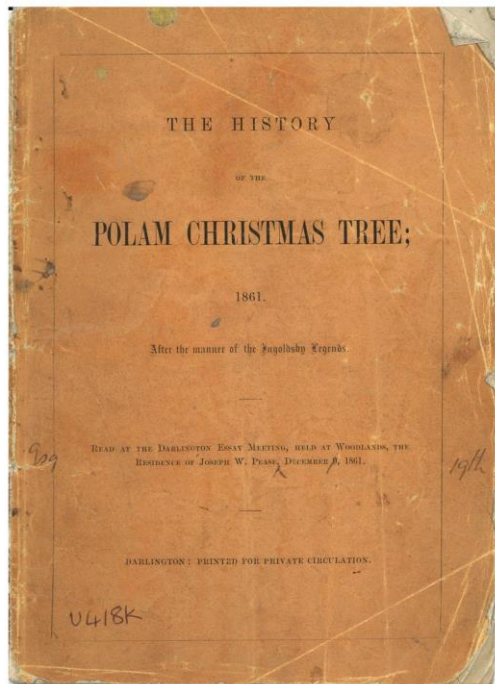


The History of the Polam Christmas Tree



The History of the Polam Christmas Tree is a tiny booklet in verse telling the story of the Polam tree, read at the Darlington Essay Meeting, held at Woodlands, the residence of Joseph W. Pease, December 19th, 1861.

Although trees were introduced to this country from Germany in 1800 it was not until Queen Victoria in 1848 made it fashionable and in 1853 the Polam Hall Christmas Tree was probably one of the first Christmas trees in the area. It was mentioned in the diary of Edward Pease, on December 21st 1853. He wrote "Invited to the Procters this evening to see what was called a Christmas Tree. I did not feel inclined to go; about seventy were present."

At this time the Procter sisters, Jane and Elizabeth were running the Procters' Boarding School for girls which operated from Houndgate in what is now the Houndgate Townhouse. It was a Quaker School and moved to the Polam Hall site in 1854. The Christmas Tree Party became a tradition which continued until World War I.

The poem describes all the excitement and preparations...