



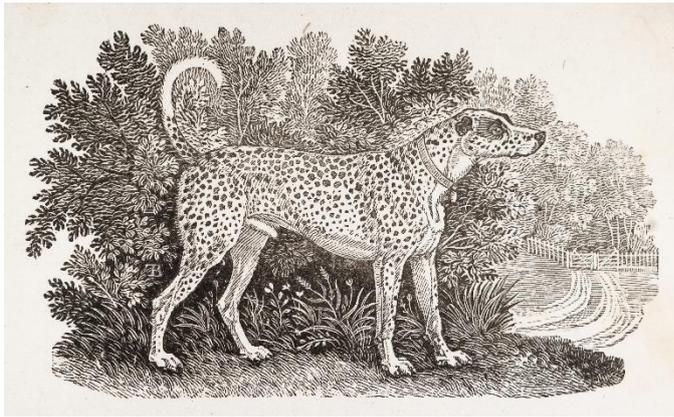
Thomas Bewick Engraver
& *the performance of woodblocks*

by Graham Williams
with a preface by Simon Lawrence

*A new book about Bewick's engravings
unlike any previous publication
286 pages, 439 illustrations*



THE FLORIN PRESS
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FOR OVER TWO HUNDRED YEARS Thomas Bewick's engravings have delighted every generation. His birds, animals and the scenes he saw around him have generated an enthusiasm for his work that has never waned. His influence

changed wood engraving and book illustration for over a century. He showed a new way to use an old skill of cutting images in wood.

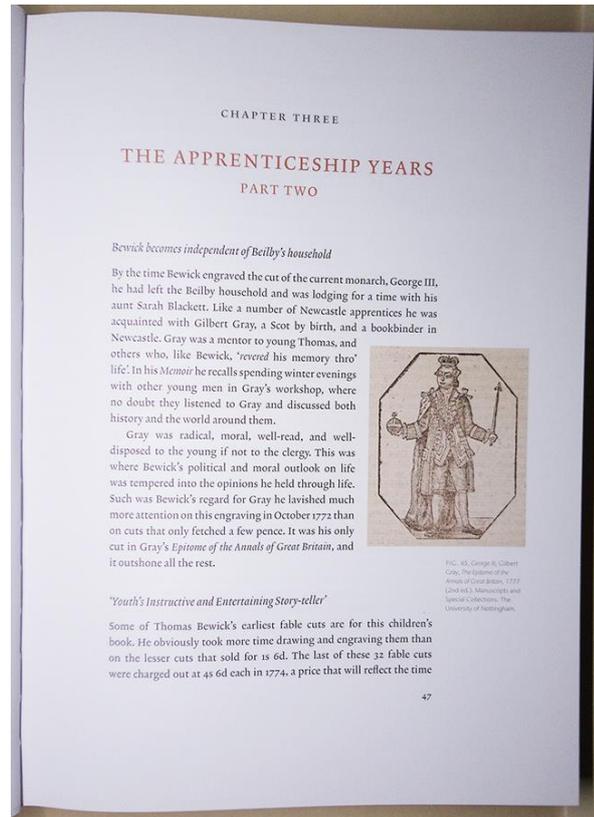
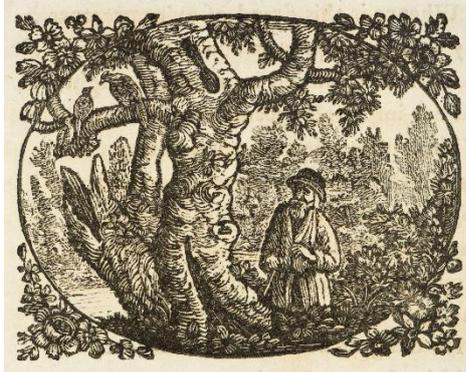
This book is not a biography of the man but an account of how his talent evolved and how his blocks can still perform their magic. It shows the development of Bewick's engraving, beginning with his first learning exercises; some of them have

survived and are included, one never published before.

Bewick's talent was obvious to those around him, particularly with his engraving of animals and birds he knew well. Towards the end of his apprenticeship he began a commission to illustrate Gay's Fables. He kept a quantity of proofs, many before their final state, and through them the book traces the emergence of his skills as an engraver. This is when he developed his techniques of engraving and lowering, a discovery that his mature work later relied on, and he paid close attention to the texts that he followed with studied realism.



The great variety of work he carried out when he became a journeyman is revealed, including a quantity of engraving on silver and other metals, an essential part of both Bewick's training and his mature skill. He did not work only on wood.



Bewick's highly developed method of lowering woodblocks is described, as are some prior lowering techniques.

His toolbox and most of its contents are illustrated and described individually. Twenty of Bewick's original blocks are illustrated, with proofs that reveal the surface engraving and lowering, and some of the drawings that relate to them are included. Rare proofs made before the blocks were finished and published reveal corrections that Bewick made in his early and later work, many of them radical. A display of sixty-one wood engravings of Bewick's mature work reveals details



seldom seen. They are taken from the best impressions in his own publications of *Quadrupeds*, *Birds and Aesop Fables*, including books with and without text, India paper proofs, and individual proofs made in his workshop.



To appreciate Bewick's engraving fully it helps to be familiar with how they were printed. The text presents a brief history of hand printing, papermaking and printing ink up to current times in an engaging way for the general reader. For anyone who prints from woodblocks, not only Bewick's, more technical information is included in the notes at the end of the book.

Hand presses did not produce the same result every time from any woodblock. This is shown with nine different examples of the Hoopoe engraving,

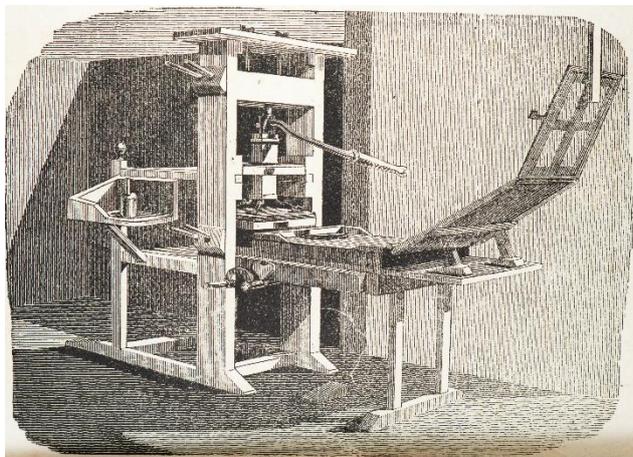


from the nineteenth century to recent prints from the original block. These show that the block will still print as well or better than the best examples from Bewick's own publications.

Many people have printed from Bewick's blocks, the most notable being Robert Hunter Middleton. Examples of his prints and an account of how they were printed introduces a chapter on modern printing from the blocks. The author discovered the importance of vellum to the printing of Bewick's blocks and showed

Iain Bain in 1983. The outcome was a few copies of a little booklet, with five of Iain's woodblocks and a text by Graham Williams, all eight pages are reproduced.

Industry changed printing ink as well as paper and printing presses. Over



time the ink most suited to print woodblocks by hand disappeared. In the course of research the author changed modern proofing inks and ground inks from the old ingredients. The detailed information is again found in the notes.

Wood engraving is very much alive today and all those involved in engraving, printing, appreciating, conserving or collecting will find this

an informative and readable text with a wealth of illustrations, many published for the first time. For those with a greater interest in printing from woodblocks the additional information in the notes will be particularly useful.

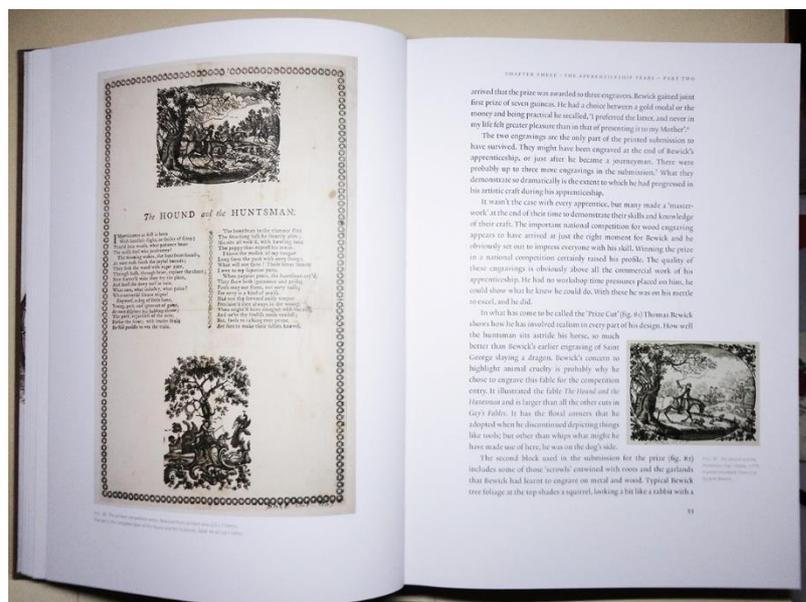
About the production of this book.

The majority of illustrations come from the author's own collection, and from a number of institutions.

The design of the book is by Susan Wightman, co-author of two books on book design. The integration of text with illustrations is most sympathetic.

The printer was chosen primarily for their skill in colour reproduction, even though this is a black and white subject. Colour reproduction is the best way to convey the various tints of paper and densities of printing ink of the originals.

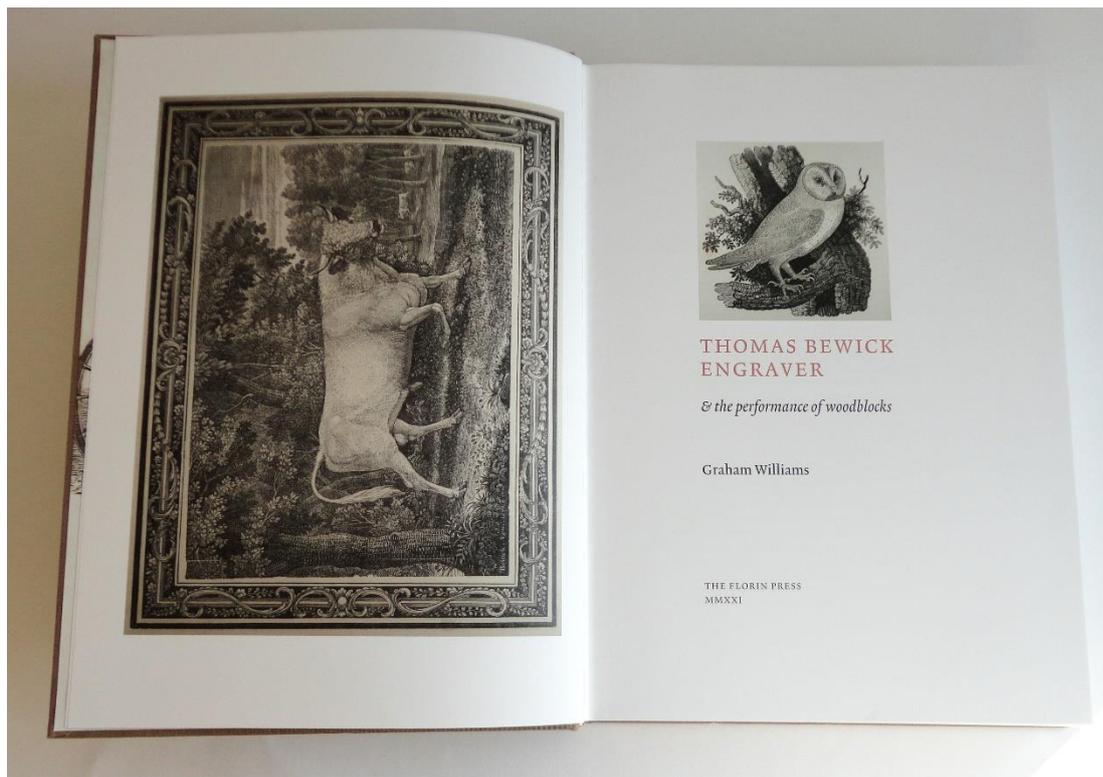
Graham Williams is a hand printer, wood engraver, author and sculptor, and has been widely exhibited. He has had a long association with publishing and began hand printing in the 1960s.



Typeset and designed at the Libanus Press. 297 x 215mm. 286 pages with 437 illustrations including a frontispiece, a few in black and white. The endpapers have two further images, slightly enlarged. Printed in colour throughout by Hampton Printing (Bristol) Ltd. All prices include postage, packing and insurance within the UK. Postage for orders from overseas will be quoted individually.

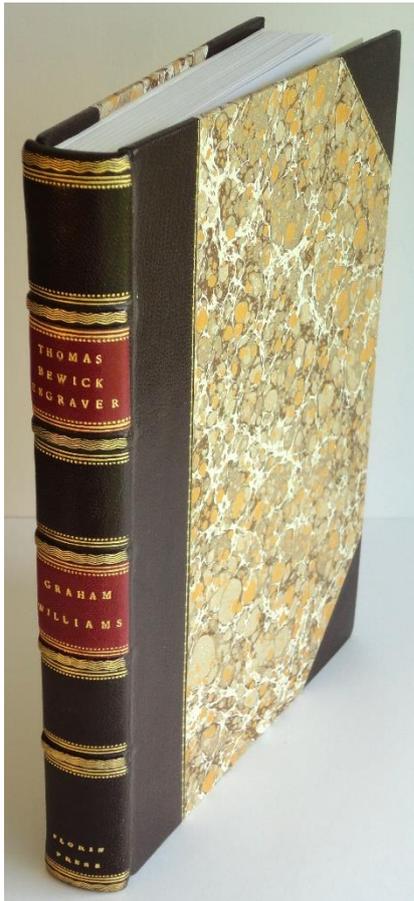
The standard edition

The standard edition is bound in Brillianta Fawn book cloth. Titled in gold on the spine with a titling label and gold blocked title on the front board. £125.00.

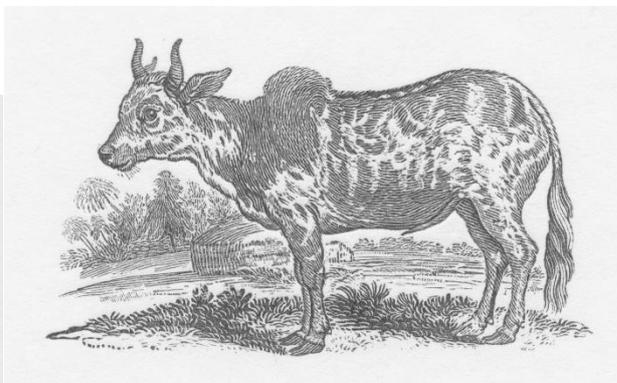
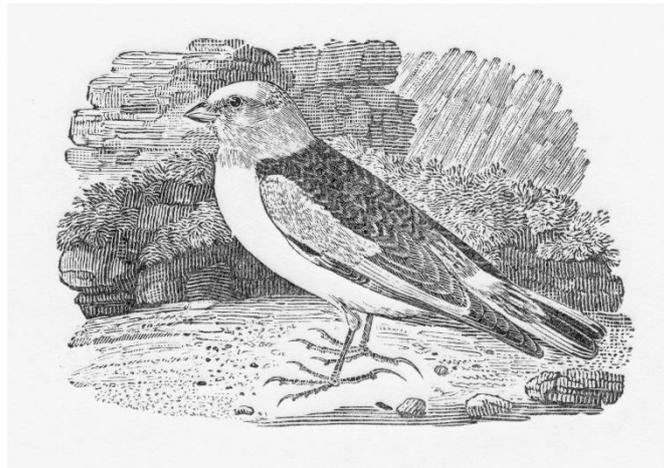


The special edition

Twenty-five special copies half bound by hand at the Abrams Bindery, in morocco and marbled paper by Alberto Valesse in Venice, end papers of a pale green handmade paper from Barcham Green, two titling labels on the spine and hand sewn headbands. A few copies will have a combed flower in the centre of the marbling on the front boards. Six additional leaves are tipped in including four leaves printed at The Florin Press, each with a Bewick engraving printed from the original blocks. Three have texts – A Postscript describes a book that came



to light dating from 1964 in an edition of 60 that also set out to print Bewick's blocks on book papers. A Note on Presswork describes inking techniques and adjustments to the hand press that are not covered in the main text. The Printing of Wood Engravings is a quotation from Caleb Stower's *Printer's Grammar* of 1808 describing the difficulties experienced by printers and the need for them to 'judge the effect'. It also laments the quality of printing ink. The fourth leaf is a titled print of Bewick's Corn Bunting.





Two fold out plates reproduced in high definition and in their original sizes show two large and rare Bewick engravings. In a slightly enlarged reproduction they form the end papers of the standard edition. Bewick's wood engraving The Trafalgar Coach is reproduced from a proof he gave to his daughter Jane. Bewick's elaborate copper engraved royal coat of arms for the King's Letters Patent, is reproduced from the only known contemporary proof with the original lettering. The first ten copies have arrived from the binder. £585.00.

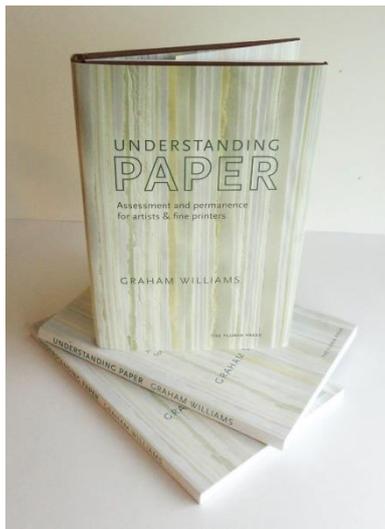


*A revised full prospectus will be found on the website
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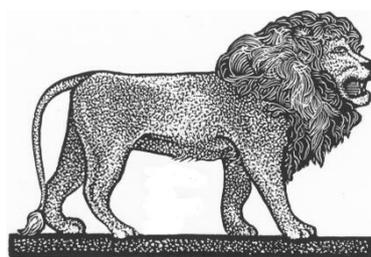
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from Woodblocks**
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