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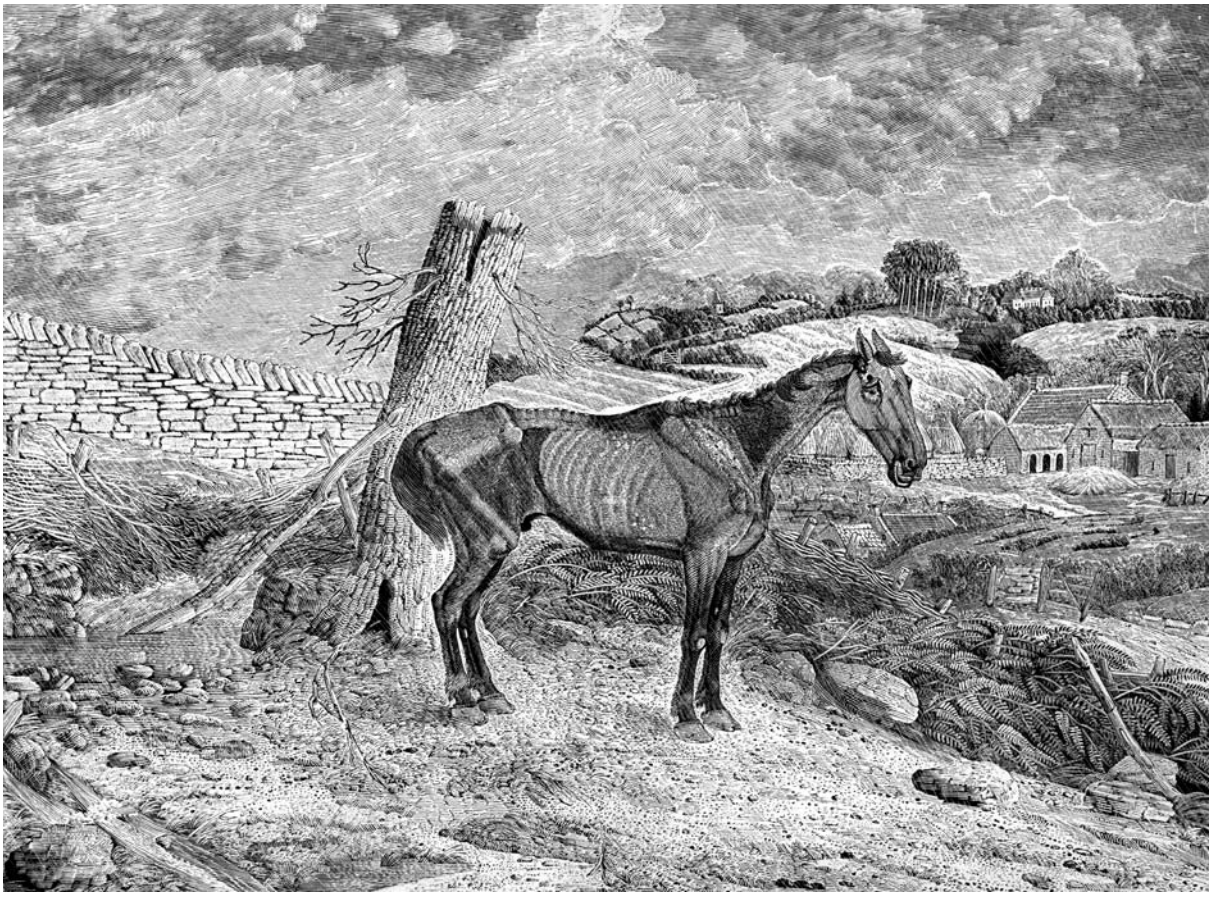
CHERRYBURN TIMES

The Newsletter of The Bewick Society



Waiting for Death. (reduced from original block size $11\frac{5}{8}$ in. x $8\frac{7}{8}$ in.) Wood engraving by Thomas Bewick, 1828, printed in 1832 by Messrs. Vizetelly and Branston for Robert Elliot Bewick,

BLACK BEAUTY

by Charles Bird, London Secretary

Did Thomas Bewick inspire one of the most famous animal stories of all time ?

Black Beauty was written by Anna Sewell (1820-1878) and published in 1877. Some fifty years earlier Thomas Bewick had engraved his last major work 'Waiting for Death'. A few experimental pulls on vellum were taken from the wood-block (then in an unfinished state and composed, like the Chillingham Bull of 1789, of more than one block of wood) on 1 November 1828. Almost immediately Bewick became ill. A week later he was dead.

It was left to Robert Bewick to publish the work in 1832 together with a descriptive text describing the life of the horse so poignantly depicted on its last legs. The text had, we are told, been composed by Thomas in 1785. It had been intended that the engraving be dedicated to the recently formed Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (now the RSPCA) and the cut may have been designed to hang in cottages for the enjoyment and education of their occupants. The woodcut and text were later re-issued by Robinson (printed from the original block which Robinson had purchased from the Misses Bewick) on parchment and paper and in his *Thomas Bewick His Life and Times* (Newcastle; 1887). In Julia Boyd's *Bewick Gleanings* (Newcastle;1886) she praises the

softly printed earlier impressions taken for Robert Bewick as against the coarser ones 're-issued only a few years ago' (presumably the Robinson ones). The block is now in the Hatton Gallery collection of the University of Newcastle.

The text of *Waiting for Death* has always reminded me of the story of Black Beauty known to me and loved, I imagine, by many others from childhood. So it seemed good to look more closely at the two.

The Bewick text is easy because it is so short. Here it is in full:

Waiting for Death

In the morning of his days he was handsome – sleek as a raven, sprightly and spirited, and was then much caressed and happy. When he grew to perfection, in his performances – even on the turf, and afterwards in the chase and in the field – he was equalled by few of his kind. At one time of his life he saved that of his master, whom he bore in safety across the rapid flood; but having, in climbing the opposite rocky shore, received a blemish, it was thought prudent to dispose of him, after which he fell into the hands of different masters; but from none of them did he ever eat the bread of idleness, and as he grew in years his cup of misery was still augmented with bitterness.

It was once his hard lot to fall into the hands of Skinflint, a horse-keeper – an authorized wholesale and retail dealer in cruelty – who employed him alternately, but closely, as a hack, both in the chaise and for the saddle; for when the traces and trappings used in the former had peeled the skin from off his breast, shoulders, and sides, he was then, as his back was whole, thought fit for the latter; indeed, his exertions in this service of unfeeling avarice and folly were great beyond belief. He was always, late and early, made ready for action – he was never allowed to rest. Even on the Sabbath day, because he could trot well, had a good bottom, and was the best hack in town and it being a day of pleasure and pastime, he was much sought after by beings in appearance something like gentlemen, in whose hands his sufferings were greater than his nature could bear.

Has not the compassionate eye beheld him whipped, spurred, and galloped beyond his strength in order to accomplish double the length of the journey that he was engaged to perform, till, by the inward grief expressed in his countenance, he seemed to plead for mercy, one would have thought, most powerfully? But alas! in vain. In the whole load which he bore, as was often the case, not an ounce of humanity could be found; and, his rider being determined to have pennyworths for his money, the ribs of this silent slave, where not a hair had for long been suffered to grow, were still ripped up. He was pushed forward through a stony rivulet, then on hard road against the hill, and having lost a shoe, split his hoof, and being quite spent with hunger and fatigue, he fell, broke his nose and his knees, and was unable to proceed; and becoming greased, spavined, ringboned, blind of an eye, and the skin by repeated friction being worn off all the large prominences of his body, he was judged to be only fit for the dogs. However, one shilling and sixpence beyond the dog-horse price saved his life, and he became the property of a poor dealer and horse doctor.

It is amazing to think upon the vicissitudes of his life. He had often been burnished up, his teeth defaced by art, peppered under his tail, had been the property of a general, a gentleman, a farmer, a miller, a butcher, a haggler, and a maker of brooms. A hard winter coming on, a want of money and a want of meat obliged his poor owner to turn him out to shift for himself. His former fame and great value are now to him not worth a handful of oats. But his days and nights of misery are now drawing to an end; so that, after having faithfully dedicated the whole of his powers and his time to the service of unfeeling man, he is at last turned out, unsheltered and unprotected, to starve of hunger and of cold.

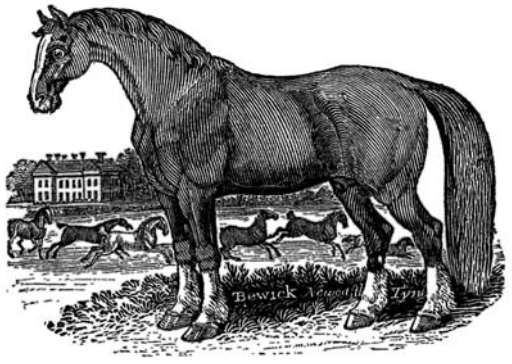
Thomas Bewick.

The same text is set out at the end of the *Memoir* (1862; Newcastle and London) except that it has the date 1785 in place of the name 'Thomas Bewick'.

The statement that the text was composed by Thomas as early as 1785 presumably derives from Jane Bewick. But it is not mentioned in the *Memoir* itself and by then he had not assumed responsibility for the letterpress of his works. He was not, for instance, in charge of the text to the first part of the *British Birds* (Newcastle; 1797) for which Ralph Beilby was in the lead. The first edition of the *Quadrupeds* (Newcastle;1790) does, however, have a paragraph at the end of the entry on horses (page 9):

'But it must continue to be a matter of regret to every feeling mind, that these excellent qualities should be often shamefully abused in the most unnecessary exertions; and the honest labours of this most noble animal thrown away in the ungrateful task of accomplishing the purposes of unfeeling folly, or lavished in gratifying the expectations of an intemperate moment.' Perhaps Thomas was responsible for more of the text of the first part of *British Birds* than has previously been supposed.

The *Black Beauty* text is more difficult to keep in one's mind as it is book length. There are many elements that appear in one but not the other. But there are surprising similarities. The ones that struck me are as follows:



The Black Horse, figure from *Quadrupeds*.

1. Both stories are about a male horse. Obviously the Sewell tale is about a black horse. Bewick's horse is not described as black but its coat is 'as sleek as a raven' which suggests that it was black. Indeed there is a remarkable coincidence of imagery. In chapter 4 of *Black Beauty* his

coat is 'brushed every day till it shone like a rook's wing'. It is almost as if Sewell takes the idea but then puts it in slightly different language. And if Sewell did read Bewick's *Quadrupeds* there is of course an entry on 'The Black Horse'.

2. In chapter twelve Black Beauty is taken out on a stormy night. He comes to a bridge over a swollen river. He is urged on by the coachman but, sensing something amiss, refuses to go on. In doing so he saves the lives of his master and his coachman because, unknown to them, the bridge is broken in the middle. This reflects not only the reference in Waiting for Death to saving the life of his master by bearing him over the rapid flood but also some of the tailpieces in Bewick's works.

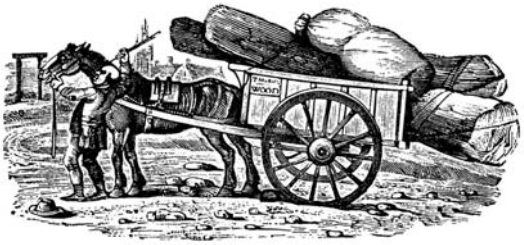
Pony refusing, rider distracted by birds. Vignette from *British Birds,* vol. 1.

3. In passing, in chapter thirteen of *Black Beauty* there is an interesting paragraph which might almost be a commentary on Bewick's use of the image of the devil to indicate disapproval:

'Then he talked to the boys very seriously about cruelty, and said how hard-hearted and cowardly it was to hurt the weak and the helpless. But what stuck in my mind was this – he said that cruelty was the devil's own trademark, and if we saw anyone who took pleasure in cruelty, we might know to whom he belonged, for the devil was a murderer from the beginning and a tormentor to the end. On the other hand, where we saw people who loved their neighbours and were kind to man and beast, we might know that was God's mark; for 'God is love'.

Scrawny horse, beaten and kicked (note gallows). Vignette from *Quadrupeds.*

4. In chapter twenty there is another scene described by Anna Sewell which could have come straight from a Bewick woodcut. Black Beauty comes across a cart heavily laden with bricks. 'The wheels had stuck fast in the mud of some deep ruts and the carter was shouting and flogging the two horses unmercifully . . . It was a sad sight. There were the two horses straining and struggling with all their might to drag the cart out, but they could not move it; sweat streamed from their legs and flanks, their sides heaved, and every muscle was strained, whilst the man, fiercely pulling at the head of the forehorse, swore and lashed most brutally.' How like the scene of the carter maltreating his overloaded horse in Bewick's description



Overloaded cart, angry driver (note gallows). Vignette from *British Birds,* vol. 1.

5. In chapter twenty-five Black Beauty injures his knees and has a bad fall when his drunken groom rides him at a gallop, without one of his horseshoes, over a rocky road. After this he is sold to a livery stables where Black Beauty finds that:

'Hitherto I had always been driven by people who at least knew how to drive; but in this place I was to get my experience of all the different kinds of bad and ignorant driving to which we horses are subjected; for I was a 'job-horse', and was let out to all sorts of people who wished to hire me; and as I was good-tempered and gentle, I think I was more often let out to the ignorant drivers than some of the other horses, because I could be depended upon.' This is very similar to the experience of the horse in Bewick's text quoted above on page two.

6. In chapter thirty-three Black Beauty becomes a horse pulling a London cab. At chapter thirty-six there is a discussion of the use of cabs and their horses on Sundays. Black Beauty's cabbie declines to work on Sunday and, at least at first, loses quite a bit of trade because of it: 'It soon became known that Jerry had lost his best customer, and for that reason, most of the men said he was a fool, but two or three took his part . . . 'If working men don't stick to their Sunday,' said Truman, 'they'll soon have none left; it is every man's right, and every beast's right. By God's law we have a day of rest, and by the law of England we have a day of rest, and I say we ought to hold to the rights these laws give us, and keep them for our children.' This reflects the reference in the Bewick text to Sabbath working.

7. After having a hard time working for a corn dealer and baker, Black Beauty is sold to a cab-owner in a large way of business called Skinner. Here the horses got no Sunday rest. Overloaded Black Beauty falls whilst pulling his cab up Ludgate Hill. Advised by the farrier that Black Beauty needs a rest Skinner has only an eye to business: 'Then he must just go to the dogs . . . I have no meadows to nurse sick horses in – he may get well or he may not; that sort of thing does not suit my business. My plan is to work 'em as long as they'll go, and then sell 'em for what

they'll fetch at the knacker's or elsewhere.' The name 'Skinner' is pretty similar to the villainous 'Skinflint' in Bewick's tale.

8. Being a Victorian novel Black Beauty has a happy ending with him being bought by a good family whose coachman recognizes him and gives him his old name again. There Black Beauty fancies 'I am still in the orchard at Birtwick, standing with my friends under the apple trees'. Quite a contrast to the unnamed and emaciated horse standing under the blasted tree on a rain-swept field in *Waiting for Death*.

Well, there it is. People can make up their own minds. I read in the Introduction to my copy of *Black Beauty* that Anna Sewell, who was an invalid for quite a deal of her life, kept a Journal. She records starting work on *Black Beauty* in 1871. I do not know whether the Journal is available or is in print (is there an Anna Sewell Society?) but it would be fascinating to check through to see if there are any references to Thomas Bewick's works, his *Memoir* or *Waiting for Death*. I feel sure that such a keen animal rights campaigner as Anna Sewell would have known all about them.

Select Fables, 1820: A Conundrum Solved

by Christopher Dean

Four years ago I had the opportunity of acquiring a very fine imperial copy of *Select Fables* published by Emerson Charnley. This was printed on thick paper watermarked 'J WHATMAN/1818'.

Before parting with my equally fine demy copy I decided to compare the two examples. I quickly noted many variations starting with the 'Advertisement'. The first cut in the imperial copy was of Newcastle Cathedral - probably as seen from Bewick's workshop; in the demy the opening cut is of a fisherman on the bank of a wooded pool or stream. On page ii the imperial copy has a large vignette comprising five cherubs, a vase surmounting a lion's head and garlands of flowers. This cut was omitted from the demy with the result that the text was adjusted upwards although it still occupies the first four pages of the Advertisement. The cut at the foot of page iv shows a mounted man evidently fencing with an angel in the demy whereas the imperial issue depicts a deer emerging from a forest glade.

At the end of detailed examination, there appear to be no less than forty occasions where there are fundamental differences in the cuts between the two issues. Three variations have already been discussed, two are headpieces and the remaining thirty-five are tailpieces. Of these, three blocks had been plugged and recut, one has had its margins trimmed and the remaining thirty-six cuts in the imperial do not appear in the demy issue. A schedule of the variations between the two issues is set out below.

Details of the three tailpiece blocks which were plugged and recut are as follows. The traveller's wagon and two horses on page seventy of the imperial have been removed and replaced by two men and a dog. On page 142 of the demy, a fisherman has been added to the otherwise rural scene on page 142 of the imperial. Finally, the grazing horse on page 154 of the imperial hes been replaced by a fisherman and appears on page 82 of the demy. The tailpiece on page 144 in the imperial version has been cropped and appears in a more oval format on page 182 of the demy.

Overall pagination is the same for the two issues as iv, xi and 332 but whilst the printer's name appears on page 332, viz 'Newcastle: printed by/S. Hodgson, Union-street' of the imperial there is no such imprint on the demy.

There are also minor variations in the layout of the text, albeit it is identical. Sometimes a word is moved from one line to the next and occasionally the number of lines on a page can vary (e.g. pages 330 and 332).

Why should this be? It was usual to print the demy issue before executing the larger paper issue but, given the three examples of plugging and recutting, It is not clear how this could be so.

Furthermore, why the minor resetting of the text here and there, but no changes to the sequences of words? Indeed, why plug and recut any of the blocks?

I also noticed that the feel of the paper used in the demy issue seemed 'odd'. One expects larger paper editions to be printed on good quality paper and this is certainly so with my imperial *Select Fables*. I recall that the paper used in my demy copy, whilst of good quality, had not the feel of a typical contemporary paper used by Bewick in his demy printings. The *Select* demy paper was much smoother and had less texture, and it looked as though it was machine made.

My conclusion is that the demy issue was not what it purported to be. In short, it was not a contemporary printing but one printed sometime later. As we know, Bewick made no direct contribution towards the 1820 *Select Fables*. The publisher was Emerson Charnley who used blocks acquired from various sources as narrated on page ii of the Advertisement - in particular he used the headpieces, less the ornamental borders, which Thomas and John Bewick cut for the 1784 edition of Select Fables, published by T. Saint.

There is support for my conclusion in *Thomas Bewick his Life and Times*, by Robert Robinson, published in 1877. Robinson mentions that Charnley parted with his collection of blocks to Henry George Bohn of York Street, Covent Garden in London. He then states that (Bohn) '. . . published an inferior edition of Charnley's reprint (in demy 8vo only)'. In fact Charnley's work was far from a reprint - it was a carefully considered publication and could in no way be construed as an update of the 1784 *Fables*. Robinson then goes on to tell us that Bohn disposed of the blocks to Edwin Pearson of London and they '. . . were now the property of the Rev. E Pearson of Cheltenham'. Edwin Pearson used the blocks (some with fresh borders) to publish another version of the 1784 *Select Fables*, in 1871 (Pease Collection No. 21). I also understand that he published other editions in 1878, 1879 and 1886.

In the light of all this it would appear that my demy was the Bohn reprint of Charnley's 1820 work and was probably published in the 1850s. I have seen two copies of this version of the demy and I suspect that it is by no means uncommon. I would be interested to receive Members' comments on these notes.

I have subsequently seen a proper demy copy of the 1820 *Fables*. It is printed on thinner paper than the imperial issue and watermarked '*W*/1818' and '*W*/1919', whereas the latter is watermarked 'J Whatman/1818'. The paper used by Bohn bears no watermark. Comparing the type face used in the Charnley and Bohn versions, it is noticeable that that used by Bohn on his page and chapter headings is slightly smaller, more delicate and less bold than with Charnley's. The words 'SELECT FABLES' on the title page are also smaller - the capital letters 'S' and 'F' are 5.7mm compared with Charnley's 6.6mm. As for the quality of the impressions, there is no doubt that those in the Charnley edition are much crisper and with better toning than those in the Bohn. This could be due to the blocks being printed on dampened rag paper rather than the machine-made paper used by Bohn, which would not take up such fine detail.

I should like to take this opportunity of thanking Nigel Tattersfield for his suggestions in preparing these notes.

SCHEDULE

Points of difference between Imperial and (Bohn) Demy copies

Imperial		Demy
Advertisement:		
(i)	View of Newcastle Cathedral.	Angling scene.
(ii)	Cherubs, garlands, etc.	No vignette.
(iv)	Deer in wood.	Mounted man and angel.
(xxxiii)	Headpiece shows ruined abbey.	Carved stone block in wood (also appears as tailpiece on pp.328 of imperial issue.
(xl)	Stag in wood.	Spray of flowers.
2	Fish.	Angling scene.
8	Dog and two mallards.	Angling scene with Newcastle Cathedral in distance.
34	Sailing vessel at sea.	Angler looking at distant castle.
60	Man watering horses.	Angling scene.
66	Magpie and crow with ruined castle in distance.	Angling scene.
68	Hare with rocks and trees behind.	Monk looking out to sea.
70	Tradesman's cart and two horses (later recut to show two men and dog - reappears on pp.164 of demy).	Dog cart with ruins beyond.
82	Horse trotting beneath tree.	Angler with mill beyond (recut from vignette on pp.154 of imperial edition which shows horse in foreground).
98	Hare, two dogs, rifle, etc.	Angling scene.
122	Dovecote and castle.	Angling scene.
132	Farmer sowing corn.	Winter scene on river.
134	Man in library.	Angling scene.
136	Goose and duck with farm buildings.	Angling scene with coach and horses beyond (this cut appears on pp.142 of imperial issue but does not have angler in foreground).
142	River scene with overhanging branches (this appears on pp.136 of demy after being recut with an angler in foreground).	Angling scene.
144	Two birds sitting on branches.	Angling scene.
154	Grazing horses and water mill. (appears on pp.82 of demy with angler substituted for the horse).	Angling scene.
158	Man walking dog in rain.	Angling scene.
164	Hare running beneath tree.	Two men and dog (block recut from that on pp.70 of imperial issue q.v. above).
168	Huntsman and hounds.	Angling scene.
170	Horses drinking water.	Cat and fox cub.
182	Sheep drinking at pool.	Two birds sitting in trees (similar to that on pp.144 of imperial issue but vignette now oval).
196	Rocky shore, cormorant, etc.	Swan.
198	Leopard lying beneath tree.	Street scene.
228	Lion asleep beneath tree.	Child and five adults.
230	Horseman in wood.	Boy with whip.
255	Sailing ship in storm (also appears on pp.141).	Cut of a different ship.
234	Two horses pulling a cart.	Figure of Britannia.
260	Stag in wood.	Figure of a bear.
272	Thin horse and farm beyond.	Mongrel dog.
276	Two doves.	Figure of rhinoceros.
278	Two hounds beneath a tree.	Small boy with dog.
294	Duckpond and tree.	Man wrestling with lion.
298	Woman feeding hens.	Boys fighting.
322	Tiger in tree.	Woman of fashion.
328	Carved stone block in wood.	Three people in building.

THOMAS BEWICK'S *WATER BIRDS:* THE BICENTENARY

By David Gardner-Medwin

Thomas Bewick's great work, his *History of British Birds*, was first published in two volumes, in 1797 and 1804. His incomparable skill as a wood-engraver made it possible to print exquisitely detailed figures and text together on one page far more simply and cheaply than before, and to create illustrations that were not only accurate in the details of plumage but were also, wherever possible, brought to life by personal observation of wild birds. The *History of British Birds* was a revelation, a book of the Enlightenment, and an inspiration to go out and discover more about the natural world. No later 'field guide' captured the affection of people so completely as the original.

When should we celebrate the bicentenary? Volume II, containing the *History and Description of Water Birds*, was 'Finished at Press on the 2nd & 5th July 1804' (though its 'Advertisement' or preface was dated 3rd July). Distribution of copies to subscribers started at once: Sir John Trevelyan, Sir William Blackett and Sir Thomas Blackett were sent their copies on 4th July, and others from the 7th of July onwards; so early July is the time to celebrate the publication. These and many other details are to be found in three little known notebooks from the Beilby and Bewick workshop, now in the Tyne & Wear Archives in Newcastle (T&WA 1269/54, /135 and /136); they provide the nucleus of the new material in this article. A longer, fully referenced and illustrated version is planned for publication later in the year.

Preparation

Although Bewick had been considering the book for at least five years (as his letter to William Hutchinson, dated 21 March 1786, now in the Pease Collection, shows), it is generally accepted that the first active step came in July 1791, in the year after the publication of *A General History of Quadrupeds*, when Bewick went to Wycliffe to do some preliminary drawings. In the 'Advertisement' to the 1804 *Water Birds*, he wrote:

> *During a residence of nearly two months at that little earthly paradise . . . drawings were taken from the stuffed specimens of most of the British species, and many of these were afterwards traced and engraven upon the blocks of wood; . . .*

But he went on to say that many recently killed or living specimens, provided later 'by Patrons of the work', superseded the Wycliffe drawings as 'a more near approach to perfect nature'. Certainly Jessop (*Trans. Nat. Hist. Soc. Northumbria*, 59: 65; 1999) recognised thirty-three specimens now surviving in the Hancock Museum, from the 800 or more birds originally in Tunstall's collection, as the very ones that Bewick engraved for the book (to which Tunstall's spoonbill has lately been added). The workshop cashbooks record payments made when birds, some more welcome than others, poured in from many parts of England, 'cash on delivery'. When he used these donated or museum specimens for his engravings, Bewick was generally meticulous about acknowledging his sources.

The significance of Bewick's work at Wycliffe sounds a little different in a letter written at the time. On 24th July, when he had been there a few days, Bewick wrote to Beilby about the remarkable library. Of all the books he found there, he felt that Tunstall's own notebooks of observations and his annotated copy of Pennant's British Zoology would have been the most useful to them in preparing their book. But for illustrations . . .

> *I find that Edwards & Buffon are the only books that will be worth anything to us – I mean for the figures, which are generally extreemly well done, & indeed I think them better to copy than the stuff'd birds here. I can only pay attention to the Beak & plumage – they are all so distorted and unnaturaley stuck up that, as faithful representations of them as I can do, appear stiff as a poker – (as the Museum is to be sold I wou'd not like to have it said that we said anything slighting of it)* (TB to Ralph Beilby 24 'Aug' [actually July] 1791; published in Dobson's *Memorial Edition* of Bewick's *Memoir,* 1887).

Nothing slighting was said, and history may thereby have been distorted because what Bewick did not acknowledge in the *History of British Birds* were those bird drawings he made in the library, rather than the museum; and there were several.

The trail of evidence begins in a little notebook (T&WA 1269/54). Catalogued only as 'Engraving work notebook, Birds, n.d.', it is in fact Bewick's own record of what he found at Wycliffe. We can be sure of this, not only because his pencilled list of the books that impressed him there matches those he later mentioned in print, but because at the end of the book is a brief pencilled chronology of the visit, now partly illegible, the wording of which is matched, and its meaning clarified, in a letter Bewick wrote from Wycliffe to his wife, on Friday 22nd July 1791 (coll. Lit. and Phil. Soc., Newcastle).

A large part of the notebook is occupied by a list of British birds, copied from Pennant's *British Zoology*, which became the principal basis for the choice and naming of the birds later included in the *History of British Birds*. There are two substantial comments on Edwards' *Natural History of Uncommon Birds* (1743-68), one praising the figures and the other quoting in precis some evidence about the migration of birds – which Bewick later quoted in *Water Birds*. There are brief notes about several other famous ornithological works of the time, most of which were later commended in Bewick's *Birds* or in his *Memoir*. The wide range of birds from many parts of the world that were mentioned, together with the watercolours of many foreign birds, painted at Wycliffe, now in the British Museum and the Hancock Museum in Newcastle, make it very likely that in the summer of 1791 Beilby and

Bewick were intending to publish a world-wide 'General History of Birds', comparable to the *Quadrupeds*, but were deterred by the number of species involved. Bewick wrote in the notebook, despairingly:

The Number of Birds treated of by Linnaeus amounted to a few above 900 – 30 or 40 of which were new – Mr Latham describes about 3000 – between 5 or 6 Hundred of which are only to be found treated of in his work.

Mrs June Holmes discovered that many of the watercolours of foreign birds were copied, not from museum specimens but from the books in Tunstall's library, especially from the works of George Edwards (Davis and Holmes, *Arch. Nat. Hist.* 20: 167; 1993). It is now apparent that some of the surviving Bewick watercolours of uncommon British species that were included in *British Birds* also bear a striking resemblance to Edwards' coloured etchings, while in the case of the 'dusky' (Slavonian) grebe, fulmar, red-breasted merganser and pied flycatcher the wood engravings themselves are clearly derived from the Edwards illustrations.

Once engraved and published, whether from live birds, recently dead ones, museum specimens or the illustrations of others, the figures were rarely changed. A few were added over the years, but scarcely any were dropped. The 'whimbrel', for example, survived through all editions, accurately engraved by Hole from a Bewick drawing that was almost certainly copied thirteen years earlier from Edwards (with a change in the head position and the bill). From the outset the figure was in conflict with Bewick's more accurate text description of the species. It seems likely that Edwards' specimen, and hence Bewick's, was in fact a juvenile curlew from the Yorkshire Dales, and not a whimbrel at all.

'Whimbrel' from Edwards (1760, plate 307)). Taken near 'Worley-clough', Yorkshire. By kind permission of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne. For Bewick's version see *British Birds*, vol. 2, p.57.

Authorship and illustration

At the age of nearly fifty, Bewick was forced into authorship for the first time. It had been Ralph Beilby who drafted their *A General History of Quadrupeds* (1790) and the *Land Birds*. Bewick had argued for changes and edited drafts, but had been spared the horrors of the blank page. It is well worth reading the *Water Birds* to see how well he fared. His Georgian prose is far from being rustic, as some might suppose. He did admit *To the Rev. H. Cotes, vicar of Bedlington, the editor acknowledges his obligations for his literary corrections*, but he robustly and convincingly denied a later insinuation that Cotes was the author (*see* Roscoe's *Bibliography Raisonné*, 1953, pp. 71-73; and Williams' *Bewick to Dovaston Letters*, 1968, p. 80). Paradoxically, Bewick seems to have been more fully responsible for the text of the *Water Birds* than he was for the illustrations.

Four of the workshop apprentices, Robert Johnson, Charlton Nesbit, Henry Hole and Luke Clennell, have been credited with contributing to the book (*see* Jackson's *Treatise on Wood Engraving*, 1839; and Bain's *Thomas Bewick Vignettes*, 1979, and *Watercolours and Drawings* 1981; etc). From the available evidence, Hole seems to have engraved the Whimbrel, the Lesser Tern (Little Tern), the Tufted Duck, the Velvet Duck (Velvet Scoter), the Red-breasted Merganser and the 'Crested [breeding plumage] Corvorant', while Clennell engraved the Lesser Imber (a diver, possibly Black-throated), the Brent Goose and the (non breeding) 'Corvorant'. Robert Johnson's watercolour drawings were engraved for a number of the vignettes in both volumes, mostly by Bewick; Nesbit (once in Volume 1) and Clennell (in Volume 2) designed others, while Nesbit, Hole and especially Clennell all engraved vignettes. Bewick himself, however, evidently engraved the vast majority of the illustrations (and all the birds) in Volume 1 and the majority also in Volume 2. He will have demanded high standards and overseen all the work, perhaps even reworking some of the apprentices' blocks, so the full attributions can never be precisely settled and Bewick himself may properly be given the credit for the book as a whole.

Overall, it must be said that the descriptive ornithology in the *Water Birds* is at least equal to that of *Land Birds*, and in many respects better, while the illustrations, though many are wonderful, are not always quite of the same immensely high standard.

Publication

Eventually the book was ready for the press. For the *Land Birds* in 1797, there was the established publishing team of Ralph Beilby, Thomas Bewick and Solomon Hodgson to oversee the process. They had already printed three editions of the *Quadrupeds* together, and things seem to have gone smoothly, until the thorny issue of the authorship led to the final breakup of the partnership of Beilby and Bewick. Not until seven editions later, in 1826, did any author's name appear on a title page, and then, of course, it was Bewick's alone.

The production of *Water Birds* was more difficult. By then, Hodgson was dead, his widow was not on speaking terms, and Beilby and Bewick had parted. The printing alone took almost a year (T&WA 1269/135, p.4). Bewick seems to have intended the book to be printed by Matthew Brown 'At the Sign of the Bible' in Flesh Market. But Brown died in April 1803, so in June, when the paper for

the book had already been delivered and put into storage, Bewick approached Edward Walker in Pilgrim Street. After long delays, Walker succeeded and thereafter he printed virtually all of Bewick's most important work.

The notebook T&WA 1269/135 records the number of copies printed of the early editions of *British Birds*, summarised in the table. Some of this information (shown in bold) was unknown to Roscoe (1953).

Number of copies printed and prices of the early editions (T&WA 1269/135)

	Land Birds 1797 First	*Land Birds* 1798 ('1797') Second	*Water Birds* 1804 First	*Sets* 1805$ Third/Second
Imperial	24 (21s)	207 (21s)	**232** (24s)	**250** (24s)
Super Royal		**87** (18s)*		
Thick Royal (new Royal)	(18s)	**448** (15s)	**642** (18s)	**750** (18s)
Thin Royal (old Royal)	850 (13s)	**134** (13s)	**900** (15s)	
Demy	1000 (10/6)	768 (10/6)	**1750** (12s)	500 (12s)
	1874	**1644**	**3524**	**1500**

*The printed price of the 1798 Super Royal *Land Birds* was 15s, altered in ms to 18s (Roscoe).

$The Demy copies, issued in 1805, were dated 1804; the Demy *Land Birds* was of this new edition, the Demy *Water Birds* seems to have been a reprint of the 1804 edition (Roscoe).

Subscribers

No list of subscribers occurs in the *History of British Birds*. But in the notebooks, apparently not previously discussed in the Bewick literature, are lists of a large number of subscribers to early editions of the *Birds*, with a few for the *Quadrupeds*. Between them, notebooks T&WA 1269/136 and /135 name about 373 subscribers for the 1797 and 1798 *Land Birds*, and 495 for the 1804 *Water Birds*. These numbers cannot be directly compared with the numbers of copies printed – some individuals and many booksellers ordered more than one copy. Bewick's declaration that the book was intended for 'the rising generation' is not reflected in the sales, which tended to include an increasing proportion of the expensive 'collectors' copies over the first few printings.

An intriguing feature in the list, for 1797 only, is the appearance of about 27 orders for coloured copies. It is very doubtful whether any of these orders were filled. Coloured copies of the first edition seem now to be exceedingly rare, if indeed any exist. No mention of colouring is made in the record of the printing, binding, pricing and sales in notebook 1269/135. It may be cautiously concluded that the original intention to colour some copies was abandoned.

The subscribers themselves can be broadly categorised as friends and acquaintances; prominent citizens of Newcastle and the neighbourhood; wealthy landowners, mostly local but widely scattered in England; a group of fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge; collectors; booksellers mainly in London, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham; and a number of artists and engravers. Several people who had supported the project in its early stages also subscribed, including Thomas Pennant, George Silvertop and Francis Constable. The volumes they received revolutionised book illustration and created a nation of bird-watchers.

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New Chairman of the Society

The Annual General Meeting was held on 10th June in the Literary and Philosophical Society in Newcastle upon Tyne, with Dr Frank Atkinson, CBE, presiding. Hugh Dixon, who has been Chairman for five years, has stepped down from the chair, as required by the Constitution of the Society. Dr David Gardner-Medwin was elected Chairman in his place. Hugh Dixon was elected to serve as a member of the Committee. Charles Bird has resigned as the London Representative because he will shortly be moving out of London. No replacement has yet come forward. Other Office holders remain in post for the next year.

Following the AGM, John Gall from Beamish Open Air Museum for the North of England gave an illustrated talk on the Coal Certificates used for the shipping of coal from Newcastle. Members present were surprised at the wonderful vignette engravings used to decorate these certificates, showing considerably detailed views of the loading process, involving ships, sheds, staithes, chutes, etc. The engravings were by various hands, all signed, one by Thomas Bewick.

Society Publications

Bewick Studies, which most members of the Society received *gratis* last Christmas, is still available for members who may wish to purchase extra copies as gifts. They cost £20, plus postage and packing, (retail price in shops £25), available from David Gardner-Medwin at the Hancock Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4PT.

Thomas Bewick with John Grundy, a thirty minute VHS video programme, is available from the same address, at £5, plus postage and packing. Also available from the Central Library at Newcastle, from Cherryburn near Mickley and all other National Trust shops in the North East. Price at these locations is £7.95.

Thomas Bewick in Newcastle, a guide to the places in and around the city associated with the artist. Folded broadsheet, available *gratis* from the above addresses, but postage is required. NB *erratum*: In the cartouche of the 1770 map the name of the cartographer should be William Hutton, not Charles Hutton.

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

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