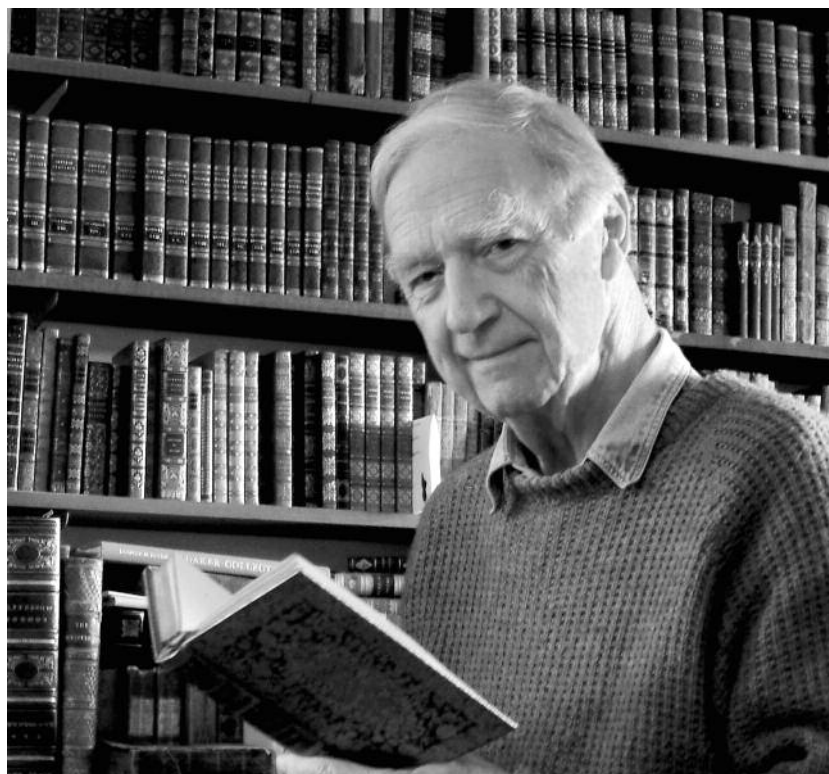




CHERRYBURN TIMES

The Journal of The Bewick Society

A CELEBRATION FOR A BEWICK SCHOLAR



In the two centuries since his lifetime, no-one has contributed as much to the knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Thomas Bewick as our Society's President, Iain Bain. In this issue of our journal we celebrate Iain's 80th birthday and send him our thanks and warmest good wishes.

The eight papers published here we hope will please him and remind our readers of the many facets of his scholarship. All of them suffer from the fact that the authors have been in the unfamiliar situation of being unable to seek Iain's help and advice – because the preparations have been kept secret from him as a surprise (and to circumvent his notorious modesty!). There are allusions here to several of Iain's varied interests including his skills as a typographer, fine printer, and Northumbrian piper. In addition to his own many distinguished writings about Bewick, Iain has been immensely generous in designing and typesetting the works of others including our Society's *Bewick Studies* and Nigel Tattersfield's *Complete Works* and has been unfailingly helpful in providing information and advice based on his experience, his years of

research and his collections of Bewick letters and other manuscript material. Virtually every Bewick enterprise in the last 50 years has depended directly or indirectly on Iain's expertise and kindness. Thank you Iain, and Happy Birthday!

The authors. Jenny Uglow and Nigel Tattersfield will be familiar to readers for their major contributions to the Bewick literature. Graham Williams is a friend of Iain's and a fellow fine printer; he has contributed a hand printed greeting in addition to his article. Anne Moore is the Museums Officer (North) for the Woodhorn Trust and acts as the curator of the Bagpipe Museum at the Chantry in Morpeth (and of the Berwick Museum and Art Gallery). Hugh Dixon, David Gardner-Medwin, Peter Osborne and Peter Quinn are active members of the Bewick Society who have contributed before to the *Cherryburn Times*.

The portrait of Iain Bain was kindly supplied by Mr David Chambers. It was previously published in the Private Libraries Association book *A modest collection: Private Libraries Association 1956–2006* (Pinner, 2007).

THE PURSUIT OF PRINTING

by Jenny Uglow

One of the many areas that Iain Bain has illuminated for everyone interested in Thomas Bewick and his work, is his concern with printing. This reminds us that the finished engravings are essentially collaborative artefacts — their transmission from block to page is of crucial importance in their making. Bewick felt this from the start. As an apprentice in Ralph Beilby's workshop he watched the letterpress men make up the pages and place them in the forme, fixing it in the press and beating it with the heavily-inked, leather covered balls, then placing the dampened paper on the tympan, securing it, and lowering it on to the type and running the bed forward while the heavy platen came down, pressing the paper onto the inked forme. 'The first difficulty, I felt, as I proceeded,' he wrote in his *Memoir*:

was in getting the cuts I had done, printed so as to look anything like my drawings, on the blocks of wood, nor in corresponding to the labour I had bestowed upon the cutting of the designs. — At that time pressmen were utterly ignorant as to any proper effect that was to be produced — or even if one of them possessed any notions of excellence beyond the common run of Workmen his materials for working were so defective that he could not execute even what he himself wished to accomplish—the common Pelt balls then in use, so daubed the cut & blurred & overlapped its edges, that the impression looked disgusting'.¹



Printers. By John Bewick, from John Trusler's *The Progress of Man and Society*, 1791.

Help came from the printers themselves. His apprentice friend William Bulmer, and Bulmer's master John Thompson, intrigued by Bewick's skill, helped him run off proofs. He found that if the paper was too dry, the impression was too faint; if too heavily inked, it was blotchy and dark, while the ink also tended to pool inside any raised edges. This, Bulmer suggested, could be solved by shaving down the edges. It is no surprise that Bulmer, founder of The Shakespeare Press, went on to be the most respected printer in London in later life.

Careful attention to printing was the key to several of Bewick's adjustments and innovations: the delicate cutting of surfaces to allow gradations of black to grey; the fine lines that could be achieved by placing slips of paper beneath the blocks to get a sharper impression. The Newcastle printers and booksellers, realising his talent, pushed him on. He had his own small letter-press in the workshop for proofing impressions from his boxwood blocks, but the main work in proving and printing was done by a succession of Newcastle printers, who were more used to producing newspapers, or quick work on broadsheets; so that Bewick said that when a work of his was going through he made it a habit, every morning, 'to proceed to the printer's to see what progress they were making, and to give directions to the pressmen about printing the cuts'.² He valued good pressmen like George Simpson of Hodgsons on letter-press and George Barber on copper, to whom he gave a special four day holiday at the start of the new century in January 1801.³ When *Water Birds* was sent to be printed by Edward Walker in 1803, Simpson came over from Hodgsons to teach Walker's pressman, George Barlow, how to prepare each cut to get Bewick's effect of distance.⁴

The workshop had a separate, copper-plate rolling-press, like those used for watch-papers, name-cards, invitations and certificates, and the bank-notes that Bewick engraved in his long struggle of the early 1800s to make one that could not be forged. For the copperplates, the dark Frankfort black ink was mixed with oil to give a dense pigment, pressed into the engraved lines of the plate, which was then polished with the ball of the hand to clean the surface. The copperplate printers were usually itinerant workmen, skilled but wayward, often drunk — the reason for Barber's eventual dismissal. Much later, when Bewick was trying to print in blue and red in his complex note for the Berwick Bank, he told John Bailey—a close friend and also Director of the bank—that he was not sure if the problem lay with the hard gummed paper, or the badly mixed ink, but he was inclined to blame his printer, 'my Botcher', as he called him. He advised valued customers that they should look at the sheets of his work and choose the best impressions before having them bound, and he was greatly disappointed when the printing was weak. When his *Fables of Aesop* was printed in 1818, with its relatively elaborate cuts, he went down to supervise the pressmen every day, but the result was still poor. He knew that Edward Walker had taken pains, he told Bulmer, but his men were not used to the ink, '& consequently they have failed, for the Impressions instead of being smooth & soft, are *clagged* broken & grey'. He was relieved to find that the second edition of 1823, which did not use such strong, black, thick ink, was much clearer.⁵

The precision required for good wood-block printing is hard for a layman to understand, and one of the brilliant touches of Iain Bain's deceptively simple-looking book, *Thomas Bewick: an illustrated record of his life and work*, is his concise illustration of what the problems were and how

Bewick got his results. Using contrasting impressions, he lets us see the poor results that come from printing on paper that has become too dry, while his diagrams make crystal clear the difference between a Bewick block with its lowered surface, beneath a tympan containing a blanket, and a surface cut block with a hard-packed tympan above. The want of precision in the wooden presses of the day, he tells us, and the uneven surface of the often worn types:

required a soft spongy impression – achieved by carrying woollen blankets in the skin covered tympan of the press. To allow for this, Bewick lowered the areas of his designs that had to be printed more softly – for example in his distances and in the soft texture of fur and feather, as well as around the edges of his vignettes shapes.⁶



This clarity of explanation comes partly, I think, from Iain Bain's own long experience in printing Bewick blocks. Hand printing is an art, a tactile, sensual skill as well as a technical exercise, feeling the right dampness of the paper, the density and smoothness of the ink, the correct pressure of the press. When I came to write on Bewick, his work leapt into life for me as I watched Iain print a vignette on the small hand-press in his book-room, with Bewick's published work all around me. I felt awed and delighted, like a child watching a conjuror.

Iain has given this intense pleasure to many people over the years, particularly at the Wordsworth Trust's annual Arts and Book Festival in Grasmere, where he first loaned his woodblocks and demonstrated printing in 1985. The present director Michael McGregor recalls people's rapt attention as Iain pointed out details in the vignettes, and the curator Jeff Cowton says his demonstration was a highlight of the year: 'Everyone was totally absorbed. Iain works with such precision and care; pulling back the handle, providing just the right amount of pressure, and then releasing it.— It stops one

in the busyness of everyday life. I was in the presence of a craftsman who was at one with his world. It has a magical air about it, a certain peace.' Pamela Woof, now President of the Trust, remembers the early days when the event was simply called 'The Book Collectors' Weekend', and among people 'with all the passions that pursuit involves', Iain talked about collecting the wood blocks, and, alongside them, the manuscripts. 'What I loved', she says, 'was Iain's great kindness, letting us come close to the press, wearing his apron, slowly applying the black ink, the rags that were needed to wipe clean, and the bringing down of the weight, yet gently, and finding we had our own Bewick print'.⁷

There lies the magic—the appearance of the image in one's hand. But the Arts Weekend is usually at the end of January, sometimes snowbound, and very near Burns night. So Pamela also thinks of Iain as a piper, piping in the haggis, or playing on the mountainside in the early morning with Chris Bacon, another printer, paper conservator, and Bewick admirer. Bewick loved the Northumbrian pipes, and Iain can play the pipes and explain the music of the time just as finely as he can explain and print the vignettes. To get both together, good piping and good printing—that surely would have made Bewick very happy.

Iain Bain demonstrating printing from Bewick's blocks at the Wordsworth Trust's Arts and Book Festival in Grasmere, January 2008.

Notes

1. Thomas Bewick, *Memoir*, ed. Iain Bain (1975) p. 188.
2. *Memoir* (1975), Introduction p. xxx, quoting W.A. Chatto and John Jackson, *A Treatise on Wood Engraving* (1839) p. 600.
3. [Holmes, J. and Gray, D.W.S.] (1998). 'Thomas Bewick's Nineteenth Century Jubilee, 1800-1'. *Cherryburn Times*, 3 (6):4-7. Christmas 1998.
4. William Garret to Thomas Hugo, March 1851 (Newcastle City Library, Pease 178, page 81).
5. Thomas Bewick to William Bulmer, January 1819; other mss. in coll. Iain Bain; and *Memoir* p.132.
6. Iain Bain, *Thomas Bewick: an illustrated record of his life and work*. Laing Art Gallery, Tyne and Wear County Council Museums, 1979 p. 36. The diagrams of the blocks and tympan are also reproduced in the introduction to his 1975 edition of the *Memoir*, p.xxxi.
7. With thanks to Michael McGregor, Jeff Cowton and Pamela Woof, The Wordsworth Trust, Dove Cottage, Grasmere.

BACK TO THE FUTURE

‘Putting Genius where it belongs’:¹ June to November 1978

by Peter Quinn

The weather was damp: constant drizzle on Friday turned to heavy rain. Back pages reported on the Scotland football team’s ignominious return from Argentina. There were industrial disputes, talk of an imminent election and a Pope intervening in Royal Wedding plans. A film was being made in Alnwick Castle by Walt Disney: extras were paid £10 per day. You might win a Volvo or £7000 in the Spot the Ball Competition. Oddly a front page advertisement proclaimed ‘Bewick Discount’: a Gateshead furniture store boasting a large range of suites and furniture.²

On Friday June 16th 1978 the *Newcastle Journal* published a short preview of the forthcoming exhibition at the Laing Art Gallery. Art critic Patrick Reade was clearly a Bewick enthusiast, dubbing him ‘Tyne-side’s foremost native artist’. The 150th Anniversary exhibition was seen as a landmark: the display would ‘put his genius in the rank it merits’.

The exhibition, curated by Iain Bain with the assistance of Andrew Greg, Gill Hedley and Peter Davis was officially opened that evening by David Attenborough. The Laing show jostled for attention with a host of other cultural events taking place that weekend. Googie Withers starred in Somerset Maugham’s ‘The Circle’ at the Theatre Royal. Theatre-goers had just heard the news that the RSC planned to spend eight weeks in Newcastle if its expenses could be guaranteed. Thin Lizzy were in town, following David Bowie, who had just completed three nights at the City Hall. The 10th annual Newcastle Festival began that weekend with the resignation of its director in protest against ‘financial shortcomings’. Some events were threatened with strike action, however a large programme had been planned. Joan Bakewell would lecture on the Brontës; Martin Amis was to read from his latest novel; poet Brian Patten would give a lunchtime recital (‘daytime is the prerogative of secretaries and luncheon vouchers’ he complained) and William Burroughs spent four days in Newcastle, appearing twice. ‘I want to see your Roman Wall’ he declared while confiding to the reporter that he was receiving no fee, only expenses for his trip.

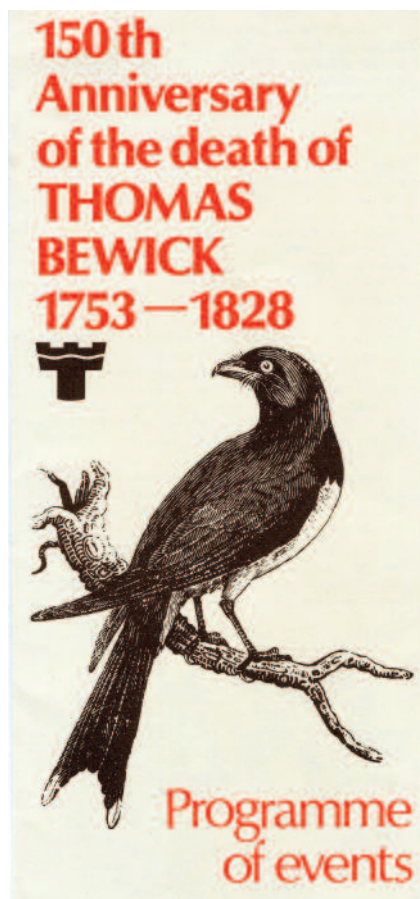
Did the Beat artist visit the Laing? The exhibition was to present a new version of Thomas Bewick, drawing on the most recent research. Tyne and Wear County Council Museums Service acknowledged that there had been eight exhibitions of Bewick’s work since 1880.³ Only the 1965 Hexham Abbey Festival, they said, had made ‘any attempt to present the

material in a way that really helped the visitor to understand Bewick’s art and techniques and to appreciate the constant burden he carried as a general trade engraver on metal’. The Laing exhibition broadsheet made this clear: a section entitled *Biography* is followed by *The Workshop* detailing the work of the trade engraver. ‘It is seldom recognised that the work by which he is now known was the extraordinary by-product of a hard and busy life as a general trade engraver on metal.’ The broadsheet is little known today: the following year the much larger *Thomas Bewick; an illustrated record of his life and work* was published, adding to the material that had guided visitors around the 1978 exhibition.⁴ The exhibition sections are however familiar to readers of Iain Bain’s accounts of Bewick: *Watercolours and Drawings* is one section, *The Narrative Tail-piece* another. There is a short section on *Engraving Style* and the *Apprentices* end the show.

By 1978 the Publications Manager at the Tate Gallery, as he then was, had a long familiarity with Bewick’s work. Bewick featured in his 1963 publication *Album de Novo Castro...*⁵ By the end of the decade he had amassed the information published as *A Checklist of the Manuscripts of Thomas Bewick*.⁶ Two years later *Bewick: a Second Gleaning*⁷ described the hitherto neglected area of Bewick’s watercolours and drawings. At that time he was already at work on a revision of *A Memoir of Thomas Bewick*⁸ and he provided notes for the *Vignettes* reprint published in 1978 by the Scholar Press.⁹ His lecture on June 21st 1978 at the Curtis Auditorium of the University of Newcastle bore the title ‘Bewick Discovered’ placing emphasis no doubt on the need to view Bewick in a fully developed context, suggesting that previous generations had been too selective in their accounts of the master.

This writer has not been able to trace any photographs of the exhibition. One imagines full use was made of the silver items from the collection at the Laing Art Gallery and, given the emphasis on Bewick’s work as a trade engraver, that there was a good collection of trade

engraving on show. We certainly know that the exhibition featured works from the collection of the Natural History Society of Northumbria: there were the bird specimens studied by Bewick at the Wycliffe museum; a number of pre-Bewick natural history texts which he had used; a large number of watercolours and drawings and a hand-coloured selection of figures from *Quadrupeds* that Bewick had made for his daughter Jane. There were a good selection of portraits



Leaflet for a programme of exhibitions, displays and events to celebrate the Anniversary (Tyne and Wear County Council Museums Service).

of Bewick and even Bewick's tooth with its comic dedication.¹⁰ We also know that many of these items were shown at the Paul Mellon Center for British Art, at Yale, later that year. The 1979 publication which followed these exhibitions suggests that they were ambitious retrospectives of all Bewick's output. No museum has since attempted such a survey.

Iain Bain's revisionist agenda seems to have been misinterpreted by the *Journal's* art critic. The exhibition literature could not have been clearer: 'Thomas Bewick's reputation as an artist-engraver on wood brought him fame in his life-time which has never since waned'.¹¹ Patrick Reade thought quite the opposite point was being made: 'That he is largely unknown to the general public is because his work was so very well known 150 years ago'. His books were out of print and his name forgotten we are told, this show will set matters right.¹² Reade's conviction that local genius was suffering neglect is an echo of much 19th Century local art journalism. As early as 1823 Newcastle writers were proclaiming that the metropolitan art world misunderstood or ignored the worth of local artists. Ironically here was a figure from that metropolitan art world suggesting that new research and a new focus were needed to properly appreciate the worth of Bewick and being misheard, at least initially.

The 1978 exhibition was accompanied by other exhibitions, lectures and events (Figure). *The Genius of Thomas Bewick* at the Laing Art Gallery was the centre-piece and benefitted from late night opening on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Printing was demonstrated in the gallery and the Charlotte Press offered engraving courses. *Thomas Bewick – Recorder of the Country Scene* was on show in Hexham from June to September. In addition, a Bewick travelling exhibition went on a tour of the region, from Jarrow in May to Morpeth in November, making eight further stops in between. The lecture by Iain Bain was followed by lectures from City Librarian Arthur Wallace, wood-engraver Joan Hassall, curator Dr Margaret Gill, naturalist James Alder and local historian Jack Armstrong. The Tyneside Poets group performed *Bewick of Cherryburn* twice and the Eagle Theatre Company presented a play *Thomas Bewick*. There were two talks on the Bewick Swan and a choice of walks led by the Ovingham Village Community Trust. There was music: the Northern Sinfonia presented Charles Avison works, the Northumbrian Pipers' Society played Robert Bewick's music. Children wrote stories based on tail-pieces and heard tales every afternoon at the Laing. The season ended with a commemorative service at Ovingham Church on 5th November. To coincide with the celebrations Robert Steedman published a 58 page catalogue of 'A fine collection of books illustrated by Thomas and John Bewick and their circle, including an original woodblock, autograph letters, manuscript material &c' with a preface by Iain Bain.¹³

We can see in the events of 1978 what the future would hold for the study and celebration of Thomas Bewick. There was a renewed emphasis on empirical research rather than misty-eyed nostalgia; an awareness of Bewick's importance beyond the region and an acknowledgement of the multiple ways in which the work of the wood engraver had touched people's lives. In the coming years the North East of England would gain a number of Bewick displays which drew heavily

upon the 1978 model: the Bewick Shrine in the Hancock Museum¹⁴, the Bewick display at the John George Joicey Museum¹⁵, the Bewick Birthplace Museum¹⁶ and the Laing Art Gallery's Northern Spirit display.¹⁷

In a series of articles in the summer of 1978, the *Newcastle Journal* grappled with the world *Beyond 1984*. We are told 'the home itself will be linked to massive computer facilities including medical scanning facilities... it may be possible for the individual seated in his own home in a specially equipped chair to obtain a computer print-out of his daily state of health with recommendations for action'.¹⁸ Or better still a database of Bewick images, a bibliography of research, instant communication with known-experts and an on-going celebration of Northumberland's greatest artist and England's greatest wood engraver (<http://www.bewicksociety.org/>).

The future began in 1978.

Notes

1. *Newcastle Journal* Friday 16th June 1978, preview article by Patrick Reade.
2. Newspaper cuttings from the microfilmed copies of *Newcastle Journal* 1978, Newcastle City Library.
3. *Programme of Events, 150th Anniversary of the Death of Thomas Bewick 1753-1828*.
4. *Thomas Bewick. an illustrated record of his life and work*, by Iain Bain, Laing Art Gallery, Tyne and Wear County Council Museums, 1979. Reissued as *The Workshop of Thomas Bewick. A Pictorial Survey*, by the Thomas Bewick Birthplace Trust, 1989.
5. *Album de Novo Castro, A description of the commonplace book together with a brief life of its first owner Bookseller, Land Surveyor and Collector Joseph Bell 1783-1864*. Newnham: The Laverock Press, 1963.
6. *A Checklist of the Manuscripts of Thomas Bewick, reprinted from The Private Library with Addenda*, 1970.
7. 'Bewick: a Second Gleaning' in *The Book Collector*. Spring 1972, pp 95-105.
8. Bain, I. (editor). (1975). *A Memoir of Thomas Bewick*. London: Oxford University Press.
9. *Thomas Bewick Vignettes. being tail-pieces engraved principally for his General History of Quadrupeds & History of British Birds. Edited, with an introduction by Iain Bain, 1st ed.* London, Scolar Press, 1978.
10. A list with the minutes of the NHS Council Meeting on 13 January 1978 of items that Iain Bain had asked to borrow for the exhibition (17 June 1978 - 30 Sept 1978 at the Laing and November - December 1978 at Yale (the Paul Mellon Center for British Art, Newhaven, Conn.).
11. *Thomas Bewick Artist and Naturalist 1753-1828*, Tyne and Wear County Council Museums, 1978, broadsheet.
12. *Newcastle Journal*, Friday 16th June 1978.
13. Thomas Bewick, 1753-1828; Catalogue 131. Robert D. Steedman, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1978.
14. Inaugurated by Iain Bain 1984; dismantled 2006.
15. The museum closed in 1993, the panels were photographed by the Bewick Society in 2012 (<http://flic.kr/s/aHsjyLjEfw>) before their destruction.
16. Cherryburn, now in the care of the National Trust.
17. Opened 2010.
18. *Newcastle Journal* Wednesday 21st June 1978.

HOW BEWICK SUFFERED AT THE HANDS OF THE BANKERS

by Nigel Tattersfield

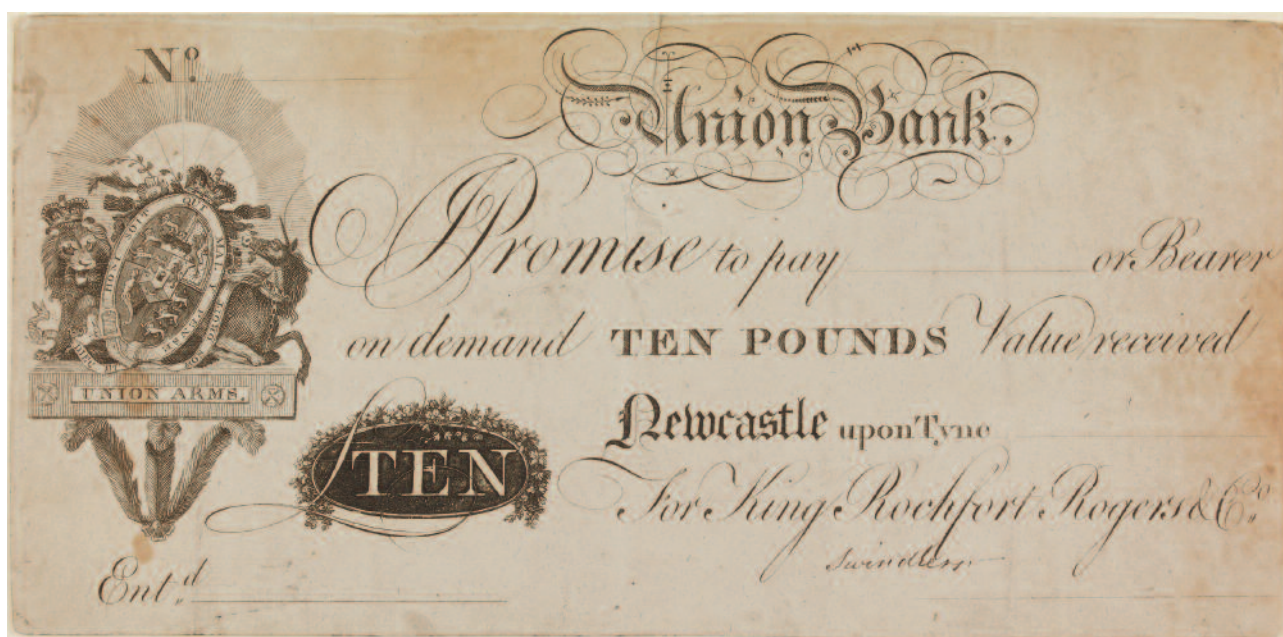
As Iain makes clear in his admirable edition of the *Memoir*, Thomas Bewick – like many another engraver of his day – regarded the devising of a forgery-proof banknote as a personal mission and devoted considerable time and effort to that end.¹ Over the years his workshop had been closely involved with banking in Newcastle; indeed, as early as the second week of his apprenticeship Bewick had paid close attention as his new master, Ralph Beilby, engraved a £1 note for the ‘Old Bank’.² From that moment onwards, the engraving of notes for the increasing number of banks in Newcastle (by 1789 there were five of them), the repeated printing from their copper plates and their refurbishment, repair and renewal (a demanding task as the slightest mistake could lead to a note being regarded as fraudulent) became an extremely profitable activity for the workshop. The late eighteenth century banking industry was undergoing its own ‘Big Bang’ as the demands of the Industrial Revolution spurred innovative approaches to raising credit and easing the flow of money around the country. Consequently the number of country banks rose from 12 in 1750 to 721 in 1810.

So it would have come as little surprise when, in September 1801, the agent of a London banking consortium by the name of John Gray arrived at the workshop carrying an important commission. Although resident in London, John Gray may have been acquainted with Bewick, being a member of a mercantile family of modest standing in Newcastle. At his bankruptcy proceedings two years earlier he was termed a merchant, underwriter, dealer and chapman of St Ann’s Mill,³ (probably a flint grinding mill supplying the Tyneside glassworks). Gray was now attempting to repair his shattered finances by representing the Union Bank of Messrs King,

Rochfort and Rogers, a recently established bank in London’s opulent Portland Place. His task was to open a branch in Newcastle, for the town’s rapid industrialisation and growing wealth rendered it a tempting prospect. Other agents of the Union Bank were active in Liverpool, Chester and Derby; by the end of June 1801 the Union Bank could announce it had opened in St Mary’s Gate at Derby, ‘where the Banking Business is in all its branches carried on’ and boasted of ‘connections in almost every principal Town in England and Ireland, and Banks of their own in many of them’.⁴

Three copper-engraved plates were urgently required, in the denominations of £1, £5 and £10. Two centuries ago, the fashion was to take summer holidays later than is the practice today, and Bewick was preparing to leave for Tynemouth with his family. Unwilling to forgo such a lucrative commission (each note cost £3 18s. 6d to design and engrave)⁵ and unable to entrust such a sensitive request to an apprentice or journeyman, he departed for Miss Scott’s genteel boarding house with his engraving tools, returning with much of the work completed. The designs speedily approved, production commenced not long thereafter; 4000 of the £1 notes, 320 of the £5 notes, and 40 of the £10 notes, were all printed on the rolling presses in the workshop’s press room at a cost of £4 7s. 0d.⁶ The total bill (including a specialised paper called ‘Thin Bank Post’) amounted to tuppence shy of £18, roughly what an agricultural labourer could have expected to earn in a good year.

However, Thomas Bewick had unwittingly fallen in with a ‘nest of miscreants’.⁷ John King was an attorney and money-broker whose father was a pedlar and hawker of north African origin. His original name – Jacob Rey – betrayed his Hispanic



Union Bank of Newcastle upon Tyne, banknote proof, © Trustees of the British Museum, Museum number 1882.0311.3155. Original size 96 x 200mm

and Jewish origins and was anglicized shortly after he left school, probably to escape the popular opprobrium attached to being Jewish at the time. Charismatic, clever and a radical (he numbered Tom Paine – much admired by Bewick – amongst his friends and was the author of several progressive political pamphlets), King operated as an *éminence grise* in the dissolute world of the aristocracy, arranging loans to cover gambling debts for everyone from the extravagant Prince of Wales (later the Prince Regent) downwards, a field rich for exploitation. A sociable fellow, King kept a generous table where his guests included the political philosopher William Godwin, the satirist John Wolcot and the reformist William Bosville.⁸ Loathed and courted in equal measure, King was a favourite target of the metropolitan press and in July 1801 had threatened to sue the newspapers for ‘unwarrantable and malignant attempts to prejudice his credit’.⁹

Waiting upon London’s *haut monde* brought King into contact with his banking partner Rochfort. This was none other than Jane Isabella Butler (*née* Rochfort), Countess of Lanesborough, the only daughter of the first Earl of Belvedere, a Protestant landowner with extensive estates in Ireland. Flighty and profligate, the widowed Lady Lanesborough had been forced to reach an accommodation with her creditors in 1783 and turned to King for finance. A business relationship developed into mutual affection, an intimacy which lasted for the rest of King’s life, allowed him *entrée* into fashionable circles and permitted him to escape, at least in part, his Jewish money-lending identity.¹⁰ The Union Bank may have been one of the schemes he dreamt up precisely to consolidate that transition.

The third partner, George Rogers esquire, FRS, FSA, brought a modest but genuine fortune to the business. Originally a naval prize agent, he became in turn Admiral Augustus Keppel’s private secretary, comptroller of the Treasurer’s account at the Admiralty, and finally one of the Commissioners of the Navy Office,¹¹ a full-time position which precluded him from day-to-day involvement with the bank. From at least 1795 he had been a regular guest at King’s dinners where, in addition to Godwin, Wolcot and Bosville he had met Richard Danvers, Lady Lanesborough’s son. King may have drawn Rogers into his web of intrigue because it gave the (spurious) impression that the Union Bank was linked to the long-established banking house of Samuel and Henry Rogers in Cornhill.¹²

Partnerships in a bank normally consisted of associates who sought cheap money either to develop their own industries or to invest in promising ventures. However, the Union Bank was almost certainly set up by John King not with its avowed aim of facilitating the remittance of money between London and Dublin¹³ but with the sole intention of attracting reserves which could then be loaned (at exorbitant rates) to the indigent aristocracy, secured against whatever verifiable collateral they could provide. King seems to have identified the developing towns of the north of England as prime targets for raising funds. As the Liverpool bank of Cromie, Pownoll,

Hartman & Company slid into bankruptcy, he poached a rascally employee called Samuel Collins to establish the Union Bank in Liverpool and in Chester. Like John Gray, Collins was probably hobbled by a lack of funds and the attempts proved abortive.¹⁴ The Derby venture fared little better; by September 1801 that branch was stated to be making losses and its doors closed shortly afterwards.¹⁵ These events went unreported in the Newcastle papers.

This did not bode well for the invoice which Bewick now presented to John Gray for settlement. Afflicted by straitened circumstances,¹⁶ Gray was unable to pay and instead provided Bewick with a draft on his headquarters. Bewick posted this to his old friend Robert Pollard in London with a request that he call at Portland Place. There the head clerk politely assured him that John Gray had ‘sufficient assets’ and expressed surprise he had not settled the invoice immediately, but eventually John King accepted and signed it at thirty day’s notice. However, on presenting the draft to a banking house in the City (which had occasionally cashed bills of exchange for him), Pollard reported that the clerk ‘shook his head at it & said he would rather have nothing to do with it, communicating things against the firm not very creditable’.¹⁷

For the next six months Pollard, assiduous as ever on Bewick’s behalf, danced attendance on the Union Bank. Uniformed flunkeys opened doors. Clerks hastened hither and yon on business of the utmost import. Perfumed ‘Ladies of Quality’ closeted themselves in John King’s innermost sanctum,¹⁸ a privilege extended to Pollard on only a couple of occasions. King even wrote directly to Bewick, railing against John Gray; he had so exceeded his budget in Newcastle that ‘we are obliged to decline honouring his D[ra]fts’,¹⁹ stated King mournfully, adding subsequently that Gray’s ‘ingratitude is the blackest’.²⁰ Gray may have been the Union Bank clerk advertised as having absconded with funds, almost certainly a smoke-screen devised by King to fob off his creditors.²¹ King even had the impudence to encourage Bewick in the arrest of ‘that unprincipled knave Gray . . . it is a duty in you’.²² In the meantime Pollard, who wondered at Bewick’s ‘imprudence & impropriety of shewing Civility’ to King and who clearly had the banker’s measure, urged Bewick to accept payment by instalments, ‘for what I learnt of him he will evade & shift & move’.²³ How right he was. On calling for the umpteenth time at Portland Place, Pollard observed ‘the Firm & names thereof on the Plate on the door alterd . . . to that of the “British Exchange Bank, Sir Robert Murray, Brown, Clarke, Leveson Prescott, & Co”’. ‘From my never seeing the Principals’, added Pollard, ‘& the evasive shilly shally way & mock appearance of state & form I was strongly led to suspect that Mr K is at the bottom of this apparent new firm’.²⁴

A week later, Pollard’s suspicions were confirmed by the *Morning Post* which accused the ‘pretended baronet’ (Murray) of ‘acting under the protection of John King’.²⁵ In the same issue it printed a devastating *exposé* by the campaigning MP for Coventry, Nathaniel Jefferys, puncturing the pretensions of both King and Murray. ‘Mr Jefferys’, crowed the *Morning*

Post a month later, ‘has completely succeeded in *blowing up* the British Exchange Bank of Sir Robert Lathropp Murray ... *ci-devant* the Union Bank’.²⁶ No bank was too big to fail and the Union/Exchange Bank quickly defaulted, leaving ‘a vast number of creditors’.²⁷ Amongst the assets to be auctioned was the furniture, reported as being ‘extremely rich and splendid, well calculated to carry on the delusion’.²⁸ Murray (Lathropp) went bankrupt in June 1802;²⁹ George Rogers was bankrupted in July and discharged from the Navy Office;³⁰ and John King was judged bankrupt in November.³¹ He was still languishing as a debtor in the Fleet Prison (or more likely, in its Liberties) in August 1805.

Before these bankruptcies, Pollard had managed to extract a total of £5 in (presumably) Bank of England notes from King,³² but Bewick was curiously reluctant to register his claim as a creditor for the remaining £13. This so vexed Pollard – who had worked long and hard on Bewick’s behalf – that he scolded him as ‘an Idle Man not to see after the Dividend of Mr King’.³³ Just as curiously, Bewick seems reluctant to cash these banknotes, at least until 1811, when the entire debt was still entered in Bewick’s Outstanding Debts Book as unpaid.³⁴ Perhaps he was unwilling to press a debtor for full payment, especially a fellow radical. However, daughter Jane was less sympathetic, peremptorily scrawling ‘Swindlers’ across the only surviving impression of a Union Bank of Newcastle note.³⁵

Notes

1. *A Memoir of Thomas Bewick, written by himself*, edited and with an introduction by Iain Bain (1975), pp.127-30.
2. Weekly Engraving Book (WEB), 12-19 October 1767, at a cost of £1 10s. 0d.
3. *Newcastle Courant*, 29 June 1799. The issue of 13 July 1799 reported John Gray had ‘assigned all his estate and effects to John Gray [his cousin] and William Smith ... of Newcastle, merchants’ for his creditors.
4. *Derby Mercury*, 25 June 1801.
5. WEB (Weekly Engraving Book) 19 September, 3 October, 10 October 1801.
6. WEB (supplementary series 1269/32), 19 September to 10 October 1801.
7. *Morning Post*, 16 November 1802.
8. *The Diary of William Godwin*, (eds) Victoria Myers, David O’Shaughnessy, and Mark Philp (Oxford: Oxford Digital Library, 2010). <http://godwindiary.bodleian.ox.ac.uk>.
9. *Morning Post*, 30 July 1801.
10. The career of John King (?1753–1824) and to a lesser extent Lady Lanesborough (1737–1828), which does not mention the Union Bank, is substantially documented by Todd Endelman in ‘The Chequered Career of ‘Jew’ King: a Study in Anglo-Jewish Social History’, *From East to West: Jews in a changing Europe 1750-1870* (Oxford, 1990), reprinted in *Profiles in Diversity* (1998). This forms the basis of Professor Endelman’s entry for King in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography online edition*, October 2006.
11. [David Steel], Steel’s *Original and Correct List of the Royal Navy* (1782), p.31. A brief but useful biography of Rogers can be found at www.edpopehistory.co.uk, accessed 1 September 2013, one of the sources employed for this account.
12. The poet Samuel Rogers was one of the principals (and also dined at King’s table).
13. *Morning Post*, 20 May 1802. Lady Lanesborough’s connections would have helped here.
14. In the *Morning Post*, 8 February 1803, Gray claimed that establishing a Newcastle branch of the Union Bank proved abortive, ‘as in other instances’, *i.e.* in Derby, Chester and Liverpool.
15. *Derby Mercury* 8 September, 8 October 1801.
16. *Morning Post*, 8 February 1803.
17. RP (Robert Pollard) to TB, 27 and 28 October 1801; V&A MS.
18. RP to TB, 8 December 1801, describing how the arrival of a ‘Lady of Quality’ (probably Lady Lanesborough in her role as the *grand dame*) had deprived him of a meeting with King.
19. John King to TB, 5 December 1801; Bain MS.
20. John King to TB, 13 January 1802; Tyne and Wear Archives, MS.
21. *Morning Post*, 11 December 1801. Note that this was an advertisement, not part of the editorial content of the paper.
22. John King to TB, 11 March 1802; Tyne and Wear Archives, MS.
23. RP to TB, 8 February 1802; V&A MS. TB was reluctant to accept instalments.
24. RP to TB, 9 April 1802; V&A MS.
25. *Morning Post*, 17 April 1802. Murray, whose real name was Robert Lathropp, counter-claimed that he had been duped by John King; *Morning Post*, 24 August 1802. Lathropp also styled himself ‘Sir Robert Murray-Brown Clark-Felton Lathropp’. Leveson Prescott was an innocent party.
26. *Morning Post*, 20 May 1802. *Ibid*, 28 June 1802, confirms King as a partner in the Exchange Bank.
27. *Morning Post*, 5 July 1802.
28. *Morning Post*, 20 May 1802.
29. *Morning Post*, 21 June 1802.
30. RP to TB, 6 July 1802,
31. *Morning Post*, 10 November 1802.
32. RP to TB, 26 March 1802; V&A MS. In early April 1802, Pollard received a further £2 from King, recorded WEB (supplementary series 1269/32).
33. RP to TB, 9 February 1803; V&A MS.
34. ODB 1805 to 1811. The debt was written off when TB admitted his son Robert as a partner.
35. BM Bewick coll., proof 1825. The Union Bank is not mentioned in Maberly Phillips, *A History of Banks, Bankers and Banking in Northumberland, Durham and North Yorkshire* (Newcastle, 1894).

Note: the writer is grateful to Iain for having generously provided transcripts of letters relating to the Union Bank from his own collection and sources at the V&A and Tyne and Wear Archives.

TO BIND FOR GENTLEMEN

William Shenstone (1714–1763) — A Quiet Influence

by Peter Osborne

Describing in the *Memoir* his early years in Newcastle, Bewick makes much of his thirst for books. ‘... I had few, that I could call intimate acquaintances, my almost only ones were books ...’. But which ones? He gives little guidance, mentioning books of history, religion and self-improvement. However, just as it is possible to show, for example, that George Edwards’ works on birds influenced his ornithological presentation,¹ it seems likely that his fables and vignette work were affected by ‘the Works of the best Authors, to bind for Gentlemen’ that he encountered in his early morning visits to libraries and binderies.²

We start with Robert Dodsley, the outstanding publisher in the decades before Bewick’s apprenticeship, partly because he inherited the development of the fine book, including liberal use of illustration, from Jacob Tonson and his Arcadian set,³ and more specifically because Bewick in his *Select Fables* of 1776 and 1784 worked from Dodsley’s *Fables*⁴ and four decades later allocated a memorial vignette to him in his *Fables of Aesop* (1818). A particular Dodsley publication presents itself as a likely influence on the young artist. *The Works in Verse and Prose of William Shenstone, Esq;* was published posthumously in three volumes by the author’s friend Dodsley in 1764–1769 (there were five editions by 1777). Shenstone was famous among ‘Gentlemen’ for his poetry and, even more so, for his much visited garden, The Leasowes near Halesowen (then in Shropshire). Immediately the title page of *The Works* seems relevant to Bewick. The large but unframed vignette shows a notably naturalistic stream, with a waterfall, and vegetation (Figure 1). By it a kingfisher is posed with a raised beak, almost exactly as it would be later by Bewick in the *Water Birds*, though both could derive originally from Willughby’s *Ornithology*.⁵ A scroll around the stream proclaims the Virgilian quotation much favoured in the Arcadian movement: *Fhumina amem sylvasque inglorius* (‘may I love simple streams and woods’). It was quoted later by Bewick in his bookplate first engraved for John Murray and

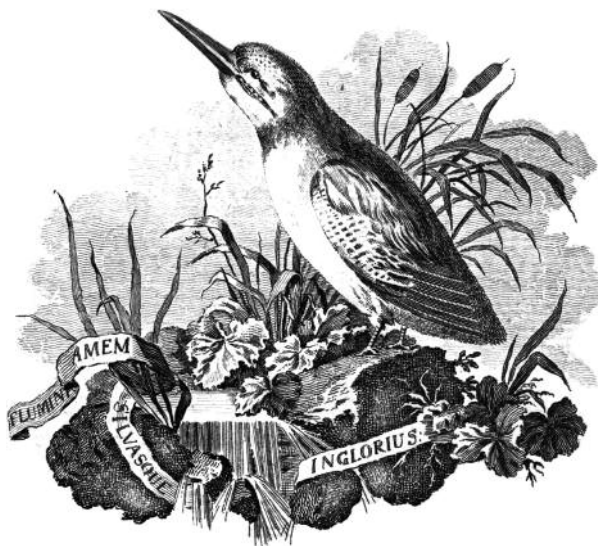


Figure 1. Intaglio title page vignette from *The Works of William Shenstone*, 1777. Original image size 80 x 87 mm.

adapted in 1802 for the Revd Henry Cotes and subsequently used as a vignette in all the editions of *Water Birds*.⁶ The frameless composition of the vignette anticipates a typical Bewick scheme in *History of British Birds* in which the upper border is formed by clouds pierced by the line of the kingfisher’s bill for due emphasis. But there is more.



Figure 2. Intaglio vignette ‘Virgil’s Grove’ from Dodsley’s *Cleone* 1786 edition, first published in *The Works of William Shenstone*, 1777. Original image size 78 x 92 mm.

The second volume contains Dodsley’s own description of The Leasowes and there at the end, on page 371, we see a large copperplate tail-piece vignette that was probably very important to the young Bewick (Figure 2). It is entirely unframed and irregular and the engraver establishes its boundaries, just as would Bewick in his wood engravings, by the outline of trees and branches. He uses the ingress of the white of the page, as Bewick would do, to draw the eye into the key features such as the bridge; and uses a full range of tones, as again Bewick would, in contrast to limited grey tonality of most contemporary illustration. This image seems important as a probable model for the Bewick vignette.

But, though Shenstone remained famous, would Bewick have heard of him? Among the posthumous tributes to Shenstone that follow Dodsley’s description of The Leasowes, we find *Corydon, a Pastoral. To the memory of William Shenstone Esq.* by John Cunningham who, by Bewick’s time, resided with the Newcastle publisher Mrs Slack. We know that Bewick was fascinated by Cunningham (secretly drawing his portrait)⁷ and also that he looked at the first edition of Cunningham’s poems, in which this Pastoral also appears, because he tells us that he and the young Robert Pollard thought its frontispiece, by Isaac Taylor, ‘the best thing that ever was done’.⁸ According to Chalmers (1810), ‘he [Cunningham] has informed us that Shenstone, with whose correspondence he was honoured, encouraged him to

cultivate [the Pastoral]'.⁹ This not only reminds us of a living Newcastle link with Shenstone but also of his fame then as a poet shifting towards Romanticism, celebrated, for example, by Burns.¹⁰ Shenstone was particularly interested in old songs and ballads, collaborating with Thomas Percy on his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), a significant breakthrough into medieval poetry. *The Reliques* is also interesting for the study of Bewick both for its planned use of unframed vignettes – there is a succession of headpieces and tail-pieces in each section – and in particular for its title page vignette. This, with its gothic ruin and foreground broken wall, appears to be the *motif* used in the Beilby workshop and reworked subsequently by Bewick as 'A Book Plate Ruins' for the Revd John Brand.¹¹

Although there is no mention of him in his letters,¹² in his later years Bewick may have discussed Shenstone with his young friend John Dovaston, whose father, also John, had lovingly produced a manuscript book, now in Cambridge



Bewick's *Select Fables* of 1776 and 1784 were, of course, partly Dodsley's, the whole of the first of three parts in particular. So there can be no doubt that he looked at Dodsley's *Fables*. His fable illustrations however are set in larger ovals within rectangular frames, whereas Dodsley's follow Richardson's tiny 2cm wide circular format (Figure 3a). He did, though, sometimes follow them and learned thereby a new clarity, as in the 'Daw with borrowed Feathers'. Far more specifically he developed ideas for vignettes directly from the emblematic illustrations in Dodsley, making improved copies, and there is fascinating evidence about precisely where these came from.

Shenstone wrote in a letter 'I procured a copy [of Dodsley's *Fables*] from Baskerville before the plates were inserted'.¹³ (Baskerville was Shenstone's friend and neighbour and Shenstone had persuaded Dodsley to use his print services for the *Fables*; the intaglio prints had to be made separately from the letterpress.) Shenstone continues, '...and I have, by the help of Alcock, supplied the place of the emblematic prints with some devices of my own.' He had tried to get Dodsley to use Edward Alcock (who had painted Shenstone's portrait and whom he elsewhere called 'my painter') for all the illustrations, but in the event Dodsley chose Samuel Wale. Shenstone, then, was bold enough to change Dodsley's original design by including emblematic images of

Figures 3a (left), Shenstone's device, plate opposite page 56 in Dodsley's *Fables* (1764); and 3b (right), Bewick's wood-engraved vignette, page 32 of *Fables by the late Mr Gay*; Saint, 1779. Both at original size.



University Archives, which copied not only many of Shenstone's poems and other writings, but also pictures including that self-same kingfisher, which the poet had chosen for his coat of arms.

From conjecture, however strong, we move to fact with a book in which Shenstone played a significant part and which Bewick certainly used, namely Dodsley's *Fables*. Though an accomplished writer as well as entrepreneurial publisher, Dodsley was content to use Shenstone as a contributor to the writing of the book and to be influenced by him in its production. Shenstone's letters indicate the considerable extent of this.

his own as drawn by Alcock. These are almost certainly the ones that Bewick adapted. But the episode has wider significance in revealing the extent to which Shenstone almost dictated much of the illustration in Dodsley's later productions. We can see the relevance of this to the *Reliques* of Percy, who himself showed no interest in illustration, and to Dodsley's own *Cleone*. Shenstone's influence tended towards the greater and more integrated use of illustration in books.

Bewick then was here directly and generally influenced by Shenstone. We can see how he lifted *motifs*, such as the boy on a goat, from Shenstone's 'emblematic devices' and, more importantly still, we can see how he copied them creatively in his vignettes for *The Fables of Mr Gay* (1779) and *Select Fables* (1784). One of these is taken from the linking *motif* on page 56 of Dodsley's *Fables* where emblematic objects are clustered round a central ribbon. Bewick on page 32 of Gay's *Fables* uses the core idea but turns it into a patriotic device, which is also more realistically achieved (Figures 3 a & b). Even closer to Shenstone's original of a rococo tree on page 204 in

Dodsley is Bewick's reversed copy on page 122 of *Select Fables* (Figures 4 a & b). Here again is a model for his unframed vignette format but he interprets the scattered elements of the model far more tightly, while still allowing the controlled opening of the white of the page to focus our attention on the boy. (Bewick freely used the incursion of the white page into his vignettes to point to key features.) Bewick's version is more naturalistic: his foliage changes from feathers to tree canopy and Dodsley's hint of a house becomes a complete little farmstead. Bewick breathes new life into the emblematic composition of Shenstone's rococo tree. Two things are key in this: movement and humour. Where there was a single dog, now hounds chase a fox pell-mell through the roots of the tree.



Notes

1. *Cherryburn Times* Vol.4 No. 6, pp. 6-8.
2. Bain, Iain (1979). *A Memoir of Thomas Bewick*. 2nd edition (OUP) pp. 48 & 47.
3. Tonsen worked closely with the associates of Lord Burlington including Pope, who helped him, and Dodsley, Gay and Kent. As 'Arcadians' they conjured up a world of idealized pastoral landscape and life, derived from Virgil's *Eclogues*.
4. Dodsley, Robert (1764). *Select Fables of Aesop and other Fabulists in Three Books*.
5. Ray, John (1678). *The Ornithology of Francis Willughby*. (London: John Martyn).

Figures 4, Rococo trees (a - left) Shenstone's design, intaglio from Dodsley's *Fables* (1764); (b - right) Bewick's wood-engraved vignette in *Select Fables* (Saint, 1784) page 122 (from Pearson edition, 1886). Both at original size.

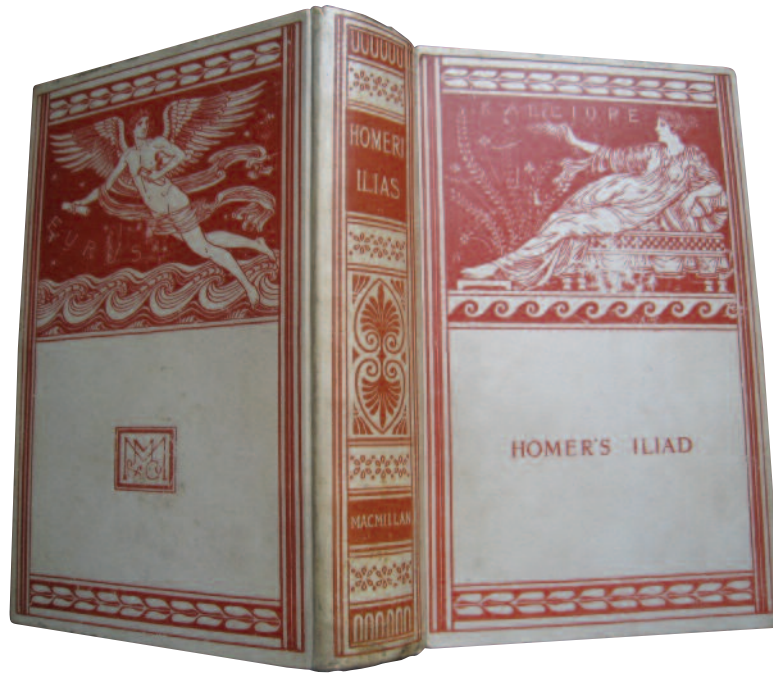
The fine peacock now has his tail pulled by a monkey, and the fun is doubled as the monkey in turn has his tail pulled by the boy. Young Bewick makes all sorts of improvements but clearly they are all based on a reversed copy of Shenstone's original.

Shenstone was but an amateur artist and clearly he used favoured artists like Alcock and Daniel Bond to execute some of his designs. He has never been fully discussed for his pictorial imagination but it appears from Dodsley's publications including his own *Works* that he influenced illustration quite radically, especially in unframed vignettes and emblematic cuts. His letters show a continuous interest in art and design. He drew, painted and designed for printing and production. Later letters show him increasingly obsessed with the visual qualities of publication.

The later title-page vignette to Dodsley's popular play *Cleone* may well have been another of Shenstone's concepts.¹⁴ This scene of a 'Vulture and Lamb', reminds us of several vignettes in which Bewick showed a raptor tearing apart a lamb. Most probably Bewick's idea for these came from *Cleone*. Its tailpiece is once again that important vignette of the grove from Shenstone's *Works*.

More work needs to be done to establish the influence on Bewick of other 'books to bind for Gentlemen' but it is clear that William Shenstone was one of those who figured largely in the process.

6. Tattersfield, N (1999) *Bookplates by Beilby & Bewick*. (London: The British Library and Oak Knoll Press.)
7. Robinson, R. (1887). *Thomas Bewick. His life and times*. (Newcastle, R. Robinson), pp.39-40.
8. *Memoir*, p.76.
9. Chalmers, A. (1810). *The Works of the English Poets, from Chaucer to Cowper; including the Series edited, with Prefaces, Biographical and Critical, by Dr. Samuel Johnson: and the most approved Translation. The Additional Lives by Alexander Chalmers, F.S.A.* In Twenty-one Volumes. (London: J. Johnson et al.) [The life of Cunningham] Vol 14, pp 425-427.
10. Burns, R. (1786). *Poems, Chiefly in the Scottish Dialect*, (Kilmarnock: John Wilson) Preface, pp iv-v '... that celebrated poet, Shenstone, whose divine elegies do honour to our language, our nation, and our species ...'.
11. Tattersfield (1999), p. 73.
12. Williams, Gordon (1968). *Bewick to Dovaston letters 1824-1828*. (London: Nattali & Maurice).
13. Mallam, D. (editor) (1939). *Letters of William Shenstone*. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota and OUP) p.406.
14. Dodsley, R. (1786). *Cleone. A tragedy. As acted at the Theatre-Royal in Covent Garden*. Fifth Edition, (London: J. Dodsley).



A MODEST TRIBUTE HIDDEN IN A MOUNTAIN

by Hugh Dixon

As Thomas Bewick discovered in his youth, Scotland produces many wonders – not least the President of the Bewick Society – but apart from good second-hand bookshops as far apart as Wigtown and Inverness, and possibly Cromarty, it is not an obvious hunting ground for Bewickiana. Arbroath on the east coast is best known for its smoked fish and the national Declaration of 1320 now getting renewed attention in the months before a referendum on Scotland's independence. Just north of the town is Parkhill, a modest country house, home of the Duncans since the building was completed in 1803. The furnishings reflect a family with a naval traditions and oriental experience. The contents of the library, assembled by successive owners, would not be unusual but for the collecting of Alexander Robert Duncan in the late 19th century, and of his granddaughter, Ursula. Both were classicists and linguists and the library includes a mesmerising assemblage of texts in Greek, Latin, Sanskrit, Russian, Ukrainian, Polish, Serbian, Rumanian, Bulgarian, Turkish and Gaelic.

Seeking attention among the classical works, its neighbours being bound in sombre academic black or dark blue, is a small volume with a pale cream cover with red decoration. Closer inspection reveals that the cover is of vellum and the red design is of classical figures and *motifs* in the manner of a Greek vase. On the front cover is Kalliope, the beautifully voiced muse of Homer and epic poetry, who lived with her son Orpheus on Parnassus, the mountain sacred to Apollo and the Muses. Usually rather bookish, here she reclines on a couch scattering seeds of learning with a rather Pre-Raphaelite languor. On the back cover, altogether more active, is Eurus, God of the East Wind, in full flight, raising waves (his speciality) and distributing not his usual cups of nectar but academic scrolls. His portfolio included dawn and autumn, the season for starting academic studies.

Apart from the title – Homer's Iliad – the only other information on the cover is the name of the publisher, Macmillan. Inside it becomes apparent that this edition of *Homeri Ilias* is a volume from 'The Parnassus Library of Greek and Latin Texts' edited by Walter Leaf, Litt.D., Late Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, printed by R & R Clarke Limited in Edinburgh and published in 1895 by Macmillan of London and New York. It was the first of the series.

The flyleaf shows that the book was purchased new by E.P. Thursfield in November 1895. From October 1908 it belonged to Stanley Casson of Lincoln College, Oxford, whose bookplate has a view from his study window, with a skyline identifiable from the spire of St Mary's and the dome of the Radcliffe Camera. Finally there is the moment (sadly undated) when the book became destined for the Parkhill library with the simple inscription 'Ursulae d.d. [dono dedit] Ronaldus'. Perhaps by way of explaining his second-hand gift, Ursula Duncan's friend, Ronald, included a manuscript note inside the back cover. It is this note, the source unknown and the accuracy yet to be fully verified, which gives the volume, and the whole series, an interest beyond being merely handsomely-produced classical texts.

The Parnassus Library
of
Greek and Latin Classics
Foolscap 8vo

Under this title Messrs MacMillan & Co. are issuing a series of texts of Greek and Latin authors carefully selected or prepared by eminent scholars, with short introductions, but no notes. The primary object has been to produce books of really attractive appearance but at the same time handy in form. Every care

therefore has been taken in the choice of types, papers and binding. In the case of the Greek volumes the new fount of type, designed for the publishers by Mr Selwyn Image, will be used throughout. For the Latin volumes Caslon type has been adopted. A special hand-made paper has been prepared by Messrs J. Dickinson & Co. For the binding an original design has been drawn by Mr Henry Holiday.

But although it is hoped that the volumes of the Parnassus Library will please the book-lover by their beauty of form, it is by no means intended that they shall be mere *éditions de luxe*. On the contrary their comparatively moderate price will place them within the reach of all who desire to possess the masterpieces of classical literature in a form at once convenient and pleasant to the eye.

The following volumes have been arranged for, & others are in contemplation:—Homer's Iliad; Sophocles edited by Professor R Y Tyrrell; Aeschylus by Lewis Campbell; Horace and Virgil by T E Page MA 5s. net; and Catullus by Professor ARTHUR PALMER.

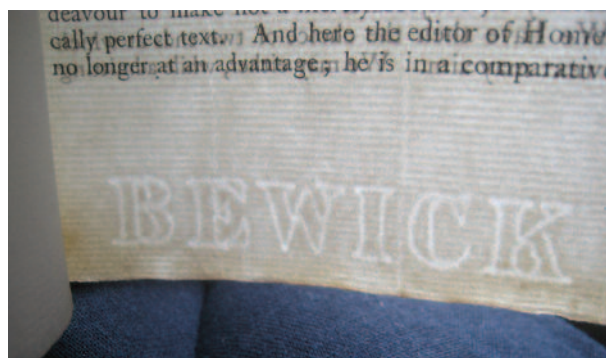
(no more came out: Macmillan issued a special case for the set. Then, before I went to Durham in '08+/-, he jettisoned the set on to the remainder market. There they were sold first as a set. Then all but one (? the Aeschylus) were offered singly but sales didn't drag. This is the best I can recollect. They were too good for the public—as e.g. the King's Classics were.)

The first part is clearly copied from a publisher's blurb but the concluding sentences in brackets show that the series did not find the right market. The production was evidently meant to be a work of superior art and craft as well as literature. Critics, classicists of course, praised its general appearance but took a lofty view of what they regarded as scholastic shortcomings and, once into their stride, might stray into areas where their expertise was more questionable. T.W. Allen reviewing Tyrrell's *Sophocles* in 1898 (*Classical Review* 12 pp 408-9) found it smaller and more portable than conventional texts 'but the publishers have penalised it with a soft paper which does not take ink, their own peculiar black type, unaesthetic and unhistorical, and two very inadequate representations of mythological characters upon the cover'. His real grumble was the lack of scholarly apparatus: 'one need not look for scholia, though arguments indeed are given'.

Thus he swept aside the publishers' achievement in bringing together some of the best designers and craftsmen of the time. Selwyn Image was a leader in the Arts and Craft movement. Henry Holiday had a distinguished career as designer, especially of stained glass. J Dickinson & Co, since the invention of a mechanical paper process in the first decade of the century, had led the country in paper production. By the time of the Parnassus series, the company was led by Lewis Evans, son and brother of distinguished archaeologists. The paper they produced for the series is of the finest laid character, rich in texture, with the added craft character of leaving the fore-edges uncut.

And why, beyond being a choice piece of publishing, might this little volume interest Dr Iain Bain? It has a simple watermark which first appears on the Acknowledgements page and is often repeated, always the right way up on the recto of the page and below the text as if it were intended to be seen at the normal turn of the page. And, in hollowed Roman capitals it reads simply 'BEWICK'.

Why? Did Selwyn Image, soon to be Master of the Art Workers Guild, who designed the typeface, influence the name of the paper? Learning to admire Bewick at Ruskin's feet at Oxford, he was himself to become the champion of Bewick's memory around the time of the centenary of his death in 1928. Or was there another Bewick admirer within J Dickinson and Co? Or is this Bewick nothing to do with Thomas? Answers may yet be forthcoming. Through the expertise of the Paper Trail Museum, it became apparent that the watermark is not a watermark but an intaglio embossed into the paper, denting the surface and in a position suggesting involvement at the printing stage. So, was there a Bewick admirer in Edinburgh? Is it significant that during Bewick's last visit to the city, he experimented with lithography at the premises of Ballantine [*sic*] and Robertson, and that this firm's successor as lithographer was R. Clarke? Can this R. Clarke have been related to R & R Clarke who printed the Parnassus series? Yet the name is quite common among printers and publishers in Edinburgh (as indeed is Bain!). The chase is afoot, enjoyable as ever. What we can only imagine is how amused Thomas himself might have been to find his name in a paper used as a foundation for the works of Homer and Virgil.



Tailpiece

The Tate Gallery, in London, was founded in 1897 as the Parnassus series was appearing.

Seventy years later, in 1964, appeared *Masterpieces of the National and Tate Galleries*, with descriptions of 133 pictures by the then Directors of the two galleries, Sir Philip Hendy and Sir John Rothenstein. Actually, there is a 134th masterpiece. In the middle of the back of the dust cover, and again on the title page, is a *grisaille* vignette of Thomas Bewick's Night Heron. Unidentified and unacknowledged, its appearance was justified only because the book was published for the Galleries by Heron Books. It is good to know that within less than a decade Tate Gallery publications were in much safer Bewickian hands and that appreciation of Thomas Bewick was about to take huge steps through the achievement of Iain Bain. *Esto perpetua*.

Acknowledgements

This paper chase would not have started but for the kindness of Dr and Mrs Andrew Duncan at Parkhill and the challenges of its library. I am also most grateful to Michael Stanyon, Senior Archivist of the Apsley Paper Trail Museum, Frogmore, Herts, for unlocking mysteries of the changes in paper making in the 19th century and for teaching me when a watermark is not one.

A STRAY LEAF AMONG THE HERBS

by David Gardner-Medwin

At the heart of this story is a speculation. It cannot be proved, but it adds a new facet to one of Iain Bain's special interests – Bewick's two exquisitely engraved blocks of the leaf of a hawthorn.

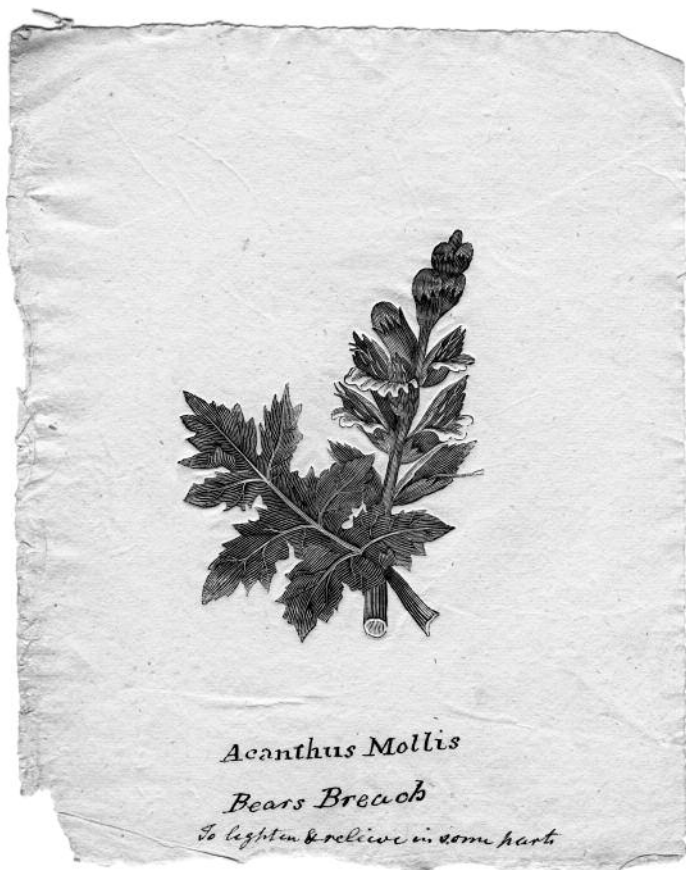
Thomas Bewick was no botanist. We can enjoy the convincing impression he gives in his best engravings of foliage and herb-rich meadows, but it is rare to be able to make a definite species identification. It is rather like the difficulty we have in identifying specific buildings or landmarks in his equally convincing Northumbrian landscapes. The contrast with his animals, where even the smallest or most distant bird or mammal is recognisable, is striking.

So it is no great surprise that, when in 1806 a huge order arrived from the London publisher Richard Phillips for plant illustrations for Thornton's projected *A New Family Herbal*, Bewick was unenthusiastic (Tattersfield, 2011). However welcome the business, the subject matter did not appeal. So the great bulk of the work of engraving the 260 distinctly solemn illustrations, from the drawings by Peter Henderson sent from London, fell to Edward Willis, then in his second year as a journeyman, and to the apprentices. The results support Nigel Tattersfield's epithets applied to Willis's work, 'dependable', 'unimaginative', and 'poor sense of design' (*ibid.*). Of the six apprentices in the workshop in 1806 (its most crowded moment), only Henry White was experienced in wood engraving and only he, the young Isaac Nicholson

and later TB's nephew John Bewick assisted Willis with illustrating the book.

The Natural History Society of Northumbria has a collection of proof impressions for the *Herbal*. They arrived at the Society's newly built museum in 1884 with the rest of the Isabella Bewick bequest, in a crude paper wrapper inscribed 'Cuts of Thornton's Botany'. John Hancock, the museum's founder and *de facto* curator, and one of Isabella's executors, pencilled on it 'Are any of these worth mounting – JH' and 'Names of Plants neatly written – to be kept'. The proofs then remained apparently unexplored in their wrapper until 1960 when Tony Tynan, then the Hancock Museum's curator, wrote 'NHS', 'Transferred into 3 packets Feby 1960 A.T.' Later they were moved from the museum store to the Society's archives, put into individual transparent envelopes, numbered, collated with the book, and labelled.

It became apparent that the names 'neatly written' on the proofs were almost all in the hand of Thomas Bewick, and that he had in some cases added instructions to the apprentices: for common basil 'wants in parts, a small matter of relief'; for water germander 'the hairy stalk too rank and coarse'; for cleavers 'the hairy stalks too like a comb'; for arsmart 'too much of a colour & the Flowers too dark'; for herb bennet 'lighten some of the leaves' and even, for common flax, 'ill done – see'; with others along similar lines (Figures 1-2),



Figures 1 and 2. Proofs for Thornton's *Herbal*, with annotations by Thomas Bewick. Natural History Society of Northumbria. Reproduced at 80% of original size.

In general, the workshop's proofs are much better impressions than those in the book: the London printer, Richard Taylor, was beyond the reach of Bewick's exacting demands on his pressmen. But some are in a 'first state', before the engraving corrections that Bewick asked for, so comparisons are sometimes interesting. Two are partly coloured, and several are duplicates. Of the 260 illustrations in the book, proofs are missing for 33, but more interestingly, there are twelve proof images that differ from those used for the same species in the book, including the pomegranate, raspberry, herb bennet, valerian and creeping cinquefoil. There are 20 other proofs of species that do not appear in the book at all; and I am grateful to Professor John Richards for identifying some of these that have no inscribed names, for example agrimony, bishop's weed, common chickweed, heath speedwell, pickerel weed, and terebinth. It is not certain that these 20 proofs had all been intended for the *Herbal*; indeed, at least one, the unlabelled image of what looks like a banana plant, turns out to be much older. It was published in the first



Figure 3. Hawthorn leaf vignette from *Land Birds*, 1797, page 142. Original size.

volume of *The Bee* (the Edinburgh periodical published in 1791-94 by James Anderson) at pages 202-204, where it is revealed as the 'Ensete' of Abyssinia (now known as the false banana, *Ensete ventricosum*). No such source has been found for the other 'orphan' proofs and most or all were doubtless engraved in the following decade for the *Herbal*, but then omitted by the author. The extra work must have added to the frustration in the workshop as the dispiriting work dragged on for a few days short of three years.

So much for the context. Packed amongst the proofs there is another interloper, a double print of a hawthorn leaf. There is no separate accession record for it, and as far as we know it seems to have arrived from the Bewicks' house in West Street, Gateshead in the same packet, though this cannot be known for sure. It is printed on a slightly rougher wove paper but being of a similar scale to the proofs it could easily escape notice. It is at once strongly reminiscent of Bewick's engravings of a hawthorn leaf.

Iain Bain has taken a special interest in Bewick's exquisite wood block of the hawthorn leaf that was first used for a vignette in the first edition of *Land Birds* in 1797 (at page 142), and re-used in 1798 and 1805 but not again until the 1826 and subsequent editions (Figure 3). The same hawthorn leaf appears again in the bottom right-hand corner of the receipt page of some copies of the second, 1823, edition of

The Fables of Aesop, where Tattersfield (2011) suggests that it may be found only in the royal paper copies.

In January 2012, Iain hand-printed the hawthorn leaf from the block, which is in his collection, as a keepsake for the Wordsworth Trust at their Arts and Book Festival at Grasmere. He called it *Bewick's Nature Print: A unique engraving*. (A year later 'Tale-Pieces', the Bewick Society's website 'blog', carried a link to a site where it had been made public: <http://blog.rowleygallery.co.uk/bewicks-nature-print/>). In it Iain contrasted the impression of his block with the 'similar image engraved in the white-line manner which appears in the tail-piece of the "howdy" or midwife being rushed to an impending birth'. In prints from the 'Aesop' block, on the other hand, the 'cut's surface replicates the surface of a leaf with all its veins standing proud. In printing, the broken texture resulting from irregular contact with areas surrounding the raised veins, produces the effect achieved when working directly from an inked leaf'. These two hawthorn leaves first

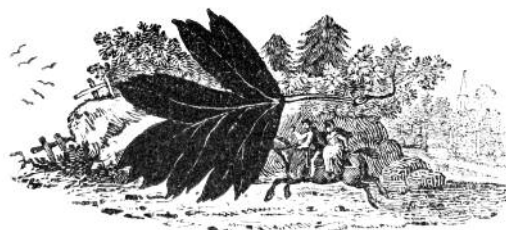


Figure 4. The 'Howdy' vignette from *Land Birds*, 1797, page 157. Original size.

appeared only 15 pages apart in *Land Birds*. But there is something more: the 'howdy' version is a pretty close but not exact copy, reversed, of the isolated one: the outline and the veins match and they are almost exactly the same size (Figure 4). The image with the raised veins seems to me to be of the leaf's lower surface, while the howdy cut shows the smoother upper surface. Together these points suggest that the two engravings represent the two faces of the same leaf.

They give a strong impression that Bewick was experimenting at the time with techniques of illustrating a leaf in its natural state. In the keepsake, Bain wrote that Benjamin Franklin had experimented with nature printing in the 1730s and had tried printing from casts of leaves as a security measure to foil would-be forgers of paper money bills. He suggested that Bewick might have copied the idea for his own receipt page, using the block he had engraved more than a quarter of a century earlier.

The Natural History Society's print seems to add to the story. Both sides of a single hawthorn leaf are exquisitely printed side by side (Figure 5). The paper has a fold between the two images, allowing them to be precisely superimposed. It seems inescapable that both sides of the leaf were inked and were printed in a single manoeuvre. The images have a green wash, apparently added with great precision after the black ink impressions had dried. They resemble Bewick's engraved

leaf so closely in all but their outline that, though proof is lacking, they were very probably printed by Bewick himself, at about the time of his engraving the blocks for *Land Birds*. Close examination of the images shows not only that the true nature-print of the leaf was made with remarkable skill, but that the two engraved leaf images seem to be highly successful imitations of it.

One can imagine the leaf print lying forgotten in the workshop, before being found and tidied away with the other botanical prints by one of the Bewick daughters, or by Isabella's executors, only to be forgotten again. It is possible, of course, that it was made by someone else, or at a different time, but its similarity to the engravings suggests otherwise. I prefer to speculate that Iain's block for *Bewick's Nature Print: A unique engraving*, is a fine example of Bewick's experimental approach to his work.



Figure 5. Leaf print. Natural History Society of Northumbria. Original size.

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THE BEWICKS AND NORTHUMBRIAN MUSIC

by Anne Moore

It is very obvious on reading his *Memoir*, that Thomas Bewick was a keen music lover and an ardent supporter of Northumbrian music. Though he could not himself play a musical instrument, he could certainly hold a tune and was a skilful whistler; but even whistling had been discouraged by the rather stern Aunt Sarah Blackett with whom he lodged: this did not discourage him from practising the art, notably with his friend Anthony Taylor. The great naturalist loved the sound of the countryside, whether it was the wind whistling in the trees or the sound of birdsong. He mentions music frequently in the *Memoir*, referring to hearing the Northumberland pipes on his rounds with his father, collecting money owed, and to the 'Scotch music & dancing' he happened upon on his travels in Scotland as a young man [*Memoir*, pp. 45, 59, 65-6].

On one occasion, having been detained all day & all night ... in listening to the tunes of a young man of the family, who played well upon the scottish pipes & having in turn whistled several Tyneside tunes to him, we could hardly get seperated [ibid. p.64].

As an apprentice Bewick would sometimes hear classical music, and though he occasionally listened to the band at the

theatre, he does not seem to have held it in very high esteem:

The late M^r Dibden, who often called upon me, had some performance to exhibit at our Theatre, & had quarrelled with the Theatrical Band, on acc^t of their exorbitant demands & in this delemma, he expressed himself to me how much he felt disappointed & knew not what to do—I told him, I thought, if he would leave the matter to me, I could set all right, & instantly applied to old William Lamshaw, the Duke of Northumberland's Piper to ask him if he thought he could engage to play at the Theatre that night; being well acquainted with the old man he readily assented—I then told my friend Dibden of what I had done, & satisfied him, as to the preference the Audience would give to the Piper—in this I was not mistaken, for all went well off & every one expressed both pleasure & surprize at the change [*Memoir* p. 96].

Bewick ensured that at least one of his family would benefit from a musical education where he had not. He acquired a set of Northumberland small pipes for his son, Robert Elliot Bewick, and paid for the boy to have lessons from one of his acquaintances—one of Newcastle's town waits, John Peacock. The first reference we have for this is to be found in one of Bewick's cash books, dated June 1798, 'Cash

to Peacock 10s. 6d'. The entry is accompanied by a thumbnail sketch in the margin of Robert, aged 10, playing his pipes. There follow regular entries over the next ten years; payments for lessons, tunes and manuscript music [Workshop Cash Books, quoted by Bain, 1982].

When he was on holiday in Tynemouth in October 1801, Thomas wrote to his sister in law Esther Elliot:

When you are out, if convenient, you may call at Mr. Bells, we are very desirous to know how he is — also you may tell John that Robert received his letter at w^{ch} he was both pleased & disappointed — he longs much to have his company among the Rocks at Tynemouth... Little Rob: is (while I am writing this) playing John's new Tunes of "peace and plenty" &c to old Willy Dean, in the kitchen — ... [Bain, 1982].

The Bells referred to were close friends of the Bewick family. Joseph Bell was a portrait painter, and his son John followed in his footsteps: John's 'Portrait of Robert Elliot Bewick playing the Northumberland pipes', painted when his friend was around 15, now hangs in the Council room of the Natural History Society of Northumbria.



Figure 1. John Bell's portrait of Robert Elliot Bewick (Natural History Society of Northumbria)

The pipes depicted in the portrait are surely the set that Robert learned to play on. They are a very simple set, fitted out with three drones and a simple keyless chanter. It appears that Robert was given another set of pipes, perhaps as a 21st birthday present, in 1809, as there is a note in the account book referring to 'the new pipes' [Workshop Cash Book 1809, in Bain, 1982]. It is tempting to think that this new set is the one now in the possession of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne; a prized exhibit at Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum.

The instrument in the museum is an exceptionally beautiful example of the work of the pipe maker John Dunn, whose workshop just off Pilgrim Street in Newcastle happened to be around the corner from Bewick's own. The

pair helped each other out in their respective trades; Dunn was primarily a joiner and cabinet maker, who regularly cut and finished printing blocks for Bewick, while Bewick might engrave a coffin plate for Dunn. The small pipes are a refined and delicate set, made of ivory with silver fittings (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Robert Elliot Bewick's ivory Northumberland small pipes (Cocks Collection, Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne)

These pipes are a relatively early example of the instrument, made at a time when the pipe maker's workmanship was being refined to a very high degree. The chanter, being keyless and originally open ended, is probably not part of the original set.

Robert himself has a very sympathetic character. We can assume that he came to be a highly proficient player, capable of playing some of the trickiest and most difficult of melodies. At the same time, however, he was quite shy, as attested to by the artist William Bell Scott, who was invited to a friend's house in the 1840s to hear Robert play:

He appeared, carrying the union-pipes under his arm, accompanied by two old-fashioned maiden sisters; but when the time arrived for his performance, he seemed as scared as some men are who have to make a public speech, and was evidently inclined to run away. Our host, however, who knew him well, proposed that he should tune his instrument on the landing outside the drawing room door, which was a formula he appeared to understand; and after tuning he played there, and we heard him perfectly, and applauded him much. The ice thus broken, he soon gained confidence, re-entered the room, and walked about excitedly playing Scotch airs with variations in the loveliest manner on that most delicate of native instruments [Scott, Autobiography, 1860, pp.194-6; quoted by Bain, 1982].

After Robert's death, his sisters gave his pipes and tune books to the artist and tune collector Joseph Crawhall (1821-1896), the gift being recorded on the pipes themselves by means of an engraving on the drone stock, as well as a carefully copied out list of Robert's tunes in Crawhall's own manuscript tune book now in the Bagpipe Museum library. Robert's music books passed into the collections at Gateshead Libraries. They contain a repertoire of tunes that were played at this early stage of the instrument's evolution; many of them are still popular to this day.

There is another set of Northumberland pipes with an important Bewick connection belonging to the Society of Antiquaries, which entered the collections at the Bagpipe Museum much more recently. This set connects three important figures in the history of Northumbrian piping. It was made by John Dunn as a gift for his friend, John Peacock, Robert's tutor. The set itself is a sorry shadow of its former self—not much of the original instrument survives, but the

original ferrule on the drone stock does, and this was engraved by Thomas Bewick.

John Peacock is an interesting character. According to William Green, the Duke of Northumberland's piper, Peacock was the best small pipes player he ever heard in his life (Green, 1856). Thomas Bewick seems to be in agreement with this opinion:

For sometime before the American War broke out, there had been a lack of musical performers in our Streets & in this kind of interval, I used ... to engage John Peacock, our inimitable performer to play on the Northumberland or small pipes, and with his old tunes, his lilt, his pauses & his variations, I was always excessively pleased. At one time I was afraid, that these old Tunes and this Ancient Instrument, might from neglect of encouragement get out of use, and I did every thing in my power to prevent this, and to revive it again by urging Peacock to teach pupils to become masters of this kind of music—and I am vain enough to believe that my efforts were not lost [Memoir pp.96-7].

John Peacock is closely associated with the first ever printed collection of music for the Northumberland pipes—'A Favourite Collection of Tunes with Variations Adapted for the Northumberland Small Pipes, Violin or Flute'—which was published in 1805 by William Wright of Newcastle. This book, with a frontispiece engraved by the Bewick workshop (Figure 4), is known today simply as 'Peacock's Tunes', because it contains an illustration of the small pipes scale with the inscription 'a Compleat Drawing of J. Peacock's New Invented Pipe Chanter'. It seems highly likely that the piper worked on this innovation with his friend John Dunn.

Thomas Bewick was a great champion of Northumbrian traditional music, determined to preserve local music and promote talented musicians wherever he could. It seems appropriate that his son's and his friend's pipes are now on permanent display together as a reminder of that flourishing

artistic & musical scene centred on St Nicholas churchyard in Newcastle upon Tyne during the early 19th century



Figure 3. Detail of John Peacock's Northumberland small pipes, showing Bewick's engraving (Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne)

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[Figure 4 near here] Frontispiece of 'Peacock's Tunes'

Author's Note

I could not have written this article without the inspiration and information that Mr Iain Bain has given. His article for the *Society Magazine*, written a long time ago now, in 1982, is still required reading for anyone with an interest in Thomas Bewick and his musical circle. I do not know Mr Bain personally very well at all, having met him only once. However, not only does he, like Robert Bewick, play the Northumberland pipes, but I suspect that he might well be a match for him in his modesty of nature, which overlies a very deep of knowledge of his subject.

A PROVISIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF IAIN BAIN'S WORKS ON BEWICK

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IAIN BAIN

by *Graham Williams*

Pottering about in my library, whether for indulgent pleasure or some serious research, I am used to finding traces of Iain Bain everywhere. As well as letters, proofs and books there is a cassette of Iain playing the small pipes, recorded in our living room.



A 'snap' of Iain piping in the author's living room.

Years ago studying in the Huntington Library in California, I came across some Bewick related material and with delight sat down at my desk to examine it. On a scrap of paper I found tucked in was Iain's familiar handwriting. It had a message for whoever looked next that made a connection I would have missed. It was like having my friend there with me.

In the late 1960s Iain and David Chambers produced a portfolio of seven Bewick prints printed by them from the original wood blocks that illustrated Gregory Way's *Fabliaux of Le Grand*. Another portfolio of a further ten prints followed in 1971, which The Folio Society, where I worked, published for members. This was my first real contact with Iain.

Since then I have enjoyed a friendship and a number of projects with him. At every turn I have learnt something, for Iain is generous with his scholarship and with his enthusiasm. When I published a suite of proofs taken by Bob Hunter

Middleton from nineteen of the Bewick *Aesop* headpieces, it was Iain who wrote the text and lent me further original blocks that I printed in the text. He also pointed me to the connection between the Croxall and Bewick editions of the fables, so I could add that note to the text. The experience resulted in a long study of Bewick's *Aesop* that continues to this day.

Like me there must be thousands of people who have caught Iain's enthusiasm—that lasts a lifetime. You don't have to know him to catch it. It is there in every book he has been a part of and every exhibition he has curated or been concerned with. Just once I showed Iain something, when I printed from five of his Bewick blocks to demonstrate that they were best printed on dampened paper with dampened vellum tympan installed on the hand press. At the end of a happy weekend we had printed enough proofs to make sixteen copies of a miniature book, *Bewick & Printers*.



Later we published a few books together, a venture that we can be proud of even though it didn't last very long. Through Iain I brought back a lot of Bewick blocks from America, most of which now rest at Cherryburn.

There are so many people Iain has introduced me to, a number resulting in long friendships; and it was Iain who was responsible for my meeting my wife.

Congratulations Iain for your eighty well spent years and all your accomplishments, thank you for your kindnesses, and thank you for enriching my life. I can't wait to see what you show me next.

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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