Challenging the assumptions which underlie an understanding of the ‘Romantics’ as solitary and anti-sociable, and Romanticism as representing the rejection of Enlightenment sociability, this volume introduces sociability to the field of Romantic literary and cultural studies. The volume engages with Jürgen Habermas’s model of the ‘public sphere’ which emphasizes the coffee-house and club as models of an older, masculine eighteenth-century sociability, focussing on the changing nature of sociability in British radical culture of the 1790s and on the gendered nature of sociability. In a range of essays which examine modes of sociability as diverse as circles of sedition, international republicanism, Dissenting culture, Romantic lecturing, theatre and shopping, the volume transforms our understanding of Romanticism by exploring the social networks of such central Romantic figures as Anna Barbauld, Frances Burney, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Godwin, William Hazlitt, Anne Lister, Robert Merry, Joseph Priestley, John Thelwall and Mary Wollstonecraft.


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To Benjamin Penny
and Susan Conley
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