

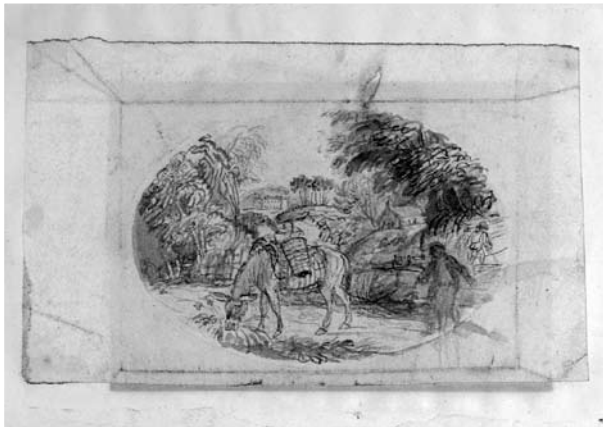


CHERRYBURN TIMES

The Journal of The Bewick Society

DRAWN ON THE WOOD BY THOMAS BEWICK: A MISSING LINK

by Graham Carlisle



Pencil, ink and wash. Transfer drawing by Thomas Bewick. Courtesy of the Natural History Society of Northumbria.



THE ASS EATING THISTLES, from *Fables of Aesop*, 1818, p.369, printed from the block cut by an apprentice in Bewick's workshop.

The Georgian landscape, often with figures and animals, observed in the tiny vignettes scattered throughout Thomas Bewick's books, has gripped the imagination of successive generations of those interested in his work. The same often appears as a background to his headpiece figures. Let us consider one example: a mill with water-driven wheel in the middle distance; in the foreground, the familiar figure of a heavily laden ass, pausing for a moment, together with a fisherman and dog to one side. The miniature rural scene comes framed by swathes of broad-leaved foliage and a broken fence, a motif so common in Bewick's images as to be almost a signature.

The two images above present us with the first and the final stages of Bewick's working process, from the original visual idea worked out in a design on transfer paper, to the final image printed from a boxwood block. The blocks themselves often still exist, though sadly dispersed in collections large and small all over the world. But there is another element missing to us which links the drawing to the engraved block: the drawing on the polished surface of the boxwood, which had been transferred to the wood – but which would then normally be lost in the cutting process.

Although Bewick loved to design, draw and cut his 'tale-pieces' (the pun was his own) the main illustrations would be a different matter. In a letter to Robert Pollard dated 29 January, 1816, when work for *The Fables of Aesop*, 1818, was in full flow, Bewick referred to the pains he was taking with the key illustrations of that book, printed as the headpiece to each fable:

...during the day I am employed in designing & drawing the subjects on the Wood – & this is rather a laborious kind of work – I am obliged to finish the drawing with miniature-like minutia, otherwise my Boys cou'd not cut them – This also requires my close superintendence & help and when the Cuts are done I then go over the Whole.

He had a great fondness for books of fables going back many years to his own childhood. The various editions he had owned or been involved with are well documented on the Bewick Society website. His own long-planned production had been under way since the cutting of the first block in 1811. In the following extract from his *Memoir* (first published in 1862, here given in his original spelling) he again mentions some difficulties, as well as the pleasures of the undertaking. He had recently recovered from a severe illness:

As soon as I was so far recovered as to be able to sit at the window at home, I immediately begun to draw designs upon the Wood of the Fables & vignettes, and to me this was a most delightfull task – In impatiently pushing forward to get to press with the publication, I availed myself of the help of my pupils, (my son, Wm Harvey and Wm Temple) who were also eager to do their utmost to forward me in the engraving business & my struggles to get the Book ushered into the world – Notwithstanding the pleasurable business of bringing out this publication, I felt it also an arduous undertaking – The execution of the fine work of the Cuts, during the day light, was very trying to the Eyes [...]

To find any surviving examples of early nineteenth century drawings on the wood prepared and ready for engraving is most unusual, for the reason mentioned above. Bewick drawings, or indeed anything from his workshop in this state is more than interesting and we would expect it to be extremely rare. We know of some displayed as part of the Ward Collection at the Newcastle upon Tyne exhibition of 1903, but nothing seems to have been recorded concerning their subsequent history.

Thomas Bewick 150th Anniversary Exhibition of Works and Relics. Academy of Arts, Newcastle upon Tyne, September 12th to October 8th, 1903.

At page 38, item 253 of this catalogue we see:

LOG OF BOXWOOD FROM BEWICK'S WORKSHOP.

The process of production of the engraved block may be traced from the beginning, thus:- First from this log of wood in its original state, then in Case 11 will be found the wood cut into pieces of the required thickness for printing from, and again squared to be drawn upon. In Case 8 the blocks may be observed with drawings upon them. The tools necessary for the engraving are in exhibit No.172, and the finished blocks and prints from them are all around. The WARD Collection.

At page 20, item 76 (Case 8) of the catalogue we see:

EIGHT ORIGINAL DRAWINGS ON WOOD,
by Thomas Bewick. The WARD Collection.



We can only wonder why the wood block drawings from the Ward collection survived in an un-engraved condition. Nevertheless, another one came to light recently. Offered for sale by a South of England dealer, it came housed in its own purpose-made frame dating from the early nineteenth century. Although the line of provenance was broken in the twentieth century, fortunately there is a penned inscription to help: on paper, stuck to the back of the block. Almost certainly written by Thomas Bewick's daughter Jane, it says 'Drawn on the Wood by Thomas Bewick.' The drawing is within an engraved oval on a rectangular boxwood block, perfectly matching in size and shape those used in Bewick's *Fables of Aesop*, 1818. This drawing of 'The Ass Eating Thistles' resembles the transfer drawing shown in Iain Bain's book

The Watercolours and Drawings of Thomas Bewick and His Workshop Apprentices, 1981, volume 1, page 183. Iain Bain offers a further clue relating to the un-engraved block: '...an un-engraved block carrying this design was offered for sale by Jane Bewick to Edward Ford in 1853 (Ford MSS)' Very helpfully, Iain Bain has provided the relevant extract. Jane Bewick to Edward Ford, 6 April 1853 [draft]:

...three original sketches which I hope you will accept. - I have a great [many?] of such. There is an original design, drawn on the wood for the Fables 'Ass Eating Thistles,' it is framed with a glass I should charge 50/- for it. I remain Sir, Yours very truly, Jane Bewick.



Two angled views of the block without the frame. The lead pencil marks reflect the light to show as white.

Favoured over time with offers of many choice items – amongst which were sets of vignettes on China paper, coloured drawings and pencil sketches – Edward Ford nevertheless declined the wood block. It was bought instead from Jane Bewick by the Pilgrim Street bookseller Robert Robinson, whose accounts for 2 February, 1859, show: *Drawn on the Wood framed Fable cut, Ass Eating Thistles* £2.2.0 [Workshop records in Tyne & Wear Archives, 1269/84]

The marked similarities between this previously unpublished transfer drawing (reproduced below) and the drawing on the block would lead us to speculate with some confidence that it was the one used to produce the principal outline. Iain Bain's book gives an in-depth description of the technique used, pp.56-60.

Although we have to be wary about the attribution of much of the material passing through Jane Bewick's hands –



Unpublished transfer drawing. Courtesy of the Natural History Society of Northumbria and with special thanks to June Holmes.

often many years after the death of her father – I think we can safely conclude that the above block is the one sold to Robinson. But that still leaves the question about who made the drawing on this block. On 5 February, 1818, Thomas Bewick wrote to John Bailey:

I hope to derive some assistance on the cutting [of] the Fables from a young man [William Harvey] who left me last September. As he expressed a wish to continue to work at them for me, I gave him a number of designs with him to London, which I had, on his acct. drawn on the wood with a finish and accuracy of fine miniature paintings, and flatter myself that I cou'd put a finishing hand to them when he returned them; but he has sent me none of them back, and I fear he only intends to make a blaze about the Fables being of his doing, at my expense, in London..'

It is possible that this drawing on the wood was by, say, William Harvey, but the label on the back makes it safer to attribute it to Bewick himself, since despite the wariness mentioned above we may think Jane would surely have known who had worked on it. Bewick designed and drew the Fables images on paper; he used the paper image to achieve a transfer outline onto the wood block; he then worked up the outline, by his own account, drawing the Fables directly onto the block with an exceptional attention to detail, knowing that the cutting would be done by his apprentices. Why this specific drawing on the wood was never cut can only be guessed at, but there is a further clue which opens up a specific possibility. Close scrutiny of the block shows the presence of hairline cracks running from top to bottom of the surface; they are just visible in the photographs printed opposite. They do not extend into the depth of the block, but they may well have indicated a weakness such that it would not be worth while to proceed with the cutting. Inserted into the forme for printing, the block would be put under high pressure which could turn the hairline cracks into deeper splits. All the hours spent on cutting would be wasted—better to start again, with a fresh block, re-drawing... We have to concede that this is mere speculation, though it would allow one further speculation, namely that the work done so far in completing the drawing would not have to be wasted by throwing it away. It could be kept as a showpiece drawing on the wood. That could just account for its survival.

OBITUARY NOTICES:

Margaret Weedon



In the course of research in my book on John Bewick I had occasionally come across a contributor to bibliographical journals by the name of (rather austere) M.J.P. Weedon. The first instance occurred in *The Library* for June 1949, where the name was attached to a fine, pioneering study of the eighteenth century children's writer Richard Johnson, entitled 'Richard Johnson and the Successors to John Newbery'. Two years later, writing in the TLS, the same author contributed a short but valuable article on Mother Goose's Melody (the edition of about 1780) which made the point that the woodcuts to this delightful little volume appeared to be by Thomas Bewick. Some of the mystery regarding the contributor was dispelled with the revelation in the acknowledgements to Sydney Roscoe's bibliography *John Newbery and His Successors* (published by Brian and Valerie Alderson in 1973) that the author's 'foremost debt...many times multiplied' was to his 'old friend Miss M.J.P. Weedon, Librarian of the Oxford English Faculty Library'.

To be honest, I had imagined that this Miss Weedon was now – in 1993 – long dead. So it was with some surprise and much delight that about 1994 I received a brief letter from Hugh Dixon forwarding a longer one to me from a Miss Margaret Weedon, demanding to know when my book on John Bewick would be finished and how she could get hold of a copy. As I was about to find out Margaret Janet Pearce Weedon (having successfully beaten cancer of the tongue) was very much alive and kicking and voluble. A correspondence was initiated and, since I frequently found myself researching in the Bodleian Library at that stage, invitations to afternoon tea and cake at nearby Kidlington quickly followed.

Margaret's home, Church Cottage, displayed the sort of arcane muddle that quickens the pulse of any self-respecting book lover. Leather bound volumes of all shapes and sizes lined the walls, piled up in the hallways, and joyfully escaped from the numerous shelves and bookcases. Space could barely be found in the kitchen to boil the kettle or lay the tea tray and books comfortably reclined on all the easy chairs in the

sitting room. Books, it rapidly came obvious, were Margaret Weedon's utter delight, especially eighteenth century children's books, spelling primers, books of proverbs and anything by or about Thomas Bewick or (above all) Jonathan Swift.

Books had always played an integral part in her life. Her mother had been a governess, her father a master at Tiverton Boys' Middle School. In 1936 she went to Bedford College, University of London, gaining an honours degree in English and French and carrying off the Annette Akroyd Scholarship and the Early English Text Society prize. Like her parents, Margaret became a teacher but found it uncongenial, switched to market research at Lintas and in 1942 was recruited into the Foreign Office's Bletchley Park, 'Station X' codebreaking station where she stayed for the duration of the war. Subsequently she trained as a librarian, eventually being appointed English Faculty Librarian at Oxford, a position she retained until retirement in 1983. Until the mid 1960s this library of 35,000 books was shoe-horned into an attic in the Schools Building and Margaret, it was reported, irrepressible as ever, 'has infected the place with an atmosphere of busy, friendly, abandon'. Its readers adored the place and Margaret was not without her admirers too. Amongst them was the great Bewick scholar Sydney Roscoe who was so enamoured that he proposed marriage. One cannot help but think that the very rare *Addenda and Additamenta to Bewick's Birds*, donated to the Faculty Library by Roscoe (Roscoe 34, 35) may have been as much for Margaret as for the Library. But the lady was not for marrying and her strongly independent streak became progressively fiercer with age.

Alas, time and the death of a beloved brother took its toll and in 2006, having becoming quite frail she found herself in the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford where she amused staff and patients by her cry of 'ah books! Books are my life!', whenever the library trolley drew up at her bedside. Her exclamation has proved to be a fitting epitaph for she was really not well enough to go home to Church Cottage and, after a few months in a nursing home, she was taken ill with pneumonia and died in December last year, greatly missed by her family, friends and scholars of the eighteenth century everywhere.

Nigel Tattersfield.

Margaret (Gerda) Janet Pearce Weedon, librarian, book historian and Bewick enthusiast. Born Bolham, Devon, October 1918, died Rugby, 30 December 2006. With thanks to Tim Weedon for providing the photograph of his aunt.



Brian North Lee, FSA

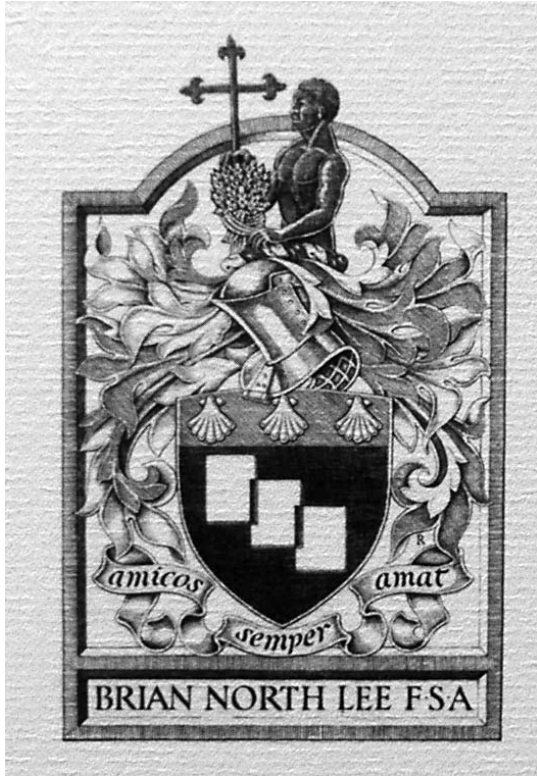
In mannerisms if not in appearance, there was much of the elderly maiden aunt about Brian North Lee even though, when I first met him in 1980, he was only in his mid forties. At the time it seemed to me, being a reasonably affluent advertising copywriter in possession of a small collection of books, that I must be in need of a bookplate. A mutual friend suggested that I visited Brian at his home in Chiswick, a few stops down the line from where I was living in West Kensington. I was courteously received, handed a cup of tea from a porcelain tea service that would not have disgraced a duchess, my requirements ascertained, and the work of various wood engravers laid before me. I thought the work of Simon Brett met my brief most sympathetically (Brian was fortuitously engaged in writing a monograph on Simon's work at the time), and Simon proved agreeable to drafting a plate. Alas, the greasy pole of advertising provides the slipperiest of employments and the plate fell victim, along with many other plans, to a notice of redundancy I received shortly thereafter.

Thirteen years later, whilst researching *Bookplates by Beilby and Bewick*, I recalled Brian had sedulously built up one of the largest private collections of bookplates in the country and, in search of illustrations for the book, I telephoned him for one or two photostats. To my astonishment he remembered me perfectly and shortly afterwards I found myself once again in his perfectly arranged front parlour, amidst mahogany side tables and velvet-cushioned occasional chairs (an aspidistra would not have been out of place), precariously balancing yet another exquisite cup of tea (no biscuits ever came forth) whilst volume after volume of bookplates (Brian mounted them in loose-leaf stamp albums) were laid before me. To my surprise, pleasure and gratitude (and apprehension, for my purse was never very deep) Brian indicated that, as he himself was a great admirer of Bewick and, as my researches were serious, he was prepared to sell me whatever I would care to buy. Even though it appeared a second mortgage would be required, for Brian was not behind in computing the value of his bookplates, I purchased as much as I possibly could. Assembling my own collection proved crucial; it is easier to write enthusiastically of something you own than something you don't.

From then on we kept in touch on a regular basis. When, after a further six years, my book was eventually published I sent Brian a copy. Not without apprehension, for his erudition was formidable, his own style of writing felicitous and his criticisms could be pithy to the point of waspish. Mercifully he liked the book, remarking to me it was 'far better than he had any right to expect' and henceforth he promoted it tirelessly.

Born in Syston, Leicestershire, to a family who had for many generations worked the land, Brian's career was marked by variety rather than continuity, though some common threads can be identified. Having initially trained for the Anglican priesthood, he then trained as a teacher and taught English in various schools in and around West London. He also spent several years in Ghana. Finally, possessed of a modest competency, Brian was able to do pretty much as he liked. Nevertheless he drove himself relentlessly. Although a fellow of the Society of Antiquaries he was never a clubbable man,

preferring ‘monkish solitude’ to vacuous chatter. He rose at four o’clock every morning and was at his writing table by five thirty. His day was full of enquiry and scholarship, as his stream of over 24 books, all published between 1973 and 2007 (his last a posthumous publication) demonstrates. He was also a witty and indefatigable letter writer and an expert collector of early pilgrim badges, the earliest form of tourist mementos.



Brian North Lee’s armorial bookplate, engraved on copper by Stanley Reece.

Brian was, in addition, a bundle of contradictions. He adored conventions (especially those of class and heraldry) but thought of himself as unconventional. He had the manners of a prim maiden aunt (as I have indicated) but took a perverse delight in provoking, tossing obscenities into a quiet conversation with a measured tone. He was a devout Christian but, when he imagined himself slighted, found it hard to turn the other cheek. He kept his interests, conversations, and friends, compartmentalised which at least had the advantage of making the tributes at his funeral entertainingly diverse. In the last year or so he was deeply distressed by the early death of his twin brother. Accordingly, on Brian being diagnosed with advanced cancer of the bowel he decided, sustained by his strong Christian beliefs, to forgo all treatment and let nature take its course. He leaves no direct descendents and his recently granted coat of arms (his branch of the Lee family were not previously armigerous) will now lapse since they may not be borne by anyone else. *Nigel Tattersfield*

Brian North Lee, born Syston, Leicestershire, 27 December 1936, died Chiswick, 24 February 2007. Teacher, bookplate historian and co-founder (with David Chambers and Peter Summers) of the revived Bookplate Society.

John William Borden

March 31, 1926 – January 7, 2008

The following notice was published in the *San Francisco Chronicle* on Monday, January 21, 2008:

John Borden passed away peacefully after a long illness in his beloved City of San Francisco. He was the son of Dr. Fred W. and Ruth Borden of San José, CA. John was proud of his Navy service as a pharmacist’s mate in WWII. Following his discharge in 1946 he entered Kenyon College in Gambier, OH, graduating in 1949, and then Columbia University where he received a master’s degree in business administration in 1957. For the rest of his life he retained a strong connection with Kenyon College, which presented him with their Distinguished Service Award for 2006 in recognition of his varied contributions to the college as an alumnus.

John had a long professional career with the financial services firm Dean Witter, first in New York and then San Francisco, retiring as vice president for administration. San Francisco was his chosen home and he continued his early maritime interest by sailing from San Francisco on passenger liners up and down the Pacific Coast. John also had a life-long interest in rail travel, and took many trips across the United States, Canada, and to other parts of the world.

He was a renowned collector and expert on antiquarian books and the history of fine printing. His extensive collection of books printed by the 19th century British wood engraver Thomas Bewick has been acquired by The National Trust of Great Britain and is now at Cherryburn in Northumberland, Bewick’s birthplace. John was a long-time member of the Book Club of California and served as its treasurer, vice president and its president from 1971-1973. Joining in 1954, John was also one of the most senior members of the Roxburghe Club of San Francisco, which he led as master of the press from 1971 to 1973. In addition to collecting finely printed books, he also handset type and printed cards and pieces of ephemera on his own fine press, styled the ‘In Time Press.

John was predeceased by his parents and his brother Henry Davy Borden. He will be deeply missed by his sister Jane Borden Marshall (Jack) of Los Altos; nieces and nephews Margaret Marshall Carlton, Alison Marshall Palu (John), Scott Marshall (Deanna), John Marshall (Kim); many grand nieces and nephews. At his request, there will be no service or memorial. Contributions in his memory may be made to Kenyon College, Gambier, OH 43022.



BIRDS AND BLUSHES

by Peter Osborne

John Ruskin's admiration of Bewick's work is well attested; he called him one of the best draftsmen since the time of Holbein. Ruskin also valued his moral stance in two ways: he praised the specific moralising of some fable engravings, such as the 'Frogs and their King', (*Ariadne Florentina*), and, more profoundly, the young Ruskin shared Bewick's concern for what has become known as 'Natural Theology' – the belief that knowing more of creation helped us to understand more of the 'wisdom' of the creator.

But there was one aspect of Bewick that Ruskin did not admire, and this is epitomized in his statement that Bewick was 'not a gentleman'. Bewick, he thought, shared with Hogarth that 'English love of the ugly'. This seems to have meant two things to Ruskin: an inability to compose ideal or fine figures and a tendency to depict vulgar things. Did this concern with propriety accord with the feelings of those who bought and owned Bewick's books? I believe that I have an interesting piece of evidence that sometimes it did. We know, of course, that Thomas himself became more sensitive about this and modified some of his engravings as a result, e.g. 'The Privy' (Bain, *Vignettes*, 64a), where the man's bare bottom was later hidden by added planks.



My recent acquisition of an 1821 edition of *British Birds* seems to throw some light on this. Inspection at purchase revealed what appeared to be a disruptive effect of poor printing in a blot-like spread of ink in some illustrations. Bewick's dissatisfaction with his printers is well known, and at first sight this could have been the sort of thing that caused it. However, what appeared as a reason for reduced purchase

price turned out to have a different, and perhaps historically more interesting, cause. More thorough inspection revealed that blotted prints occur only in vignettes and, furthermore, occur only on certain types of image. In page order the smudged prints are as follows:

(IBV refers to Bain's *Thomas Bewick Vignettes* illustrations.)

Volume 1, *Land Birds*

- | | | |
|------------------------|--|----------|
| 1.1 Frontispiece p. xi | Girl showing leg | IBV 63B |
| 1.2 p. 56 | Man urinating on his shadow | IBV 152B |
| 1.3 p. 126 | Devil's execution ¹ | IBV 12B |
| 1.4 p. 234 | Horse dung basket | IBV 86B |
| 1.5 p. 318 | Devil spying at execution | IBV 123B |
| 1.6 p. 20 | Supplement: Devil hindering a thief ² | IBV 83A |

Volume 2, *Water Birds*

- | | | |
|------------|--|---------|
| 2.1 p. 195 | Glutton vomiting | IBV 66B |
| 2.2 p. 268 | 'Pinched for Water' (Urinating boy) ³ | IBV 37B |
| 2.3 p. 337 | Dog urinating on linen basket | IBV 30B |

¹ quoting Jane Bewick (?): 'The devil has led his victim to the gallows, and is smoking his (the victim's) pipe.'

² 'A thief and his bounty being hindered by his old friend the devil.'

³ '...to float the toy boat.. the readiest source is to enlarge the puddle.'

All the above are blotted roughly, but perhaps expressively and certainly selectively, with black ink, except 1.1, where the girl's bared leg is covered with ink pen lines trying to show continuation of her skirts. In summary: three smudges obliterate the devil – an evangelical sensitivity perhaps; three hide people urinating; one blacks out vomiting; and one covers the girl's bared leg. Particularly prudish is 1.4 because the practice of attaching baskets behind animals to collect their dung was both widespread and sensible in protecting precious pasture and saving good manure. The reduced occurrences in the (later) Vol. 2 – (half those in Vol.1) – reinforces the point that Bewick may have been moving away from 'vulgarity' under pressure.

Clearly the smudges follow a pattern; they hide features that a prudish person might find objectionable or might want to hide from the eyes of an inquisitive youngster. Who could have made them? The book's early owner was 'Jn C Browne, 1825'. Presumably it stayed in Newcastle, where it later belonged to Phyllis Osborne, 1930 – née 'Chilton at 4 Saville Place, n/c'. The inks look 19th century but only chemical analysis would confirm it. Perhaps a NE member knows more of the Brownes and whether there was a sensitive and evangelical Browne who would have had such objections, like Ruskin, to the vulgarities of a 'Northumberland clod', as Ruskin called him.

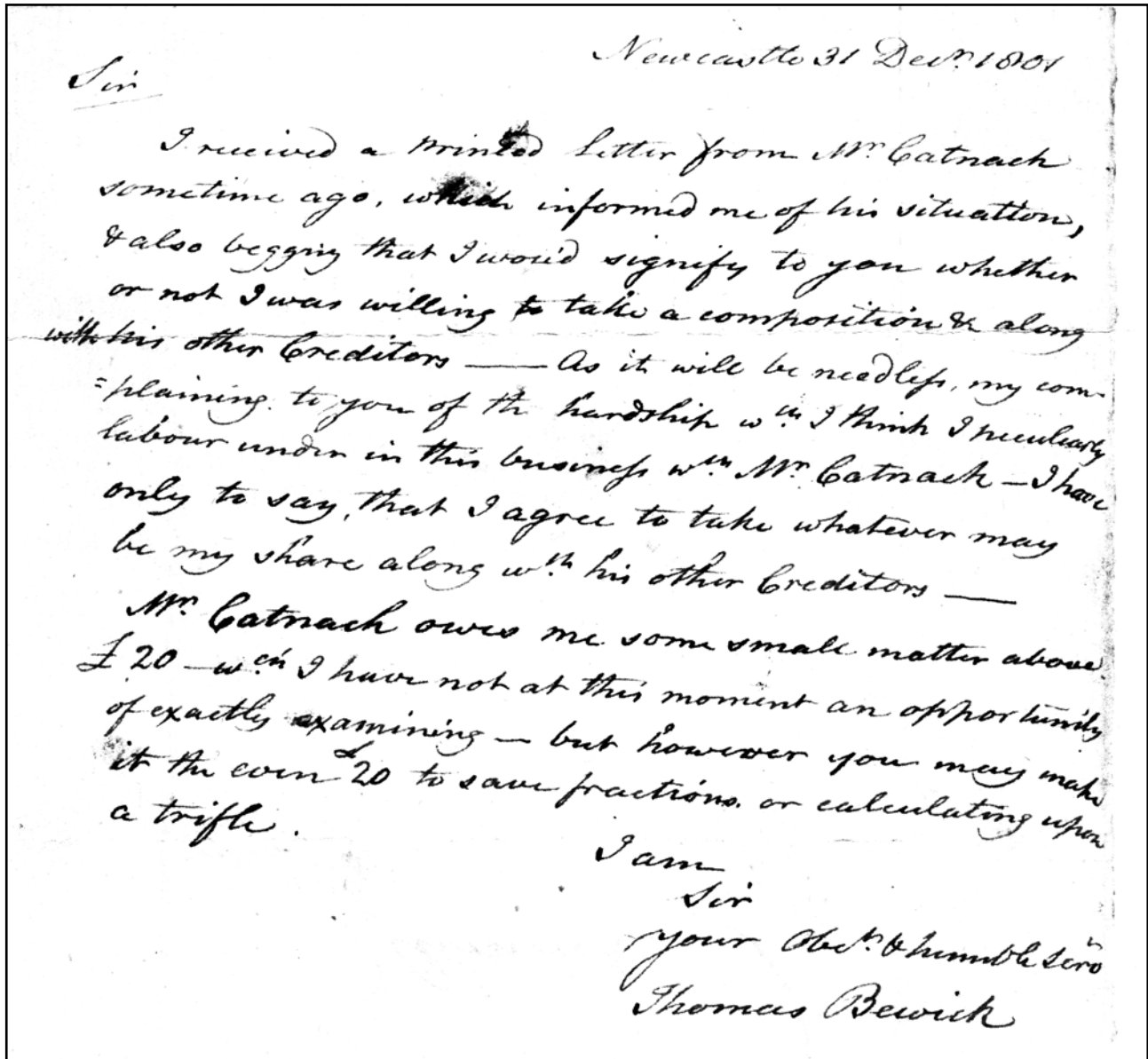
Prudish bowdlerisms must have occurred far more widely, particularly in Bewick, driven as he was, said Ruskin, by a 'vigorous veracity'. Members may like to keep a look-out for this. Twice in the last month I have seen Bewick books offered for sale with willful damage of the same sort. In both cases scratched rather than inked, the aim was the same: to obliterate from view, perhaps especially from the sight of juniors, anatomical and diabolical aspects, the depiction of which was undoubtedly thought vulgar by many.

BEWICK AND CATNACH: NEW LIGHT ON OLD DISCORDS

by Alex Fotheringham

At a recent auction in Carlisle, a letter from Thomas Bewick to Thomas Bell, attorney of Alnwick, was one of the lots. It related to John Catnach's first bankruptcy in 1801, and a following lot contained a MS list of his creditors – although Thomas Bewick, curiously, is not listed among them. Both lots were purchased by a member of the Bewick Society and are summarised here.

Robert Hudson, butcher:¹ Although his entire stock in trade was advertised for sale, as were the contents of his house (including a cradle), the process was not as terminal as this would suggest, for Catnach continued in Alnwick until 1808, when he moved first to Newcastle and then London, where he died in 1813, 'after an unsuccessful and poverty-stricken year.'²



Newcastle 31 Decr 1801

Sir

I received a printed letter from Mr. Catnach sometime ago, which informed me of his situation, & also begging that I would signify to you whether or not I was willing to take a composition & along with his other creditors — As it will be needful, my complaining to you of the hardship wth I think I peculiarly labour under in this business wth Mr. Catnach — I have only to say, that I agree to take whatever may be my share along wth his other creditors —

Mr. Catnach owes me some small matter above £ 20 — w^{ch} I have not at this moment an opportunity of exactly examining — but however you may make it the even £ 20 to save fractions, or calculating upon a trifle.

I am
Sir
your Obed^t & humble Serv^t
Thomas Bewick

John Catnach, born in 1769, having completed his apprenticeship as a printer in Edinburgh, set up in business in Berwick (briefly) before moving to Alnwick in 1790. As a printer, bookseller, stationer and lending library proprietor, he built up a substantial business, but by the end of the century he found himself in dire financial straits. In consequence he was declared bankrupt in 1801, not for the last time. His creditors were numerous – a MS list prepared at the time contains fifty-two names, from London and Edinburgh booksellers to ‘Mr

Thomas Bewick was among Catnach's many creditors in 1801; the stock-in-trade included ‘17 Woodcuts for Tail Pieces’ and 136 other woodcuts. Not all would have come from the Bewick and Beilby workshop, but Nigel Tattersfield notes that from 1790-1800, Catnach ‘appears frequently in the workshop archive as a customer for various binders’ tools and miscellaneous wood-engravings.’³ Bewick's letter was written to Thomas Bell, the Alnwick attorney who was dealing with the matter (and who was to cross Bewick's path

over Catnach's financial affairs on at least one subsequent occasion).⁴ In it he accepts realistically that he was only going to receive a proportion of his debt of more than £20: 'as it will be needless, my complaining to you of the hardship wth I particularly labour under in this business wth Mr. Catnach – I have only to say that I agree to take whatever may be my share along wth his other creditors.' The sum should be rounded down to 'the nearest even £20 to save fractions, or calculating upon a trifle.'

It is a characteristically practical and direct letter, unpublished – and hitherto unknown. It adds another strand to the narrative of relations between Bewick and Catnach, perhaps the most interesting North-Eastern printer of the time.

Notes:

¹ The full list of Catnach's creditors is worth reprinting. There is no indication of the amounts owed, but the wide geographical spread gives some idea of the commercial network developed by Catnach. They are ranked in south to north geographical order – London, the provinces, then Alnwick, with local tradesmen and personal (i.e. non-commercial) creditors last:

Flight and Williams Stationers 318 Holborn London
 Bloxham Fourdriner & Co Stationers ditto
 Grosvenor Chaters & Co Stationers ditto
 William Lane Booksellers Leaden-hall Street Ditto
 Oppenheim & Co Toy Merchts 115 Aldersgate D°
 Oppenheim Senr Jewellers and Toy Mercht Ditto
 Field, Pocket Book Maker, 18 size Lane Do
 Wallis Bookseller Paternoster Row Ditto
 Cawthorn British Library, Strand D°
 Mr – 61 Strand Agent for Thos Barns D°
 Gedge and Newton No 107 Newgate Street D°
 Shaw, Medecine Ware House 74 Borough D°
 Goulding & Co Music Sellers 45 Pall Mall d°
 Dickinson, 55 Long Acre - - d°
 Taylor & Davy Drugists d°
 Dr Brodsum No 9 Albion Street d°
 Jackson & Co 95 Fleet Market d°
 Henderson No 18 Bridge-water-square d°
 Marshall Printseller etc D°
 Chapman Printer Fleet Street D°
 Steavenson (deleted)
 Stephenson late Type Founder Ditto
 Richd Whitehouse Hardwareman Birmingham
 Fletcher and Sharett Walsal (*sic*)
 Wilson & Spence Booksellers York
 Richd & Jn Todd, Pocket Book Makers Rippon (*sic*)
 Suddock Leather Dresser Durham
 Tarn Painter and Glazier Sunderland
 Mrs Hodgson Newcastle
 Execr of John Scaife Newcastle
 Nessess & Glenton Drugists Newcastle
 Walker Printer Newcastle
 Barns Bookseller N. Shields
 Mrs Phorson Berwick
 John Taylor d°
 Wm Embleton d°
 Tankans Leather Dresser Ditto
 Morison Leather Cutter D°

Fairbairn Bookseller Edinburgh
 Brown Bookseller ditto
 Neal & Co Printers d°
 Duncan & Son Booksellers Glasgow
 Morison Printer Perth
 Revd J Cook Newton⁵
 Mr Millin Alnwick
 Currie Grocer do
 Gilson & Co do
 Hardy ---- do
 Mrs Cattanach --- do
 Mr Baird do
 Mr Embleton Grocer do
 Mr Robert Hudson Butcher

² Hunt, C.J., *The Book Trade in Northumberland and Durham to 1860*, Newcastle upon Tyne, Thorne's Bookshops Ltd, 1975, p.20.

³ Tattersfield, N., *Bookplates by Beilby and Bewick*, London, The British Library, 1999. pp. 86-7.

⁴ Bell and Bewick fell out in 1815 over work done in 1805 for Catnach's *The Hermit of Warkworth*; the bill came to £44-13s-8d, of which only £6-10s-0d had been paid ten years later. Little wonder, as Tattersfield says, 'that Bewick sharply reminded Davison [pharmacist and printer of Alnwick] that "you and Mr Bell ought in honour immediately to pay me what you have promised – you £15 and he £10 as is plainly promised in both your letters, before I began the Cuts & in your subsequent Letters to me."' (Tattersfield, *op.cit.* p.62; cf. also Peter Isaac's book on Davison: *Davison's New Specimen*, London, Printing Historical Society, 1990, p.9. for a longer account.)

⁵ Cook, vicar of Chatton, and a substantial book collector, must have been 'touched' by Catnach for money, so this, unusually appears to be a personal rather than a commercial debt. For more on Cook see N. Tattersfield, *Bookplates*. Tattersfield has suggested that Catnach may have worked off his debts to some of the London booksellers by selling them (or allowing them) sheets of his publications. His edition of Johnson's *Journey* (1800) has the imprint 'Alnwick: printed by J. Catnach for J. Wallis, 46 Paternoster Row,' the eighth name of the list, and further research might uncover more such links.

Bewick on DVD

The original 'Mini DV Video' recording of *Thomas Bewick, with John Grundy* has now been re-issued in DVD format (PAL and NTSC). Copies are available from June Holmes c/o Natural History Society, Hancock Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4PT. (A few VHS copies are still available but in future DVD will be the preferred format of choice.)

Cherryburn Times is normally published twice a year. Contributions are invited particularly (but not only) from members of the Bewick Society. The preferred digital format is 'Rich Text Format' (.rtf) or Microsoft Word (.doc) and images in Jpeg or Tiff: print resolution 300 d.p.i. (8 cm wide or larger).

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