



# CHERRYBURN TIMES

*The Journal of The Bewick Society*

## OUR RED NIGHTCAP YEAR



*Fields near Cherryburn, September 2020. Photo courtesy Peter Quinn*

Thomas Bewick favoured the occasional slow Sunday: a time to sit in his garden, do a little exercise and contemplate nature. As a signal perhaps to family and friends he wore a red nightcap.

In line with the UK pandemic restrictions the Bewick Society cancelled all planned events for 2020. We have lost a planned walk, lectures, a book launch, a visit to a gallery and our usual Cherryburn events. With Cherryburn closed, their Artist in residence scheme was put on hold, a part of the celebrations for the centenary of the Society of Wood engravers. Covid restrictions in early summer made it impossible for us to visit Middleton North Farm as planned. In the meantime the Bewick collections of the North East have been largely unavailable to the researcher, the curious and the curator.

This issue of the *Cherryburn Times* is themed around the lost events and experiences of 2020. Here you will find a review of our President's new book; the winner of the Bewick

Prize; a report from Liverpool on an archive treasure; a summer holiday letter from Tynemouth; a rare book with an early image of football in Newcastle and a walk on a farm.

Writing of his apprenticeship years (*Memoir* p.50) Bewick lays out his prescription for good physical and mental health: 'I regularly pursued my walks & while thus exercising, my mind was commonly engaged in considering upon plans about how I should conduct myself in life & of forming resolutions on such as I approved of & of strictly acting up to them.'

This year of social distancing, isolation, and local walks has given us plenty of time to pursue our walks, reflect and plan. There are clearly going to be challenging times ahead. As Cherryburn, our libraries, galleries and museums prepare for re-opening the Bewick Society remains ready to support their efforts; encourage new displays and research; inspire new audiences.

# UNPACKING PEARSON, THE CAUTIONARY TALE OF A VICTORIAN BOOK CONFECTIONER

by Peter Quinn

In April 1931 the historian Walter Benjamin gave a talk on the radio: ‘Unpacking my Library:’ Sitting surrounded by boxes of books he tries to organise his thoughts on book collecting. ‘Of all the ways of getting hold of books, the most laudable is deemed to be writing them yourself.’

You can borrow books and almost inevitably not return them. You can buy books. The book buyer must, Benjamin tells us, exercise the finest of instincts.

‘Year numbers, place names, formats, previous owners, bindings and so on, all these things must speak to him – and not just to convey dry information, either; they need to sound in concert, and depending on the harmony and clarity of that sound he has to be able to recognize whether such and such a book is his or not.’

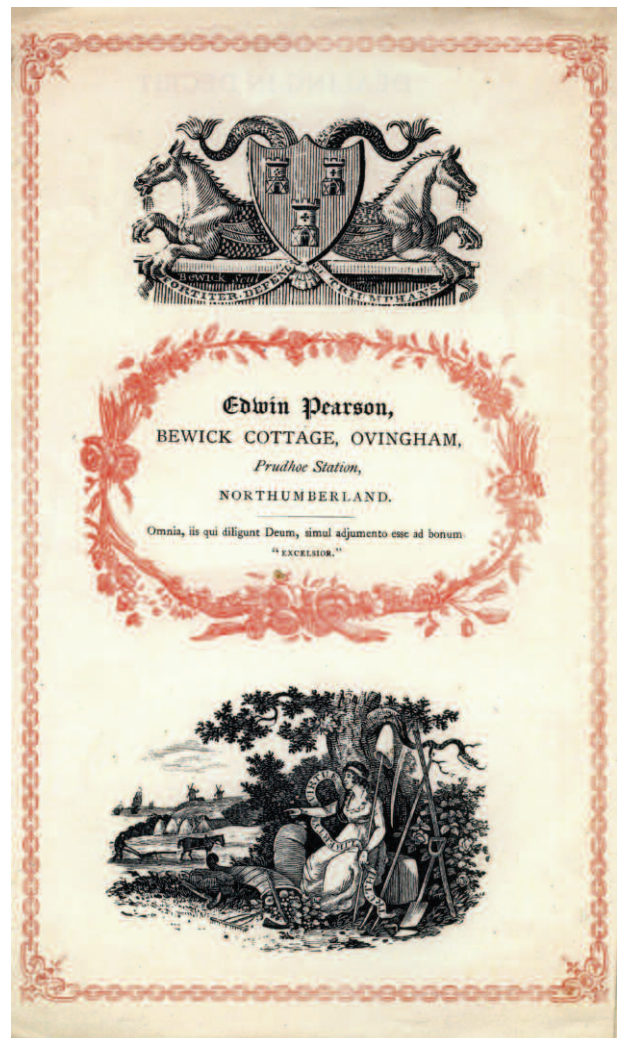
In Nigel Tattersfield’s *Dealing in Deceit* we learn how the Victorian bookseller and rogue Edwin Pearson hoodwinked collectors and has left in his wake disharmony and obscurity.

Edwin Pearson appears as a figure of Victorian melodrama: he is ‘dealing in deceit’ on the title page; a creature of the shadows on page 7; on page 9 his life and career is said to read as a cautionary tale. Chapter One, *A Promising Start*, takes us to 1867 when Pearson has had some success with the reprint of *A Pretty Book of Pictures*. In Chapter Two, *Snares for the Unwary*, the story takes a darker turn. By Chapter Three, *Expectations Unfulfilled*, bereavement, and divorce feature in a downward spiral that ends in a workhouse death.

My own encounter with Edwin Pearson took place in the spring of 1992. I was attempting to get to grips with the Nineteenth Century local art world of the North East of England, conducting research funded by the University of Sunderland. In Tyne and Wear Archive is a large holding of the correspondence of Thomas Dixon (1831-80). Dixon was an artisan cork-cutter with literary and artistic enthusiasms. He had attracted my attention as the Sunderland-based correspondent of John Ruskin. His name often appears in the biographies of poets, artists, thinkers of Victorian England. He is most often found in the footnotes, as is the case in *Dealing in Deceit* (footnote 30 on page 65).

Dixon’s persistence and curiosity widened his circle of correspondents far beyond industrial Wearside. His letters deal with subjects such as the education of the working man; Pre-Raphaelite poetry; the efficacy of life-vests; physiognomy and the lives of the idle rich. A number of factors led Dixon to Pearson’s Bewick Repository: his enthusiasm for the Memoir; his role as mainstay of the Sunderland Subscription Library; his belief in the importance of portraits in understanding the work of men of genius. Dixon however was not a book hoarder: he read books and then gave them away. There are a number of instances of him gifting books: for instance, to William Bell Scott he gave a copy of *Leaves of Grass*; Thomas Carlyle received Bewick’s *Memoir*.

Dixon’s letters from Edwin Pearson concern practicalities. He ordered a copy of Pearson’s portrait of Thomas Bewick. This was the stipple-engraved portrait by Henry Hoppner



Leaf printed in red and black, devised by Edwin Pearson, possibly as a keepsake, c.1867. The wood engravings are all by Thomas

Bewick and the impressions probably from electrotypes in Pearson's collection after the original blocks in the possession of Thomas Hugo. The arms at the top were engraved in 1788 as the masthead device for the Newcastle Advertiser; the floral border to the centre was engraved in 1777 to decorate trade cards; the figure

of Liberty at the foot was engraved by ex-apprentice Charlton Nesbit in 1797 after the design by Bewick as the drop-head title device for *The Oeconomist*, Thomas Bigge's influential periodical.

Actual size: 210 x 130mm.

Meyer after James Ramsay created for Pearson in 1865. A parcel was sent to Sunderland and the portrait print arrived with a crease in it. Pearson advises damping the back of the print to flatten out the crease. Other letters relate to an offer of books from Dixon. We learn that Dixon does not own the books and Pearson is irritated by the confusion and delay this causes. There is a letter with a black border; mention of moving premises; best wishes from Mrs Pearson and notes in preparation of the visit to London of Dixon's son. It all seems very inconsequential but was part of the evidence to show that

after he read the *Memoir* Dixon became an advocate for the importance of Thomas Bewick. In 1866 Dixon and Pearson exchange a number of letters, more follow in 1868 and there is a final flurry of letters from 1872. Dixon's letters to others frequently show developing friendships and respect. However the back and forth with Pearson remained formal. The final letter dated March 1880 ends uncharacteristically however. Pearson writes 'Hearing your name in London this week reminded me of an old friend I should be pleased to hear from you.'

Nigel Tattersfield conjures the figure of Edwin Pearson for us out of the dust and smoke of Victorian England. He was a 'book confectioner' (page 49). He has left a legacy of confusion and doubt. Tattersfield unpicks the twists and turns of Pearson's career as a seller of dodgy editions.

'The ease with which a Pretty Book had captivated wealthy collectors of Bewickiana appears to have tempted him... to indulge the bibliophiles' acquisitive instincts by covertly publishing books with cuts by Bewick, but in a form in which they had never originally been published and under titles which were clever figments of the imagination.' (page 23)

Benjamin would have understood and shuddered.

As the first coronavirus lockdown loomed in the Spring of this year the Bewick Society was forced to cancel events. One of the first casualties was the *Dealing in Deceit* book launch planned for the Keel Row Books of North Shields. Writing this at the beginning of the second lockdown we have no way of planning when such an event might take place. In

the meantime you can add a copy of *Dealing in Deceit* to your own collection by ordering from the bookshop online (<http://keelrowbooks.com/>) by phone or indeed by letter. (Keel Row Books, 11 Fenwick Terrace, Preston Road, North Shields, Tyne & Wear, NE29 0LU)



#### REFERENCES

- Tattersfield N.** (2020) *Dealing in Deceit. Edwin Pearson of 'The Bewick Repository' Bookshop 1838-1901*, The Bewick Society, Newcastle upon Tyne.
- Benjamin W.** (2008) *Unpacking My Library, One Way Street and other writings*, translated by J.A. Underwood, Penguin Books pp 161-171.
- Thomas Dixon papers, Accession No. 717, Tyne and Wear Archive, Newcastle.

## THE BEWICK PRIZE 2020

Despite the pandemic the 82nd Exhibition of the Society of Woodengravers has been on tour around the country. Selection has recently been underway for the 83rd exhibition. As part of the process the selectors award the Bewick Prize for a small wood engraving. And the winner is Kathleen Lindsley, for her print "Storr Swans" (86x84mm)

Kathleen is based on the Isle of Skye where she runs Ravens Press Gallery. Their website is <http://www.ravenpressgallery.co.uk/>

'Born in Gibraltar in 1951, studied fine art at Newcastle Upon Tyne. Introduced to wood engraving by Leo Wyatt in 1974. Resident in Scotland since 1976 and full time in Skye since 1987.

'I employ the medium of wood engraving, an original relief printing process, to interpret and record the area in which I live, including landscape and wildlife. The blocks are usually end-grain boxwood, sometimes lemonwood. I edition my prints on fine papers using an Albion hand press. Sometimes I work to commission in illustration and design. Private Presses I have worked with include The Fleece Press, Wild Hawthorn Press- in collaboration with Ian Hamilton Finlay, Whittington Press, Black Pennel Press, Partick Press, Perpetua Press and Folio Society.'



'Storr Swans' by Kathleen Lindsley

# AESOP ON MERSEYSIDE

## A VISIT TO THE HORNBY COLLECTION LIVERPOOL

by Peter Osborne

Last year I bought a copy of that sumptuously produced tribute to Bewick's *Aesop* created by Graham Williams and Iain Bain in 1980.<sup>1</sup> Having enjoyed the delights of the typography and printing I turned to the introduction. There, basing his comments on Bewick's *Memoir* account, Iain discussed the authorship of the Aesop cuts. He said that while some preparatory drawings (actually 16) are in the NHS collection, there are forty-one in the Hornby Library at Liverpool.

That called out for further investigation and publication if, as I thought, they had not been widely shown before. A trip to Merseyside led to the Hornby Collection attached to the Central Library and to Bewick riches. These included several copies of Aesop and a fine *Bewick Scrap Book* of material collected by Henry M Mather from the Hugo sale of 1867.<sup>2</sup> Most significant are the 41 drawings pasted into an 1818 copy of *The Fables of Aesop* which was part of the bequest to Liverpool City Library on the death of Hugh Frederick Hornby of Wavertree in 1898.



Opposite p.212 Transfer drawing for schoolboy vignette, the 'wrong sum'

The bequest was both large and magnificent for Hornby had been a passionate collector of fine illustrated books. Among his interests were illustrated books of fables, of which he had a valuable spread, from Caxton through Ogilvy, Barlow and Croxall to Bewick and beyond. He had an 1818 Bewick with seaweed receipt and *Old Cloutie*, an 1818 Royal, without *Old Cloutie*, and an 1823 edition. It is the second that interests us because, to quote the Collection catalogue, 'There are, inserted in this copy, 41 of the original pen, ink or sepia sketches by Bewick, these being placed against their relevant woodcuts.'<sup>3</sup> The original owner of this extraordinary book had recreated the 1818 *Aesop* by binding in 30 extra blank pages on which were pasted the Bewick drawings, some two per page, but all facing the relevant vignette or Fable cut.

The catalogue usefully continues, 'Some of the drawings have been signed 'TB' and others have been made on the backs of envelopes addressed to T Bewick.' The latter point

is of interest: not only does it complement our knowledge of the craftsman's unwillingness to waste useful materials, like his box-wood fragments turned into tiny vignettes, but it lends weight to two matters; the leading role of the master in designing the Aesop cuts and the fact that he may sometimes have continued this work at home.

But first, who made up the book? There was a long tradition in Liverpool of collecting Bewick's process drawings that he otherwise tended to treat largely as trash. The book - and picture- dealer Vernon befriended the Bewicks as early as 1801. The correspondence is printed in Robinson.<sup>4</sup> He sent the present of a cup to Robert as well as an album for Thomas to paste in his drawings. Our *Aesop* was clearly bound together as it is much later. Could it have been Henry Mather, who collected into the other Liverpool treasure, the giant album? Or could it have been Hornby himself?<sup>5</sup> We do not know but both items illustrate the continuing interest in Bewick's work on Merseyside.

Thomas Bewick's signature, which looks genuine, appears on several of the inserted drawings. It has the rising lead-in line to the top of the 'T', which is therefore shaped more like a 'J', and the lower curlicue on the riser of the 'B', such as are seen on the cover of this Journal. Did he sign them for Vernon? Otherwise why did he sign what he considered trash? The drawing style looks to be his, employing sharp dark details to foreground figures and much softer marks for the background. There is his characteristic way of drawing middle ground branches with separated diagonal strokes for their twigs.<sup>6</sup> But the clinching factor is the drawing for the naughty schoolboy vignette on page 212, which has the boy holding a slate on which he was written a sum with the wrong answer. The drawing has this too, but also two other elements: a trial of the wrong sum and a drawing of a human bottom. It is surely unlikely that an apprentice would have done this, especially as it has got as far as a transfer drawing. It must have been the master, who we know to have had a penchant for the mildly scatological, and who was probably persuaded by his family before it went into print to underplay the naughtiness. It is still there in *Aesop* but so faint as to be hardly visible.

According to Bewick's account in the *Memoir* chapter 15 he began to draw designs on the wood" for *Aesop* as he recovered from his illness of 1812, sitting 'at the window at home'. He does not mention making the preparatory drawings that must have preceded working on the wood but the Schoolboy vignette drawing and several others show that he did so. Indeed the inserted drawings show that Thomas Bewick himself provided many ideas and sketch designs for *Aesop*. The Hornby collection includes a number of sheets that include design development where an initial idea is refined towards a finished state. For example sketches for the cat and playful kittens on page 108. One sketch has only three kittens but the other has the squabbling bundle much close to the print. The cat, by contrast, shows the 'simplicity of manners... and plain common sense' alluded to in the neighbouring text. This illustrates Bewick's thought process whereby he brings out the nature of the mother by contrast with the unruliness



p.345 Husbandman & stork, Catalogue illustration.

of her kittens. It underlines the seriousness of purpose in which designs for cuts were made or refined by him to illustrate the teachings of the book.

In the early drawing for the headpiece of the *Preface* Bewick has drawn the signpost with its quattrain in place but has not yet put in the misty waste land to the right. The later addition of this wildness brings out the contrast between principled law and order on the one hand and confusion on the other. Similarly the drawing for *The Two Frogs* (p.198), seems to be a visualisation of the composition, with a drawn oval in place, but with the two frogs only indicated as a trial. Most fascinating are the two drawings for *The Boys and the Frogs* (p.375). One, clearly an early stage, has fewer boys and the other, which is a transfer drawing, has the crowd, but also redresses the landscape to hold the eye on the foreground drama.

These rough working drawings led up to a reversed finished drawing ready to be transferred on the block. Examples at different stages include more finished drawings not yet reversed, reversed drawings without sign of transfer and many finished transfer drawings with varying degrees of detail. For example the reversed drawing for the bee vignette is indeed much finer than the print itself.

While many of the reversed drawings have indication of oval in which they would they would be printed, there appear to be some with a different format indication. It is possible that this indicates that drawings for a previous project were being used in preparation for the 1818 book. It is possible that

indeed Robert Johnson had some involvement with such an earlier project and that these differently formatted drawings may be some sort of remnant of that. A thorough study of Bewick's formats would be valuable. The choice of a wider format in the published book is close to the golden section and thus parallels the classical influences in the illustrations.<sup>7</sup>

The signs are that Bewick was working out exactly what he wanted to be cut, though in some cases his finesse is not carried through in the final print, which may suggest that when he was not fully recovered his strict supervision could slip. Bewick clearly intended the dog on a cushion (p.104) to emphasise the theme of friendship in the Application above. To do this he had the dog's ears flopping slightly out and its head turning more towards us, as if in welcome, but the assistant doing the cut has not brought this out.

Bewick emphasizes in the *Memoir* (Chapter 15) that the drawing he executed on the wood was 'fine' so as to guide the assistants doing the cutting in detail. The evidence of these drawings is that he himself was in the habit of creating and developing the ideas for his cuts, some quite probably at home in the evening. His assistants followed his designs closely but occasionally failed to replicate his finesse which would have brought the cuts still closer to the thought in his fables and applications. The Hornby assemblage is a clear proof of the care and thought that he put into this and offers useful evidence of his working procedures.



p.375 The Boys and The Frogs, Catalogue illustration.

#### Footnotes

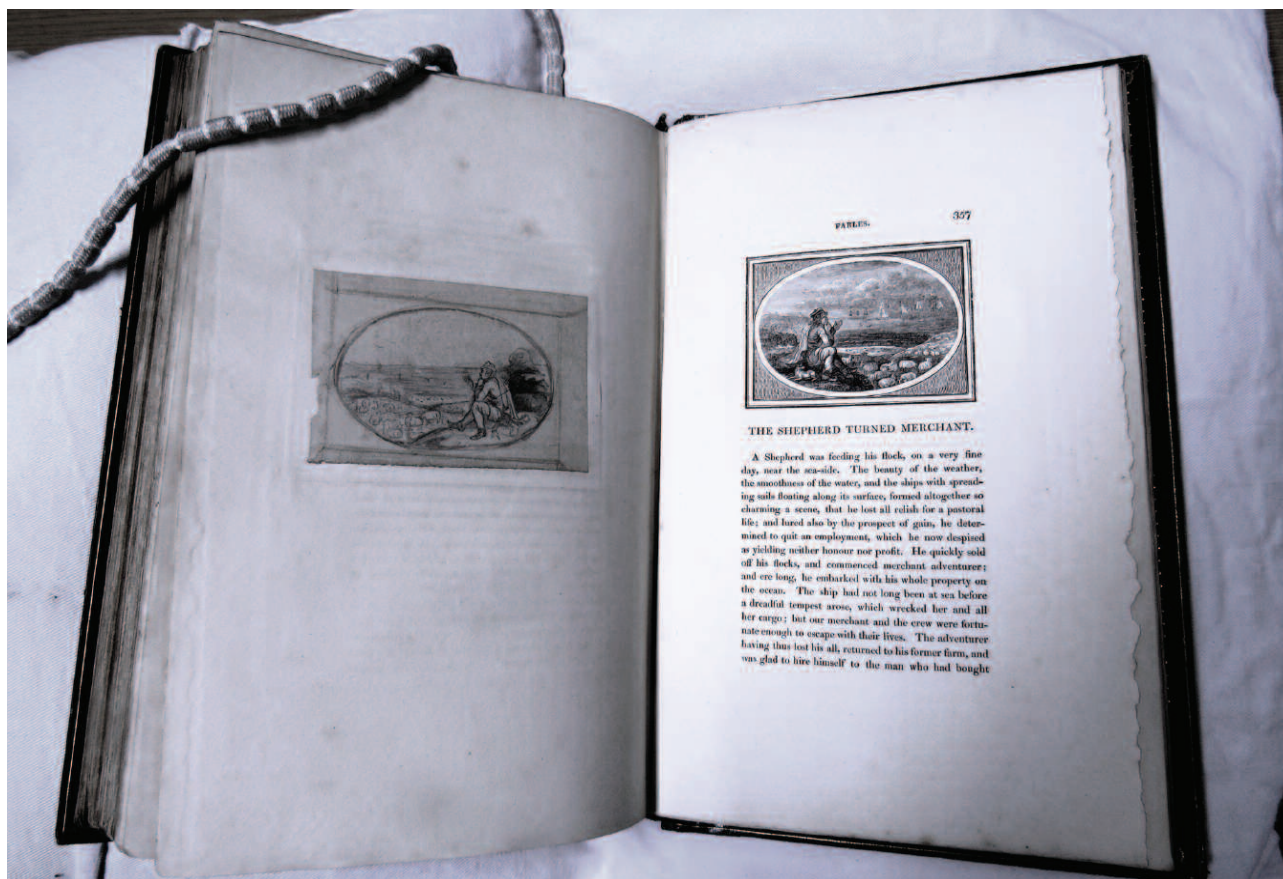
1. Bain, Iain and Williams, Graham (1980). *Thomas Bewick's Fables of Aesop and Others*. Proofs printed by R. Hunter Middleton, book printed by Graham Williams. Edition of 80 boxed sets containing 19 proofs and the book, and 50 copies of the book alone. The Hornby collection is also mentioned in Bain, I. (1981). *The Watercolours and Drawings of Thomas Bewick and his Workshop Apprentices*. London: Gordon Fraser, Appendix 3, p.224
2. The Scrap Book includes, inter alia, a Chillingham Bull, a January 1824 receipt page, Kyloe Ox, letters and bills.
3. *Catalogue to the Hornby Art Library*, Curran H and Robertson C, 1906
4. Robert Robinson, *Thomas Bewick, His Life and Times*, Newcastle, 1887, pp109-114 quotes the correspondence between Bewick and Vernon. Since Bewick frequently destroyed his preparatory drawings, the existence of so many relating especially to the last Aesop cuts suggests that he made similar donations after 1823.

5. Hornby's main trade dealer was J S Arthur, principal partner in Edward Howel's shop in Church Street, Liverpool, quite a few of Hornby's Bewick items came from the famous Hugo sale. Information kindly supplied by Steven Dearden, Team Leader, Central Library, Liverpool.
6. Iain Bain and others have attributed drawings to Thomas and various individual apprentices, but I do not know of descriptive analyses to justify attributions. In the present drawings there are some with darker overall backgrounds similar to those attributed to Harvey - presumably on the grounds of his tendency to dark chiaroscuro, as seen in his work for Northcliffe. But those here appear to be the result of a change of drawing medium when the draughtsman replaces soft pencil shading by grey wash so may well still be Bewick. The only cut in the Florin Press collection identified in workshop records as by Harvey does not show sign of a shift to his later distinctive tonal style.
7. See *Cherryburn Times*, summer 2019, pp 8-9.

# Hornby Library Bewick Aesop Drawings, Brief Catalogue

*The inserted drawings in full with the relevant page number.*

Preface	Headpiece pennant on rock, missing landscape right	228 256	Sketch for farmer vignette, + pipe drawing for tramp and fire vignette
Introduction	Headpiece rock with fabulists ' names Ditto, creatures as per cut, foliage adjusted	301	Detailed compositional drawing for 'The Eagle and the Crow'
Contents	Rough headpiece sketch: monkey, easel, etc. Numbers above	315 323	Wash drawing for the 'Deer and the Lion' Ditto for 'The Fox and the Sick Lion'
18	Frog vignette, side/back view	327	Ditto for 'The Horse and Ass'; no rider
64	Dog reading vignette, paws lifted	329	Possible transfer drawing for 'The Hawk and the Farmer'
70	First idea for mountebanks vignette		
92	Detailed transfer drawing for bee vignette	339	'The Dove and the Bee' rough drawing + figure sketches
104	Transfer drawing for vignette of dog on cushion	345	'The Husbandman and the Hawk'
108	2 ideas sketches for cat & kittens; 3 kittens then huddle	346 350	Vignette drawing for bull and resting couple Idea sketch for vignette of crowding piglets
112	Rough transfer drawing for vignette of cat, fish and basket	351	Transfer drawing (different format) of man, dog & calf vignette, thumbnails
130	Drawing, not transfer, for dog and moon vignette	357	Transfer drawing for 'The Shepherd turned Merchant'
138	Fine pen drawing for 'An old filtering stone' vignette	358	Tiny atmospheric scrap for snowy cottage vignette
150	Reversed drawing for cat vignette	361	Wash drawing (different format) in gray tones of 'The Young Man & Cat'
152	Idea drawing for vignette of rock inscription	363	Transfer drawing, though changed, of 'The Fowler and the Partridge'
158	Drawing for old woman and pipe vignette		
172	Pen sketch for and ?print of, dog vignette	373	Transfer drawing for 'The Trumpeter taken Prisoner'
176	Idea sketch for dated stone vignette		
199	Faint indication of 2 frogs, foliage etc.	375	Transfer drawing for 'The Boys and the Frogs' + second drawing
212	Transfer drawing for schoolboy vignette + wrong sum	375	Transfer drawing, fewer boys.



p.357 The Shepherd turned Merchant, Catalogue illustration.

**BEER AND KISSES**  
**A TYNEMOUTH HOLIDAY OF 1807**  
*by Peter Quinn, June Holmes and George Armstrong*

*My dear Jane* *Forth 4 Sept. 1807*

The wet morning, has cast the scale, & this Sunday must be a Red-Night-Cap-Day—Along with the News papers, I hasten to drop these few lines, to supply the place of a bit chat by your fire side—In the first place I must tell you that my cold is mending, & that I am determined to live temperately, & to come to the sea perfectly cool & prepared for bathing, if the weather ever intends to mend, & I have no doubt a fit of fine weather will soon come on—you must not be impatient I will come as soon as I can, & am doing my utmost to put matters so as that I shall not be interrupted while I stay at Tynmouth—<sup>NEWHM:1997.H45.1</sup> let my Boy stay until I come down I hope the bathing is agreeing with you all & that you are happy at Tynmouth—write me a letter full of News &c—ask Mother what she thinks of Dr Surgeon as a Tenant for the Offices—he I find is fond of them & thinks 10 Guineas a very reasonable Rent—he calld to view them yesterday & I have now no hopes of letting them as offices, for from the uncommon breakings on the Quay there is now & will be plenty of empty ones to spare—Aunty is seized with a fit of carefillity & is brewing treacle Beer—I fear I shall lose the Coach—

*I am my dear Jane*

Manuscript letter, dated 4 September 1807, from Thomas Bewick to his daughter Jane, residing at Willy Dean's House in Tynemouth. He discusses his intended visit in the near future. Presented by E Bewick Ward on behalf of the late Robert Ward in 1895. *NEWHM:1997.H45.1, courtesy the Archives of the Natural History Society of Northumbria*

A letter from Thomas Bewick can be found in the archive of the Natural History Society of Northumbria. At an Enthusiasms event in 2018 June Holmes introduced us to the letter. It is fairly easy to decode however here is a transcription:

My dear Jane

Forth 4 Sept. 1807

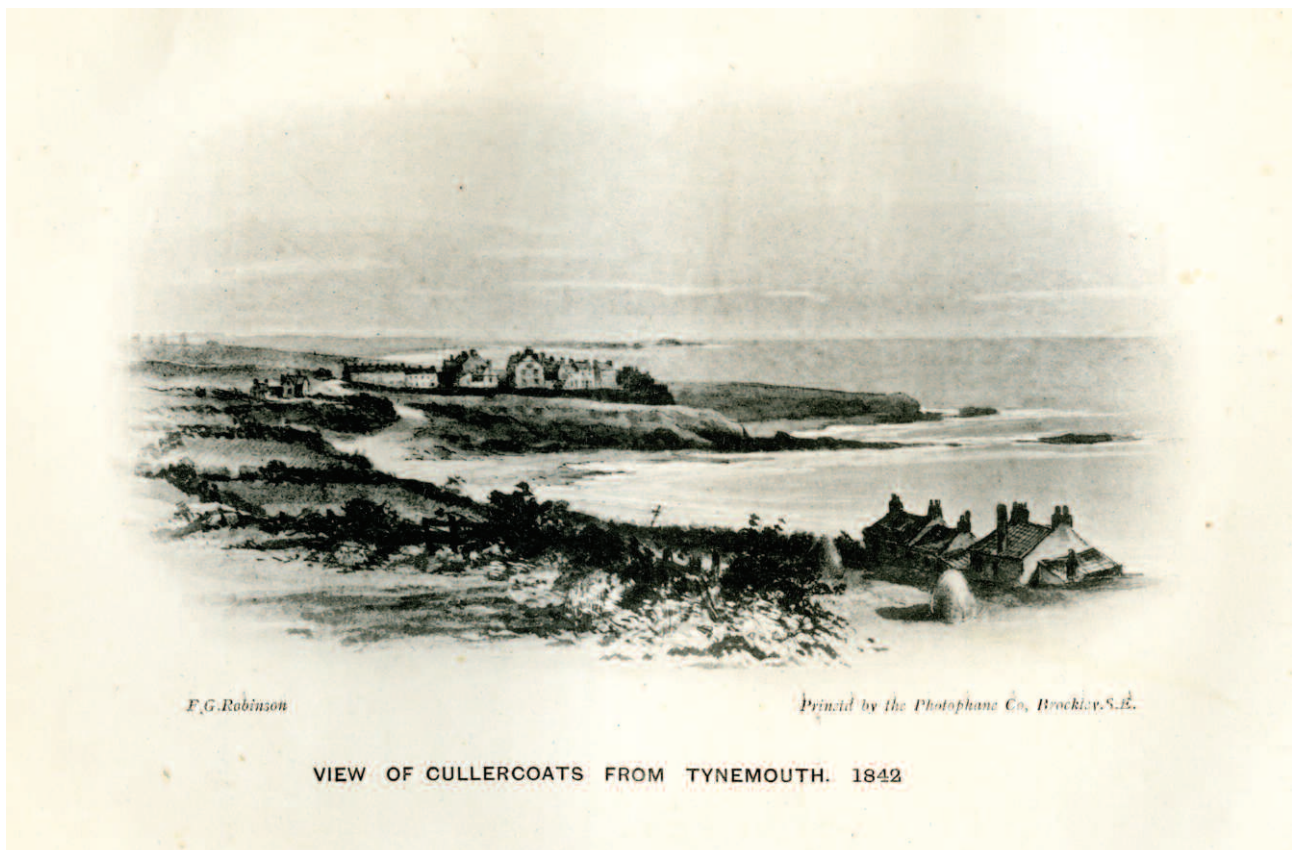
The wet morning, has cast the scale, & this Sunday must be a Red-Night-Cap-Day – Along with the News papers, I hasten to drop these few lines to supply the place of a bit chat by your fire side – In the first place I must tell you that my cold is mending, & that I am determined to live temperately & to come to the sea perfectly cool & prepared for bathing, if the weather ever intends to mend, & I have no doubt a fit of fine weather will soon come on –you must not be impatient I will come as soon as I can, & am doing my utmost to put matters so as that I shall not be interrupted while I stay at Tynmouth [sic] – let my Boy stay until I come down –

I hope the bathing is agreeing with you all & that you are happy at Tynmouth – write me a letter full of News &c – ask Mother what she thinks of Dr Surgeon as a Tenant for the Offices – he I find is fond of them & thinks 10 Guineas a very reasonable Rent – he calld to view them yesterday & I have now no hopes of letting them as offices, for from the uncommon breakings on the Quay their [sic] is now & will be plenty of empty ones to spare – Aunty is seized with a fit of carefillity & is brewing treacle Beer – I fear I shall lose the Coach – so

I am | my dear Jane

The letter, folded in the manner of the day, was addressed to ‘Miss Jane Bewick at Willy Deans House, Tynmouth.’

At this time Jane Bewick (1787-1881) was twenty years of age. The family had been making late summer trips to Tynemouth since at least 1790. From numerous surviving letters it appears that Willy Dean’s house was a regular booking. Where was the house?



F.G. Robinson

Printed by the Photophane Co, Brockley, S.E.

VIEW OF CULLERCOATS FROM TYNEMOUTH. 1842

Bewick enthusiast George Armstrong recalled an entry in William Weaver Tomlinson's late Nineteenth Century history:

'Overlooking the Short Sands at Tynemouth stood Willy Dean's cottage, where Thomas Bewick lodged in 1801. In John Rook and Son's "Plan of North Shields & Tynemouth," published in 1827, only three buildings are shown on the banks immediately above the Short Sands, one of them no doubt the quaint old cottage below the level of the road, now forming part of a refreshment house.'

Locals will know that although the landscape has altered in the intervening years, the tradition of refreshment continues on the Short Sands.

Bewick dates the letter the 4 September, a Friday. Yet he declares Sunday will be 'a Red-Night-Cap-Day'. In Chapter 25 of the *Memoir*, introducing his thoughts on religion, Bewick reminds his daughter of those

'times, when on a Sunday morning, I had fixed upon spending the day at home, and of my calling it a "Red nightcap day" – because it was set a part for contemplation & for this purpose, I walked undisturbed in the Garden alone – and thus employed, it was always a welcome & a happy 'tho short day to me.'

The letter gives a clue to the origin of these slow days. He has a cold and he is determined to 'live temperately'. Later he mentions a possible business arrangement with Dr. Surgeon. In the *Memoir* (page 112) we learn that the publication of *Quadrupeds* led Bewick to friendship with a number of medical men among them the appropriately named 'Nathan Surgeon, Surgeon.' Nathan would die ten years later in November 1817 and is buried in St. John's.

'that 'tho nature had done every thing, they [his new medical friends] as it were threw her favors in her face & all fell victims to the *Bottle* – with this company & their

conversations, I often felt much pleased, but it sometime led me to join with them in their excesses.'

At the end of the letter we read of the promise of Aunty's Treacle Beer. Aunty was Bewick's sister-in-law Esther Elliott. The fit she was 'seized with' does not appear in the Oxford English Dictionary. Does anyone know of another use of the word 'carefillity'? Or is it 'carefullity' perhaps?

'Treacle Beer' is not so common these days although a number of real ale versions are sold commercially. A recipe can be found in *Modern domestic cookery, and useful receipt book*, Elizabeth Hammond (1819) You may wish to give it a try:

'Put a gallon of boiling water to two pounds of treacle, mix them well, add twelve quarts of cold water and half a pint of yeast, put it into a cask, cover it close, and in three days it will be fit to drink. If made in large quantities or designed to keep, put in some malt and hops, and when the fermentation is over, stop it up close.'

#### REFERENCES

- Thomlinson, W.W.** (1893) *Historical Notes on Cullercoats, Whitley Bay and Monkseaton with a descriptive memoir of the coast from Tynemouth to St. Mary's Island*, London, page 72
- Tattersfield, N.** (2015) Bewick and the 'medical gentlemen' *Cherryburn Times*, Volume 6 Number 7 pp.6-9. [Nathan Surgeon, Surgeon was among a group of Newcastle medical men studying the effects of alcoholism.]
- Ugnow, J.S.** (2006) *Nature's Engraver: A Life of Thomas Bewick*, London: Faber. [Numerous references to holidays in Tynemouth.]
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# A CHOICE COLLECTION OF HYMNS AND MORAL SONGS

by Les Jessop

Early this year I acquired a copy of *A Choice Collection of Hymns and Moral Songs adapted to the capacities of young people, on the several duties and incidents of life*, a small book published by Thomas Saint in Newcastle in 1781. Much of text originated with the writings of Isaac Watts and he is sometimes listed as the author. The pages of this copy are grubby, some are torn and others missing and the binding a Victorian half-calf with all-edges-gilt: suggesting that it saw many years of its intended use as a book of religious and moral instruction for young people, followed by recognition by a later book collector of its importance.

Published only two years after the famous TB-illustrated edition of Gay's *Fables* (also published by Thomas Saint), the *Choice Collection* is much less well-known. This is possibly because of its rarity, most of the copies were probably 'read to death' within a few years, this copy being rescued from a similar fate. Looking for it in the North East, there is no copy in Durham University, Durham County libraries, Gateshead library, Newcastle City library, Newcastle Literary & Philosophical Society, Northumberland County libraries, the Pease collection or Sunderland City library.

I have located seven copies of this edition of the book in libraries:

- 1 British Library (3436.aa.27) [a scanned copy of this book is available on the internet for subscribers to *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*; print-on-demand copies of the scan are also available to buy]
- 2 Edinburgh University library (Hymn 2004). An imperfect copy. Flyleaf signed Robert Young and dated 1797; also anonymously with date of November 1821.
- 3 Newcastle University library (Bradshaw-Bewick 372.8245 CHO)
- 4 Oxford University, Bodleian library (Dunston D 271). There is an unread signature on the first pastedown.
- 5 Oxford University, Bodleian library (Opie P. 473)
- 6 University of Indiana, Lilly library (BV353.C54). From the collection of Elisabeth Ball.
- 7 Princeton University library (Cotsen Childrens' library). This copy was examined by Sydney Roscoe.

There may also, of course, be copies in private collections. One copy was a favourite of Jane Bewick's, in her collection until at least 1865 and another was owned by Thomas Hugo (his #4042): these may (or may not) be among the ones listed above. Neither Pearson nor Pease had copies.

The book is rare, but is it of any interest? It is notable not only for being an early example of Bewick book illustration but for the large number of woodcuts. Some detailed information can be found in Nigel Tattersfield's *Complete Illustrative Work* (number TB2.80): The Beilby-Bewick workshop was paid twelve pounds and seven shillings between August 1778 and December 1781 for 66 cuts. Some were used more than once, and two cuts were used by the publisher from previous publications. In all, the book has 67 headpieces.

The large number of illustrations is comparable with the 66 in Gay's *Fables*. The *Choice Collection* also has – in

Roscoe's words – the 'dainty charm' of Saint's edition of the *Fables*. Opinions vary on the merit of the cuts, with Mrs Trimmer saying they were very ordinary and Hugo describing them as being 'very beautiful': unfortunately several of the ones he singled out for special praise were on pages now missing from this copy. Since the date-range of production of the blocks coincides with the dates of John Bewick's apprenticeship, we might ask whether he was responsible for some of the engraving.

Like Gay's *Fables* (which was first published in the 1720s and went through several editions in the 18th century) this was not a piece of new writing. It derives from the *Divine Songs* of Isaac Watts (who had been dead for more than 30 years when this collection was brought together). The one hymn in the book that remains popular today – *While Shepherds watched their flocks* – was not written by Watts, but by Nahum Tate. The text may have been derivative, but as far as I know the illustrations were newly designed. Unlike Gay's *Fables*, where Thomas Bewick could copy the layout of the cuts from earlier editions, the origin of these illustrations is unclear. Were the scenes designed in-house in the Beilby-Bewick workshop, or did they engrave the designs of an outside artist?

The illustrations reward close study.



## HYMN VI *On the nativity of our Saviour*

While shepherds watched their flocks by night  
All seated on the ground  
The Angel of the lord came down  
And glory shone around

A difficult scene to illustrate, being a dark night with light coming from the fire as well as from 'glory'. And yet the shepherds are all pictured as individuals. Mrs Trimmer objected to the cuts in the book giving 'false and mean ideas of sacred subjects', but it is hard to see anything false or mean in this one.



HYMN XXIV *Honesty*

I have a house, the house of prayer  
 (no spy beneath my eaves)  
 And purring gratitude is there  
 And he that frights the thieves

An early example of a format (static foreground figure plus a scene being played out in the background) found commonly in Thomas Bewick's work for book illustration. The main figure is the author of the hymn and 'he that frights the thieves' is his dog (there is no sign of his cat and its 'purring gratitude'). In the background we see two men, presumably thieves, being chased from a house by a dog and a man with a long gun.



SONG XIX *On playing at football*

What crouds [sic] pursue the tumbling ball  
 To hasten on its course  
 With eager eyes they watch its fall  
 And loudly to their partners call  
 To show their utmost force.

The very similar body positions of the four boys detract from the effect of this scene: in comparison look at the dynamic positions of the boys in Song XXI *On the whipping of tops*. However, the cut might be of interest to historians of football in possibly being the earliest depiction of the game by a North East artist.



SONG XXI *On the whipping of tops*



SONG IX *On the flying of a paper kite*

This is one of the illustrations that Hugo particularly admired. The bending of the trees, the smoke blowing from the chimney and the flapping of the boys' coat-tails is very effective in depicting a windy, kite-flying, day.



SONG XIII *The danger of misspending time*

Let me not spend my precious hours  
 In trifling works like these  
 But still employ my active powers  
 In what may truly please

Enough said !

# THOMAS BEWICK STEPS INTO 2020

## MIDDLETON NORTH FARM

by Charles Bennett

Do you think if Thomas Bewick was walking around his workshop one sunny morning in Newcastle and came across a drawer labelled 'Birds and Animals of 2020' that he would open it? I think a man of his enquiring mind would not leave much more water to pass under the Tyne Bridge before the drawer was snapped open.

In mid-2019 I found myself on the flip-side of this dilemma. We have a small estate in Northumberland that my wife and I are trying to farm with wildlife at the front of our mind. I say farm however the plan is to produce a harmony between farming for food, protecting valuable habitats and creating new ones.

In a nutshell a farm that was 70% arable had its last harvests in the summer of 2020. All that land has been replaced with herbal rich meadows, bird seed fields, hedges, 16 new ponds and 40 acres of additional woodland. There will also be light grazing of ancient rig and furrow pastures. We have put in place a comprehensive plan to manage existing woodlands and riverside habitats.

Behind it all is our ambition to protect the existing flora and fauna and encourage historically-native species to come back home. So we have been asking : what have we got; what have we lost; what should we be looking for to return; indeed what has returned?

Data is all important. We have started the task of gathering information and it will be an ongoing, lifelong concern.



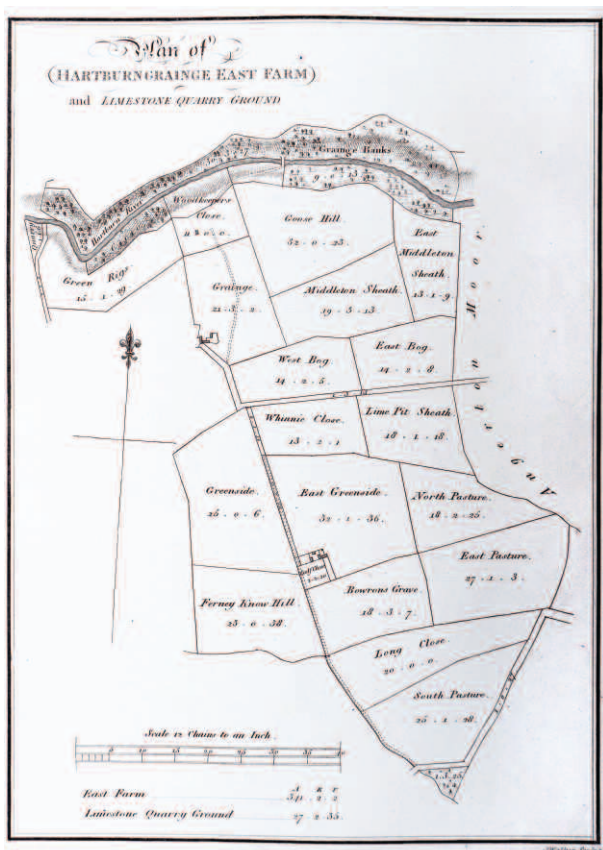
The Crane.

A History of British Birds, Water Birds p.130

Here we had a stroke of luck. I was reminded that George Dodds, the Chairman of Alnwick Wildlife Group, might be able to help. He and the group have been amazing. They have carried out surveys of birds, mammals, insects, plants and even lichens.

Meantime I was burying myself in the history of the place. It like anywhere in the UK has a long and rich history. A real find was in the dusty archives of the Lit and Phil in Newcastle. Here I found original maps from 1805. A large part of the place had been owned by the Greenwich Hospital and they had surveyed the land using their best admiralty surveyors and engraved by Bewick contemporary J Walker . What a treat. All the old field names and hedge lines are there to be read. The eye is caught by Bowron's Grave. Not the resting place of a favourite pig but a place where a wood or "grove" had once stood.

That date 1805 had lodged in my head. The more I thought about it, it was a pretty good time for wildlife and farming. The population was still quite low, industrialisation had not really got into its stride. Farming didn't have chemicals, drugs or huge machines, it relied much more on mixed farming that worked in harmony with the seasons and nature.



Plan of Hartburngrange East Farm, J. Walker Sculpt. 1805]



2020 photos of Crane at Middleton North Farm

How could I illustrate that?

Light bulb moment- wasn't Thomas Bewick illustrating then? He was and not only that he had been a regular visitor to our neighbouring estate Wallington.

So I had an illustrator of all the species the Alnwick Wildlife Group had found, I also had a record of what was common at the time and had now disappeared, Corn Crakes and Cranes the list sadly goes on.

I started a spread sheet; it compares what was there with TB and what we have now.

Back to that sunny morning in Newcastle. Tom would have found in that drawer my spread sheet. Perching his glasses on the end of his nose he would probably been horrified at the losses but also delighted at what was still there and with a changing view of the world what was coming back. A brilliant example is the arrival of this year's Crane.

I owe Mr Bewick a huge debt of gratitude and can only hope that our work can in some way bring his amazing legacy to life.



The Land-rail or Corn-crake.  
A History of British Birds, Water Birds p.130

*Cherryburn Times* is normally published twice a year. Thanks to all involved with this issue. In the coming months the impact of the pandemic on the collections supported by the Bewick Society will become clearer. We hope to have a mixed programme of digital and face-to-face events in 2021. If you would like to contribute to future issues, please get in touch. We can be contacted via the Bewick Society email and address:

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