



# CHERRYBURN TIMES

*The Newsletter of The Bewick Society*

## Alan Smillie Angus, 1920 – 2002

*Treasurer to the Thomas Bewick Birthplace Trust and the Bewick Society*

Alan Angus was a modest man. Those who knew him only later in his life would never have guessed at the excitements and bravery of his youth. Briefly articled to the County Land Agent, Alan soon turned to his natural talents as an engineer. He was studying Civil Engineering in Newcastle when the Second World War broke out, and because of his background in the Territorial Army he found himself quickly swept away on the tide of war. His company of Royal Engineers, with scant preparation near Oxford, was moved to France and Belgium. He was at Dunkirk in 1940 where it was the Sappers' job to hold up the enemy advance as long as possible. Later he served on Crete, and in Syria and the Western Desert, and was with the SAS operating behind enemy lines in 1943. Injured and captured, he later harmed his elbow and fingers during an escape bid. His brother, Arthur, serving in similar circumstances, died from his injuries.

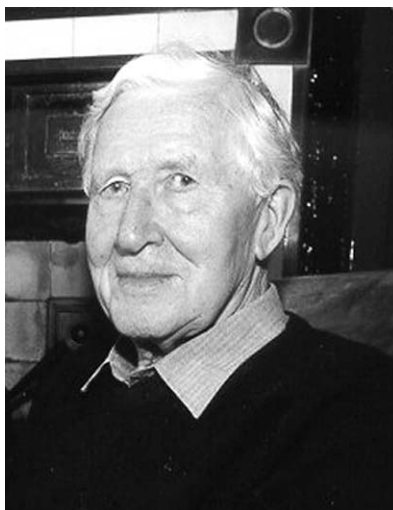
After the war he lost no time in completing the studies he had started in 1938, graduating as a BSc in Civil Engineering in December 1945. Employed by the Tyne Improvement Company, and Charles Brand, he developed an expertise in tunnelling which was to take him all over the world. He worked on the Tyne Tunnel, in Scotland where his projects included the Glasgow underground circuit now known as the 'Clockwork Orange', in London on the Victoria Line, on the Tyne and Wear Metro, on the Mass Transit Railway in Hong Kong, and in Singapore. He and Anne had been married in 1950, and it was with some relief, amidst all his travelling that the family settled to live in the North East, first at Monkseaton and then at Mitford.

On retirement in 1985 he at last had the time to develop his long-standing interest in family history which in turn led him to extensive and meticulous research into Thomas Bewick's apprentices. As a boy Alan had been fascinated by a stuffed heron at his grandfather's house, and was much impressed when told that it was the work of his grandfather's grandfather. Later he was to discover that this ancestor, John Laws, had been Thomas Bewick's first apprentice, had shared his master's deep interest in the natural world, and had himself been a pioneer naturalist who even travelled to America to pursue his interest. Like Bewick, too, he was a brilliant engraver. Fragments of his remarkable career have been preserved. A collection of birds eggs that he made and presented to Bewick, one of the earliest known, is still preserved in the collections of the Natural History Society at the Hancock Museum. At Sunderland Museum, also part of the Tyne and Wear Museums group, there is a medal commemorating the British admiral who commanded the fleet at the great naval victory over the Dutch at Camperdown in 1797. Its

simple inscription 'Duncan and Glory' was adapted when Alan's 80th Birthday was celebrated at Cherryburn in 2000. The inscription on the cake was 'Angus and Glory'.

Speaking at the Bewick Society's AGM in June 2002 the Chairman summed up Alan's achievement in relation to John Laws and Thomas Bewick:

'My final note on membership is the saddest. I have to report the death of Alan Angus in April. Alan, an engineer by profession, who was with us at this meeting last year, served the Society as its first Honorary Treasurer, and latterly as senior adviser and very regular contributor to events. He was the great-great-grandson of John Laws, Thomas Bewick's first apprentice, who gained a great independent reputation as one of the foremost bright-cutting engravers of his generation, whom Bewick himself described as 'perhaps the best at this day'. John Laws also farmed on the family's land at Heddon Laws, near Heddon-on-the-Wall. We know so much about John Laws because of Alan's careful stewardship of family possessions and his detailed research.'



Alan was a great supporter of the Thomas Bewick Birthplace Trust in its campaign to secure Cherryburn, and open it to visitors. His enthusiastic and generous support continued after Cherryburn was passed to the National Trust in 1990. His own research extended to all of Bewick's apprentices, and resulted in a series of articles published in Cherryburn Times. It was through Alan's research, and with access to his collection and those of other members of his family, that an exhibition devoted to John Laws was mounted at Cherryburn in 2000. After the exhibition Alan placed his collection of pictures, documents and books (including John Laws' copies of Bewick's books) on permanent loan at Cherryburn; and the loan has been confirmed by his children. At his request, again confirmed through the generosity of his family, memorial donations were made to the Bewick Society. The result is that the Society has a fund of over £400, which we wish to use in an appropriate way. One suggestion, now being investigated, is that Alan's articles, necessarily appearing in rather ephemeral form originally, be gathered as a separate publication in his honour.

As was said at his Funeral and Thanksgiving Service at Whitley Bay on 26th April, Alan was 'a really nice person, friendly and unassuming, altogether a super man'. He was also a loyal colleague, and a scholar to whom those with an interest in Bewick and his world owe a great debt. We will miss his wise counsel, his funds of knowledge, his encouragement and his gentle sense of humour.

(Photograph courtesy of the Hexham Courant.)

# London Walkabout

by Charles Bird,  
*London Secretary to the Bewick Society*

On Saturday 25 May 2001 there was a Bewick Society walkabout in central London to visit some of the sites associated with Thomas and John Bewick during their stays in the capital. Because of massive development many of these are now no more than locations with nothing left of the buildings or atmosphere which would have been present in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Indeed, on a Saturday afternoon the City has a somewhat deserted feel, as all the office workers have gone home for the weekend and the shops and hostelrys which service them are mainly shut. One could sympathise with the words of William Blake (1757-1827: an almost exact contemporary of Thomas Bewick) who said in his poem 'London':

I wander thro' each charter'd street  
Near where the charter'd Thames does flow  
And mark in every face I meet  
Marks of sadness, marks of woe.



The Walkabout Group, Charles Bird third from the left.

Thomas arrived in London after a protracted three-week voyage in a collier on 1 October 1776. That year he had been unlucky with his sea journeys, having also undergone a frightening trip from Leith to North Shields on his way back from his Scottish walking holiday. Perhaps these experiences explain the rather doleful images of wreck and stranded sailors in his seascape vignettes (for a collection of these, see Blanche Cirker's Dover publication *1800 Woodcuts by Thomas Bewick and His School*, at plates 188-193). He disliked London almost from the start and left eight months later in June, 1777. One can almost feel the homesickness of his account of his return in the *Memoir*, when he recalls that he:

posted off to the Pool & got on board of a Collier, & after a very short passage, arrived in sight of St Nicholas Church steeple about the 22nd June 1777.

The constantly recurring distant view of the openwork Gothic lantern or 'Scottish' steeple of St Nicholas in his vignettes serves as an abiding memory of his love for his home country and may be contrasted with his younger brother's signature vignette, which shows the classical dome of St Paul's in its background.

Thomas was twentythree when he arrived in London and had before that spent some months journeying on foot through Scotland and the Highlands. The comparison with London – no doubt seething politically from the American Declaration of Independence of 4 July, 1776 – must have been intense. His brother John, on the contrary, took to the capital at once. He was 26 when he arrived in August, 1786, and was to be based there for the remainder of his short life until his death in 1795. Perhaps symbolically, John had enjoyed an agreeable sea passage of 6 days or so from the Tyne to the Thames.

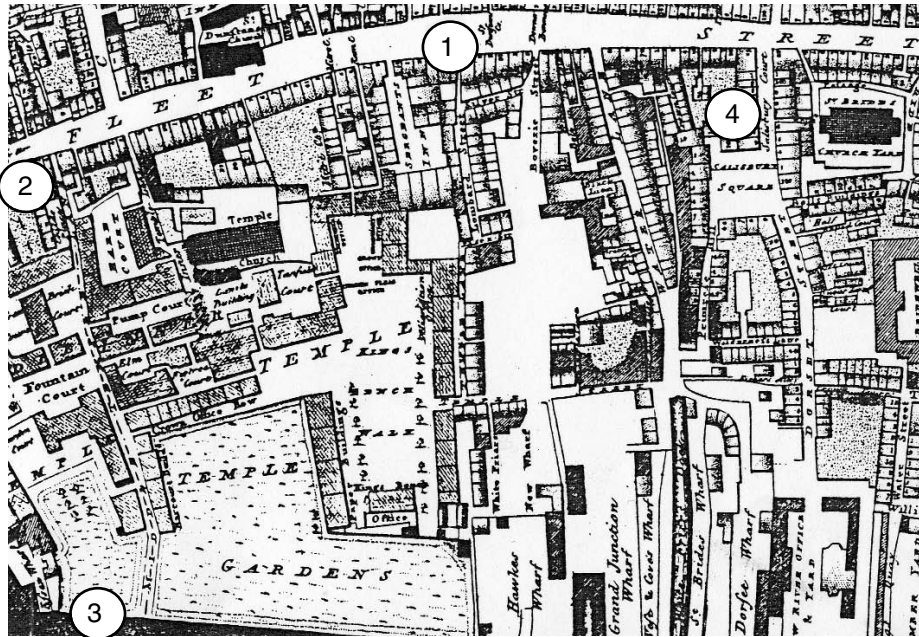
After a rendezvous at the Cheshire Cheese public house, in Wine Office Court to the north of Fleet Street opposite a Knickerbox outlet, our small band of Bewick Society members moved off to Gough Square in front of Dr Johnson's house. Here a few observations were made about the difference between Thomas Bewick and Samuel Johnson. How the former had disliked London, but been very keen on Scotland, whereas Johnson had decried Scotland (his *Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland* appeared in 1775) and eulogised London. How Thomas had been a dog man (with at least two of his dogs, 'Witch' and 'Cheviot', known by name) and Johnson a lover of cats (a statue in Gough Square depicts his cat 'Hodge'). Certainly, the dogs illustrated in Bewick's *Quadrupeds* are some of his finest work, whereas the solitary cat is a relatively poor thing. It was interesting to wonder whether the paths of the young Thomas would ever have crossed those of the elderly Samuel (who died in 1784 at the age of 85) in these back lanes and courts.

After these musings the group moved on to the site of the 'Hole-in-the-Wall' public house in St Dunstan's Court (stop no 1). Of this pub nothing now remains (it was demolished in the 1860s) except for its site in a rather bleak and malodorous alley off Fleet Street. According to the *Memoir*, this was the place where Newcastle men met every Monday night and where the Newcastle papers were available. Later on Thomas was to cut the woodblocks for the mastheads of several of these, including the *Newcastle Courant*, the *Newcastle Chronicle* and the *Newcastle Advertiser*.

The next stop (no.2) was at Temple Bar. Now represented by a late Victorian erection in the middle of the road separating the Strand from Fleet Street and marking the westward boundary of the City, in the Bewicks' day it was a proper gateway with a central arch and two postern gates at either side. It was at Carnegie's, the hairdresser near Temple Bar, that Thomas asked the waterman to drop him. The passing through the arches of the old London Bridge was somewhat perilous and the *Memoir* recalls that:

'The first cockney I met with was the scullar man, who was engaged to land me and my baggage at Carnegie's the hair dresser near Temple Barr – I was amused with his slang and his chatter all the way to London Bridge' (obviously watermen of the 18th century were no less garrulous than their modern taxi-driver counterparts) 'and on his approaching it, he asked me if I was affeared, but not knowing what there was to be afraid of, I asked him the same question at which he looked quere – and in this way we passed the gulph, about which he wanted to talk, & I then asked him if he had been affeard.'





Thomas's sang-froid may have been due to his earlier experience of Newcastle Bridge (partially destroyed by a flood in 1771) and crossing the Tyne by ford and ferry. Indeed, Thomas's bravery was in contrast to the more genteel and cautious approach of a fellow writer on quadrupeds, Thomas Pennant. When Pennant passed downstream some eleven years later in May, 1787, he was put ashore upstream of the bridge and then collected a little way downstream, thus avoiding the rapids 'which had cost so many thousand their lives' (see page 4 of *A Journey from London to the Isle of Wight, 1801*). Later, Thomas was to engrave a single wood-cut illustration for Pennant's *Quadrupeds*, 3rd edition, 1793, (that of the 'Aye-aye' squirrel on page 142 of Volume 2).

Where Carnegie's stood I have been unable to discover. Information on this from other Members would be much appreciated. If it was near Temple Bar it seems an odd place to ask to be disembarked even when the Thames was much closer to Fleet Street than it is today, since it was not then significantly embanked. Perhaps a hairdresser's near the 'Hole-in-the-Wall' pub was a good place for Newcastle men to leave messages, or gather. And Thomas presumably needed a shave and general brush-up after his long sea-passage.

Before heading towards the river the group stopped to look westwards down the Strand. Here Thomas had come across a surprised and delighted Sergeant Hymers (or Hindmarsh) with whom he had shared lodgings in Newcastle. The Sergeant (a retired Life Guard) went back to his lodgings to get dressed (presumably into his regimentals) and then escorted Thomas to all the 'blackguard' places of London. Again, I have found it difficult to get any information about Sergeant Hymers: the Army Museum in London and the Guards Museum at Windsor were not able to be of any help. It would at least be interesting to know what sort of uniform he would have been wearing in 1776 so we can imagine him with Thomas. Any information members could provide on the Sergeant would be welcome.

The next stop (no.3) was at the Temple stairs, the successors to the steps or pontoon at which Thomas

would have landed in 1776. Now they are a rather lumpish granite affair erected as part of the Bazalgette embankment project of the 1860s. The original steps would have been connected to the higher land above the high-tide mark by a rickety walkway. Some members of the group thought that alongside the coat of arms of the Inner and Middle Temples it would be good to have a plaque saying that here in 1776 the young Thomas Bewick stepped ashore to seek fame and fortune.

Traffic along the Embankment is fast and furious, but we managed to negotiate it without

any loss in the membership. We proceeded to Salisbury Square and Salisbury Court (stop no.4). Little survives from earlier days save an eighteenth-century frontage now housing the Press Complaints Commission and an obelisk in the centre of the square. It was at no.137, Salisbury Court, that William Gray lived and worked as a bookbinder. He was an old companion of Thomas's from Newcastle days and his copper-engraved trade-card was engraved by Thomas. We then proceeded down the attractive arched alleyway leading to the west end of St Bride's Church and over New Bridge Street and the Thameslink railway line to Apothecaries' Hall. Here we admired (stop no. 5) the front door of the Hall surmounted by its badge of a naked, bow-holding Apollo bestriding – rather uncomfortably – a scaly dragon over the motto 'Opiferque per orbem dicor.'

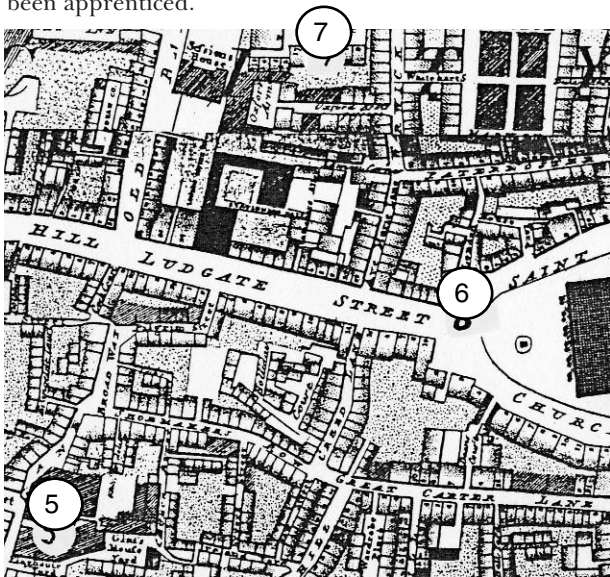


This device was engraved by John (see N. Tattersfield, *John Bewick*, p. 199, and over page). At the Apothecaries' Hall, Christopher Gregson, the son of the Rev.



Above: Engraving by John Bewick of the Arms of the Society of Apothecaries.

Christopher Gregson of Ovingham and an old school-fellow of Thomas, worked as a druggist. He had been apprenticed to a chemist in Newcastle on 1st October, 1767, the same day as Thomas was apprenticed to Ralph Beilby. Later he was to become Chief Galenical Operator at the Apothecaries' Hall where he prepared and mixed potions, salves and ointments of vegetable origin for the factory within the precincts. Christopher's brother Philip was also in London at the time and had a post as a Customs House Officer. Thomas later engraved in a particularly beautiful design the trade card of Messrs Doughty and Wiggins, the firm to which Christopher had been apprenticed.



Stop no. 6 was at the corner of Ludgate Hill and St Paul's Courtyard. On this spot stood the premises of John Newbery, publisher and bookseller, whose business was carried on by his widow, Elizabeth. She published *The Blossoms of Mortality*, designed by John, though mostly engraved by Thomas. A view of the shop appears in a woodcut which appeared in children's books published by her successor, John Harris. At number 33, Ludgate Hill, George Riley, a children's book publisher, jigsaw and pencil manufacturer for whom John did some work, had his premises. In the time of the Bewicks Ludgate Hill contained many fashionable shops, coffee houses and publishers. And perhaps it was here that Thomas came across the large numbers of fine-looking women reduced to street-walking.

The area on the north side of St Paul's was in olden days full of bookshops and publishing houses. Collectors

of old books will be familiar with the imprints from Paternoster Row. Now there is an enormous excavated hole where a new development is being built to replace the little-loved post-war buildings of the 1960s. The attention of the group was drawn to the fine backwater of Georgian town houses in Amen Court with its very early windows, as our Chairman pointed out.

In Warwick Court (stop no. 7) Henry Cole had a copper-engraving workshop for which John did some work (perhaps the Gray and Bain bookplate). Cole also worked for the Bank of England, which may have provided something of a connection for the ideas for banknotes later submitted by Thomas to the Bank and which he felt were given scant consideration (see his *Memoir*, chapter 14). Near here is the Stationers' Hall that had an important role in the censorship and control of the book publishing industry. In 1775, in a case heard before the Court of Common Pleas, Thomas Carnan had successfully challenged the Company's claim to a monopoly on the printing of all almanachs.

Past the Old Bailey we headed towards St. Andrew's Church, Holborn, (stop no. 8) where Thomas was in the habit of attending Sunday services with Robert Pollard. They listened to the Rev. Harrison there. Thomas was once invited to go with his friend William Watson of the Treasury (who had married the elder Miss Beilby) to hear the Rev. Dr. Dodd preach at the Magdalen Chapel. Dr. Dodd later came to a sticky end when he was found guilty of forgery and executed.

By this stage some of the group were flagging, so we were all pleased to reach the site of Thomas's lodgings at Wharton's Court, Brook Street (stop no. 9). Now an insalubrious and dreary backland to modern shops and offices, we nevertheless felt we were on holy ground. Here Thomas lived with Mr and Mrs Kendal. Few details remain about his time here, but presumably he used his room as his workshop. Not far away, up Holborn just past Chancery Lane, was the workshop of Isaac Taylor, under whom Robert Pollard studied copper-engraving and who provided plenty of work for Thomas. Indeed, Isaac must have been something of a hero for Thomas. In the *Memoir*, Thomas records how he thought Isaac Taylor's frontispiece for Cunningham's *Poems* the best book illustration he had ever seen.

We said goodbye to a couple of the group here who had done enough walking. The remnant staggered down Brook Street at some point of which the George Inn had once stood. The pub was kept by a man called Darby, whose Cumberland wife, 'a very good-looking woman,' claimed a distant relationship with Thomas. Whatever the truth behind this, it was while spending his evenings here that Thomas graduated from drinking milk to porter. And it was here that Thomas had an argument with a man who spoke disparagingly of the rudeness of the Scots.

And so finally to Clerkenwell where John lived between 1786 and 1791, first as a lodger with Thomas Hodgson in St. George's Court (now Albion Place) for whom his elder brother had engraved (while in Newcastle) cuts for the *Curious Hieroglyphick Bible*. Hodgson gave John work on the *Emblems of Mortality*,





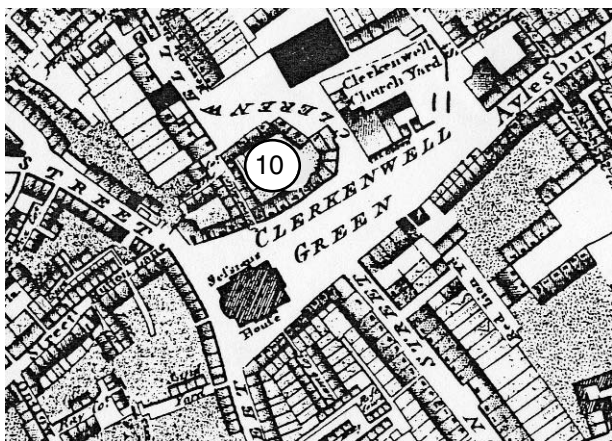
Frontispiece to *Poems, chiefly pastoral*, by John Cunningham, 1766. Reduced from the original size of 94 x 156 mm. Courtesy of Newcastle City Libraries. For Bewick's story of his relations with Taylor, see the *Memoir*, ed. Iain Bain, OUP, 1979, pp. 75-6.

published in 1789. Nearby in Britton Street (in John's time known as Red Lion Street) had been the house and printing office of the Rev. Dr. John Trusler, for whom John worked on the *Honours of the Table*, the *Progress of Man and Society* and *Proverbs in Verse*.



After leaving the Hodgson household John lived at 7, Clerkenwell Green (stop no. 10), as a lodger of the plumber and glazier George Percival whose trade card he engraved. It seems that

Percival also practised as a house and sign painter. Close



by is the Church of St. James, then in the process of being built. John worked here on commissions for Trusler, Elizabeth Newbery and the Piccadilly bookseller John Stockdale. Later on John moved five miles north to



Crouch End before his early death in 1795. There is a rather tantalising woodblock of St. James's Church in the Guildhall Library collection showing a view of St. James's: it

is attributed to Thomas Bewick by a note on the block. It has to be said, however, that it does not seem very Bewickian. The tour finished in the churchyard, more or less on the spot from where the view on the woodblock was taken.

I would like to thank Nigel Tattersfield for his help in researching the background to the tour and for accompanying me on a pathfinder outing. Unfortunately Nigel could not attend on the day of the walkabout itself, so the group had to make do with me as a poor substitute. Nigel did, however, allow me to see before publication a chapter of his recent book *John Bewick* (British Library, 2001) containing several choice descriptions of the localities in John's time. A good deal of my account derives from chapter 7 of the *Memoir* (and the notes thereto in Iain Bain's Oxford University Press edition of 1975), but I am sure there is much more to be discovered. I would be most interested if any members or readers can shed any further light on the Bewicks in London.



St James's Church, Clerkenwell.



# Blowing in the Wind

## Simon Schama on Bewick

by Dr. Peter Quinn

In March, 1878, a bibliophile of Newcastle was amazed to find blowing in the wind some pages from an Eighteenth century political pamphlet. A grocer had used pages 35-38 of 'The Chains of Slavery' to wrap up some bacon or butter. Long forgotten, the pamphlet had been written in 1775 and distributed free in Newcastle. Its author was Jean Paul Marat, who was to achieve world fame in Paris nearly twenty years later.

In May, 2002, bibliophiles and art lovers of Newcastle were surprised by the rôle given Thomas Bewick in *Forces of Nature*, part 12 of Simon Schama's *History of Britain*. Viewers of the popular BBC series (with video, CD, website and book spin-offs) were treated to an account of Thomas's life and work which placed his concerns as central to an understanding of British life and culture of the period 1780-1832. No other visual artists were mentioned in the programme: no Turner, Girtin, nor Blake. Schama's lively account was delivered in a matter of ten minutes, accompanied by a bewildering array of images, John Harle's specially composed music pulsing excitedly. Whilst we might balk at the unexplained conjunction of Chillingham cattle, Ovingham churchyard and Lake District scenery, we have to admire the spirit in which Thomas's rich world of visual and intellectual ideas was conveyed.



'The Over-long Grace before Meat'. Vignette headpiece to the advertisement (preface) of *History of British Birds* vol. 2.



'Some poor bastard' (Simon Schama) - also known as 'The Stonebreaker' or 'A Roadman breaking Stones'. Vignette tailpiece, *History of British Birds* vol. 1.

Each age has remade a Thomas Bewick in its own likeness. Does Schama offer us a Thomas for the twenty-first century? If so does his new model Bewick stand up to critical scrutiny?

We might plot the changing readings of Bewick's legacy thus. To the Victorian he represented a natural genius sprung untaught from Northumbrian soil (ARIADNE FLORENTINA, *Six Lectures on Wood and Metal Engraving given before the University of Oxford in Michaelmas Term, 1872*, John Ruskin, Works, London, 1890, p.247). Ruskin's basic picture was elaborated on by Julia Boyd in 1886 (*Bewick Gleanings*, Julia Boyd, Newcastle, 1886). Thomas's closeness to nature was prized also by the early twentieth century revivers of wood engraving who gave new emphasis to Thomas's mastery of printmaking technique. At this time, Bewick was seen alongside Samuel Palmer as a precursor of the neo-Romantics of the 1940s-50s. Later it became common to emphasise Bewick's radical views, seeing him as a champion of the common man against landed wealth. (see E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, Victor Gollancz, 1963) Subsequently Thomas's work has been associated with a nostalgia for a rural past (as a recent cartoon in the Times showed: countryside alliance protesters rendered in Bewick-style) although it must be said it has thankfully missed becoming absorbed by the heritage industry.

Schama offers a re-conceptualisation of Thomas. In Schama's account Bewick is an ideal example of the coincidence of interests in nature, science, radicalism, and visual art. Thomas is seen as naturally inquisitive; politically motivated; expressive of human suffering; a force for the democratisation of art; and, in his tail-pieces, the provider of a dark critique on the social world of the Northumberland of his day. Schama identifies Bewick with continuing radical struggles that caused social upheaval and unrest after the Napoleonic Wars. He is used strategically by Schama to contrast with Wordsworth, whose romantic fascination with nature post-1793 became associated with patriotic conservatism. Bewick, we are told, kept the radical faith: witness the views expressed in the Memoir and read out to great effect by James Bolam.

However, a number of questions arise in the mind of seasoned Thomas-watchers. What can we say about Bewick's interest in nature? Rousseau or simply his environment? The Ruskinian image of Thomas had no room for an artist inspired by philosophers, writers and poets. However even a cursory reading of the Memoir shows that Bewick was well-read in Enlightenment thought. The wider context of English, French and Scottish intellectual life needs to be considered: we need to broaden the context in which we see Bewick's work. We no longer need the Ruskinian image of the artist as lonely Northumbrian pine

How radical was Bewick? What has contemporary research established for Newcastle in the late 18th Century? What can we say were Bewick's interests and involvement? Schama puts forward as proof of Thomas's realist credentials his radical beliefs and his association with known radicals. To what extent does the Schama case bear testing against the available evidence? Given the fate

of the Marat pamphlet, researching radical Newcastle of the late eighteenth century is like chasing papers blown in the wind. Who knew whom? Where did they meet? What did they talk about? In the gaps left by missing documents, lost diaries, undiscovered journals myth and legend has sprung up. Marat's presence in Newcastle in the 1770s and the radicals he came in contact with there have long been subject to speculation and out-and-out fantasy. Thomas Bewick's presence in Newcastle is by contrast well documented, not least through Thomas's own efforts in writing his Memoir. How reliable in any case is the Memoir as witness to earlier politics and positions? Both Schama and E.P. Thompson before him use it unquestioningly as a testimony to the times. There is no extant diary of the 1770s, 80s or 90s. These were difficult times to have a contrary opinion or a critical eye. By the time the Memoir was written the free expression of radical views on the constitution and religion was much easier. Pinning down what exactly Thomas's rôle might have been and what opinions he held and when, is a fascinating game of attribution and influence best left for a forthcoming article.

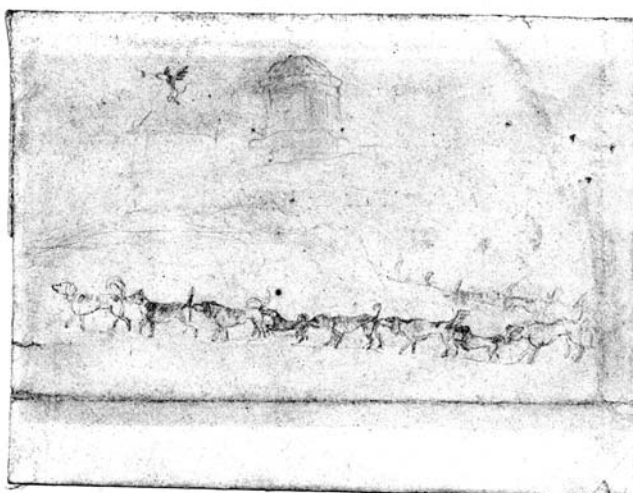
To what extent do the tailpieces display a political vision? Does Schama misrepresent Bewick by over-elaborating Bewick as a depicter of rural poverty and blight? For instance, two images chosen by Schama to illustrate Thomas's realism come to twenty-first century eyes heavily weighted in favour of a political reading. The first is an old man saying grace while his cat eats his dinner, reminiscent of Picasso's 1904 etching 'The Frugal Meal'. The second, 'The Roadman breaking Stones' ('some poor bastard') recalls for us Courbet's 'The Stonebreakers' of 1849. But was Bewick a critical realist in the manner of Courbet? Or was he a sentimental realist in the manner of Blue period Picasso? Surely neither. This is eighteenth century England, not Paris 1850 or fifty years later. Whilst Courbet and Picasso have benefited from close contextual readings of their work, Bewick's perhaps exists too much in a vacuum, allowing all sorts of meaning to be attributed to the tailpieces. Does the Bewick Stonebreaker carry a message at all? Is there anything to be read into the context in which these images appeared? In fact, the old man about to eat is a headpiece vignette from the preface to *British Birds* vol. 2. The Roadman is a tailpiece vignette used in *British Birds* vol. 1 at various locations in different editions. This last point would argue against any significance to the placing of the vignette.

All these questions are worth asking again, going back to the evidence and testing it against the assumptions built up through past ages. We should be grateful that Schama's programme invites such questioning and enquiry. With the Bewick anniversary imminent, a time for recapitulation and new research is surely upon us. It is to be hoped that the *Cherryburn Times* can play a role in the re-assessment of Thomas for the twenty-first century.

We owe it to him (to paraphrase a poet from other revolutionary times) that the answers are not left blowing in the wind.

## 'The Sniffing Dogs'

We republish here the Bewick drawing that appeared in the last edition of the *Cherryburn Times*, because there is more to relate.



One of our stalwart members, Graham Carlisle of High Wycombe, has sent us a copy of a print clearly based on the drawing, though it shows much more detail. (It was common for Bewick drawings to be quite sketchy, perhaps even little more than an idea. In many instances, the sketch was handed to an apprentice to work up the detail – and possibly to another apprentice to cut the woodblock.) Our member writes as follows: 'A few minutes ploughing through the mine of engravings printed by Ward's of Newcastle turned up the drawing's corresponding block. Effectively a snapshot of the remaining blocks controlled by the Bewick family at this date, each printed sheet has in the bottom left corner : WARD, DEAN STREET, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, AUGUST 1883. As can be seen, some much loved Bewick references are here: a waiting gallows on the hill, a double helping of 'Auld Clouty' on top of the gate pillars.'



It would appear that this block was never included in any publication produced by the Bewick workshop as such. It was included in the large collection of 'proof' pulls produced by Ward on quarto paper. (See Graham Carlisle's article 'Wards Impressions', *Cherryburn Times* vol. 2 No. 7, August 1994 p.4.)

The style of the cutting seems to indicate that it is a late production in the last two or three years of Bewick's

life. The speculations as to content and meaning sketched out in the last edition obviously need modifying now we can see the whole composition in detail. Our remarks about the relation between the classical architecture at the top and its contrast with the dogs at the bottom still seem justified. We can now see a statue on top of the rotunda, perhaps a Mercury or a Winged Victory; it might more probably be an Eros or Cupid – there was something of a convention for such kinds of rotunda in the landscaped parks of the gentry. We can also see that the dogs are a motley bunch of various breeds and mongrels, not possibly a pack of hounds. The leader seems to be a Dalmatian, and we now see two small dogs sparring together at the front. The two figures guarding the gates could be heraldic dragons at the entrance to a park, but they might also be demons guarding the entrance to the place where demons belong. The ambiguity might be part of the fun. A gallows usually signifies that Bewick dislikes something depicted. It does not seem probable that he would dislike the dogs or what they are doing; much more likely that he would dislike the artifice of such landscaped parks with their follies and other decorative architecture. Is this romantic realism opposed to classic idealism?

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## The Bewick Society Website

We have been working for more than a year on the creation of a Bewick Society Website. Since first formulated the project grew in ambition and size and made much greater demands on our time than originally envisaged. However, we can now announce that it will be posted on the World Wide Web in January, 2003, to herald the 250th Anniversary of Bewick's birth.

The site will be divided into several sections, accessible in the usual way by clicking on the link words identified on the screen. The site will not be complete when first posted, but will be added to regularly as new material becomes available. We expect that some visitors to the site will want to suggest improvements and amendments, and all suggestions e-mailed to us will be examined seriously.

The main sections of the site are:

Home page (with additions, such as a downloadable application form for membership);

Life and Work (brief summary for newcomers to Bewick);

Bibliography (subdivided into several sections);

Online Gallery (examples of images from all main sources);

Cherryburn Times (complete archive)

Bewick Collections (information about main collections)

Contacts (including links to other Bewick websites)

Bookseller's and Bibliophile's Notes (Summer, 2003)

The domain name will be *bewicksociety.org* – reached by the usual full address <http://www.bewicksociety.org>

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## 250th Anniversary Programme 2003

**Provisional programme is as follows :**

(dates not finalised are omitted)

- January 10 **Website Launch!** Click on <http://www.bewicksociety.org>
- February 28 *Cherryburn Times* deadline.
- March 19 **Visit to Pease Collection, with Anniversary Enthusiasms**, Wednesday, 7.00pm.
- April **St Mary's RC Cathedral**, Newcastle. (Site of Bewick's cottage) Readings and music (to be confirmed.)
- May 25 **Bewick 250th Anniversary Celebratory Supper** combined with **Mr. Avison's 18th century Assembly and Supper Concert** 6.00pm. Tickets £35 (£30 to Bewick Soc. & Avison Soc. Members.)
- June **London Walkabout**. Charles Bird has agreed to conduct another London Walkabout. See article in this issue. (Date to be announced.)
- June 11 **Society of Antiquaries**. A walkabout event following the Bewick Trail in Newcastle and Gateshead.
- June 26 **Annual General Meeting**, 6.00pm. At the Literary and Philosophical Society, Westgate Road, Newcastle upon Tyne. (Near Central Station.)
- July 25 to October 5 **The Many Faces of Bewick**. Exhibition at the Hancock Museum.
- August 9-10 **Birthday Party Weekend at Cherryburn** including **Roadshow** event.
- October 5 **Finale of 'The Many Faces of Bewick' Exhibition** (optional event with Natural History Society).  
*Cherryburn Times* deadline.
- November **Public Lecture on Bewick** - James Alder, Northumbria University. (Date to be announced.)
- Guest Speaker** Nigel Tattersfield.

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*Cherryburn Times* is normally published twice a year. Contributions are invited particularly from members of the Bewick Society.

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