



ANIMAL STUDIES

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REBECCA SHARPE / BRUNO TARTARIN



CHARLES REID

by unknown photographer, c.1880s.

CHARLES REID:
THE LANDSEER OF PHOTOGRAPHERS
ANIMAL STUDIES, IN HIS OWN WORDS

Scottish photographer Charles Reid is an unsung pioneer of commercial wildlife and animal photography. His first forays in the field, using wet plate collodion, predate the better-known Kearton brothers, but very few photographic history books give him the credit he deserves.

Charles Reid was born in Turriff, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, in 1837, to simple and humble surroundings. His father, agricultural labourer William Reid, descended from farmers who had lived in the Inverurie district for 300 years. Charles Reid's first job, at the tender age of 10, carried on the family's farming tradition by herding cattle in the summer, at the expense of his education.

Aged fourteen, Charles Reid was apprenticed to a local shoemaker, working fourteen-hour days in a physically demanding job. Self-described as 'never robust', his health declined, and eventually forced him to find alternative employment. This position, however, gave him his first encounter with the photographic image. He recalled observing a daguerreotype portrait of his employer, around 1853, and his astonishment at the process by which it was made.

Reid became a post-runner in nearby Cuminestown aged twenty-three, and, despite the poor pay and long distances covered each day, working in the open air restored his health. It was during this role that a friend gifted Reid his first camera. In 1864, in his spare time, Reid began taking portraits outdoors,

with sitters paying a small fee to cover the costs of his chemicals, plates and equipment.

Due to increasing demand, Reid opened his first photographic studio in 1866, leaving his letter-carrying role behind. It was around this time he received his first lesson in animal photography. Under the direction of a local amateur, Reid captured horses on wet plate collodion in what he described as his 'first field day'. Reid noted the difficulties of capturing animals with long exposures, but explained that he took pleasure in mastering the difficulties, being greatly helped by his sympathy, love and understanding of animals and their habits, as well as his utmost patience.

In 1870, Reid approached photographic dealers in Glasgow and Edinburgh with samples of his wild nature photographs and received many orders for stock, initiating the commercialisation of the images in which he was specialising. It can be presumed that the leather-bound 'Animal Studies' album of 100 albumen prints, described in this catalogue, was a later sample album, which photographic retailers in London presented to prospective buyers for orders.



CHARLES REID
with cuckoo,
by unknown photographer,
c.1915.

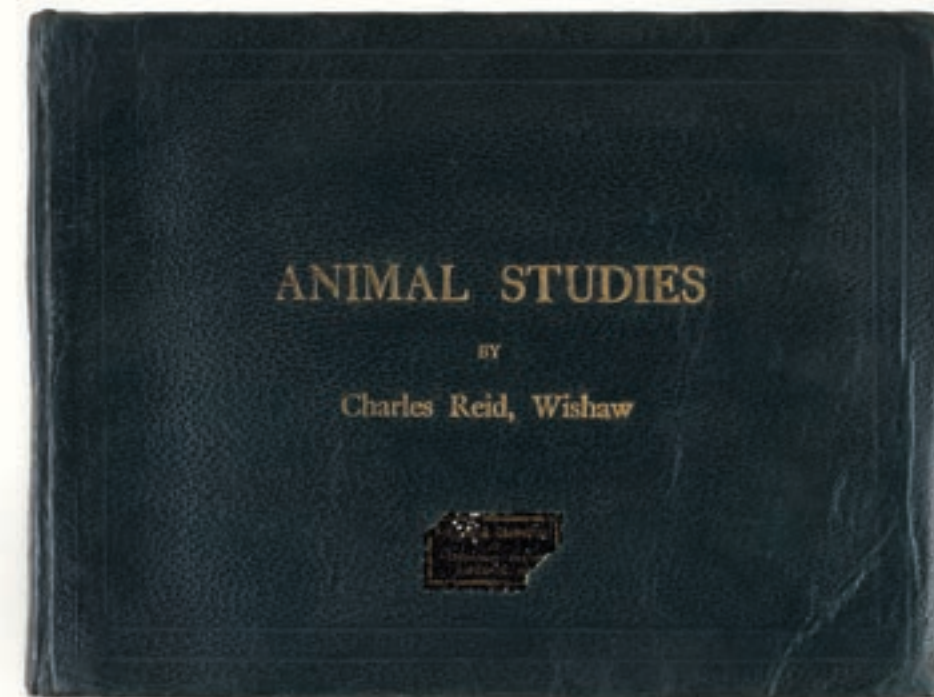
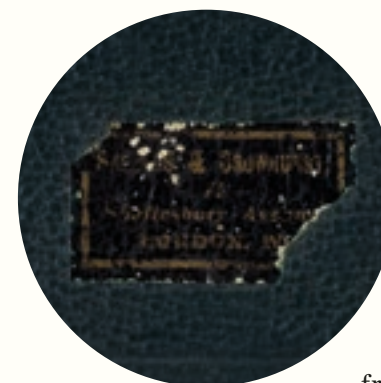
Charles Reid moved to Wishaw, Lanarkshire, in 1875, taking over a local photographic studio, which he closed every Wednesday so he could continue his beloved animal photography. His first twenty years as a professional photographer were taken up with him perfecting his techniques and capturing picturesque scenery, wildlife and domestic animals throughout the British Isles, growing the commercial arm of the business, as well as continuing to run the traditional photographic studio.

When they were old enough, Reid employed three of his sons as assistants, both at the studio and in the field, due to the ever-increasing demand for his portraits and animal studies. He later fondly remembered their time spent photographing together in the moors and mountains of Scotland.

Reid was appointed the official photographer for several agricultural societies and events, and received numerous commissions to photograph prize animals. His images were widely published internationally in monthly magazines, journals, newspapers and books, as well as on postcards and as magic lantern slides, albumen and carbon prints.

In his later years, Reid increasingly courted the printed media and photographic societies with his experience and knowledge of domestic and wild animals, as well as photography. He eventually withdrew from the photographic studio in Wishaw, with his capable sons taking over the reins of it and the commercial productions.

Reid, on several occasions, was described by contemporary sources in the press as “what Sir Edwin Landseer was among the painters of animal life, Charles Reid is among photographers.” The photographs within the album ‘Animal Studies’ beautifully illustrate this worthy description.



ABOUT THE ALBUM

The company named on the label found on the front of the Animal Studies album, ‘Sanders and Crowhurst, 71 Shaftsbury Avenue, London’, was formed in 1900 by Harold Armytage Sanders and Harry Arthur Crowhurst; the former being the father of World War I photographer Henry Armytage Bradley Sanders. Sanders and Crowhurst sold photographic and optical equipment, and also acted as agents for other businesses, until the partnership was dissolved in 1908.

Harold Armytage Sanders exhibited his own wildlife photographs from 1907 onwards; he also made a pioneering nature film production, ‘In Birdland’, in 1907, with Oliver Gregory Pike. It was the first British wildlife film to be screened to a paying audience.

In 1914, famed English ornithologist and scientific illustrator, Maud Doria Haviland, used a ‘Birdland’ camera built by Sanders during her explorations of the Yenesei River in Russia. It can be assumed that Reid’s wildlife photography in the Animal Studies album appealed to Sanders, who acted as a retailer for Reid by showing the album to prospective customers in London.

●
REBECCA SHARPE

REID OFTEN RECALLED HUMOROUS
EXPERIENCES FROM HIS YEARS AS AN ANIMAL
PHOTOGRAPHER, AND ALSO SHARED HIS DEEP AFFECTION
AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE CREATURES HE CAME
TO KNOW SO WELL. THE PASSION, KNOWLEDGE
AND ENTHUSIASM REID HAD FOR ANIMALS ARE APPARENT
IN HIS MUSINGS, IN A WAY THAT NO DESCRIPTION FROM
A THIRD PARTY WILL DO JUSTICE.

WHAT YOU WILL READ OVER THE FOLLOWING PAGES
ARE EXTRACTS OF CHARLES REID'S OWN WORDS,
TAKEN FROM LECTURES, ARTICLES, BOOKS AND INTERVIEWS
TO ACCOMPANY THE BEAUTIFUL IMAGES FROM
THE ALBUM 'ANIMAL STUDIES'.

DONKEYS



‘WAITING FOR CUSTOM’

“
In vivid contrast to the freedom of the wild ass
is the bitter bondage to which the domesticated animal is so often
subjected by heartless people. They seem to have no thought
that the lower animals are, in a way, as sensitive to pain
and suffering as they are themselves. Apparently they regard them
as machines, which neither feel nor tire.
”



“
The mode of capture decided on was to surround him
at some distance and cautiously approach — a proceeding
in which I heartily joined. As the circle narrowed the uneasiness
of the donkey increased, and when any one ventured nearer
than the other he was rewarded with the sight of a pair of heels —
no doubt by way of a hint as to what might be expected by any one
who attempted to lay hands on him.
”

LONG-EARED OWLS



“
The long-eared owl usually nests in wood,
frequently making her home in the old nests of large birds
and squirrels, and appropriating, as food for herself
and her voracious young, the carcasses of any that she finds herself
strong enough to master and kill.
”

LAPWINGS



“
The lapwing, or peewit, as it is commonly called,
lays its eggs in April and May, making no further preparation
than that of bringing together a few stalks and placing them
in a shallow depression in the ground.
”

GOLDEN EAGLE



“
The golden eagle is said to inhabit the whole circumference
of the globe. It prefers mountains or extensive forests, building
its eyrie either on rocks or lofty trees.
”

RING-DOVES



RACING PIGEONS



JACKDAWS



‘JACKDAWS AT HOME’

“

It was a kae or jackdaw. He used to keep it at home,
but it made such a noise that he was sent out with it one morning with strict
instructions not to bring it back again. But he was fond of his kae, and his kae
was fond of him. He could not part with the kae, so he took it to school
with him; but how could he hide it? Little boys’ trousers were in those days
buttoned over their vests; and as Tom’s trousers were pretty wide,
he thought he could get the kae in there. He got it safely into his breeks
before he entered school.

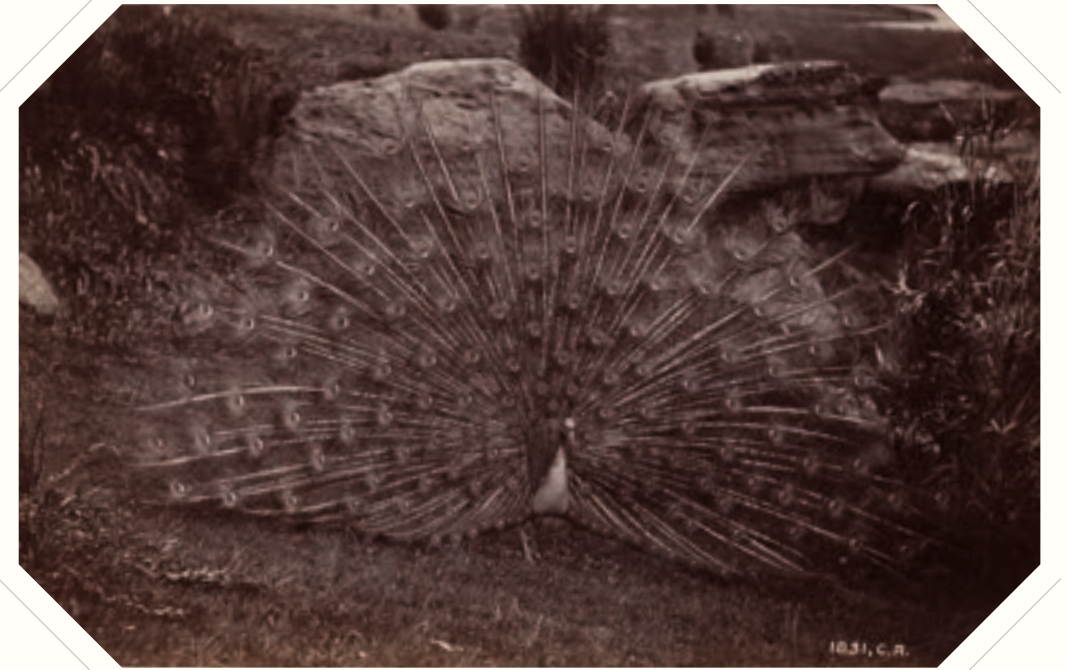
”



PEACOCKS



2570, C.R.



1831, C.R.



1878, C.R.

LINNETS



“
In autumn, chaffinches, linnets, larks, etc.,
assemble in flocks and wing their way from one locality to another.
Possibly these irregular movements may be prompted
by a roving disposition on the part of the birds or more probably
they may be impelled by hunger to travel afield
in quest of food.
”

HOUSE MARTIN



“
In May the house martins begin to build
their nests of mud and straw lined with feathers, a few feet down
a chimney, in an outhouse, in the corner of a window, or in any other place
which is at once dry and dark.
”

REDSTART



“
The redstart's nest,
made of fibrous roots and moss, lined with hair, wool,
and feathers, is usually found in gardens.
”

CHAFFINCHES



“
The chaffinch is a smart, lively, active bird,
always in a bustle, flitting here and there incessantly, and staying long nowhere,
always wearing a holiday look, so trim and spruce is he, and rattling
through his song with wondrous volubility.
”

WILLOW WARBLERS



‘WILLOW-WARBLERS, YOUNG’

“
The willow-warbler is abundant and generally diffused,
arriving in England about the middle of April and remaining
until October.
”

GREENFINCH



“
The greenfinch, or green linnet, usually builds
in shrubberies a nest with a framework of twigs and roots,
interleaved with moss and wool, to which succeeds a denser layer of
the same materials lined with hair.
”

BULLFINCHES



“
In spring, unfortunately for the gardener,
their taste alters, and nothing will satisfy them but the blossom-buds
of fruit-trees, especially those which are cultivated.
”



BUDGERIGAR



SEASCAPE & GULLS



SWANS



“
Thus a picture of swans
rather gains in attractiveness where the figures are
partly hidden by sedges or bulrushes.
”

DUCKS



“
She left her companions prisoners at Perth,
and on the second day amazed her late owner by her unexpected
reappearance on the farm. By arrangement she was allowed
to spend the remainder of her days there. My informant,
a keen student of bird-life, assured me that the little brown duck
lived there for thirty years.
”

GEESE



“
Another picture — geese and goslings — shows what may be
accomplished in adverse circumstances by the exercise of patience
and perseverance. The silliness of the goose is proverbial,
yet sometimes she will behave better during an exposure than other sitters
of whom better things might be expected.
”

CHICKENS





“
Occasionally the hen disdains to enter artificial contrivances,
and prepares a nest of her own. The site selected may be under a hedge,
among brushwood, or further afield among the growing corn.
If nothing befalls her she will hatch her brood, and in due course return
to the farm, proudly leading a dozen or more downy little tots
as an addition to the poultry yard.
”

CATS AND KITTENS



‘SPILT MILK’







“
While each one was fighting for his own hand,
or more literally for his little tum-tum, puss,
taking advantage of the occasion, came stealthily forward
to snatch a share of the good things.
”

RABBITS



“
The productiveness of rabbits is proverbial.
Beginning to breed when only six months old, it produces sometimes
as many as seven litters in the year; and considering that there are six
or seven in each litter, it will be seen that rabbits may increase
with almost incredible rapidity.
”

SHEEP



“
The rams, ‘MACGREGOR’ and ‘MACGREGOR II’.
— sire and son ... are the property of Captain Dempster,
Brownhill, Strathavon. The rams are excellent specimens
of the breed, and have had a brilliant show-yard career,
carrying off several champion awards.
”





“
 In an English town a small boy, on first seeing
 the rams of this breed, with their large curled horns, exclaimed
 — “Look, grandfather, the sheeps have got
 on the cows’ horns.
 ”





“
 The black-faced sheep of the Highlands of Scotland are
 as near the original type of the British breed as any now existing.
 These sheep are extremely hardy. They have been known
 to be buried beneath a snow wreath for five weeks and come out alive.
 The wool is long and coarse and weighs from 3 to 5 lb, but the mutton
 is of the best. The horns are very picturesque.
 ”



“
 Among this series was a beautiful evening scene
 of several sheep standing on rocks with the still sea
 stretching away in the background
 — “Just such a picture,” Mr Reid said,
 “was only possible to obtain on very rare occasions, and was the nearest
 approach to the perfect of a beautiful sunset.
 ”



“
The quiet of the sheep's life is periodically broken in upon a manner that must be somewhat distressing. Apart from the process of dipping which has occasionally to be submitted to and which causes loud and repeated protests on their part, there is the yearly shearing, which must prove embarrassing to all the adults, but especially to the ewes, who, on account of the transformation which they undergo in the clipping process are subsequently unknown to their lambs.
”

GOATS



HIGHLAND CATTLE





“

Many an interesting experience has fallen to mine and my sons' lot.

Usually, to secure a particular picture — say of Highland cattle — we journey to some remote district in the Highlands or Islands of Scotland, having previously ascertained by personal investigation or otherwise where the materials for a picture are to be found. The journey alone may take days to accomplish. The photographer may have his plans completely frustrated by unfavourable weather. He may have to wait a whole week for a particular picture, and must be prepared to trudge for miles and miles, burdened with a whole-plate camera and a supply of plates.

It is here that patience comes into play.

”





“
 During his recent tour in the West Highlands,
 His Majesty the King was pleased to purchase several photographs
 as mementoes. The vast majority of these pictures
 were taken by Mr. Charles Reid, of Wishaw.
 The subjects were nearly all Highland sheep and cattle photographed
 among their natural surroundings.
 ”





“
Of all breeds the Highland is admitted to be
the most picturesque. To see them at their best the spectator
must betake himself to the north or west of Scotland,
where the heather, brackens, and furze that are to be seen
on every hand form a harmonious setting to the picturesque
and striking figures of the animals.
”

OTHER CATTLE



“
There were several occasions when the bull was pulled up exhausted and panting for breath, but before the camera could be brought into action he was gone. Along with our assistant we followed them this way and that, now in the courtyard, then in the stockyard, at one time losing sight of the couple, at another confronting them all of a sudden. The man clung tenaciously to the rope, although unable to keep the bull in any particular place. This was not a question of bringing an animal to a suitable locality to be photographed; it was a case of Mahomet and the mountain!

”



“
But cattle look best when seen in the enjoyment of freedom about their homes. Imagine a great herd of these cows in a spacious field carpeted with daisies, bordered with hawthorn fragrant in May blossom, and interspersed with wide-spreading trees providing circles of shade from the oppressive noonday heat.

”



“
How well this cow fits in with the landscape,
especially when she appears as Nature has moulded her,
with all her irregularities of form and wealth of colour,
her wide-spread horns, bushy tail, and swinging gait.
No wonder the eye of the artist is attracted and charmed
with the harmonious combination, or that he so frequently
introduces the animal in his pictures of rural scenery.

Indeed, she is often an important element
in their composition.

”







“
Agricultural pursuits formed the subject
of a large number of pictures, the not very common sight
of oxen ploughing being included.
”

HORSES



“
The horse approaches a man in quite a friendly manner,
responds to a kindly word, or a pat on the neck in a companionable way,
and rubs his nose against the hand or body.
”









“
 Will it surprise the young reader to be told
 that originally the horse was no larger than a fox?
 – probably smaller than the Shetland foal. Geologists have found
 its remains deep down in the ground, not merely at this stage
 of its existence, but through successive stages of its growth till
 it has attained its present size or sizes and structure.
 Singularly enough, the earliest remains of the animal show
 that it had claws instead of hoofs.
 ”





“
Of a different stamp are the Hackneys, some of which
are shown in the ordinary way, others in harness.
These sprightly, high-stepping horses, always in the pink of condition, seem
most impatient of restraint. When given a loose rein, or urged on,
the natural tendency of the horse is to gallop.
”

PONIES



“
Of ponies there are many varieties, the smallest
of which is the Shetland. When these pigmies are trotted
or galloped round the arena they make an attractive display.
The amusing antics of the foals, as they caper about,
are an unfailing diversion to the crowd. To the young folks
the performance is as good as a circus.
”

AGRICULTURAL SCENES







“
Most of the photographs were taken north of the Tweed,
but, on the other hand, there were a good many taken in England,
notably in the series that illustrates the different methods of ploughing
in vogue in the various parts of these islands.
”



DEER



“
My recollection of a gigantic stag of this breed
is still vivid, owing to his threatening appearance, and the difficulty
in getting near enough to secure a good-sized portrait; but
“big game” as he was, he was eventually ‘bagged.’
”

ST. KILDA



‘RETURNING FROM THE MARKET’



“
To produce such pictures as the Highland Cattle,
I had to travel many miles and wait many days for proper light,
and expose many plates before a faultless negative was secured.
I have learned by experience that, while a happy hit may
at times be made by any one, anything approaching to general success
can only be achieved with the aid of skilful assistance,
the possession of a love for the work, and fertility of resource,
with the exercise of patience, self-reliance, and, above all things,
a temper capable of bearing a heavy strain.
”

ZOO ANIMALS

“
Mr Reid's subject was
– “The Beaver, and Animals of the Zoo,” and was illustrated
with lime-light views. The outstanding photographs thrown
on the screen were those illustrative of the beaver and its habits,
and of several of the animals at the Zoo, London.
Mr Reid gave many interesting details concerning
the various animals, and his lecture was listened to
with much interest throughout. At the close he was accorded
a hearty vote of thanks.
”



‘PELICANS’



‘LIONS’

“
 The lion looks bigger and stronger than the tiger,
 but reports say that when a combat ensues, it usually ends
 in favour of the latter. Indeed, Major Alexander holds
 that the disappearance of the lion from India
 is partly due to tigers.
 ”



‘FLAMINGOS’



‘ELEPHANTS’

“

The photographing of animals has grown so strong
with me that I can see no attractive or unusual subject
without feeling the desire to secure it;
hence my camera has been pointed at almost
every accessible creature,
from the ponderous elephant to the tiny,
half-fledged robin.

”

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