

**SOME OBSERVATIONS ON TWO OLD BOOKS:  
WOOD'S *INDEX ENTOMOLOGICUS* AND  
BROWN'S *BUTTERFLIES, SPHINXES AND MOTHS***

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From time to time I have noticed that antiquarian bookdealers will advertise some book or other as being 'a previously unrecorded edition' or 'not in British Museum catalogue'. This raises the interesting point that many dates of publication, which could effect nomenclature, are still in doubt and it seems that the full publication history of many entomological works remains to be elucidated, although the evidence, as deduced from occasional remarks made in their catalogues, is that at least some antiquarian book-dealers have some knowledge we are not aware of and it is a pity they do not publish more of it. While books before 1800 have been thoroughly researched by Lisney (1960), variants and combinations are still capable of turning up. For nineteenth century books, however, the field remains wide open.

Although the library catalogue in question is sometimes specified, more often it is not and so the term 'not in British Museum catalogue' is an ambiguous one for does this refer to the British Library in the British Museum, Bloomsbury, or, which is perhaps more likely with natural history books, the library of the British Museum (Natural History), South Kensington? I know of at least one butterfly booklet item that is in Bloomsbury but not in South Kensington and there are undoubtedly others and doubtless vice versa. Also to be borne in mind is that the *printed* catalogue dates from 1940 and in the past 50 years both libraries have made many acquisitions for which their updates on the premises must be considered.

The item that has led to this article was the offer for sale of an 'unrecorded and apparently unknown' 1845 edition of William Wood's *Index Entomologicus* which is 'not in Hagen or the British Museum (Natural History) catalogue'. The dealer's catalogue went on to state 'It has the 54 plates as in the first edition and is NOT the 'Second Edition' (Wood & Westwood). This work was originally issued in parts and the 'First Edition' of 1833-1839 bears a title page with the date 1839. The 'Second Edition' is dated 1854.'

Now this statement does not concur with my own knowledge of this book, since I possess a copy dated 1852 (edited by Westwood) and enscribed within as 'new and revised edition', which can hardly, therefore, be followed 2 years later by the 'second edition'. The 'previously unrecorded' 1845 edition was in fact recorded in 1949 by Curle (1949) and there is a copy in the Balfour Library of the Department of Zoology, Cambridge. While Freeman's Handlist (1980) is an excellent starting point, it does not mention this edition for it is by no means comprehensive and is indeed what it subtiles itself, a 'handlist', not a publishing history and detailed collation as in Lisney. Since there is no bibliographical account of so many nineteenth century books I would like to query the words 'previously unrecorded'. Unrecorded by whom? In fact it appears to be errors of accidental omission, since library catalogues are a list of books in their possession not a comprehensive list of every edition of every book ever published. The *Dictionary of National Biography*, a useful source of (not always accurate) information on the more famous, when giving details of the publications of its entries, lists them, sometimes only the better known works, so far as they were known to the compiler, and certainly not all editions, which in some cases can be very numerous indeed. Nor can any one library be expected to possess every edition of every book.

It is worth giving a brief review of book production as it existed in earlier centuries and which goes a long way to explaining, in the absence of any written records, the confusion over printings and editions of early works as they exist today.



Bound books in the form in which they are published today did not come into existence until the mid 1820s. For a very long period indeed, both before and after this date, books were sold either 'in sheets as printed', 'in weekly/monthly/occasional parts', or 'in boards'. This last consisted of the complete work roughly and economically sewn and cased in cardboard with a paper spine. Gentlemen were expected to have them bound up uniformly in leather according to their taste or the fashion of the time. Edges were left untrimmed. It was not until about the 1820s that cloth and/or printed paper covers came into use with the rise of literacy and the sale of books to people who could now afford them but not the expense of having them bound by hand.

Books were often issued first in parts to subscribers and then sold, when completed, as a volume or indeed even as a 'half' volume. Maybe then with a different title-page. Not infrequently they were re-issued some time later again in parts and as completed volumes. Sometimes this was a simple reissue of existing stock and at other times it was a revised and reset printing. There may well have been a mixture of both. This is a practice that still goes on today. Now the major cost in times past (apart from the engraving and handcolouring of plates) was in binding (if this were done well) not in the typesetting or printing the cost of these being minimal so that it took only a small amount of capital to print  $x+n$  copies where  $x$  was the number already sold to subscribers. The extra  $n$  copies were then stored until a demand arose and were of course also a disposable asset and were sometimes sold *en bloc*. At other times the firm itself would be sold or taken over, as indeed is still happening today. The new owner would then re-issue the book under his own imprint by simply printing a new title-page. As there is today there was also a 'remaindered trade'. Pirating of popular works was also all too common.

As perhaps we all know it is very easy to misplace and lose parts of periodicals. Indeed this very thing happened with at least one copy of *Index Entomologicus*, for when Griffin collated the dates of a copy in parts as originally issued, he also notes several plates as 'wanting in this copy' (Griffin 1931). Although not done in this instance (or perhaps they were lost at a later date), in the past it was easier to replace missing pages, plates, or parts than it is today. One only has to study the many advertisements of the period to find that many books remained 'in print' both as parts and as complete volumes over very long periods of time compared with today. Nor would every purchaser of these works in parts have them bound. Often the binding did not take place until a second or later owner, who then might have to replace some missing part. We can see how easy it is for any volume dating prior to at least 1860 to be a mixture of editions and printings and should not be too surprised therefore if odd binding combinations exist. Indeed I recently had such evidence when a copy of Ackerman's *History of the University of Cambridge* turned up in a local auction. It was in a specially made library box and was labelled as being 'original parts'. However, on inspection only about 80% was in original parts, the rest had clearly been torn out of a bound volume in order to complete this 'original parts' set. They were not only without covers, but of a smaller format and had gilded edges, something only to be found in leaves torn from a bound volume.

Another source of error of course is typographical. Even if subsequently corrected, a number of copies may have been released before the mistake was noticed and corrected. For instance I have one book where the title page bears the date 1838, but from style alone, not to mention other evidence, I know the book was printed in 1783. In Wood's *Index Entomologicus* a preface was issued with the first part in 1833, but was replaced with a new one in 1839 when the book was issued as a completed volume. The original preface has the misprint *Gompetyryx* for *Gonepteryx* (see Griffin, 1931).



I would state, therefore, that occasional 'aberrant' and 'previously unknown' editions need not necessarily be taken at their face value. Like a number of Lepidoptera they may be aberrations due to the whim of chance. In addition to the factors stated above I also have a feeling that some pages may even have been specially printed as a one-off job in order to complete a book, by order of the then owner to a local jobbing printer. After all in those days those who could afford to have their purchases often sumptuously bound in full tooled leather were not going to miss the shilling or two it would cost to replace a missing page. It was indeed not unknown for some persons to own their own printing presses, usually for the purpose of issuing scurrilous anonymous political pamphlets, but also because they enjoyed printing as a hobby.

When we consider the complete 'first editions' fraudulently printed by the forger Thomas Wise, it can be seen how difficult it is to be sure of the authenticity of some works. It is also standard practice to see stated in auction catalogues that certain pages have been replaced 'from another copy' or even 'handwritten in matching style'. So such 'made-up' copies are by no means rare.

Another cause of possible doubt over an edition is in its thickness. There is an understandable assumption to think that if two apparently identical copies are of differing thickness then they must be different editions. This is not so, for I know of a number of books, known to be of the same date, but where the thickness varies. This is due to the paper used originally, for unlike paper manufactured today which is of uniform thickness, in times past this was not so and even small batches could vary as between sheets. During the printing the most convenient paper to hand would have been used. This is also the explanation of why we sometimes come across copies of a book where a whole signature is discoloured or even obviously different in texture or thickness from the others. By chance an inferior batch of paper was used when that particular signature was printed.

In 1852 Westood published a supplement to go with his 'new and revised' edition of Wood's *Index Entomologicus*. In this supplement the pagination was carried straight on from the end of the 'Doubtful British Species' section of the 1845 edition and the former index, which it displaced, was then replaced at the end of the Supplement. The running title of these pages are headed 'Additions to the Second Edition'. The 1852 edition has been typeset afresh but great care has been taken to preserve the same text on each page as exists in the 1845 one. It is unfortunate that the wording on the cover of this separately issued supplement is contradictory and therefore ambiguous, for the cover, while clearly headed 'Supplement to Former Editions. 12s. 6d.' then spoils things by stating '. . . not included in the former edition of the . . .' One plural; one singular!

The publishing history of Wood's *Index Entomologicus* would therefore seem to be as follows:—

First edition, first issue, 1833–38. Issued in 22 parts between (April?) 1833 and October 1st 1838, pp xii + 266 + 54 coloured plates. Title page dated 1839 (arabic numerals). Full title: *Index Entomologicus; / or, / a complete / Illustrated Catalogue, / consisting of 1944 figures, / of the / Lepidopterous Insects / of / Great Britain. / By W. Wood, F.R.S. & L.S. / Author of Zoography, General Conchology, Index Testaceologicus, / Linnean Genera of Insects, Etc. / (short wavy rule) / London: / William Wood, 39 Tavistock Street, Covent Garden. / 1839.*

The Publisher is given as Ward (typographic error?) in Freeman. Two alternative prefaces, sometimes both bound in, as may be two identical title pages when found bound as two volumes (Curle, 1949). The last part was issued October 1st 1838 (Griffin, 1931); printed by Richard and John E. Taylor.



First edition, second issue, 1839. The above issued as a completed volume with date 1839 on title page. Printed by Richard and John E. Taylor.

Second edition 1845. New title page bearing this date but title now reads: *Index Entomologicus; / or, / a complete / Illustrated Catalogue / of the / Lepidopterous Insects / of / Great Britain, / containing / 1944 Figures of Moths and Butterflies, / Accurately engraved and carefully coloured after nature*. Rest as first, apart from date which is now in Roman numerals. Pp xii + 266 + [i] + 54 coloured plates. The extra page is of omissions in the index. This edition was still published by William Wood, Covent Garden and printed by Richard and John E. Taylor. Now it has been stated, and could be argued, that this is a re-issue of unsold parts of the first edition with a new title page. Curle states '... what seem to be the old sheets with the same illustrations coloured as needed were given a new title page—in 1845', (Curle, 1949). It is my opinion that it is a new printing. This is proved by the copy before me, where six of the plates bear an 1839 watermark and so must have been run off after the completion of the work in October 1838 (Griffin, 1931). Seven of the earlier plates bear watermarks of 1837 or 1838, these dates being several years later than their original publication and therefore must also be of a later printing. The remaining plates are undated, but some bear the watermark 'Whatman', which was and is still one of the best makes of paper to be had. I therefore consider that this is a true edition rather than re-issue.

Third edition 1852. Pp vii + [i] + 298 + ii + 59 coloured plates. Published by Willis, Covent Garden. Styled 'A New & Revised Edition.' Revised by J. O. Westwood, who added five supplementary plates which were also bound and sold separately. In this edition the title reads: *Index Entomologicus; / or, / a complete / Illustrated Catalogue, / consisting of about / two thousand accurately coloured figures / of the / Lepidopterous Insects / of / Great Britain. / By W. Wood, F.R.S. & L.S. / Author of Zoography, General Conchology, Index Testaceologicus, / Linnean Genera of Insects, Etc. / (short straight rule) / A new and revised edition, / with figures of the newly discovered species, / by J. O. Westwood, F. L. S. / President of the Entomological Society, etc. / (longer rule) / London: / G. Willis, Great Piazza, Covent Garden / 1852.*

Fourth edition 1854. Exactly the same as third except for title page which now reads: *Index Entomologicus; / or, / a complete / Illustrated Catalogue, / consisting of upwards of / two thousand accurately coloured figures / of the / Lepidopterous Insects / of / Great Britain. / By W. Wood, F.R.S. & L.S. / Author of Zoography, General Conchology, Index Testaceologicus, / Linnean Genera of Insects, Etc. / (short straight rule) / A new and revised edition, / with supplement, / containing figures and notices of nearly two hundred newly discovered / species, synoptic lists, etc. / by J. O. Westwood, F. L. S. / Late President of the Entomological Society, etc. / (longer rule) / London: / G. Willis, Great Piazza, Covent Garden / 1854.* Supplementary plates were also issued separately with this date.

It is very curious that the editions of 1852 and 1854 do not bear any printers imprint, for I believe this was still a legal requirement at the time. Nor does the supplement state by whom it was printed.

As stated by Curle (1949) there are actually 1950 coloured figures, (which gives exactly the publicly advertised price of 1 (old) penny each), not the 1944 stated. The five supplementary plates are in the same style of four rows of nine with the exception that there are only eight figures in the last row. This gives a total of 179 extra figures, which at its published price of 12/6 (150 old pence) is actually *less* than the original



price and it must be remembered that both this and the original contained extensive printed text as well!

There appear with some regularity on the market various incomplete bits of this publication where some of the plates are plain or only partly coloured. This argues for copies only being made up as and when required and, as usual in such circumstances, towards the end, due to spoilage and accidents, one or more plates runs out and the remainder are then disposed of, as they are, for what they will fetch.

In 1949 Richard Curle published a short account of this work, but my experiences of it are so contradictory to his that I feel they should be detailed. It could be that our differences are due to the surfacing of a number of copies of Wood's *Index* over the 40 years that have elapsed since his paper was published. In detail we differ as follows.

Curle states that he has never seen an un-coloured copy. I have seen two and also two with only partial colouring of the plates. Unfortunately I did not collate these and they could well have been incomplete copies resulting from remaindering, as mentioned above. I have also heard of other such copies.

Prices of this work have also changed over the years. Curle states that the published price was £8-2s-6d (£8.12½; quite expensive for the 1830s), far more than the then 1949 price. In Cambridge there was a copy for £2-5s (£2.25) about then. Today £150 would be the going rate.

As stated above I consider the 1845 edition to be the second, not the old sheets and same illustrations as stated by Curle.

Very surprising is Curle's assertion that 'Certainly, the work is generally found in two volumes, . . .' Now I have never seen a copy in two volumes, but have seen some 20 copies bound as a single volume. I will admit, however, to not having tried to track down any two-volume set, but their failure to appear in either the bookshops or dealers catalogues when so many single volume copies do, argues for their rarity.

Curle states 'In 1852 Westwood republished the work . . . and in 1854 he added five coloured plates . . .' This date is incorrect for the cover of the individual Westwood supplement before me bears the date 1852 and it is clear from the 1852 title page that the five plates must then have been published.

Curle goes on to say ' . . . the colouring of the plates is in certain respects inferior, though I dare say that all the editions vary slightly from copy to copy, and anyone who wants to possess a copy of Wood's *Index Entomologicus* might well be advised to procure the edition of 1839'. Here again my experience differs very markedly from Curle's. In all four editions before me as I write, 1839, 1845, 1852, 1854, the colouring is superb. In the three Westwood supplements it can only be described as exquisite.

An aspect of this work which I do not believe has been previously commented on, is the attribution of the plates. These are all signed to W. Wood Junior, whom I take it was the author's only son. He would have been responsible for the copper plate outline to be coloured.

When one considers the smallness of the figures and the very accurate, even with the smaller micros, application of the colours (even if not always quite true to life) one has to remember that these were priced at only one (old) penny (= <½ a new p) each. The colourists have to be both admired and pitied. Admired for the excellence of their work: pitied for their having almost certainly been 'sweated labour', poorly paid, (how else could this price have been maintained?) and probably working very long hours in poor conditions. How long did they keep it up and what happened to their eyesight in the long-term?

I now turn to the rather curious and, I believe, not previously commented on,



discrepancies in the publication of Capt. Thomas Brown's *The Book of Butterflies, Sphinxes and Moths*. Now the first two volumes of this work were published in 1832 and it is clearly stated to be 'in two volumes' and 'illustrated by ninety-six engravings'. However, in 1834 a third volume was issued and the series is now stated to be 'in three volumes' and illustrated by 'one hundred and forty-four engravings'. In the first two volumes these are numbered 1–96, but in volume 3 the numbering starts again and runs 1–48.

There is confusion over both title, number of plates, and publisher(s) of these volumes. According to Freeman it is *The Book of Butterflies, Sphinges* [sic] and *Moths* and the two-volume edition contains 93 plates (total not mentioned for the three-volume edition). Now in all seven or eight copies that I have examined, the plates in volume 2 are not quite in sequence and towards the end are bound in the order 90, 91, 94, 95, 96, 92, 93, and in this order they correctly adjoin the accompanying text referring to the species depicted. Since plate 93 appears always to be the last, this accounts for Freeman's statement.

Now sometimes found bound in with the volumes of Constables Miscellany is a 16-page advertising leaflet listing the volumes in the series. Dated 1832, the last entry in one copy I have seen is:— LXXV. LXXVI. *The Book of Butterflies, Moths and Sphinxes* (note reversed change of title) 'contain-ing. . . 120 engravings'. Today of course a purchaser of the 96 actual engravings would have a case under the Trade Descriptions Act! There are 60 plates in volume 1 and 36 in volume 2. It is possible of course that volume 2 was originally intended to have the same number as the first volume. Two years later, when the third volume was issued a different printer was used and this may account for the fact that this volume is entitled *The Book of Butterflies, Sphinges, and Moths*. Note the change from sphinxes to sphinges. But there is a further anomaly in this connection. Although not always present, the foretitle in volume 1 gives sphinges although as already mentioned the title page (and the advert) gives sphinxes. Freeman gives the sphinges version only for the title.

These volumes, as did some others of Constables Miscellany, contain two title pages. The first, on thicker (or 'plate' paper) bears an engraving, an abbreviated title, but no author's name; the second is straightforward typography with title, author and publisher in full.

I have in my possession two copies of this work, one of which is a 'normal' copy, clearly Constables Miscellany, and similar to all other copies I have consulted and another copy (of volumes 1 and 2 only) where the first title page is different and there is no mention of the books being in the Constables Miscellany series. These two volumes are also 'large paper' issues. It is worth giving the titles in full.

First, or normal, version. *Constables Miscellany / of / Original and Selected Publications / in the Various Departments / of / Literature, Science & the Arts. / Vol. LXXV. / The Book of Butterflies. Vol. 1.* / Follows an engraving of a cupid asleep on a grassy bank, above which towers a garden urn, full of flowers, a butterfly approaching. Below the engraving a quotation from Shakespeare. / London; / Printed for Whittaker, Treacher and Co. / and Waugh & Innes, Edinburgh. / 1832.

Second version. *The / Book of Butterflies, / Sphinxes & Moths. / Vol. 1.* / Follows the same engraving and quote / Printed for Constable & Co., Edinburgh: / and Hurst, Chance & Co. London. / 1832.

In both versions the second title page is the same and the imprint is as in the first version. Volume 2 is similar, but the engraving is of two cupids playing with butterflies in a meadow. When we turn to volume 3 we are back to Constables Miscellany, as in the first version above, but we have lost Treacher. The imprint on



both title pages is now:— London. / Printed for Whittaker & Co. / and Waugh & Innes, Edinburgh. / 1834.

The engraving in this volume is of two winged cupids playing with butterflies in a wood.

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