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Title: Potter's Museum Of Curiosities: A Personal Recollection Of A Recently Dispersed Collection

Author(s): Moore, S.

Source: Moore, S. (2004). Potter's Museum Of Curiosities: A Personal Recollection Of A Recently Dispersed Collection. *NatSCA News, Issue 3*, 56.

URL: <http://www.natsca.org/article/401>

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**Potter’s Museum Of Curiosities:**  
**A Personal Recollection Of A Recently Dispersed Collection**  
**- Simon Moore**

My family moved from Tunbridge Wells (my place of birth) in 1959 to the Sussex Downs near Worthing. My interest in natural history having been piqued some years before, I was most interested to visit a small museum at (fairly nearby) Bramber which displayed, among other strange natural phenomena, a two-headed lamb! My Father duly took me along but after about an hour (I was totally absorbed) sneaked off for a pint while I continued perusing the amazing taxidermy tableaux – The Death & Burial of Cock Robin, The Kitten’s Wedding, The Rabbit’s Schoolroom &c &c, to say nothing of the more unusual material like the lamb. Although I had a natural empathy with the living world, I didn’t consider for a moment the fact that all these young animals had probably been killed to adorn these dioramas and it wasn’t until a middle aged woman came in and went out again, loudly complaining that the place ‘gave her the shudders’ that I even considered the ethical view at all! Besides, they had all met their ends about 100 years ago and even their glassy stares failed to upset me in the least! Potter’s Museum has always both shocked and fascinated people.



That 2-headed lamb...

My parents again moved in 1968 to East Preston further west along the Sussex coast and a few years later, the Potter collection moved to nearby Arundel after a brief spell at Brighton. I visited several more times and, being more mature, was able to appreciate the other ethnographic objects on display. Once again I could hear comments either vilifying or praising the taxidermy tableaux.

Eventually the collection moved out of my life to Jamaica Inn in Cornwall and I never saw it again. I heard that it had doubled in size with various additions from certain other collections. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2003, it was sold by Bonhams to various buyers. The star lot which reached £20K (hammer price) was, of course, Potter’s first and best-known tableau of Cock Robin. My personal favourite was the rabbit’s schoolroom, making £13K and the two-headed lamb £2.6K. A great shame that the collection was split up, especially after it was rumoured that a certain Mr Hirst had offered £2M for the entire collection – a most generous offer since I suspect that the total cheque from Bonhams was much less.



...and the bunny’s schoolroom!