

Thomas Bewick in Context

With Dr Peter Quinn

Introduction

From his small workshop in Newcastle Thomas Bewick gained a world-wide reputation. He introduced a mass audience to the study of natural history. Those with an interest in British birds, great art or local history will relish this opportunity to study his life and times. This course includes hands-on introduction to the Bewick collection of The Natural History Society of Northumbria, a visit to Cherryburn and a walk round hidden 18th Century Newcastle.

Course outline

Week	Title
1	Introducing Bewick and the art of Wood Engraving.
2	Visit to the collection. June Holmes introduces the collection at Great North Museum: Hancock.
3	The context of Eighteenth century Newcastle.
4	Bewick and the idea of nature. Includes Rousseau, education, children, the romantics.
5	Bewick and the development of natural history in the North East and Britain
6	Visit to Cherryburn: view the collection and session on the many editions of his major works. (date to be confirmed with Cherryburn curator)
7	Tail-pieces. Reverie or reality. Bewick and the picturesque.
8	Citizen Bewick, coffee houses, spies and cudgels.
9	Bewick Walk around hidden 18th Century Newcastle.
10	A Local Academy, Bewick and local art.

More detail

Thomas Bewick's art has long attracted admirers from far and wide. In his own lifetime (1753-1828) Bewick was recognised as an important illustrator. Subsequently he was hailed as "a truly original genius" (Howitt) and said to possess "magnificent artistic virtue" (Ruskin). His books are collector's items today. His art is of interest to those keen on the local history of the North East of England. It is also admired as a key contribution to the study of British birds and wildlife. His "Memoir" gives us a unique insight into the thoughts and feelings of an artist alive during a fascinating period of history. The course will encourage students to look closely at Bewick's works and their relation to the complicated context of his life and times.

Thursdays, 2pm - 4pm in the NHSN Council Room, Great North Museum: Hancock, from 8th October 2009