging texts, the 1812 catalogue shows that the largest category in the library is for imaginative work. Allan suggests the changing contents of the library reflected Scotland's evolving contribution to British authorship and changing tastes towards more imaginative literature. The changing reading tastes of the nation must be borne in mind if one is comparing catalogues from different libraries, especially if there is a significant chronological gap.

3.6.2 Aspirations of Circulating Libraries

In contrast to subscription libraries, the main ambition of circulating libraries was to run a profitable enterprise. Yet, the advantages offered by these businesses are often promoted in a similar way. Isaac Forsyth, for example, emphasised that his circulating library in Elgin would help those wishing 'to maintain a respectable appearance in society, from the extent and accuracy of their information' (quoted in Thomas, 2006, p. 100). While the first priority of circulating libraries was not to improve taste, a significant proportion of the middle classes were either anxious to cement their position, or

ambitious to improve their rank in society. Consequently, these commercial organisations catered to the desire for a socially acceptable image of circulating libraries as respectable places of learning and self-improvement. In practice the promotion of reading was balanced by the promotion of its exclusivity (Raven, 1996, p.179).

Norbert Schurer considers the working of Lownds Circulating Library in London between 1755 and 1766. The aim of this library to cultivate a higher class audience is identified through its advertisement of books in three languages, and claims to cater specially for the nobility and gentry. Schurer also suggests that this higher class audience is reflected in the stock, where the combined categories of romances, novels, poetry and plays account for no more than 30% (2007, p.350). These figures represent a break-down of stock broadly similar to the Lancaster Amicable Society's 1812 library catalogue, but it should not be assumed that this indicates no difference between commercial circulating libraries and subscription libraries. A significant time lapse exists between the Lownds catalogues and that of the Lancashire library and this question requires further investigation before conclusions may be drawn.

Examining Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice,* Erickson suggests that Mr Collins response to being asked to read aloud a book from a circulating library has several implications; that books from circulating libraries were identifiable from a distance, that they were likely to be novels; and that they were unsuitable for clergymen. Much has been made of the ephemeral status of novels for this time period. Erickson claims that the presence of circulating libraries 'reflected the relatively low marginal utility of rereading novels for contemporary readers' (1990, p.574). According to Erickson, the demand for new novels within libraries ran its course within a few months, and novels were consequently bound in cheap marble coloured bindings which made them distinguishable, at a distance, as circulating library items (1990, p.579). The bound physical objects in circulating libraries could, therefore, have contributed to the feeling that these libraries offered a poor quality or even vulgar product. In contrast, the material in subscription libraries was more likely to be bound for long-term use, and this may have supported distinctions between these institutions.

Edward Jacobs argues that the relationship between circulating libraries and novels can only be fully understood, once it is acknowledged that these libraries did not just distribute books, they also published them. His analysis of circulating library publishing indicates that novice writers were favoured, as were anonymous and female writers (Jacobs, 1995, p.603). Jacobs further suggests that a stigma was attached to circulating library publishers and that this may account for the number of

works published anonymously (1995, p.609). George Justice notes that despite being published by a circulating library publisher, Fanny Burney did not want her work to be associated with the popular, and short-lived, novels usually published by circulating libraries (2002, p.155). Yet, it must be noted that not all circulating libraries were associated with the publication of cheap fiction, and that the stock of libraries advertised in catalogues suggests significant proportions of non-fiction.[8]

3.7 Stock Development

Whether a commercial, for profit library, or a library run for the benefit of members and the community, the reading tastes of library users had to be catered to, if the organisation was to have a long term future. Larger circulating libraries claimed that all tastes would be catered for by the breadth of their collection. The London and Westminster, for example, assured subscribers that 'no Work of Repute, whether new or old, shall be withheld' (p. i). Stock development was the responsibility of a businessman trying to gage the tastes of his customers. Decisions at subscription libraries were usually more democratic. They held regular meetings, at which members would be asked to approve books for purchase. Theoretically, any member objecting to a controversial text, would prevent it appearing on library shelves. Many libraries specifically stated they would not purchase certain material, to prevent conflict. Macclesfield Subscription Library, for example, noted that no books on 'Law, Physic or Divinity' would be allowed (1796, p.36).

One way to identify desirable texts for purchase, is to provide a mechanism which enables library users to request or recommend items not yet held. Lancaster Amicable Society kept a book for requests in the library room. The committee could take the decision to purchase a requested item, but any books thought improper would be discussed at the next general meeting. Subscription libraries insisted upon knowing who it was that was requesting items. Lewes Library Society states that any member may propose a book at their monthly meetings, 'either in person, or by writing' (1793, p.4). At Macclesfield 'every *anonymous* Proposal will be disregarded' (1796, p.36). Requests for books could be measured, not just on the merits of the item, but on the qualities of the individual who made the suggestion.

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[8] For example, John Smith & Son who ran the Glasgow Circulating Library were publishers of a number of works in the early nineteenth century, including John Finlay's *Scottish Historical and Romantic Ballads* (1808), Captain J Laskey's *General Account of the Hunterian Museum* (1813) and Thomas Hopkirk's *Flora Glottiana.* See Ewing and Stewart (*A Short Note on a Long History,* 1921, p.28).

3.8 Reader Behaviour

According to Barbara Benedict, conservative commentators of the time believed that the reading of items from circulating libraries was self-indulgent and 'a perversion of the habit of pious literary contemplation into a practice of self-stoking passion' (2009, p.180). Concern did not just relate to the consequences of access to inappropriate information, but rather to how and where reading was taking place. Benedict suggests that earlier in the century, the reading of newspapers in public spaces had been a prompt to social conversation, whereas circulating libraries encouraged private reading at home (2009, p.179). However, it is important to note that reading at home was not necessarily private. The complexities involved in distinguishing between public and private spheres have evoked much scholarly research.[9] Naomi Tadmor's study of eighteenth-century reading behaviour indicates that reading aloud for friends and family members was a popular practice and an important aspect of eighteenth-century sociability (1996, pp.162-174. Undoubtedly, some of the material borrowed from circulating libraries would have been experienced communally but in the absence of evidence of reading, or listening, experiences it is impossible to quantify.[10]

Commercial pressure to expand the existing market for books and reading, combined with the growing demand across the social classes for literature both to entertain and to provide opportunities for self-improvement, intensified anxiety about access to potentially dangerous ideas. In particular, the consequences of inappropriate and undesirable reading by certain social groups was feared, including women, the young, and the lower classes. Raven has noted that illustrations of libraries could reassure by suggesting that utilising libraries would not be an unmediated experience and that vulnerable groups would be pointed to the reading which would best meet their needs - while keeping the social and gender hierarchy intact. Looking at an image of the interior of John and Francis Noble's library from a 1746 catalogue, a trade card of Francis Noble's library from the mid-1750s, and an engraving of Thomas Wright's Circulating Library from the mid-1740s, Raven notes that they all feature advice on reading given by the proprietor, his shopkeeper or fellow visitors (1996, p.186). While it may be unlikely that such mediation was ever offered to library users, these images may indicate continuing anxiety about commercial libraries and the attempts of proprietors to assuage these fears.

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[9] See, for example, Lawrence Klein, 'Gender and the Public/Private Distinction in the Eighteenth Century: Some Questions About Evidence and Analytic Procedure', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 29:1 (1995). Also Elizabeth Eger, Charlotte Grant, Cliona O Gallchoir and Penny Warburton (eds), *Women, Writing and the Public Sphere, 1700-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

[10] The Reading Experience Database (UK) enables searches not just for texts and readers, but also for listeners, giving some indication of the important part reading aloud has played in the history of books and reading.

3.9 Library Organisation

The organisation of a physical library and its accompanying catalogues could impact on those using the service. Arranging and cataloguing books could convey information which affected book selection behaviour. Jacobs suggests that readers were able to attribute status to items according to genre, format, place in catalogue or even the position on a book shelf (1999, p.57). This would suggest the practices of librarians or the commercially equivalent businessman in eighteenth-century libraries did not require direct interaction to have an effect on the availability of information.

3.9.1 Access to the Physical Library

Little evidence has survived to definitely judge the way eighteenth-century borrowers used libraries and made book selections. Much uncertainty exists even over the question of whether shelves were browsed, or whether users made their selection entirely on the basis of library catalogues. Raven notes that some of the larger early subscription libraries advertised their premises as 'spacious' or as having reading rooms (1996, p.181). Around 1790 Meyler's circulating library at Bath was advertising the library as a place to peruse public prints. Sibbald notes in his plan for lending prints as well as books from the Edinburgh Circulating Library that these will need to be consulted in the library for borrowers to make their choice. The Amicable Society catalogue notes that subscribers may peruse items in the library room within specified opening hours. This certainly suggests that a significant number of libraries offered consultative space and it would seem reasonable that at least some stock would be available to browse in these spaces. Yet what proportion of stock was on display and could be accessed in this manner remains unclear and an emphasis on consulting prints or the latest monthly publications, together with an association between reading rooms and newspapers may indicate that even in these places the ability to browse stock was limited to specific items. In addition, it is possible that reading rooms were intended to fulfil a function which went beyond providing access to library material. Jacobs notes that a 1789 image of Hall's Library in Margate, presents the library as a place for sociability and conversation, with only one wall in a huge hall shelved with books (1999, p.58).

3.9.2 Book Formats

Jacobs has suggested that variations within different formats encouraged library users to attach different kinds of value and purpose to books according to their size. Romances and Novels, for example, tended to appear in the octavo or duodecimo format. So too did a number of new useful categories of books, such as 'Husbandry, Gardening, Cookery etc'. According to Jacobs, the wider variety of books available in octavo and duodecimo would have encouraged an association that these format were more modern and useful (1999, p.52). He further argues that the physical location of books could reinforce this message. Images of libraries from this period often show Folios on the highest shelves, with Quartos below and octavo and duodecimo on the lower shelves. Octavo and duodecimo were therefore the most accessible books, with Folios, requiring the use of ladders, attaining an 'elite' status (Jacobs, 1999, p.55). It should be noted, however, that P. S. Morrish suggests a different format filing arrangement, with folios at the bottom of shelves where they are easier to remove and duodecimos at the top (2006, p.220). Jacobs is suggesting that the physical shelving of folios on the top shelf mirrors the outlay of the catalogue and that both invest status and meaning in the format of books. Schurer, taking issue with this argument, notes that the absence of a separate list of duodecimos in Lownds's catalogue does not mean that this format of books was regarded as insignificant (2007, p.349). As analysis of eighteenth-century library catalogues shows, providing a combined list of duodecimos and octavos was not unheard of. In fact, catalogues which organised lists by genre or A-Z were common. Format may have been noted next to individual items, but was often completely missing. This indicates a serious weaknesses in Jacobs's arguments. Schurer's counter claim, based on his analysis of Lownds's catalogues, that the 'organisation of books reflected not so much a categorisation of knowledge as efficiency in shelving' may be equally valid (2007, p.346).

3.9.3 Catalogues

Listing a library's stock in a catalogue required organisation of material and a wide range of formats and subject headings were adopted for this purpose. Schurer convincingly shows that the subject divisions used in the catalogues of circulating libraries do not correspond in any obvious way to divisions of knowledge accepted by wider society, noting that no standard emerges from publications such as the *Gentleman's Magazine,* the *Monthly Review* and the *Critical Review* (2007, p.342). Yet, Schurer, identifies similar traits used by a number of London circulating libraries and suggests some level of collusion between these businesses. While acknowledging small differences, he argues that these similarities suggest that there was an effort to standardise catalogues, either to make it easier to attract customers from competitors, or simply because readers had got used to

these divisions (2007, p.342). Evidence of collusion between London libraries at this time does exist in the form of a joint advertisement issued in 1766 by the 'Reputable Circulating Libraries', informing the public there would be a rise in borrowing fees across five libraries - Nobles, Bathoe, Lownds, Vernor and Chater, Jones and Cooke (Raven, 2006, p.253). Agreement regarding catalogue design is more problematic. Benedict offers another model for the category devisions in library catalogues. She suggests that these 'mirror the mushrooming categories in catalogues of natural history collections' and consequently 'represent literature as highly differentiated, and the library as an all encompassing collection' (2009, p.179).

A brief survey of twelves catalogues for the period (Meyler's Circulating Library at Bath, c.1790; Leightonian Library at Dunblane, 1793; Sibbald's Edinburgh Circulating Library, c.1786; Kelso Library, c.1790; Amicable Society Library at Lancaster, 1794; London and Westminster Circulating Library, 1797; Lownds Circulating Library in London, c.1761; Macclesfield Subscription Library, 1796; Minerva (Lane's) General Library, c.1795; Fisher's Circulating Library at Newcastle, 1791; Norwich Public Library, 1796; Palmer and Merrick's Circulating Library at Oxford, 1789) reveal at least as many differences as similarities in catalogue design. A tendency to standardisation could not be identified across libraries in the UK generally or even between the three London catalogues considered. Two catalogues organised contents by format alone, only one of these also listed the contents of the four sections - Folio, Quarto, Octavo, Duodecimo - alphabetically. Four catalogues organised their material by format followed by genre. One organised primarily by genre and secondly by format; two organised by genre alone. One was an A-Z listing. Two listed books by folio and quarto but broke down the octavo and duodecimo items into a number of genres.

Further differentiation existed between the four catalogues organised by format followed by genre. The number of genres varied, between catalogues and between formats. Under the folio format, the Bath library had 10 subject divisions, Lownds Library had 6, the Minerva Library had 3 and Newcastle Library 4. Similar levels of variation existed for quarto (7, 6, 3, 4), octavo (Bath 6, Newcastle 4) and duodecimo (7, 1). Two of the catalogues did not differentiate between octavo and duodecimo; Lownds's Library had 12 subject divisions for the combined formats, while Minerva had 15. These twelve catalogues represent only a small percentage of the material which could be analysed. Nevertheless, they do indicate that there was no one accepted way of organising a library catalogue and provide little evidence to suggest that the catalogues were being designed according to common principles or ideas.

Inevitably, there is some overlap between the subject divisions used across these different catalogues. 'Divinity and Ecclesiastical History', 'Miscellanies', 'Novels and Romances' and even 'Livres Francoise' all make regular appearances. However, the exact range of subjects bundled together to create sections varies considerably from one catalogue to another. The 'History, Lives, Travels, &c.' in Bath's Circulating Library may correspond to Edinburgh Circulating Library's 'History and Antiquities of Great Britain, Ireland, and Foreign Nations; Geography, Voyages and Travels; Lives, Trials, Peerages, &c.'. In contrast, the London and Westminster Circulating Library have three separate sections 'History, Antiquities, Manners & Customs of Various Nations, &c.', 'Voyages and Travels' and 'Lives and Memoirs'. More confusingly, Bath's subject division for Natural History is 'Natural History, Physics, Architecture &c.', while Edinburgh offers 'Arts & Science: Natural History and Philosophy: Metaphysics, Trade Husbandry, &c.'. London and Westminster have 'Natural History, Husbandry, Gardening, Botany and Farriery' while the subject division for Arts and Sciences is 'Arts and Science, Mathematics, Natural and Experimental Philosophy, &c.'. Morrish notes that 'cataloguing is a core librarianly activity yet choice of conventions rather than one set of rules prevailed' (2006, p.487).

None of this suggests a seamless browsing experience for users moving between libraries. Library users unsure of which subject area their preferred book was filed under, or which format size their library had purchased, may have had considerable difficulty in locating the item of their choice. Interestingly, Schurer also notes the categories of books listed on the title page of Lownds's catalogue do not completely mirror the subject listings inside. While most of the categories closely coincide, the differences may indicate Lownds's desire to create a particular image for his library. Under octavos in Lownds's 1761 catalogue, a section of books appears on 'Husbandry, Gardening, Cookery, &c.'. Only cookery is not mentioned on the title page. 'Heraldry, Painting, Law, &c.' also appears as a category under octavo. None of these subjects made it onto the title page. Schurer suggests the absence of cookery in the title page may have reflected a distaste for domestic work; the absence of law a distaste with the professional world; and the missing heraldry heading may have revealed reservations about the importance of nobility as subscribers to the library (2007, p.340). Of course, variations in subject divisions, may reflect variations in stock. Certain libraries may have specialised in particular subject areas and library users may have patronised the facility catering to their interests. Undoubtedly, an eighteenth-century population would have been more familiar with the catalogue system and, perhaps, the reasoning behind the subject divisions of their chosen library. Consequently the difficulties and inconsistencies identified may have been negotiated more efficiently than one would think. Morrish notes that while the Bodleian and British

Museum approached the organisation of books with intellectual rigour, this was not the priority for circulating libraries or mechanics' libraries which served a different readership (2006, p.489). Subscription libraries may have had more intellectual ambitions for their collections, but they did not serve the scholarship function of the Bodleian. It may be that the library catalogue was viewed as part of a serendipitous browsing experience, rather than as a strictly organised finding aid.

Jacobs's claims that alphabetical listing by title keywords within subject categories encouraged library users to read neighbouring books - either in the catalogue or on the physical shelf - on the basis that they would offer a similar experience (1999, p.54). As an example, he notes that in the 1757 catalogue for Bathoe's Circulating Library, within the 'Romances and 'Novels' category, items beginning with 'love' or 'lovers' are grouped together. A problem with this theory is that the range of subject matter grouped within subject divisions is so varied that books close together in the catalogue are unlikely to be connected. In fact, within non-fiction items are usually filed by author and abbreviated title, for example, 'Hume's Essays'. It is therefore possible that the browsing experience may have favoured reading books by a particular author, although subject divisions often disrupted this process. Hume's *History of England* filed under history will be nowhere near Hume's *Essays,* filed under philosophy or miscellaneous items. In contrast, novels tended to be listed by title. While this may have the effect of bringing books beginning with the words 'Love' or 'Lovers' together, as suggested by Jacobs, it also separates books by the same author which would, perhaps, have been a better gage of attaining a similar reading experience. Thus Fanny Burney's *Camilla* is not filed close to *Evelina,* nor Charlotte Smith's *Emmeline* close to *The Old Manor House.*

Morrish notes that eighteenth-century librarians inherited an organisation system based on fixed location, format and subject division derived from the medieval curriculum. As long as they were operational, it was the objective of subscription and circulating libraries to add to stock, which would satisfy the reading desires of subscribers. These growing collections were not compatible with old methods. Medieval categories, too, became strained and incompatible with useful subject arrangement (Morrish, 2006, p. 219). Fixed location implied retrieval of books, not through an inherent and standardised subject arrangement, but through the physical arrangements in individual libraries. Inconsistent organisation made catalogues essential as finder aids. As stock was continually being added, libraries were being continually reorganised. No Dewey Decimal or similar classification system existed. Books were often allocated a number, which the subscriber would access through the catalogue and provide to the library in order to receive their request. Complicating this system, as stock changed and was added to, books were often renumbered. It

was important subscribers had the most recent catalogue in order to receive the right item (Schurer, 2007, p.353). The 1796 catalogue for the Macclesfield Subscription Library advises readers to destroy the old catalogue when they receive the new one, in order to avoid confusion (p.38). John Smith's Glasgow Circulating Library renumbered books on a regular basis, but no overt advice is included to readers advising them about the necessity of an up-to-date catalogue. This suggests a certain familiarity and awareness of how the system worked.

4. GLASGOW AND ITS LIBRARIES

Between 1755 and 1821 Glasgow's population increased from 31,700 to 147,000 (Devine, 1995, p.10). The textile industries remained important to Glasgow's economy, while the significance of the tobacco trade gradually increased. American colonists wanted manufactured goods in return and this was a stimulus to the workshops of Glasgow (Cummings, 1997 p.291). Economic success brought new wealth and the city boundary expanded into areas such as Buchanan Street with new luxury housing developments (Cummings, 1997, p.292). Yet, further down the social scale, overcrowding and unsanitary conditions remained a problem. This was the environment which the city's libraries operated in, catering not just to the rich, who would often have private family libraries, but to anybody who could afford the subscription fee.

4.1 John Smith's Glasgow Circulating Library

Allan Ramsay's circulating library, the first in Great Britain, began lending its material in Edinburgh in 1725. Glasgow had to wait a further twenty-eight years for its first circulating library to be introduced by John Smith & Son in 1753 (Ewing and Stewart, 1921, p.26). Several catalogues for this library have survived and are held, bound in one volume, at Glasgow University Research Archive, as part of the Smith collection. There are no dates printed on most of this material. Handwritten annotations include a few dates plus a number on each catalogue, from 1 to 9, which would appear to indicate the running chronological order of when the catalogues were issued. Unfortunately, some of these appear to be out of order, casting doubt on the accuracy of the annotated dates.

One possible way to gauge the dates of individual catalogues is to look at the items available for loan. Particularly useful are periodical publications and the *Monthly Review,* which makes regular appearances throughout the catalogues, provides speculative dates for a number of catalogues. Although the entry in the first catalogue for the *Monthly Review* does not offer any information

about dates or volumes, later catalogues feature multiple entries for each volume held. The earliest volume listed is for 1759. It is possible, of course, that earlier editions of this periodical were lost or discarded but it seems reasonable to speculatively date the first catalogue to 1759 or later. The next catalogue is annotated 1764. Two items in the appendix would appear to support this date - *The Beauties of Nature and Art Displayed, in a Tour through the World*, first published in 14 volumes between 1763-64, and *Millenium Hall,* a novel by Sarah Scott first published in 1763. The fourth catalogue in the bound collection includes a letter dated 1769, indicating an approximate date for this catalogue. The third catalogue in the bound collection shows that 1736 separate titles were held in the library at time of issue. This compares with only 1525 in the fourth catalogue, leading to the presumption that these catalogues have been bound in the wrong order and that the third catalogue can be dated after 1769. Two items in the catalogue confirm these findings. John Dalrymple's *Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland, from the dissolution of the last parliament of Charles II until the sea battle of La Hogue,* first published in 1771, while William Carstare's *State Papers* were first published in 1774. Consequently, a date of c.1774 has been taken for this catalogue. *The* fifth catalogue has the annotated date of 1778. Items new to this catalogue include *Adventures of a Corkscrew* published in 1775 and Abbe Raynal's *Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies,* which had a third edition published in 1777. Consequently, the annotated date of 1778 has been accepted for this catalogue. Two of the later catalogues have, again, been bound out of order but, helpfully, the entries for the *Monthly Review* in the later catalogues are dated and the most recent copy has been taken as an indication of the catalogue publication date, leading to approximate dates of 1781, 1783, and 1785. The last item consists of a catalogue, dated to 1796 by its latest *Monthly Review* edition, and 6 appendices which have printed dates - 1797, 1798, 1799, 1800, 1801 and 1802. These dates will be used to map over time the changes and continuities revealed by the Glasgow Circulating Library catalogues over a forty year period.

4.1.1 Borrowing Costs

The c.1759 catalogue advertises that subscribers could pay to borrow one book at a time at an annual rate (ten shillings), half-yearly (five shillings and sixpence) quarterly (three shillings) and monthly (one shilling and sixpence). Those without the means to pay an upfront fee could rent books at the cost of one penny per night. By around 1764 these prices were increased to twelve shillings annually, seven shillings half-yearly, four shillings quarterly and two shillings monthly. Additionally a weekly rate of a shilling was advertised, while the penny a night rate is no longer mentioned. Presumably, the price rises were not a success because by c.1774 they had been

reduced back to previous rates. The weekly rate was discontinued and the penny rate advertised at its former rate of one penny per night. The other notable change in this catalogue is an additional option to borrow two items instead of one, at one and a half times the usual subscription rates.

These rates remained unchanged until c.1781, when two nightly rates for books were introduced instead of just one. For books priced at three shillings or less, the penny a night rate was unchanged but to borrow a book priced at four or five shillings would cost two pence per night. Reducing options for nightly borrowers was an evolving process. First, we see an attempt to remove the nightly rate, as already discussed, then there were special expensive items marked unavailable to nightly borrowers, then all books over the price of six shillings were excluded. Yet, the fact that the service continued to be offered suggests there were enough people interested to make it a profitable enterprise. These penny a night and two pence a night rates remained unchanged in 1802, when other subscription costs increased.

In the c.1781 catalogue the option for borrowing two books, becomes three, for the same price. The more expensive subscription prices are also more prominently displayed, with the specific rate for annual, half-yearly, quarterly and monthly subscribers set out underneath regular subscription prices. By 1802 prices had risen for all subscribers, with annual rates for one book standing at twelve shilling and for four books one pound and a shilling. Half-yearly rates stood at seven shillings and sixpence (one book) or twelve shillings (four books); quarterly rates were four shillings and sixpence (one book) or seven shillings (four books); monthly rates were two shillings and sixpence (one book) or three shillings and sixpence (four books). Undoubtedly, anybody with the means to pay the enhanced rate could save money, especially within a large household, where all could access the contents of the library for the price of a single subscription. In fact, subscription rates were remarkably consistent over a long period of time. If we remove the temporary price increase from the c.1764 catalogue, we find subscription prices for one book unchanged between 1759 and 1785.

In common with many other circulating libraries of the time, John Smith & Son, set out that, if required, a borrower would have to leave a deposit for the value of the books taken. This cost may have deterred many, especially from borrowing more expensive items. Following what appears to be a standard rule, subscribers are warned that if they lose or damage a book, they must pay for it, and that if the book belongs to a set, the whole set must be taken and paid for. Jacqueline Pearson puts into context the extortionate cost of books in the 1790s. Fanny Burney's *Camilla* cost one pound and five shillings, and Anne Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* one pound and four shillings

- the same price as eight to ten pairs of women's shoes (Pearson, 1999, p.163). It is set out in the Glasgow Circulating Library catalogue that no discount on the price of a damaged book will be given, because a new item must be bought in its place. In the absence of first-hand accounts, it is impossible to say what effect these rules had on eighteenth-century behaviour. However, Mark Towsey has noted the tendency of Wigtown Subscription Library, to purchase the cheapest available format of a range of books, choosing, for example, a later four volume octavo edition of Robertson's *Reign of Charles V* rather than purchasing the new quarto edition in three volumes. Similar decisions were taken when purchasing Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, Gillies's *Ancient Greece,* Henry's *History of Britain* and Hume's *History of England* (Towsey, 2009, p.475). It seems reasonable to suggest that people borrowing from libraries and aware of the risks may have made similar decisions about the format and cost of the material they borrowed. If so, this tendency could only have been reinforced when the new nightly borrowing rates increased the cost of renting books over the price of three shillings, and refused to lend items over six shillings nightly.

4.1.2 Reputation

The title page of the first catalogue promises the 'best Authors, in almost every branch of literature', providing assurances of both quality and subject coverage. Circulating Libraries thrived on offering the new, and making it quickly available. This was clearly a major selling point. However, the promise of adding to the library 'Every new performance' is tempered by the qualification 'on amusing or instructive subjects'. Lip service, at least, had to be paid to creating a respectable image, both for the activity of reading, and for the business providing access to the desired material.

Nevertheless, cultivating respectable images and attracting elite audiences does not seem to be a priority in the first two catalogues. The attempt to remove nightly borrowing in the c.1764 catalogue may indicate there were reservations about the clientele this attracted, but as the penny a night rate was reinstated by the time the c.1769 catalogue was issued, there is no evidence to suggest a long term plan to cultivate a more gentrified customer base. The title pages of the catalogues, as well as promising new books and the best authors, advertise practical information such as prices, location and opening hours.

While the c.1769 catalogue reinstates the nightly rate, it also includes a letter and essay which demonstrates, for the first time, the desire to create a respectable image for the Glasgow Circulating Library. The letter reads like an advertisement for the library, praising the new enlarged catalogue, as perhaps the largest ever published in the country, which includes not only the addition of new

material, but more importantly, of 'valuable' books (1769, p.3). This letter writer, who has

subscribed to the library for the last fourteen years, requests not a novel, but the more respectable,

History of the Emperor Charles V, by Dr Robertson. The essay begins by promoting the activity of

reading as especially advantageous for women. Those with beauty on the outside, may complement

this with the wisdom gained from books; those without beauty may compensate through reading

which cultivates virtue and affability. These sentiments, commonly expressed in eighteenth-century

conduct books of the time, would have been familiar to young ladies, especially of the middle

classes, used to being lectured on their behaviour. The writer of the essay is equally keen to

promote the advantages of reading to men. Through literature, men can learn how to avoid vice

and lead a virtuous life; reading is an amusement when life is good and a comfort when things go

wrong. Particular concern existed about the reading choices made by the young. The argument that

readers learn to emulate the good examples, and avoid the bad examples set out in literature was a

powerful counter-argument to such concern. The authenticity of the letter and essay is

questionable. It is just as likely that this was written as an advertising gimmick for the library,

attempting to reassure that women and the young would be steered in the direction of appropriate

reading material. In the c.1785 appendix, a note of thanks is inserted, under the name of J. Smith

(now John Smith, Jun), for the support the library has received from the 'Nobility, Gentry and public

in general' (p.78). Although it could be argued that all are equally thanked, regardless of status, the

deliberate mention of nobility suggests a desire to cultivate a more elite audience. Yet, this point

should not be exaggerated, most of this inserted note talks about 'enlarged plans', bringing items

monthly by coach from London, the availability of new reviews and magazines, and the advantages

to be gained by the 'trifling' cost of the subscription fees. While the commercial pressure to attract

as many subscribers as possible is occasionally balanced in the Glasgow Circulating Library catalogue,

by the desire to promote reading as virtuous, respectable, and exclusive, this does not seem to occur

in the same degree as can be seen elsewhere. In contrast, for example, to the catalogue for the

Minerva circulating library in London, no expensive prints or emblems have been identified in

adverts for the Glasgow Circulating Library. The overall emphasis remains on the practicality of

selling a service.

One way to promote the library, was to advertise the number of volumes it held and from the c.1769

catalogue, this appeared on every title page. This number relates, not to the separate titles found in

the catalogue, but to the total number of books held by the library. Judging by the difference

between the 1525 items in the c.1769 catalogue, and the 3,000 volumes advertised on the title page,

either a very large number of duplicate copies were held, perhaps particularly for the latest novels,

or this figure was much exaggerated in an attempt to attract more borrowers.   Including the items in the 1802 appendix brought the total number of separate titles in the collection to 4537, but the title page of the catalogue was advertising 10, 000 volumes. It is impossible to judge whether this number of volumes was ever held, but it undoubtedly sounded good to library users.

4.1.3 Catalogues and Stock

The first catalogues for the library were organised alphabetically using a combination of author, and abbreviated title.   No standard method for presentation existed. We see, for example, two history books by the same author, running in chronological order, presented in different ways. Item 316 in the catalogue for William Harris's An *Historical and Critical Account of the Life and Writings of James I.* uses 'Historical' as the first word for the entry. Item 317 for *An Historical and Critical Account of the Life and Writings of Charles I.* uses 'Harris' as the first word for the entry. The fact that these items run next to each other in the catalogue is the consequence of the catalogue only filing to the first letter, making it unnecessarily cumbersome to search for a specific item. Even if you know which keyword from the title to look under - sometimes titles beginning with 'an' are filed under 'a', others, as we have seen, file under the second word - it is still necessary to check every item under that letter. Additionally, without pre-existing knowledge, it is often impossible to predict content in an A-Z listing. The novel by Sarah Scott, for example, entered in the catalogue as *Description of Millenium Hall with the Character of the Inhabitants,* may lead an individual to expect a work of non-fiction.

From the c.1781 catalogue, titles are organised by subject heading foremost, followed by A-Z listing. The A-Z is still only to the first letter. On the one hand, if it is definitively known which subject heading a wanted item is filed under, the list of items to search through is smaller; but on the other hand searching under numerous subject headings under both author and title keywords for items only filed alphabetically to the first letter was found to be a time-consuming and frustrating process. Items filed under unexpected subject headings add further complications. The novel, *Yorick's Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (impossible to definitively say whether this is Sterne's original novel *Sentimental Journey* or the sequel written after his death *Yorick's Sentimental Journey Continued*)*,* for example, is filed under the broad non-fiction section, 'History and Antiquities of Great Britain, Ireland and Foreign Nations, Geography, Voyages and Travels, Lives, Trials, &c'. Presumably, it was thought to be travel writing, rather than a novel.

One advantage the introduction of subject headings offered was the ability to analyse which subjects the circulating library stocked most of, and whether there were identifiable changes in the library's holdings over time. The early catalogues showed a particular interest in plays. These were included in the A-Z list by title, but also provided in a separate section at the end of the c.1759 and c.1764 catalogue. The c.1778 catalogue, which still ran an A-Z organisation, considered plays important enough to create a discreet section, with item numbers running on from the main section. It was not until the c.1781 catalogue, however, that subject heading were properly introduced, and plays, rather than being given their own section, were incorporated within a broad arts and sciences section. The c.1783 catalogue used identical subject headings. The c.1785 appendix returned to an A-Z listing, as did the appendices for 1797-1802. This leaves three catalogues which can be used for comparison purposes, dating from 1781-1796.

Five subject headings were used:

Subject Heading	1781 Catalogue	1783 catalogue	1796 catalogue
History and Antiquities of Great Britain, Ireland and Foreign Nations, Geography, Voyages and Travels, Lives, Trials, &c.	470 (24%)	510 (24%)	801 (22%)
Arts and Sciences, Natural History, Philosophy, Trade, Husbandry, Poetry, Plays, Essays, Letters, & c. Entertaining and Critical	705 (36%)	823 (38%)	975 (27%)
Divinity and Ecclesiastical history	131 (7%)	135 (6%)	174 (5%)
Novels and Romances	665 (34%)	701 (32%)	1126 (31%)
Periodicals			555 (15%)

The last subject heading only appeared in the 1796 catalogue. The c.1781 catalogue lists 1971 items: of these, history, antiquities etc. had 470 titles (24%); arts and sciences etc. had 705 (36%); divinity 131 (7%); and novels and romances 665 (34%). Clearly, the library stock favoured the arts and science section and novels and romances. The c.1783 catalogue lists 2169 separate titles; history, antiquities etc. had 510 (24%); arts and sciences etc. 823 (38%); divinity 135 (6%); and novels and romances 701 (32%). Surprisingly, given the close association between novels and circulating libraries, the stock of novels has only increased by 36 items during this time, while the percentage share of overall stock has fallen slightly. In contrast the arts and science section has added 118 items and increased its overall percentage of stock. The 1796 catalogue lists 3631 separate titles;

history, antiquities etc. had 801 (22%); arts and sciences etc. 975 (27%); divinity 174 (5%); novels and romances 1126 (31%); and periodicals 555 (15%). Novels and romances are now clearly the biggest section with 151 more items than arts and sciences and the biggest percentage of stock. Yet at 31% overall percentage of stock has actually slightly reduced from the c.1783 catalogue. While the percentage of arts and sciences stock fell by 11%, this change is largely the result of the separate section for periodicals which has been introduced in this catalogue. Periodicals had previously been filed under arts and sciences, and the reduction in the size of this section can be understood to relate to a reorganisation of the catalogue, rather than a change in acquisitions policy. It should be noted that if the reorganisation had not taken place, the combined arts and science section and periodicals section would have accounted for 42% of stock. It seems likely that increasing numbers of periodicals and reviews were being purchased by the library; this may account for the growth of the arts and science section from 36% in the c.1781 catalogue to 38% in the c.1783 catalogue. Given the level of accumulative growth, the decision to list periodicals in a separate section is unsurprising. Interestingly, the first catalogue to list in detail all the volumes and dates of the *Monthly Review* is also the first catalogue to list the library's contents under subject headings. It could be that the increasing impact of periodical reviews on people's reading choices, influenced the Glasgow Circulating Library's decision to organise catalogues into subject headings. It must be noted, however, that the subject headings do not correspond in any obvious way, to the organisation of the *Monthly Review*.

4.1.4 Access and Availability

Impressive opening hours are advertised from 8am to 8pm daily. It would appear that for anybody working long hours, a commercial circulating library close to town offered significant advantages. The opening hours of the Glasgow Circulating Library contrast notably with those at the Fort William Subscription Library which opened only twice a week, for one hour. Morrish draws attention to the dangers of these opening hours for an eighteenth-century library. He notes that if 'libraries wished to attract readers whose only leisure time was in the evening, they would have to use candles, oil lamps, or gaslight in order to function'; additionally 'some heating was beneficial to stock, librarians and readers'. However, in heating and lighting a library, fire, and even explosion became a real danger (Morrish, 2006, p.493). Perhaps these risks account in part for the restricted opening hours of many subscription libraries.

As we saw in an earlier section, circulating libraries across Britain did sometimes have special arrangements in place for subscribers from the country. From the earliest c.1759 catalogue,

Glasgow Circulating Library allowed readers from the country the use of four books at once, instead of one, to be changed weekly. No readers were allowed more than one new book at a time but the loan period was for eight days. This would have enabled country subscribers visiting once a week to return new publications within the specified time period. However, by 1802 there were changes to the borrowing conditions at Glasgow Circulating Library and country visitors were no longer being offered the same flexibility for borrowing new material. New items could still only be borrowed one at a time, but now had to be returned within two days. It is also set out for subscribers from Glasgow that a new magazine or review may be kept only one night, indicating that some flexibility on this loan period may have been available to country visitors. While, the enhanced fee for town residents enabled the loan of 4 books at once, country visitors were entitled to borrow eight at the same price. Yet, the two-day loan period for new items made these unavailable to country visitors.

There is evidence throughout the catalogues that the Glasgow Circulating Library struggled to get the requested material into the hands of borrowers, and to convince subscribers to return their material in time. The c.1774 catalogue first mentions that readers, from town and country, should transmit a list of six or more items to ensure they got an item of their choice. By the c.1778 catalogue, readers in the country are requested to send a list of ten or twelve item numbers, although this would be to receive a maximum of four books. By c.1781 town subscribers are also being asked to submit ten or twelve item numbers; even although those paying the enhanced fee could only borrow a maximum of three books. Within a couple of years the number had increased again, town and country subscribers should submit a list of twelve to eighteen books. By 1796 subscribers had to submit a list of between twenty and thirty item numbers. The increasing need to submit a larger and larger list of books indicates a growing problem with satisfying borrower demand. While the new, more expensive rates offering increased borrowing capacity from around 1774 onwards may account for greater usage of the service, it seems likely that this problem had more to do with unreturned books. From the first c.1759 catalogue, a polite request is set within the reader conditions that readers return their books quickly, so other subscribers may access them. By c.1774 a special note is inserted to gentlemen who had failed to return books after reading them, claiming that these items were wanted by other readers, and constituted a daily loss to the library which had recently borne the financial burden of producing an enlarged catalogue. In the c.1778 catalogue, the message is repeated, slightly extended to announce a resolution to accommodate subscribers, which requires a timely return of borrowed items. The reader conditions also set out that subscribers must give names and addresses. Although, one would presume that names and addresses for subscribers had always been recorded, it is possible that not all nightly borrowers had

a permanent abode, and this could indicate a tightening up of procedure to prevent items going missing. For the first time, women are accused of having overdue items, when a similar message is addressed to both ladies and gentlemen in the c.1781 catalogue. By 1783, the message seems more threatening. As a consequence of subscriber complaints about unavailable items, the proprietor of the library will ensure that reading conditions are strictly adhered to. On the one hand, library users are admonished and threatened with punishment; for example, lending to a non-subscriber could result in forfeiting your subscription. On the other hand, they are courted and promised wonderful things; especially those paying the more expensive subscription who will have first opportunity to place their names in a list kept in the library for newly available items.

4.2 Stirling's Library

When Walter Stirling died in 1791 he left to the City of Glasgow one thousand pounds, a house in Miller Street, his own collection of books and a share in the Tontine Society. The purpose of this legacy was to create and maintain a library for the people of Glasgow. The library was to be managed by a directorate of thirteen, with the Lord Provost as president and other members drawn from the Town Council, the Merchant's House, the Presbytery of Glasgow, and the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons.

The intention was that the one thousand pounds be used to buy land, or be invested, to bring a yearly income which would cover the costs of the library and librarian. At least twenty pounds yearly was to be spent on new books, and as much more as possible after settling the library's other expenses. The library was first housed in a room in St. Enoch Square, rented at twelve pounds a year from the Faculty of Physicians and Surgeons, open on lawful days between 12 and 3. Stirling had intended access to be for all, with items consulted in the library and only in special circumstances lent out. This would have required an order by two of the directors and the borrower to leave a deposit to the value of the book. Unfortunately, despite Stirling's intentions, the bequest was too small to cover the expenses of running a library. The appointed directorate, therefore, decided to authorise the lending of books to subscribers.

Only one catalogue within our time period has been located. From this 1805 catalogue we learn that loan periods for Stirling's library were two weeks for an octavo or smaller format, four weeks for a quarto, and eight weeks for a folio. It also indicates fines for late returns - sixpence per week for the first four weeks, per volume, rising to a shilling per week - and a strict policy in upholding library

rules. While the first librarian appears to have been somewhat lackadaisical in carrying out his duties, Mr Pate who held the post between 1796 and 1808, is reported as carefully examining books for damage upon return (Mason, 1885, p.64). Undoubtedly, this would have been a worrying experience for those struggling financially. Subscribers would not be allowed use of the library if fines were due or damaged items remained unpaid for, and if library items were lent to a non-subscriber, the risk was forfeiture of subscription.

4.2.1 Borrowing Costs

The 1805 Stirling's Library catalogue sets out only four rules, making it less informative than either the Glasgow Circulating Library's or the Glasgow Public Library's, which we will look at in the following section. It does not, for example, tell us about subscription fees. Luckily, Thomas Mason's *Public and Private Libraries of Glasgow*, published in 1885 can fill in many of these details. Subscribers would not pay monthly, or yearly, as they did at the Glasgow Circulating Library, rather this would be a life-subscription, costing three pounds and three shillings. (1885, p.62). 202 subscribers enrolled in the first year. In March 1793 the fee was increased to five pounds and five shillings and in 1816 to ten pounds and ten shillings, but six years later was reduced to seven pounds and seven shillings. For those who managed to obtain a lifetime membership at the original entry rate, this was a definite bargain; the equivalent money at Glasgow Circulating Library would have paid for just three years. Yet many would never have access to such money and the lifetime basis of membership must have encouraged an exclusive user group.

The exact number of books subscribers were allowed to borrow is not specified but according to James Denholm's *An Historical Account and Topographical Description of the City of Glasgow and its Suburbs*, each life subscriber paying five pounds and five shillings was allowed to take home whatever book or books they chose, provided the cost of the items did not exceed the value of half their subscription (Denholm, 1797, p.175). If books borrowed exceed this amount, the subscriber must also leave a deposit. According to Denholm, non-subscribers also had a right to borrow, provided they gave a receipt, deposited the value and agreed to comply with the regulations. However, this author also quotes the number of volumes held at the library in July 1797 as between six and seven thousand. This contrasts notably with Mason's figures of 3705 in 1795 rising to 5, 899 volumes by 1816. Limited sources of information exist for Stirling's Library at this time. Such contradictions indicate that some of these sources should be treated cautiously.

4.2.2 Reputation

Stirling left 804 books valued at £160. This collection was particularly strong in history and included a number of books in Latin (Mason, 1885, p.45). Mason notes that Stirling's intention was for the library to contain 'rare and curious' books and that 'he hated novels so heartily that he had not read one in forty years' (1885, p.35). As previously noted, libraries can try to attract or repel particular sections of the community. The desired image and clientele can be communicated through a collection development policy. While Stirling's bequest would appear to indicate democratic impulses, the created institution may have reinforced notions of reading as an exclusive activity. These original 804 books were added to and the collection had increased to 2,000 volumes when a new catalogue was produced in 1792. Mason notes that a copy of this catalogue, probably the only one in existence was still held by the library. Unfortunately, this item was missing from the Mitchell library and not found several weeks after the initial enquiry. Mason also claims that no copies of the 1805 catalogue have survived. Luckily, this is not the case as this is the catalogue currently being worked from, available to view in the Glasgow University Special Collection. This catalogue indicates the important part donations made to the Stirling's Library collection, with book donations made since 1791 listed at the end of the 1805 catalogue. Clearly donations were welcome and, perhaps, conferred a certain amount of respect upon the donor, who may have taken pleasure from having their gift publicly acknowledged. If this is the case, the item donated would be carefully chosen, with the intention of creating a particular type of image for the contributor.

4.3 Glasgow Public Library

While Glasgow Public Library's name may seem to suggest a library free to all, this was in fact a subscription library created in 1804. To gain access to the Glasgow Public Library members had to pay an entry fee of twelve shillings in addition to the annual subscription of ten shillings and sixpence.

4.3.1 Membership

A subscription book for the library has survived for the period, which is held at the Glasgow Archives at the Mitchell Library. At the end of its first year there were 163 members. 54% may be categorised as merchants, 22% as manufacturers. The next largest group define themselves as writers (6%); the lack of lawyers within the list of employments in the subscription list led me to the conclusion that these writers were probably within the law profession. The OED provides a definition of writer (specifically Scottish) as 'an attorney or law-agent; an ordinary legal practitioner

in country towns; a law clerk' (OED, 1979). 4% defined themselves as clerks; a possibility, again, that they belong to the legal profession. 3% were in the medical profession, including three surgeons, a physician and a dentist. While access to literature was nothing new for the medical and legal professions, it is likely that the library offered new opportunities to many merchants and manufacturers. The term merchant may be used to define operations on significantly different scales, and within Glasgow Public Library membership there may have been merchants with different social status and different levels of wealth. At least some are likely to have fallen into the criteria suggested by St Clair when he noted that 'many of the members of such institutions were probably the first generation in their family to have had regular access to newly published books' in contrast to a restricted diet of 'school books' and 'old canon authors' (2004, p.250).

Nevertheless, the democratic role of the Glasgow Public Library should not be exaggerated. The entry money and subscription fee would have placed membership outwith the reach of most. Although it is set out in the rules that if any person who has been a member for five years should suddenly become unable to pay the annual subscription, they should have the use of the library for free, curators of the time were responsible for judging claims. Libraries had a long association with the middle-classes and their social aspirations, and it seems likely that being unable to pay a subscription fee would be an embarrassment to be hidden rather than shared. Under these circumstances, many may have chosen to quietly cease membership rather than seek free membership on the grounds of financial hardship. In general, too, fees for late returns, and damaged or lost books were high, further placing libraries beyond the financial scope of many.

4.3.2 Reputation

Another way to place barriers between a library and certain, less desirable, social groups is to create an exclusive image. The desire of Glasgow Public Library to create a respectable and virtuous image for itself is obvious from the title page of the 1810 catalogue. Reading is elevated as a pursuit of self-improvement and cultivation of the intellectual faculties:

> "Let it be impressed upon your minds - let it be instilled into your children -
> That the attainment of Man's true rank in the Creation, and his present and
> future happiness, individual as well as public, depend on the cultivation,
> and proper direction of the Human Faculties" (1810, title page).

Both the good of the individual and of mankind depend upon the 'Human Faculties' being properly directed, and it is implied, the reading material for this purpose can be found at Glasgow Public

Library. The purpose of this institution is to 'provide the means of diffusing literature and knowledge' (p.v).

4.3.3 Stock

Glasgow Public Library and its patrons were not uninterested in lighter or more entertaining works. In the *Annals of Glasgow* James Cleland notes that novels and periodicals were so popular that a reservation system had to be put into place so that the first applicant was the first to receive the item. Borrowers would fill in their name and address on one side of a ticket, with the name of the requested book on the other side. When received by the librarian, he marked on the number of the application. The ticket was then posted when it was the applicant's turn to receive the book, who would have to respond within a given time, or the next applicant in the list would be contacted (Cleland, 1817, p.333).

Unfortunately, Glasgow Public Library's 1810 catalogue is an A-Z list of items, with no distinction between different types of literature, and a detailed analysis of the catalogue is beyond the scope of this project due to time pressures. It is therefore impossible to say what percentage of the stock were novels. However, a separate *Abstract of the Regulations of the Glasgow Public Library* was issued in 1805, which details the first books made available by the library. The collection began with 53 items. This list contains many of the expected texts for a subscription library, such as Gibbon's *Decline and Fall,* and the *Works* of the historian William Robertson. Hume's *History of England* was purchased, while a copy of Locke's *Essay on Human Understanding* was donated. Out of the 53 items, 4 (8%) are either novels, or can be expected to contain novels. These items were Henry Fielding's *Works*, Tobias Smollett's *Works* and Henry Moore's *Zelucco* and *Edward.* In 1805 a further 83 books were added to the collection, 14 (17%) of these were either novels or the works of writers who had written at least one novel. Novels by Fanny Burney and Maria Edgeworth were added. A copy of Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* was donated, and his *Works* were purchased by the library. Interestingly, two items were added by Charlotte Smith which were aimed at children - *Rural Walks for Young Persons* and *Rambles Farther.* Glasgow Public Library offered a juvenile library at the back of their 1810 catalogue, from which subscribers could borrow one additional item, to be kept no longer than four days. This was a period that saw a significant increase in literature aimed at children, and a number of works were intended to be read and discussed with a teacher figure (often the mother). It was believed that individuals could learn from example, and that literature could as easily offer these examples as real life. According to Kirsteen Connor, the novelist Margaret Oliphant was taught by her mother at home using books borrowed from circulating libraries (2010,

p.10). For those who could not afford to buy books, access to a junior borrowing library could have been an invaluable resource, for both parent and child. It must be noted, however, that the juvenile libraries attached to commercial circulating libraries attracted the contempt of many female education writers of the time who worried that the stock prioritised amusement over moral instruction (Rowe, 2005, p.56).

4.4 Book Selection and Stock Organisation in Glasgow Libraries

While the contents of a catalogue indicate the information resources available to eighteenth-century borrowers, they tell us little about the circumstances surrounding book selection. Key questions remain unanswered about whether borrowers had direct access to a library's content. Jacobs, as we saw earlier, suggested that the format of physical items could inform and direct borrowers, and that the layout of a catalogue could have similar consequences (Jacobs, 1999, p.52). However, none of the three catalogues being considered use format in any organised way. Schurer, in contrast, suggested that organising shelves by format was probably a decision based on practical considerations. As well as efficiency in shelf-space, Morrish notes that 'promiscuous shelving of taller books with shorter deprives the taller of lateral support (they may collapse) and the shorter may slip from view (2006, p.220). By 1781, the Glasgow Circulating Library catalogue was organised by subject heading, followed by an A-Z list. Starting with the first entry in the catalogue, each item was numbered. While the catalogue gives no indication of format, for practical reasons, it seems likely that items would be shelved by size, with item numbers running numerically within these sections. With a rapidly expanding collection, items in appendices would initially be awarded the next available item number, but when new, full catalogues were issued, with added items placed under their relevant subject heading and filed alphabetically, all texts in the collection had to be renumbered. This process would have required a considerable investment of time in the organisation of the library. This could be seen as an indication that open access was offered, and that this was an effort to make books easier to locate for visitors to the library. The advertisement in the 1796 catalogue of a reservation book available, within the library, for subscribers to recommend or request the purchase of new items, requires access to a library space of some kind. Yet, little evidence is available to suggest a willingness to embrace browsing. No mention is made of the physical library space and catalogues repeatedly ask for borrowers to send lists of numbers to request books.

The question of access has relevance because the browsing experience in a physical library involves individuals removing items from shelves to peruse. They may look at item descriptions, examine table of contents or turn to back-of-book indexes. Having the physical book to hand allows borrowers to skim through pages or turn to a chapter of particular interest. All of these options help library users decide whether a book meets their requirements. While little information is available about the space Stirling's Library operated from, or whether browsing was available, each item in the catalogue has been assigned a shelfmark. Interestingly, instructions at the beginning of the catalogue explain how to interpret these marks:

> In this catalogue, the Places of the Books in the Library are distinguished by
> letters and figures. The letters refer to the Press, the figures immediately after it
> to the Shelf, and the figure or figures following to the Place of the Book in the
> Shelf (1805, p.1).

These instructions tell us that items in the library have been awarded a topographical location, an actual place on the shelf, in a particular Press, rather than under a subject heading. Morrish explains the mechanics of fixed location: 'each book bore a unique press-mark, usually letters and numbers, which established its settled place. A typical mark might appear as "12.A.3", that is, the third book from the left on shelf "A" in the twelfth case'. Morrish argues that expanding knowledge and the increasing rate of book production, rendered previously used medieval subject categories inadequate, while fixed location systems and shelving by format were difficult to combine with useful subject arrangement (2006, p.219). An 1833 edition of the Stirling's catalogue shows the same kind of system in operation, but the shelf marks for specific items have all changed. Such systems work well for closed collections, but are organisationally unfit for rapid expansion. While Stirling's Library's rate of expansion was noticeably slower than that of the Glasgow Circulating Library, it did, according to Mason, grow from 2000 volumes in 1792 to 5899 volumes in 1816.

Wheras the Glasgow Circulating Library possibly organised its books for the benefit of those working in the library and to ensure a quick and efficient service for customers, instructions within the Stirling's catalogue suggest this knowledge was to have relevance for subscribers by directing them how to find books. These instructions are missing from the 1833 catalogue, perhaps indicating unmediated access was no longer available. However, these are speculative conclusions based on the interpretation of minimal information.

What we can say is that choosing a book from a catalogue is a different experience from browsing in a physical library, often providing few clues as to content and fewer still to tone or subject depth.

The catalogues for the Glasgow Circulating Library and for Stirling's Library may for a multi-volume work provide an abbreviated title for each volume but this is as extensive as their entries get. In contrast, the catalogue for Glasgow Public Library provides far more clues, with extensive entries for multi-volume works which go on for several pages. While entries for novels are brief, a title, perhaps followed by an author, more serious items have entries which seem to reproduce extended tables of contents. In fact, if you open this catalogue at a random page, you may have to turn back multiple pages to find the full title of the item being described, and the index letter which you have reached. This may make the catalogue clumsy for a quick finding aid, but it can also provide something akin to the browsing experience of a physical library. An item's table of contents may spark interest in a title previously unknown to the catalogue browser, or it may suggest an item previously of interest is not actually to their taste. Manley notes that this catalogue seems to have been compiled by the librarian, James Kennedy, who later worked on, although never completed, a bibliography of British medicine (2012, p.107). The creation of the Glasgow Public Library catalogue would have exercised a similar skill set.

4.5 Library Catalogues and False Attribution

A library's role in relation to information is generally thought to be one of facilitating access, rather than as primary producer. Yet, library catalogues are sources of information. Much of this either relates to details transcribed from physical items, or to the physical location of information sources. Yet, especially in the eighteenth century, the tendency to abbreviate titles or reproduce in a library catalogue information gained from other sources, points to the role that such catalogues can play in perpetuating misinformation. Mark Vareschi argues in an interesting article that library catalogues and advertisements played an important part in establishing Daniel Defoe as author of certain works. While *Robinson Crusoe* was quickly attributed to Defoe, other fiction, such as *Moll Flanders* and *Roxanne* appeared anonymously well after their release (Vareschi, 2012, p. 36). Vareschi looks at how the circulating libraries of Francis and John Noble fostered knowledge of Defoe's authorship of *Roxana* and *Moll Flanders* through advertising and cataloguing. He notes that 'a single instance of naming the author or genre of a text may not constitute a lasting attribution: attribution requires repetition. As a text moves through space and time with the name of an author or genre repeatedly attached to it, the text is more readily assumed to be by the named author or in the named genre' (Vareschi, 2012, p.38) Through repeated advertisements the idea of Defoe as author of specific texts took shape.

In a time when establishing authorship was more difficult; when new novels were often published falsely claiming to be the works of well-known authors, this could represent a danger for library catalogues. While searching for novels written by Fanny Burney in the Glasgow Public Library catalogue, an unexpected item was found: 'Harcourt, a novel, by Miss Burney.' Published in 1780 this work advertised itself as 'Harcourt, a sentimental novel. In a series of letters. By the authoress of Evelina'. This work, however, was not by the 'authoress of Evelina' (See Raven, 2015, p.12) and by attributing this work to Fanny Burney, Glasgow Public Library produced false information which may have encouraged many to read an item on the basis that they liked Burney's other work. The time lapse of thirty years between the production of this novel, and its false publicity in an 1810 catalogue suggests the potential longevity of incorrect information. Similarly, while looking for works by Laurence Sterne in the Glasgow Circulating Library catalogue, the item 'Sterne's Fables for Grown Gentlemen' was singled out for further research. This was quickly revealed to be the work of a friend of Sterne's, John Hall-Stevenson. There may have been an effort to imitate Sterne's style and this could have added to the confusion. Nevertheless, these are unlikely to be the only instances of false attribution in the catalogues, and would offer an interesting area of future research.

4.6 Stock Availability at Glasgow Libraries

A key question this work has set out to answer, is whether eighteenth-century libraries made a difference to the availability of information. One way to judge this across the three Glasgow libraries is to look at the reading of a few key individuals who had access to a range of reading material and ask whether library members could access similar texts. To achieve this, a reading list had to be compiled and the Reading Experience Database UK (RED) proved an invaluable resource. This enabled the identification of two people from the period, where extensive information is known about their reading. Anne Grant, born in Glasgow in 1755, moved to America in 1758, and returned to Scotland when she was 14. While in America she was reading Milton, Shakespeare, Pope and Addison at a very young age. Aged 24, she was married to a Church of Scotland minister and moved to Laggan. It was only when her husband died in 1801 that she turned to writing professionally to help support her family (Feldman, 1997, p. 251). John Drummond Erskine, 4th baronet of Torrie, Fife, was born in 1776 (*Gentleman's Magazine,* 1836, p. 539). He was a writer for the East India Company and later a landowner (RED). The RED returned information about 22 texts read by John Drummond Erskine, and 63 texts or authors discussed by Anne Grant. As these texts were to be checked against

three library catalogues, the oldest of which was published in 1796, all material published after that date has been excluded.

Two lists have been compiled. Where a specific text has been identified, this has been added to list one. Where author only has been mentioned, this has been added to list two. Where a generic title, such as *Works* or *Poetry* has been mentioned, this has been entered on list two only. In addition, all authors mentioned in list one, have also been added to list two. This resulted in 47 texts (19 for Erskine, 28 for Grant) being added to list one, and 49 authors being added to table 2. These RED results have been further supplemented by a few texts known to have been relevant to two women of the period. The first of these women is Mary Somerville, a well-known and respected eighteenth-century mathematician. Somerville's interest in maths was stimulated by the puzzles in women's magazines. Originally she found it difficult to pursue her studies because of a lack of suitable information sources but her brother's tutor provided her with a copy of Euclid's *Elements of Geometry* which she realised would help her 'to understand some parts of Robertson's *Navigation'* (Somerville, 2001 [1873], p.39). Both these items have been added to the lists. Somerville also takes exception to a certain type of conduct-book writing addressed to young women. She notes that 'it was the fashion of a set of ladies such as Mrs Hannah More, Mrs Elizabeth Hamilton and Mrs Grant of Laggan to write on female education. I detested their books for they imposed such restraints and duties that they seemed to have been written to please men' (Somerville, 2001 [1873], p.74). Mrs Grant refers to Anne Grant, whose own reading makes up a principle part of the reading list. These three names have been added to the author list, table two.

The second woman's reading considered is that of Jane Griffin, later Lady Franklin, wife of Arctic explorer, John Franklin. As a 19 year old, Griffin made up an impressive educational plan for herself. Penny Russel notes that Griffin was in a privileged position which provided her with both the leisure to read and the access to such texts (2004, p.254). The question of whether a library could have aided access to this reading material for less privileged men and women is of clear relevance to this study and justifies the inclusion of Griffin, and her educational texts, the only non-Scottish figure in the compiled list. The final lists, included as appendices one and two, have 51 texts (table one) and 56 authors (table two).

Checklisting the items in table one against the three Glasgow library catalogues, we find 24% of the items were completely unavailable, that is 76% of texts were available from at least one library. Stirling's Library offered the best selection with 69%, Glasgow Public Library had 45% of texts

available, while the Glasgow Circulating Library had only 33% of items from the compiled reading list. The items read by John Drummond Erskine proved the least available. 47% of these texts were unavailable across all three libraries. That is, only 53% of his reading material would be available to library users in Glasgow. Glasgow Circulating Library users would have fared worst, with only 5% of items available. Glasgow Public Library offered greater availability with 26%, while Stirling's Library offering an impressive 47%.

Anne Grant's items were much more obtainable, in fact, only 4% of her items were completely unavailable across all libraries. The Glasgow Circulating Library offered 57%, Glasgow Public Library 61% and Stirling's Library 85%. Mary Somerville and Jane Griffin had two items each on the list. None of these were available at the Glasgow Circulating Library. Somerville had one item available through Stirling's Library. Griffin had one item available at both Stirling's Library and Glasgow Public Library.

When we turn to table two, we find 14% of authors had no items in any of the three libraries. That is 86% of authors had one or more work in at least one of the catalogues. The Glasgow Circulating Library still offered the poorest selection with 46%; Glasgow Public Library had 59%; with Stirling's Library performing best with 78%.

When deciding whether a text was available or not, the assumption was made, that the Works of an author would include all writing by that author. On that basis, Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* was assumed to be within his seven volume *Works;* and John Gregory's *A Comparative View* was assumed to be present in a four volume version of his *Works.* The presence of a number of such volumes in Stirling's Library accounts in great part for its high availability of material from table one. Yet, often authors do not print complete works at the beginning of their career, and a different criteria - such as a demand for newer books - may have produced a different result for these three libraries. Stirling's Library catalogue may, for example, have offered novels within collected works but browsing the catalogue did not reveal a single stand-alone novel publication.

A search for some novels of the latter half of the eighteenth century demonstrates this point (See appendix 3). The intention was to search for works which were both popular and modern. With the latest appendix for the Glasgow Circulating Library dating to 1802, texts after that time were useless. Two of the most popular novelists of the 1790s were therefore selected - Charlotte Smith and Anne Radcliffe. This was supplemented by two other popular novelists who had published over two

decades - Fanny Burney and Horace Walpole. Out of 10 Charlotte Smith novels published between 1788 and 1798, Glasgow Circulating Library held all 10 (8 were within the 1796 catalogue, 1 in the 1797 appendix, and 1 in the 1798 appendix); Glasgow Public Library held just 2; and Stirling's library none. A search for 5 Anne Radcliffe novels published between 1789 and 1797 found again all held by the Glasgow Circulating Library (3 in the 1796 catalogue, 2 in the 1797 appendix); 4 were held by Glasgow Public Library; and none by Stirling's. Out of three Horace Walpole novels, published between 1764 and 1785, only one was held at both Glasgow Circulating Library and Glasgow Public Library. Stirling's Library held a five volume *Works* of the author. Finally a search for 3 novels by Fanny Burney published between 1778 and 1796 found all three held by both the Glasgow Circulating and Glasgow Public Libraries; none were held by Stirling's. The search for these 21 novels found that 19 were held by Glasgow Circulating Library and 10 were held by Glasgow Public Library. Assuming all three Horace Walpole novels could be found within his *Works*, Stirling's Library held only 3 out of 21 items.

These findings would certainly appear to reinforce existing assumptions that novels made up a larger part of the stock of circulating libraries, than in subscription libraries. If the Glasgow Circulating Library is representative of other circulating libraries, it also shows the importance of new publications. We see novels appearing in the Glasgow Circulating Library in the same year of publication. Certainly, the argument, discussed earlier, that novels were ephemeral items to be temporarily hired rather than bought, would be supported by our findings. The subscribers to the Glasgow Circulating Library simply paid to borrow books, with no long term interest in the collection. In contrast, those paying an entry fee to Glasgow Public Library, effectively owned a share of the books, and this may have encouraged the buying of less ephemeral items. Stirling's Library was set up with a remit to make available 'rare and curious' books, and this tendency may have been reinforced by making subscription on a life-time basis, encouraging a long-term view of the collection. Additionally, libraries may have social and civic aspirations that control stock development. Glasgow Circulating Library's objective, in contrast, is to make a profit by supplying what people want, and quickly. Novels were clearly more in demand than other texts and the result may have been that anybody wishing to pursue more rigorous reading, and only able to borrow by the night, found their reading choices more restricted. Nevertheless, we should not forget our earlier findings that 'Novels and Romances' accounted for only 31% of the 1796 catalogue.

5. CONCLUSION

This project set out to test a number of assumptions which have been made regarding eighteenth-century libraries. A multi-pronged approach which both reviewed existing scholarship and conducted primary research has been adopted. The conclusions reached have been based on an analysis of the published rules and regulations of eighteenth-century libraries, the contents of stock, and the organisation of catalogues.

The study began with an overview of the differences and continuities across a range of UK library catalogues, before moving on to a more specific and detailed study of three Glasgow libraries. A close examination of catalogues for these institutions brought a number of previously unconsidered issues to light, most notably questions about false attribution of authors to texts. Unfortunately time pressures left much material uncovered and these catalogues offer fascinating opportunities for further research.

5.1 Research Questions
This research pursued five questions.

5.1.1 What Kind of Lending Libraries Existed in Eighteenth-Century Britain?
Libraries attached to churches or universities had a long history in the UK but these did not cater to the general public and their desire for access to a variety of literature. A range of formal and informal arrangements existed for lending and exchanging books in eighteenth-century Britain. Libraries in inns, coffee-houses, boats and even cow barns indicate a genuine and universal desire to share textual knowledge. Evidence suggests that these desires were intensified by the growth of middle-class Britain and may be linked to increasing social mobility and the pursuit of self-improvement.

Commercial circulating libraries sprang up to cater to these demands - businesses which intended to make a profit. Subscription libraries also appeared around the country, sometimes in rural areas where no circulating library existed, or sometimes in order to satisfy literary or social ambitions that circulating libraries could not meet.

5.1.2 What were the Restrictions on the Use of Eighteenth-Century Libraries?

The greatest restriction on the use of eighteenth-century libraries was financial. An annual subscription fee for a circulating library was a considerable investment of money, beyond the scope of many. Subscription libraries were more expensive again, often requiring the payment of entry money in addition to the annual subscription. A further barrier to subscription libraries was that payment methods were often inflexible, requiring the annual sum in full. Circulating libraries, in contrast, had a range of payment methods and subscription packages. While the more expensive subscriptions often represented better value for money for those who could afford it, the ability to rent books by the night enabled library use for those further down the social ladder, with little or no hope of scraping enough together for an annual fee.

Yet, subscription fees were not the only financial barrier to library use. Fines for items returned late could add up and worse still, lost or damaged items had to be paid for. The cost of books was prohibitively high and the fear of incurring an unpayable debt may have discouraged use. Individuals may have taken the decision not to borrow more expensive items, or multi-volume works. If so, the ability to access information was not uniform across all users of a single library, let alone all UK libraries.

Other barriers existed to membership which were not financial. Country visitors often found it difficult to access services because of loan periods. On occasion they were completely banned from membership. Social barriers may have restricted access for certain groups. Despite the publicity regarding women and circulating libraries, existing evidence suggests female membership was low. Subscription library membership for women was lower still. Often they were excluded from being committee members and in rare circumstances completely banned from membership. Some libraries were certainly more open to women than others, with several advertising their suitability to receive female visitors.

Restrictions on library use were numerous. Financial, social, geographical and gender barriers all impaired use for certain groups, at certain times, for certain libraries. However, no universal picture emerges for the UK as a whole.

5.1.3 What were Contemporary Attitudes towards Eighteenth-Century Libraries?

Richard Sheridan's play *The Rivals* (1775) referred to circulating libraries as the 'evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge'. This undoubtedly reflected the great anxiety felt in some quarters about

what texts libraries made available, and to whom they made them available. Questions about methods of reading fed into vitriolic rhetoric which feared that books were being thoughtlessly consumed rather than carefully contemplated. Inappropriate fiction was believed to exert undue influence on the young, women and the lower classes.

Yet, libraries were not regarded in the same manner by all. Accounts of enthusiastic but poor individuals gaining access to Samuel Richardson's novels reveal none of these ambiguities. Circulating libraries could open up a new world for those previously denied access to imaginative literature: 'Christopher Thomson was a "zealous" Methodist until he discovered Shakespeare, Milton, Sterne, and Dr Johnson at a circulating library' (Rose, 2001, p.31). Despite occupying a precarious position in middle-class society, Jane Austen and her family show no concern about using circulating libraries.

A dual picture emerges but undoubtedly subscription libraries were considered more acceptable, with less ephemeral and inappropriate items. Membership was likely to be in the name of the male head of household and perhaps this was perceived as a further safe-guard that items would be filtered before reaching the vulnerable.

Libraries could deliberately cultivate an image to attract a particular clientele. Messages could be conveyed by book collection policies, choice of bindings and, where budget permitted, the architecture of buildings and inside furnishings. Messages could also be conveyed through rules and regulations, or as discussed in relation to the Glasgow Circulating Library, through the insertion of reader's letters of questionable authenticity.

5.1.4 What Effect did Contemporary Attitudes have on the Information Available for Lending?
The findings of this project confirm that circulating libraries and subscription libraries were viewed differently, with more anxiety surrounding the commercial ventures and their stock. However, while some eighteenth-century commentators articulated strong negative views about circulating libraries, even at time verging on a hysterical diatribe, evidence suggests that these opinions were far from universal. A range of scholarship has focused on an anxious rhetoric against circulating libraries, with little effort to look at the workings of actual eighteenth-century libraries. This has created an exaggerated picture of contemporary attitudes towards these institutions and the differences between the stock and membership of circulating and subscription libraries has been overstated.

The study of three Glasgow libraries indicated that the Glasgow Circulating Library had more novels and modern works than either the endowed/subscription Stirling's Library or the Glasgow Public Library. Nevertheless, the tendency to offer only a binary opposition of subscription versus circulating library, distorts the many subtle differences between libraries. Stirling's Library was set up with a remit which ensured modern novels were largely avoided. This may even have been a stimulus to the creation of the Glasgow Public Library, the patrons of which, may have wished to avoid a commercialised environment, while nevertheless desiring access to the most popular novels of the time.

While it is taken for granted that subscription libraries, instigated at local level by influential members of the community, had a range of social objectives and were concerned to create a respectable image for the institution and for the self-improving activity of reading, the objectives of circulating libraries were primarily commercial. However, circulating libraries were aware of anxieties surrounding their businesses and attempted to reassure their clientele that their libraries were respectable and offered opportunities for self-improvement. Consequently, similar language is often used in the promotion of all types of library.

Focusing on Glasgow libraries revealed that the Glasgow Circulating Library was less concerned than many other libraries of the period with cultivating an elite image. Nevertheless, we still see the insertion of material into catalogues which was designed to promote the virtues of reading in a way that claims respectability for the library.

5.1.5 What Strategies did Eighteenth-Century Borrowers have for Selecting Material?
A number of questions about access to the eighteenth-century physical library remain partially answered at best. Prints and illustrations of eighteenth-century libraries often present large romanticised spaces which emphasise sociability, rather than access to stock. The space taken up by books in these prints is often limited. While a number of library catalogues indicate access to reading rooms was available, the ability to browse items within these spaces is not certain. It seems likely that many libraries, especially smaller facilities, would have been closed access with no opportunity to browse through physical items. Consequently, reader selection may have been largely based on browsing library catalogues.

A range of review magazines were popular in eighteenth-century Britain. Many could be borrowed through libraries, and these may have influenced reader's selection of material. Library catalogues

in these instances would have been utilised as a finder aid. Non-fiction items tended to be filed under surname of author, followed by abbreviated title, although this was not always the case. Fiction tended to be filed under title, perhaps followed by author. Inconsistent organisation of these catalogues may have made finding items a cumbersome process. Searching under multiple subject headings, for both title and author proved a time consuming process when trying to find out what stock was held by the Glasgow Circulating Library.

The question of how readers made their book choices depended to a great extent on the knowledge with which they approached library catalogues. In some cases, unless there was pre-existing knowledge, library users would have been confused about whether they were ordering fiction or non-fiction. Even where the subject matter is clear, catalogues rarely give indication of tone or depth. However, the level of information provided varied from library to library and library catalogues providing more detailed entries may have had a significant impact on how borrowers selected their material. The Glasgow Public Library, in particular, provided library users with an experience similar to browsing in a physical library by supplying extensive information about more serious texts.

Other catalogues were organised by format or gave an indication of the format next to the item entry. Pre-existing knowledge that different formats of book catered to different needs may have played a part in book selection. Yet, it seems just as likely that decisions not to borrow folios or quartos would be a consequence of their monetary value; rather than relating to these volumes attaining an elite status based on their place at the top of a shelf, or the equivalent top of the catalogue. Similarly, octavos and duodecimos may have been more popular because their loss or damage would not bear such a heavy financial burden - not to mention that often quartos or folios were viewed as equivalent to two items borrowed at once and would certainly have been less flexible in a larger household where more than one person wished to read at a time.

5.2 Final Conclusion

The findings of this study provide no clear answers. On the one hand comparing stock of three Glasgow libraries suggested that the circulating library offered the least choice in more serious reading material and the greatest availability of the latest published novels. This would appear to confirm many of the criticisms levelled at circulating libraries by contemporary commentators and perpetuated in much modern scholarship. On the other hand, however, novels accounted only for around one third of titles in the catalogue. Subscribers would have had access to texts on a whole

range of subjects and evidence suggests that many eighteenth-century men and women enjoyed a well-rounded selection of literature, embracing both novels and more serious works.

It would be easy to focus on the revelation that circulating libraries offered fewer opportunities to pursue more intellectually demanding works, but although the stock of Glasgow Circulating Library did not offer the same range of non-fiction as that available at Stirling's Library and Glasgow Public Library, its borrowing conditions were more manageable. Furthermore, with novels accounting for only one third of titles, the range of access to material from more popular non-fiction genres, such as history and travel, should not be underestimated.

However, it is also the case that any presumption that subscription libraries could do little to aid social mobility must be treated cautiously. The story of cotton spinner Charles Campbell and the social advancement of one of the members of his reading group suggests that access to information can assist in overcoming social barriers.

Appendix 1 - Author/Title Table

Reader	Author/Title	Glasgow Circulating Library (1796 catalogue)	Stirling's Library (1805 catalogue)	Glasgow Public Library (1810 catalogue)
John Drummond Erskine	James Beattie - Scoticisms arranged in alphabetical order	X	X	✓
	Francois Bernier - History of the late revolution of the the empire of the Great Mogol	X	X	X
	Adam Dickson - An essay on the causes of the present high price of provisions, as connected with the luxury, currency, taxes, and national debt	X	X	X
	Joseph Emin - The Life and adventures of Joseph Emin	X	X	X
	Andrew Fuller - An apology for the late Christian missions to India	X	X	X
	Hafiz - The works of Hafez	X	X	X
	Claude Adrien Helvetius - A treatise on man, his intellectual faculties and his education	X	X	X
	Horace - Quinti Horatii Flacci opera. Interpretatione et notis illustravit Ludovicus Desprez	X	✓	X
	Javahir at-talif fi navadir at-tasanif = the Asiatick miscellany: consisting of original productions, translations, fugitive pieces, imitations, and extracts from curious publications, Vol.2	X	X	X
	William Jones - Grammar of the Persian language	X	✓	✓
	William Jones - Poeseos Asiaticae commentariorum libri sex, cum sppendice; subjicitur Limon seu miscellaneorum liber	X	✓	✓
	Jean de la Bruyere - Les caracteres de theophraste et de La Bruyere	X	✓	✓

Reader	Author/Title	Glasgow Circulating Library (1796 catalogue)	Stirling's Library (1805 catalogue)	Glasgow Public Library (1810 catalogue)
John Drummond Erskine	Niccolo Machiavelli - The works of Nicholas Machiavel	X	✓	X
	Bernard de Montfaucon - Antiquity explained, and represented in sculptures	X	✓	X
	Ovid - Metamorphoses,	✓	✓	X
	John Richardson - Grammar of the Arabick language	X	X	X
	John Sinclair - Observations on the Scottish dialect	X	X	X
	James Steuart - An inquiry into the principles of political oeconomy	X	✓	X
	William Tennant - Indian recreations	X	✓	✓
Anne Grant	James Beattie - The minstrel	X	✓	✓
	Bible	X	✓	✓
	Samuel Butler - Hudibras	✓	✓	✓
	Thomas Campbell - Pleasures of Hope	X	✓	X
	Marcus Tullius Cicero - Fortieth oration	X	✓	X
	John Dryden - Tales from Chaucer	X	X	X
	Francis Garden - Sketches	X	✓	✓
	Johann Wolfgang von Goethe - Sorrows of Young Werter	✓	X	X
	Oliver Goldsmith - Vicar of Wakefield	✓	✓	✓
	John Gregory - A comparative view of the state and faculties of man with those of the animal world	✓	✓	X
	William Hayley - Life and Letters of William Cowper	X	✓	✓
	Homer - Odyssey	X	✓	X
	David Hume - Essay Concerning Human Understanding	✓	✓	✓

Reader	Author/Title	Glasgow Circulating Library (1796 catalogue)	Stirling's Library (1805 catalogue)	Glasgow Public Library (1810 catalogue)
Anne Grant	James Macpherson - Poems of Ossian	✓	✓	✓
	John Milton - Paradise Lost	✓	✓	X
	Alexander Pope - Dunciad	✓	✓	✓
	Alexander Pope - Essay on Man	✓	✓	✓
	Samuel Richardson - Clarissa	✓	X	X
	Duke de la Rochefoucauld - Maxims and Moral Reflections	X	✓	X
	Jean Jacques Rousseau - Eliosa	✓	X	X
	Jean Jacques Rousseau - Emile	X	✓	X
	Tobias Smollett - Expedition of Humphrey Clinker	✓	✓	✓
	Tobias Smollett - Roderick Random	✓	✓	✓
	Laurence Sterne - Sentimental Journey	X	✓	✓
	Laurence Sterne - Letters from Yorick to Eliza	✓	✓	✓
	Jonathan Swift - Gulliver's Travels	✓	✓	✓
	James Thomson - The Seasons	X	✓	✓
	Edward Young - Night Thoughts	✓	✓	✓
Mary Somerville	Euclid - Elements of Geometry	X	✓	X
	John Robertson - Elements of Navigation	X	X	X
Jane Griffin	Clark & Pyle - Paraphrase of the Gospels and Epistles	X	X	X
	Isaac Watts - Improvement of the Mind	X	✓	✓

Appendix 2 - Author Table

Author	Glasgow Circulating Library (1796 catalogue)	Stirling's Library (1805 catalogue)	Glasgow Public Library (1810 catalogue)
James Beattie	✓	✓	✓
Francois Bernier	X	X	X
Robert Burns	✓	✓	✓
Samuel Butler	✓	✓	✓
Thomas Campbell	X	✓	X
MarcusTullius Cicero	X	✓	✓
Clark & Pyles	X	X	X
William Collins	X	X	X
William Cowper	✓	✓	✓
Adam Dickson	X	✓	X
John Dryden	✓	X	✓
Joseph Emin	X	X	X
Euclid	X	✓	X
Andrew Fuller	X	✓	✓
Francis Garden	X	✓	✓
Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe	✓	X	X
Oliver Goldsmith	✓	✓	✓
Anne Grant	X	✓	✓
Thomas Gray	X	✓	✓
John Gregory	✓	✓	X
Hafiz	X	X	X
Elizabeth Hamilton	X	✓	✓
William Hayley	✓	✓	✓
Claude Adrien Helvetius	X	X	X
Homer	X	✓	X
Horace	X	✓	X
David Hume	✓	✓	✓
William Jones	X	✓	✓
Jean de la Bruyere	X	✓	✓
James MacPherson	✓	✓	✓
Niccolo Machiavelli	X	✓	X
John Milton	✓	✓	X
Bernard de Montfaucon	X	✓	X
Hannah More	✓	✓	✓
Ovid	✓	✓	X
Peter Pindar	✓	X	✓
Alexander Pope	✓	✓	✓
John Richardson	X	✓	X
Samuel Richardson	✓	✓	✓
John Robertson	X	X	X

Author	Glasgow Circulating Library (1796 catalogue)	Stirling's Library (1805 catalogue)	Glasgow Public Library (1810 catalogue)
Duke de la Rochefoucauld	X	✓	✓
Elizabeth Rose	X	X	X
Jean Jacques Rousseau	✓	✓	X
William Shakespeare	✓	✓	✓
William Shenstone	✓	X	✓
John Sinclair	✓	✓	✓
Tobias Smollett	✓	✓	✓
Laurence Sterne	✓	✓	✓
James Steurt	X	✓	X
Jonathan Swift	✓	✓	✓
William Tennant	X	✓	✓
James Thomson	X	✓	✓
Isaac Watts	X	✓	✓
Helen Maria Williams	✓	✓	✓
Mary Wollstonecraft	✓	✓	X
Edward Young	X	✓	✓

Appendix 3 - Novels Table

Author	Title	Year	Glasgow Circulating Library (1796 catalogue)	Stirling's Library (1805 catalogue)	Glasgow Public Library (1810 catalogue)
Charlotte Smith	Emmeline	1788	✓	X	✓
	Ethelinde	1789	✓	X	X
	Celestina	1791	✓	X	X
	Desmond	1792	✓	X	X
	The Old Manor House	1793	✓	X	✓
	The Wanderings of Warwick	1794	✓	X	X
	The Banished Man	1794	✓	X	X
	Montalbert	1795	✓	X	X
	Marchmont	1796	1797 appendix	X	X
	The Young Philosopher	1798	1798 appendix	X	X
Anne Radcliffe	Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne	1789	✓	X	✓
	A Sicilian Romance	1790	✓	X	X
	Romance of the Forest	1791	✓	X	✓
	Mysteries of Udolpho	1794	1797 appendix	X	✓
	The Italian	1797	1797 appendix	X	✓
Horace Walpole	Castle of Otranto	1764	✓	✓	✓
	The Mysterious Mother	1768	X	✓	X
	Hieroglyphic Tales	1785	X	✓	X
Fanny Burney	Evelina	1778	✓	X	✓
	Cecilia	1782	✓	X	✓
	Camilla	1796	✓	X	✓

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