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A supplement to “Lakeland taxidermists in the 19th and early 20th centuries”

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A supplement to “Lakeland taxidermists in the 19th and early 20th centuries”

Robin M. Sellers

Crag House, Ellerslie Park, Gosforth, Cumbria CA20 1BL (e-mail: robin.m.sellers.gosforth@gmail.com)

Abstract: This document summarises some new information that has come to light since the publication in 2018 of “Lakeland taxidermists in the 19th and early 20th centuries” in volume 13 of the *Transactions of the Carlisle Natural History Society*. It incorporates details of both some newly identified taxidermists together with additional information about various items of taxidermy produced by Lakeland taxidermists.

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THE 125th anniversary edition of the Society’s *Transactions* contained an account of the taxidermists known to have operated in Lakeland in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Sellers, 2018). More information has since come to light and the purpose of this report is to provide a summary of these new findings. A good deal of this new material is derived from the summary of material offered for sale by auctioneers available at ‘The Saleroom’ website. With such material the name of the Auction House and its location are given, together with the date of the auction and the lot number (where known).

Newly identified Lakeland taxidermists

Bailey of Carlisle (?)

A Little Auk *Alle alle*, apparently in breeding plumage, was in the collection on display in the Zoological Museum at Belle Vue, Carlisle and, as Macpherson (1892, p.446) relates, ‘formerly belonged to Bailey the birdstuffer’ (and was presumably a bird preserved by him).

R.Brantingham of Kirkby Lonsdale (fl.1850s)

An item of taxidermy dated 1858 by this taxidermist, was offered for sale on an internet website; no other details available (Pellow 2020).

(Mr) Harrison of Whitehaven (fl.1850s)

A bird of prey purporting to be an American Swallow-tailed Kite *Elanoides forficatus* was shot in Eskdale, Cumberland, in April 1853. It later came into the possession of a Mr Harrison, an ironmonger of Strand Street, Whitehaven and who is described by Robson (1854a,b) as an ‘amateur animal-preserver’. Robson may not have been the most reliable of informants (the notion that the bird was an American Swallow-tailed Kite is ridiculous, as are several of his other records; these appear to be cases of mistaken identity by someone with very limited ornithological knowledge - see also comments in Sellers 2020) but there seems no reason to doubt what Robson says about Harrison, a previously unknown taxidermist.

J.McKnight of Bigrigg (fl.1880s)

A Fox’s *Vulpes vulpes* mask (head) mounted on a shield together with its brush (tail) was offered for sale by Mitchells of Cockermouth in July 2020, lot 794. The back of the shield is described in the sale catalogue as being marked ‘J.McKnight, Bigrigg’, presumed to be the taxidermist who prepared and mounted the head, and is dated ‘November ’86’, taken to be 1886 (the head is rather faded and certainly looks as if it might be this old).

Townson of Carlisle (fl.1850s)

A previously overlooked entry in the *Vertebrate Fauna* (Macpherson 1892, p.298) refers to two Long-tailed Ducks *Clangula hyemalis* shot by Townson, a ‘Carlisle birdstuffer’ in October 1850 and taken to T.C.Heysham.

New information concerning previously identified Lakeland taxidermists

Linnaeus Eden Hope of Penrith and Carlisle

L.E.Hope had a taxidermy business, almost certainly taken over from his father, Thomas, based at 21 Victoria Road, Penrith, which is the address shown on his case labels (see Fig. 1 in Sellers, 2018). Some additional taxidermy prepared by Hope Junior has recently come to light and this provides further information about when the business operated. The following is a list of all taxidermy by Hope Junior known to the compiler

Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* (2), [no location given], ca.1892 (details from Tennants of Leyburn 2020, lot 186).

Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria*, Skinburness, 15th May 1893 (ex Nichol).

Corncrake *Crex crex*, ♀, Nunwick, July 1893 (details from case label illustrated in Sellers 2018).

Pochard *Aythya ferina*, Nunwick, November 1893.

Long-tailed Duck, ♀, [no location given], 15th October 1895.

White-fronted Goose *Anser albifrons*, [no location given], 3rd January 1896.

Shore Lark *Eremophila alpestris*, [no location given], January 1896.

Goosander *Mergus merganser*, immature ♂, Nunwick, 1st December 1897.

Velvet Scoter *Melanitta perspicillata*, ♀, Nunwick, 22nd May 1897.

Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*, ♀, Solway, 27th February 1898 (the trade label from this piece of taxidermy is shown in Figure 1).

Kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla*, Penrith, 14th August 1898.

Tufted Duck *Aythya fuligula*, Nunwick, October 1905.

Details of all except the Corncrake and the two Kingfishers are from labels stuck to the bases of a series of items sold at auction in Carlisle on 9th May 2005 (details supplied by K.Pellow). In addition there were unlabelled specimens of the following: Gannet *Morus bassanus*, Common Scoter *Melanitta nigra*, Scaup *Aythya marila* (♂), Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*, Guillemot *Uria aalge*, Razorbill *Alca torda*, a second Kittiwake, Black Guillemot *Cephus grylle*, Brent Goose *Branta bernicla* and Great Crested Grebe *Podiceps cristatus*, all on wooden stands very similar or identical to those used by Hope (and presumably preserved and mounted by him).

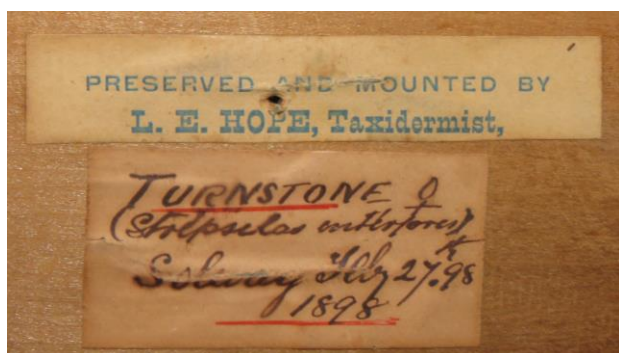


Figure 1. L.E.Hope's case label from a mounted Turnstone dated 27th February 1898. © K.Pellow

J.W.McHardy of Carlisle

As a taxidermist J.W.McHardy appears to have specialised in preserving fish. A typical example of his work, a Brown Trout *Salmo trutta* caught on the River Eden in August 1949, was included in an auction sale by Tennants of Leyburn, on 13th February 2019, lot 161. McHardy did set up other things, however, such as a case showing an Ermine *Mustela erminea* in a snowy landscape, dated 1972 and which was included in a sale by Mitchells of Cockermouth on 5th October 2019, lot 560.

William Nichol of Skinburness

Also included in the auction sale in Carlisle in 2005 referred to above was an item of taxidermy by W.Nichol, details as follows:

Greylag Goose *Anser anser*, ♂, Skinburness, 23th December 1899 (presumably taken by Nichol himself) (details per K.Pellow).

Robert Raine (later R. & G.W.Raine Bros) of Carlisle

A number of items by this firm of taxidermists has been offered for sale by auction in the past decade. The details about when and where specimens were taken are

often lacking and it has not proved possible to identify with certainty any of those listed below to entries in the Raine Bros accounts book, which covers the period 1918-1943 (see Sellers 2015, 2018). It is likely, therefore, that they will have been prepared for customers paying by cash. They include:

Long-eared Owl *Asio otus*, early 20th century (offered for sale by Penrith Farmers' and Kidd's plc on 15th September 2004, when it was described as having a 'red and gilt' trade label marked 'R.Raine', the type used before ca.1920 when R.Raine's brother joined the company and the name on the trade labels was changed to 'Raine Bros.'. What was probably the same item was included in a sale by Thomson Roddick Auctioneers & Valuers of Carlisle on 16th March 2019, lot 165).

Shoveler *Spatula clypeata*, ♀, Nunwick, not dated (auction sale in Carlisle, 2005; details per K.Pellow).

Otter *Lutra lutra*, ca.1930 (Tennants of Leyburn, 20th September 2017, lot 156); the date may not be correct, for the auction catalogue describes the trade label attached to this case as reading 'R.Raine' so, as outlined above, this probably dates it to before ca.1920.

Pike *Esox lucius*, not dated (Tennants of Leyburn, 9th October 2009, lot 296); no trade label is referred to in the auction catalogue, but the case was said to contain a painted pebble reading 'R.Raine, Carlisle', again dating it to before ca.1920.

Trout, Rydal Water, ca.1920 (Tennants of Leyburn, 5th Aug 2016, lot 105).

Also of note is the comment by Macpherson (1897) that he had examined a hybrid Red Grouse/Black Grouse "at the shop of Mr R. Raine, the courteous taxidermist who preserved them." No specific date is given but it is likely to have been no later than 1896, and represents the earliest record discovered to date of the existence of this taxidermist.

The above gives some idea of the range of species that Raine Bros dealt with. Moreover, they sometimes handled material that had been set up by other taxidermists. For example, a Fox's mask mounted on a wooden shield and dated March 1936, bore two trade labels when it was offered for sale by Tennants of Leyburn on 28th October 2020 (lot 2322). One was for Peter Spicer and Sons of Leamington Spa, who had prepared the mask originally (mounts of this type were a specialty of Spicers and they attracted business from many parts of Britain; this particular Fox had been taken at Sewingshield, Northumberland, for instance), and the second for Raine Bros. Precisely what the latter did to merit the addition of their label is not certain, but it will most likely have been to clean, and possibly renovate, the specimen.

Joseph Walton of Garrigill

The report in the Society's *Transactions* makes reference to a comment in the *Vertebrate Fauna* that Walton possessed "a handsome case of Waxwings which fell to

his own gun", during the big influx in the winter of 1867 (Macpherson 1892, p.122). What appears to have been this very case of birds was offered for sale by Penrith Farmers' & Kidd's plc of Penrith at an auction they held on 29th June 2005. The case contained four Waxwings, a female and three males, and, unusually for a piece of Victorian taxidermy, contained both Walton's trade label and a handwritten note about the provenance of the material displayed stating that the birds had been taken in October 1866.

A second case containing two Pheasants *Phasianus colchicus* and a Red-legged Partridge *Alectoris rufa* was listed in a catalogue for a sale at Tennants of Leyburn on 7th December 2019, lot 1020 (The Saleroom, 2020). Curiously the case has two trade labels. One refers to "Joseph Walton, Bird & Animal Preserver, Garrigill", and the other to "T.W.Hall, Bird & Animal Preserver, Allendale Town" Hall is not listed in Marshall's (2009) Catalogue of British Taxidermists. Allendale is in Northumberland, only a short distance from Garrigill. Whether they both had a hand in preparing the case, or it was prepared by one and later reworked by the other is unclear.

Other records of relevance to Cumbria

Unknown taxidermist

An Otter's mask mounted on a wooden shield was included in an auction sale by Laidlaw Auctioneers & Valuers of Carlisle on 4th October 2019, lot 484. It bears a printed label which reads "D.O.H. [Dumfries Otter Hounds] River Lyne, 16-7-59" (The Saleroom, 2020). Note that the River Lyne is entirely within Cumbria.

John Cooper & Sons of London

Coopers were a well-known firm of taxidermists specialising in fish. Their bow-fronted cases, often with *verre églomisé* surrounds, are very distinctive. Several are illustrated by Dunne *et al* (2009), including two with fish taken in Cumbria, details as follows:

Atlantic Charr *Salvelinus alpinus*, 2♀ (a Silver Charr and a Red Charr), caught by J.F.Peters, Windermere, 21st September 1914 and 1st October 1914 respectively.

Brown Trout, *Salmo trutta*, ♀, caught by J.F.Peters, Windermere, 30th May 1915.

Henry Murray & Son of Carnforth

The following items prepared by H. Murray & Son have appeared in auctioneers' catalogues (only material relating to Cumbria included):

Pink-footed Goose *Anser brachyrhynchus*, mounted head and neck on wooden shield, Rockcliffe, 1st March 1935 (Tennants of Leyburn, 9th August 2019, lot 91).

Brown Hare's *Lepus europaeus* head, Netherby, 1913 (Mitchells of Cockermouth, 5th October 2019, lot 591).

Fox's mask, killed Buckbarrow, November 1928 (Tennants of Leyburn, 31st January 2020, lot 13).

W.Salkeld of Carnforth

An undated case containing a Tench *Tinca tinca* caught at Roanhead, Lancashire, preserved by this taxidermist was offered for sale by Mellors & Kirk of Nottingham in 4th October 2017, lot 341.

R.Spicer & Sons of Leamington

An Otter's head on a wooden mount prepared by this well-known firm of taxidermists was offered for sale in an auction held by Trevanion & Dean of Whitchurch, Shropshire, on 13th December 2019. It bears a plaque reading "W.C.O.H. [West Cumberland Otter Hounds], Stable Hills, Derwentwater, 9th July 1912" (The Saleroom, 2020). Another mounted Otter's mask and tail, said to be "in the manner of P.Spicer & Sons", and bearing a plaque reading "W.C.O.H. Borrowdale, 3.8.35" was offered for sale by Tennants of Leyburn on 14th June 2019, lot 2273 (The Saleroom, 2020).

Spicer's also mounted many Foxes' heads, of which the following, both offered for sale by Mitchells of Cockermouth in July 2020, are typical examples: lot 775, mask from Fox taken by the Ullswater Foxhounds, Mardale, 29th April 1935, and lot 798, another mask from a Fox taken Dufton Pike, 7th February 1982.

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Cover illustration shows a case of Lapwings by H.Murray & Son of Carnforth, now in The Dock Museum, Barrow-in-Furness (Accession No. BAWMS 09586), The painted background is typical of cases prepared by this firm of taxidermists.