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An Anonymous Catalogue of British Birds dated 1832

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Description

An apparently unknown ornithological publication listing British Birds recently acquired by me has prompted the present note. The work consists of seven pages plus two pages of Patrons in the form of an octavo pamphlet.

The title page and the introduction are reproduced as figure 1. The next five pages (3-7) consist of a systematic Catalogue of British Birds divided into *I Land Birds* pages 3-5 and *II Water Birds* pages 5-7. The list includes a total of 275 species as being British, 209 of which are indicated as being represented in the Museum Collection.

The seventh page includes:

Postscript - *In the execution of a Catalogue like the preceding, deficiencies and errors are inevitable. The Author will be satisfied if they are not found very numerous or glaring. So much confusion and discrepancy exist, even in the best writers, with respect to the Gull Genus, that great difficulty has been experienced in forming the present imperfect arrangement of it.*

The following Species have been excluded from the Anas Genus: as, although naturalised or domesticated, and described by Bewick, they are confessedly not of British, nor even of European origin: A. Cygnoides, Swan Goose; A. Canadensis, Cravat G; A. Gambensis, Spur-winged G; A. Ægyptiaca, Gamboo G; and A. Moschata, Musk Duck.

The Catalogue, such as it is, will serve as the Index to a little "Manual for the Student of British Ornithology"; which will shortly be published for the benefit of the Proprietor, at the Birmingham Museum of Natural History, Temple-Row July 4th 1832.'

Pages 9-10 consist of a 'list of patronesses, patrons, and subscribers. There then follows on this and the succeeding page a list of a further one hundred and forty-two subscribers (see figure 2) including:

[Corrie, Mrs, Woodville (wife of the Rev. Corrie, President of the Birmingham Philosophical Society. She was a keen conchologist and possessed perhaps the finest collection of freshwater bivalves (Unionidae) in Europe. Dr. Isaac Lea, the american authority on the groups named *Unio corrianus* in 1834 in her honour.)

Hope, Rev. F.W., F.L.S. London (Frederic William, (1797-1862) the eminent entomologist)

Vigors, N.A. Esq., F.R.S., F.L.S. (Nicholas Aylward, (1785-1840) the entomologist, the bulk of his collection including that of the coleopterist, S. Wilkins, was transferred from the Zoological Society's Museum to the British Museum in 1859)

Withering, W. Esq. (William, Junior (-1832) Botanist)

A contemporary review

This work was reviewed in J.C. Loudon's Magazine of Natural History Vol. 6 for 1833 page 136 as follows:

'Anon: *A Systematic Catalogue of British Birds; intended as a Guide to the Ornithological Department of the Birmingham Museum of Natural History*. 8vo July, 1832. We notice this pamphlet of seven pages for the sake of stating that it shows the rare species in the museum to be, of land birds, the osprey (*Falco Haliae'etus*), Tengmalm's owl (*Strix Tengmalmi*), golden oriole (*Oriolus Galbula*), rose-coloured pastor (*Pastor roseus*), bee-eater (*Merops Apiaster*), wood shrike (*Lanius rufus*), pine grosbeak (*Pyrrhula enucleator*), and the great bustard (*O'tis tarda*). Of the water birds, the rarest in the collection are the ibis (*I'bis falcinellus*), the roseate tern (*Sterna Dougalli*), the burgomaster (*Larus glaucus*), and the little auk (*U'ria Alle*). The catalogue "is arranged on the plan of M. Temminck's valuable *Manuel d'Ornithologie*, with the improvements suggested by Mr. Selby in his *Illustrations of British Ornithology*".'

Possible authors of the Pamphlet

There is no indication of the author of the pamphlet but the publication may be attributed to Richard Weaver, the owner of the Birmingham Museum of Natural History. Richard Weaver commenced upon the study of entomology about 1814, as evidenced by his 1847 note on *Sphinx convolvuli*:

'In August, 1814, I was reaping wheat in a field, in the Parish of Tibberton, Worcestershire, about five miles from Worcester, and on that part of the field, there was growing with the wheat a quantity of the plant *Convolvulus arvensis*, amongst which I found two of the caterpillars of *S. convolvuli*, full-grown.'

His enthusiastic collecting resulted in the accumulation of some five thousand species of British insects. These were displayed to the public.

Such was his success that he obtained premises in New Street, Birmingham, with a view of forming a Museum of Natural History. During his residence there, he turned his attention to ornithology with considerable success preserving some two hundred species of British birds as well as foreign birds and insects. As his collection increased the New Street premises became too small, so Weaver moved to the Institution Rooms in Temple Row.

If Richard Weaver was not responsible for the Catalogue another possibility is N.A. Vigors. He was not only an annual subscriber to the Museum but played a major part in negotiations with the Zoological Society of London which resulted in the gift of twenty-four rare birds to the Museum, thus enriching its collections and at the same time, enhancing its reputation.

The original pamphlet has been placed in the archival collections of the Natural History Department, Art Gallery and Museum, Kelvingrove, Glasgow and photocopies deposited in Birmingham's Museum and also their Reference Library.

A
 SYSTEMATIC CATALOGUE
 OF
B R I T I S H B I R D S ;
 INTENDED AS
 A G U I D E
 TO THE ORNITHOLOGICAL DEPARTMENT
 OF
 THE BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM
 OF
 NATURAL HISTORY.

BIRMINGHAM:
 PRINTED BY WATSON AND ASTON, TEMPLE-BOW.

The following CATALOGUE OF BRITISH BIRDS is intended as a Guide to the visitor of the BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY. It is arranged on the plan of Temminck's valuable *Manuel d'Ornithologie* with the improvements suggested by Selby, in his *Illustrations of British Ornithology*. It exhibits the most accurate and complete list of British Birds, yet published.

The numbers prefixed to the various Species in this Catalogue, correspond with the numbers attached to the specimens in the Museum. The divisions of several of the Genera into Sections or Sub-genera, are indicated by alphabetical characters. The cross prefixed to a Species, denotes that the bird is in the Museum. The absence of such mark shews that the Species is yet wanting; and will, we hope, attract the notice, and elicit the contributions, of country-gentlemen. Where the number is omitted and a note of interrogation follows, the existence of the bird as a distinct Species from that which precedes it, may be considered questionable. Simple omission of the number implies doubt as to the Species in question, being really British. N., R., V. R., and E., following the English name, must be understood as meaning that the Species so distinguished, is *New*, *Rare*, *Very Rare*, or has recently become *Extinct*, in the British Islands.

Fig 1. Title page and Introduction to the catalogue.

LIST OF
PATRONESSES, PATRONS, AND SUBSCRIBERS
TO
THE BIRMINGHAM MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY.

Abney, Mr. E., Lichfield	Dawes Mr. J. S.	Millward, Miss
Amplett, Mr. T.	Dawson, Mr. R., Sandwell Cottage	Molliett, Mr. James
Atwood, W. H.	Dee, Mr. Frederick	Moseley, Rev. Thos.
Auster, Mr. John	Dudley, Mrs.	Moore, Mr. E., Tilsley
Austice, Mr. J.	Eckersall, Rev. C	O'Brien, Mr. I. B.
Baker, Mr. Charles	Fenwick, Rev. J. T.	Paine, Mrs.
Barber, Mr. J. V.	Finn, Mr. Ford, London	Palmer, Dr. Shirley
Becket, Mr. H.	Freeman, Mr., London	Pershouse, Mr. H.
Bedford, Yeend John, Esq., Edgbaston	Galton, Mr. Tertius	Petkins, Esq. S. F. S.
Bedington, Mr.	Galton, Miss	Phipson, Mr. W., Edgbaston
Beeken, Mr. H.	Goddard, Mr. S. A.	Piercey, Mr. J. E.
Benson, Mr. E. W.	Griffin, Rev. John	Power, Mr. Robt., Atherstone
Rielly, Mr. Thomas	Hadley, Mr. B.	Richards, Mr. C.
Bingham, Miss	Hale, Mr. George	Rotton, Mr. Richard
Blyth, Mr. Thos., F. A. S.	Hanson, Mr. T., Senior	Russell, Mr. James
Blythe, Mr. G.	Hanson, Mr. T., Jun.	Russell, W. C. Esq.
Bolton, Mr. T.	Harris, Mr.	Russell, Miss, Bescott Hall
Bolton, Miss, Soho	Harris, Mr. H., Edgbaston	Russell, Mr. Ditto
Bond, Mr. J.	Harris, Mr. R.	Ryland, Mr. Frederick
	Heywood, Mr. James	Ryland, Mr. T.
	Herford, Mr. James	Salt, Mr. T. C.
	Hill, Messrs. T. W. and Sons, Hazlewood	Sharp, Mr.
	Hodgkiss, Mr. W.	Skey, Mr. Arthur, Spring Grove
	Hodgson, Mr. J.	Solomon, Mr. Jas. Voss, Highfield
	Holmes, Mr. George	Stewart, Mr.
	Hope, Rev. F. W., F. L. S., London	Stock, Mr. J.
	Husk, Mrs. H.	Stovin, Mr. C.
	Hutchinson, Mr.	Swann, Mr. W.
	Jessop, Mr. Thos.	Taylor, Jas. Esq.
	Jones, Mr. Charles	Thornley, Mr. Samuel
	Jones, Mr. J.	Timmins, _____
	Johnson, Mr. W., Honsley	Turner, Mr. A., Kidderminster
	Jukes, Mr. Alfred	Turner, Mr. W. H.
	Keeling, Mr. John	Tyndal, Mrs. T.
	Kennedy, Dr., Ashby	Underwood, Mr. T.
	Kempson, Mr. Samuel, Summer Hill.	Vigors, N. A. Esq., F. R. S., F. L. S.
	Lane, J. N.	Wart, Mr. H. Van.
	Lee, Thomas Esq., Edgbaston	Warmald, Mr. Sam., Seaham Harbour
	Lee, Miss T. C.	Webster, Miss
	Lee, Mrs. T. Eyre	Webster, Mr. C. F.
	Lloyd, Mr. James	West, Mr. W.
	Lucas, Mr. W.	Wheele, Mr. S. A.
	Mald, Miss Helen, Edgbaston	Wickenden, Mr.
	Mappleback, Mr. W. B., Islington Row	Wigley, Miss, Migrey, Malvern Hall
	Martin, Mr. William	Willmore, Mr. John
	Mason, Mr. Oliver	Willmore, Mr. Thos.
	Matthews, Mr., Westbromwich	Winman, Mr. William
	Messenger, Mr. Samuel	Wilnot, Mr. J.
	Messenger, Miss	Withering, W. Esq.
	Miller, Mr., Hagley Road	Woods, Mr. T.
		Wooley, Mr., Somerfield

Fig 2 List of Patronesses, Patrons, and Subscribers. Note Princess Victoria had yet to ascend the throne.

The proposed 'Manual'

I have been unable to discover whether the proposed 'Manual for the Student of British Ornithology' ever materialised. However, it would appear to be a continuation of the work reviewed in J.C. Loudon's *Magazine of Natural History* Volume 5, for 1832, page 441 thus:

'ART I. Catalogue of Works on Natural History, lately published with some Notice of those considered the most interest (sic) to British Naturalists.

ANON: Popular Lecture on the Vertebrated Animals of the British Islands. Part I. On the British Mammifera; with a tabular View of them, arranged according to Blumenbach's System; a Synopsis of all the Genera and Species; and an Appendix containing a Sketch of Extinct Animals. 8vo, pp. 96. Birmingham, 1831. Wrightson, Birmingham; Baldwin, and Longman, London.

The Writer of these Lectures plays with his subject, that is, he discussed it in an off-hand manner; and although in his successive treating of the various animals, one by one, he gives in English, the technical characteristics of each species, and those of the genus, order, etc., to which it belongs, he gives also, in relation to each either some sentimental reflection, something interesting that has to his knowledge occurred in association with it, or anecdotes and notices descriptive of the habits of the animal.. This untechnical part of the book we regard more than the technical part, because the British animals are to Britons empirically known or distinguishable; but it is, we fear, far from being the fact, that each is to every Briton a centre of amiable, intellectual, and therefore highly interesting, associations.

This is what it is most desirable they, and every object in creation, should be; and we admire the present manual, as being a cheap means of promoting so desirable an end, and heartily wish that the successful sale of this "Part I" may encourage the author to proceed with the remainder, which he proposes should consist of six parts: "Parts II., III., and IV., to be respectively devoted to the description of the land birds, the Grallae or waders, and the water birds; Part V. to the amphibious animals and cartilaginous fishes; and Part VI. to the osseous or bony fishes." We cannot state the price of this richly sorted pamphlet, or "Part I.", but it cannot be high, as it has been got up in a plain, unornamented, but nevertheless clear and neat manner.'

The origin and author to this work, which I have so far been unable to trace, again may be attributed to Richard Weaver.

References

- Wallace J. (1832). Weaver's Museum of Natural History in Birmingham. in J.C. Loudon's *The Magazine of Natural History and Journal of Zoology, Botany, Mineralogy, Geology and Meteorology* **5** : 546-548.
- Weaver, R. (1847). The Caterpillar of *Sphinx convolvuli*. *The Zoologist* **5** : 1679.