

Rowland Ward

Taxidermist to the World

by P.A. Morris



Yours faithfully
Rowland Ward

Chapter 1

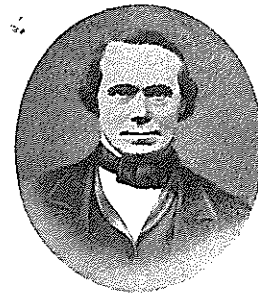
Rowland Ward - the man and his life.

James Rowland Ward was born in 1848 and joined a family that had a long association with natural history. His grandfather had been a naturalist and dealer in animal skins and skeletons. His father, (Edwin) Henry Ward, went on a collecting expedition with J.J. Audubon in America. At the time of Rowland Ward's birth Henry Ward was still working for Thomas Mutlow Williams (according to William's trade label), himself a leading taxidermist based in Oxford Street (London) who had exhibited at the Great Exhibition of 1851. After 1857, Henry Ward set up in business on his own, based at no. 2 Vere Street (off London's fashionable Cavendish Square) and was listed in trade directories until 1878. This was also the address given in his Will (in which he left less than £16,000, all to his widow Emily). However, he actually died in Kent, apparently quite suddenly on August 29th 1878, so perhaps he had another residence there too. Henry Ward clearly had some social connections and established himself as one of the top London taxidermists, being granted a Royal Warrant by Queen Victoria in August 1870.

Henry Ward of London is often confused with the American, Henry Augustus Ward of Rochester, New York. The latter was also a major taxidermist and became a prominent international museum supplier, but he was not directly related to the Ward's of London (Ward, R., 1948). Jane Tost (c1817-1889) appears to have been a sister of the London Henry Ward. She married a German taxidermist and emigrated to Australia, where she worked in Tasmania as a 'Naturalist and Bird Preserver', then at the Australian National Museum. She later set up a pioneering taxidermy business in Sydney (M. Sear, *pers com*).

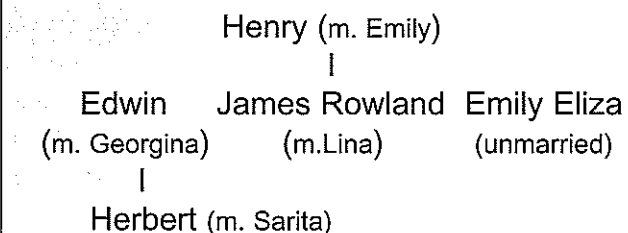
Rowland Ward's elder brother Edwin also became a noted taxidermist. Edwin Ward was (Edwin) Henry Ward's eldest son, and following a common tradition, he was christened with his father's first name. Like his brother Rowland, he was trained in his father's taxidermy studios before setting up on his own. Edwin Ward clearly had impor-

Edwin Henry Ward (1812 - 1878)



Henry Ward was Rowland Ward's father. He had been in business since at least 1857, based at 2 Vere St, London (off Cavendish Square). He became one of the most prominent of London's many taxidermists. Pheasants, tragopans and Himalayan monals were a Henry Ward speciality and his cases are still fairly common today, testimony to their quality and effective preservation.

A simplified family tree





Chillingham Bull's head by Edwin Ward. Edwin had Royal Patronage and in 1871 was entrusted with the job of mounting this head for the Prince of Wales at Sandringham. He sat up all night attempting unsuccessfully to separate the horns from the skull so that he could save the latter as another trophy specimen. The head is no longer at Sandringham and now appears to have been lost.

tant social connections. He was granted Royal Patronage and was entrusted with the job of mounting a Chillingham bull's head that had been shot by the Prince of Wales (and intended for display at Sandringham). He also prepared an elaborate taxidermy compilation for the Empress of Austria as a memento of her hunting trip to the Isle of Wight, and he did taxidermy work for Landseer, the famous painter. Edwin Ward mounted the head of 'Ronald', Lord Cadogan's charger at the battle of Balaclava (the horse survived its owner by four years and died in 1872). He also prepared upright standing bears as 'dumb waiters' (including one for the Prince of Wales), a speciality that Rowland Ward was later to claim, before retiring in 1879. His daughter-in-law (Sarita Ward) later described him as a restless and irritable man (Ward, S., 1927), who moved many times before going to San Gabriel in California (reported in the *Pasadena & Valley Union*, 30 January 1885). There it seems he somehow acquired the honorary title of 'General' and became involved in land speculation. He appears to have died in the USA, more or less broke. There was a sister too, Emily Eliza, but she never married and died in the 1930s.

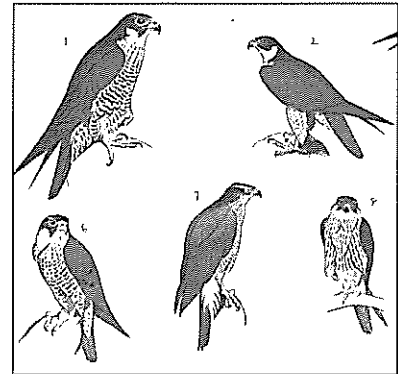
Young Rowland Ward

We know little about the lives of the Ward family, but Rowland Ward did write an autobiography in the last few months of his life (Ward, R., 1913- see Chapter 9), and this would normally be the primary source of information about the family and the man himself. However, details of Rowland Ward's family background are brief in that book and almost nothing is said about his youth, not even where he was born or where he went to school. The autobiography tells us that he left school at 14 and went to work in his father's taxidermy studios, where he helped Henry to mount some of John Gould's famous hummingbird collection. His artistic bent is also referred to and may have been inherited, perhaps through being related in some way to James Ward RA (1769-1859), a famous and larger-than-life portrait and animal painter.

Otherwise we are left to guess about Rowland Ward's early days, except for his dramatic account of two major disasters in his youth that confirm his London upbringing. One of these, the collapse of the ice on the lake in Regent's Park, might have ended his own life, along with those of several friends, when he was only nineteen years old. Rowland Ward wrote with admiration of

his father and dedicated some of his books to him, but says nothing about how he spoke, dressed or behaved towards his family. There is otherwise virtually no personal information recorded, and there is no mention in his autobiography of Rowland Ward ever having had a mother!

Instead, Ward tells us of his early ambition to become a sculptor and that he earned pocket money from his school fellows by making casts of their hands. It is not clear when he first began experimenting with taxidermy. His focus was on sculpture and attaining accuracy in anatomical modelling. Nevertheless, a case in the Glasgow Museum and Art Gallery offers an insight into Rowland Ward's own early taxidermy skills. It contains two peregrine falcons, well poised and neatly arranged, with the typical green trade label of Henry Ward inside the case at the bottom left. On the right hand side an artificial leaf is signed 'James Ward' and dated 11.1.1868, ie when Rowland was twenty years old. By then he had been working for about seven years in his father's studios.



Ward's sketches of peregrine and goshawk from his autobiography. This confirms his interest in these birds and their availability to him.



Two peregrine falcons mounted by Rowland Ward, aged 20. At that time he was still working in his father's studio, perhaps finishing a seven-year apprenticeship since leaving school at 14 years old. The birds are a little 'wooden', but competently done. The groundwork in the case is relatively elaborate, comprising artificial rocks made of paper and also moss covered branches. The case itself is a simple glass-fronted box construction.



One of the artificial leaves in the peregrine case is signed using Rowland Ward's first Christian name, and dated 1868. Elsewhere the case bears the trade label of his father Henry Ward.

It seems that Rowland Ward earned sufficient money as a sculptor to set up in business on his own. He undertook commissions and gained widespread approbation in the Press for creating a bust of 'Pongo' the famous gorilla. He also made a large terracotta bear for the Bear Hotel in Maidenhead. For a while Rowland Ward, his brother Edwin and their father Henry were all operating taxidermy businesses in London's West End at the same time, causing a degree of confusion. An advertisement in *The Field* (25th January 1873) listed all three businesses and begged to inform customers that each was unconnected with the others and that 'mistakes continue to occur'. Confusion between the three firms was inevitable, but there appears also to have been some animosity between Rowland and his brother. This may be not unconnected with the fact that Rowland Ward published the first edition of his *Sportsman's Handbook* in 1881 (see Chapter 7). This made passing reference to the combined knowledge and experience of the Ward family. However, Edwin Ward had published a book nine years earlier called the *Knapsack Manual for Sportsmen on the Field* (Ward, E., 1872) that contained many illustrations and long sections of text which were later reproduced, identically and without acknowledgement, under the name of Rowland Ward.

When Henry Ward died in 1878, the businesses of his two sons remained. Then Edwin Ward went to America, and shortly afterwards a flurry of press advertisements announced that Rowland Ward was now "the only member of the highly esteemed Ward family of taxidermists" still in business. Various versions of these cautionary notices were still being published in British and foreign newspapers and periodicals as late as 1882, including *The Times of India*.

Notice in *The Times*

CAUTION - Our Mr Rowland Ward is the only member of the long unrivalled and experienced Ward family now left in the trade. Mr Henry Ward of Vere Street (senior member of the family) having recently died, and Mr Edwin Ward of Wigmore Street having lately retired. The advantages of long experience study and skill of this family can now only be obtained from the remaining member of this family at our new galleries. Rowland Ward & Co, Naturalists & c., 166 Piccadilly.

Copy provided for insertion
in Post Office Directory - 25/7/79
Ward Rowland & Co
166 Piccadilly. W.

*
The Business of the
late M. Henry Ward
of 2 + 5 Ser Street
Naturalist by Special
appointment to the
Royal Family, is
now transferred to
this address.
166 Piccadilly

The Business Directory
23/7/79

* Caution - Now the only
members of this Family left
in Trade -

Rowland Ward's draft for an insertion into the Post Office Directory, written in July 1879. It announces that Henry Ward's business had now been transferred to his own premises in Piccadilly. At the bottom he added the cautionary note about his being the only member of the Ward family still trading in taxidermy.

There remained one fly in the ointment: George Frederick Butt. He was Edwin Ward's brother-in-law and had been his business manager. He attempted to continue trading under the Ward name after Edwin's retirement from the scene. This incensed Rowland Ward, who advertised in the press that "mistakes occur" and waged a long battle over this matter, even after Butt registered the business in his own name and created his own trademark. This was based on a pair of fighting tigers and registered in March

Herbert Ward (1863 -1919)



Herbert Ward

Herbert was the son of Edwin Ward. He was a boyhood friend of Alfred Harmsworth (later Lord Northcliffe, a famous publisher and newspaper proprietor). Young Herbert became a great traveller and served as zoologist on Henry Morton Stanley's Emin Pasha Expedition (1887-8). Later he was trained as an artist by Seymour Lucas (painter of Rowland Ward's portrait), married an American (Sarita), and became a noted sculptor and painter. His collection of life sized bronze sculptures of African warriors is now housed in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington and may have been the inspiration behind similar works created later by Carl Akeley, the eminent American taxidermist, following his own travels in Africa.

1881 as no. 20,564. Eventually Butt's business was bought out and his trade mark was formally de-registered in 1911. This does suggest that his demise was seen as a necessary and welcome accomplishment. A similar fate followed for at least one other firm of London naturalists that might have offered some degree of commercial competition for Rowland Ward Ltd.

A further twist is that Edwin's wife was Butt's sister Georgina. They had a son, born in 1863, and christened him Herbert E. Ward. Whilst Rowland Ward was happy to remember and describe his many famous and successful preparations, he was more reticent about one infamous item, prepared in the field by Herbert Ward, his own nephew. This is not mentioned anywhere in Rowland Ward's autobiography, which is perhaps no surprise as the specimen in question was a human head. It had been collected during Henry Morton Stanley's Emin Pasha Expedition. It appears that the local natives had been creating problems by stealing from the base camp, so a punitive raid was made on their village early one morning. The people fled and several lost their lives. One lost his head as well.

After skinning, this specimen was sent to London along with the more conventional zoological items collected by the expedition. Back in Piccadilly, the head was prepared using the same taxidermy methods that were normally applied to setting up game head trophies. It is difficult to believe that Rowland Ward was not himself involved in this job. At the very least he must have inspected the work in progress. The finished head may even have been briefly exhibited in the Piccadilly showroom window, although it was swiftly withdrawn as controversy mounted. Rowland Ward was forced to deny knowledge of how it had been obtained or that his nephew had been responsible. A long and heated discussion took place in the newspapers until further investigations revealed an even more blood-curdling tale that involved the expedition's artists and their attempt to record instances of cannibalism. This eclipsed the furore about the African head, and nothing more was said on the matter. The specimen still exists (or did until at least 1970), but such items have become an increasing embarrassment to many museums, and their future is uncertain.

Personal Life

Rowland Ward's autobiography tells us that he was so wedded to his work that he could not spare time to wed anything else until he was forty years' old. Nowhere does he speak of his wife by name. Even in *The English Angler in Florida* (Ward, R., 1898), a book largely based on his wife's diary of their holiday together in 1897, fishing for tarpon in Florida, she is still referred to only as "Mrs Ward" (although she wrote of him as "Jim"). Actually her name was Lina and she was part of the Maple family who owned a large furnishings shop in London. She was twenty years younger than her husband and survived him by nearly four decades. After he died, she did not remarry, but lived on at their last home (Restmore, along Sea Road in Boscombe, now part of Bournemouth) with several servants. She died there in May 1951 and was buried with her husband in Bournemouth cemetery. They had no children, but she had several nephews, nieces and at least one godchild in the Maple family.

Mrs Lina Ward

(1868 - 1951)



Rowland Ward's autobiography does not mention his wife by name, nor comment on the fact that she was twenty years younger than him, or that they never had any children.

Correspondence with his customers, in Rowland Ward's hand writing, emanated from a variety of private addresses between 1907 and 1909 including 61, Whitehall Court, a very posh London apartment block. He also wrote from his home in Boscombe (1909) and from Blackhall at Sevenoaks, although he may only have been staying there temporarily. A newspaper advertisement published about 1881 suggests that Rowland Ward had lived as a bachelor for a time at 'The Paragon', beside the Thames near Maidenhead, and his scrapbook included a picture of otters being shot on the Thames at some eel traps nearby. The 1901 census shows him living at 166A Piccadilly, where there was an extensive apartment above the taxidermy showrooms. Also living there at that time were his wife and Mr and Mrs Brandsletter who served as their butler and cook respectively.

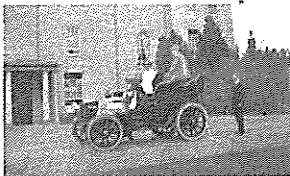


Rowland and Mrs Ward also briefly leased Stradsett Hall in Norfolk and then (1902) Nacton Hall near Swaffam. They entertained many well-known guests here with shared

This picture of guests at Stradsett Hall appears in Rowland Ward's autobiography. It shows several famous authors and big game hunters including, from the left, A.H Neumann, Abel Chapman and F.C. Selous. J.G. Millais is second from the right. The women were not identified.



Another group of house guests, this time at Nacton Hall. Rowland Ward is at the extreme right. His black Labrador, one of many he owned, lies in the centre of the picture.



Rowland Ward was a keen motorist and owned this early Daimler in 1902.



Rowland Ward was also a keen pheasant shooter and enjoyed sharing his rented Norfolk estate with sportsmen and wildlife artists.

sporting and artistic interests (including the big game hunters Abel Chapman and Frederick C. Selous, and famous artists such as Edwin Landseer). These houses were probably taken for the shooting season and photographs of shooting parties appear in Ward's autobiography and personal scrapbook. He was clearly happy with the shooting scene and enjoyed the social life that went with it. He was certainly proud of having introduced the 'Mongolian' race of the ring necked pheasant to Norfolk for its sporting value. Rowland Ward was a keen motorist and as early as 1902 he owned a primitive 22 hp Daimler motor car and also another vehicle used for transporting shooting parties in the field.

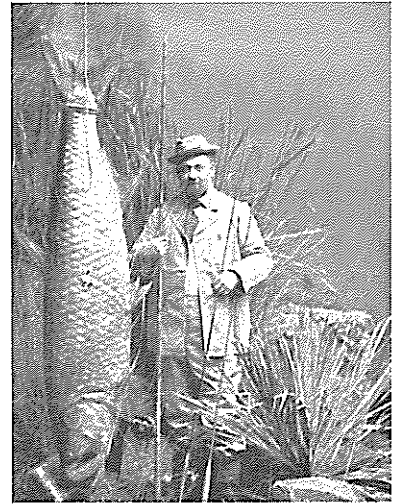
Rowland Ward was knowledgeable about animals and became a Fellow of the Zoological Society of London in 1879, signing himself 'FZS' thereafter on letters and trade labels alike. He also wrote frequently to *The Times* about various aspects of natural history ranging from a kite in Surrey (6 May 1889) and a white hedgehog (3 February 1893) to a sunfish (24 April 1897) and even the dangers of electricity (30 December 1889).

Apparently Ward travelled fairly widely because he mentioned in *The English Angler in Florida* (Ward, R., 1898) that parts of Florida reminded him of the Upper Nile (which he visited in 1893). He also travelled to Norway (for part of the time sharing a ship's cabin with a load of festering cheeses!), and to New York, Spain and several times to France. Nowhere does he describe a trip to East or South Africa (or to India). This is rather surprising given the amount of work he did on big game trophies from there and the authoritative directory of hunting areas in those parts of the World, that he published in his many editions of *The Sportsman's Handbook*. However, he was much troubled by swollen feet in Florida, brought about by a combination of the heat and the mosquitoes, so perhaps he was not keen on tropical travel. The Florida diary also mentions the absence of a bath in their hotel and the need for Mrs Ward to have a hairdresser call at 6.30am each day, so perhaps she was not keen on the rigours of foreign travel either.

Rowland Ward was an enthusiastic angler and he made many fishing trips along the Devon coast. He was a keen photographer too and invented a portable camera that he used it to take many

photographs at the London Zoo. The pictures from his 1897 visit to Florida, he claimed, were spoilt by the weather, but “at least they were genuine”. However, the same cannot be said of a posed photograph of himself in *The English Angler in Florida* which is clearly a studio portrait and features a large preserved tarpon, supposedly freshly-caught.

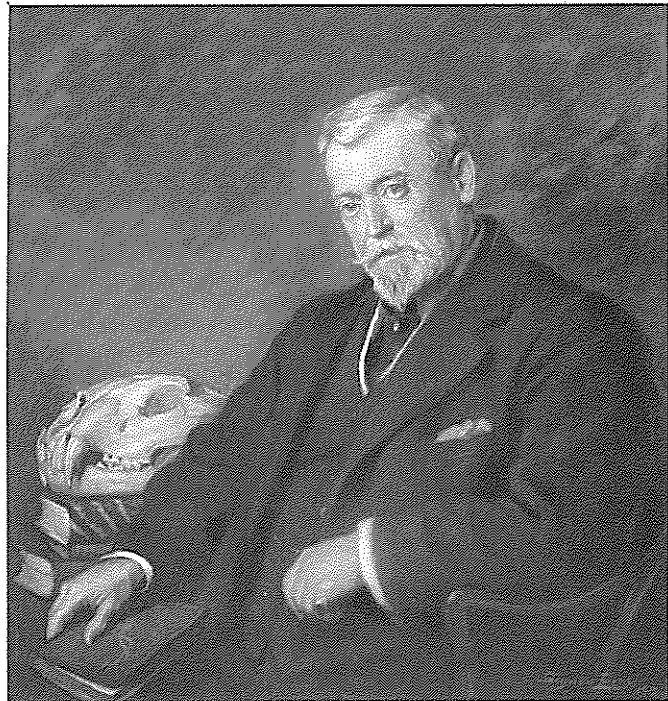
Ward’s general appearance is recorded in various photographs, including one of him out pheasant shooting, published in *Country Life* (4 November 1905). He was a shortish, stoutly built man who weighed 14 stone (196 pounds) in the year of his death. The frontispiece of the seventh edition of *The Sportsman’s Handbook* (Ward, R., 1894), shows him bearded at a relatively early age, with dark hair. A later photograph in the 6th edition of “*Records of Big game*” (Ward, R., 1910) also shows a bearded figure, but with lighter hair and wearing a morning coat whilst measuring a lion skull. Later still, the portrait painted by Seymour Lucas RA



A posed studio portrait of Rowland Ward with a preserved tarpon, intended to illustrate his fishing trip to Florida with his wife in 1897.



Rowland Ward aged about 60, using large calipers to measure a lion’s skull. Based on his experience as a sculptor, he was always keen to promote the idea that accurate measurements were vital for good taxidermy.



The portrait painted by Seymour Lucas, RA a few months before Rowland Ward died. It was used as the frontispiece for Ward’s autobiography, and may actually have been commissioned specially for that purpose. For many years it hung in the Directors’ office in Piccadilly.

in 1912 shows an older bearded figure somewhat resembling King George Vth. This picture was used as the frontispiece for Ward's autobiography. The original used to hang in the Directors' room at Piccadilly (P. Hodgkinson, *pers com*), but was later transferred to the workshops. It then appears to have been lost during one of the subsequent moves.

Rowland Ward seems to have been a typical middle class, late Victorian gentleman and businessman. His customers included many of his social superiors, including substantial numbers of British and foreign Royalty. He was sufficiently class-conscious to devote an entire section of his autobiography to those who he obviously looked up to and whose signatures in his visitors books clearly meant a lot to him. Elsewhere, in *The English Angler in Florida* he refers to "coloured attendants" and "darkies", clearly regarding them as something different, a common and widespread attitude at that time.

Rowland Ward's autobiography makes many self-deprecatory remarks, a social requirement to avoid the impression of undue bragging, yet leaves little doubt that he rated his own significance quite highly. His book also narrates various amusing incidents "some of which have been full of hidden compliment to myself".

Rowland Ward died relatively young, aged only 64. He left a very substantial estate valued at nearly £150,000, equivalent to being a comfortable millionaire in modern terms. This suggests considerable business success in his short lifetime, as it represents almost ten times his father's accumulated wealth. However, it is likely that he also benefited from his wife's connections with the Maple family. Rowland Ward's Will, made seven months before his death, listed among his various beneficiaries a selection of charitable institutions (including several hospitals, children's homes, the Battersea Dog's home and the Natural History Museum in London), but the majority of his estate, including cash and shares, was left in trust in order to provide his wife Lina with an income. There were also bequests for his sister Emily Eliza and his nephew Herbert Ward. Certain business associates and employees benefited too, including his chauffeur and the principal workshop taxidermists William Plowman (£750 or 75 shares in the Company) and William Shakespeare (£15).

Chapter 3

Latter day Ward's

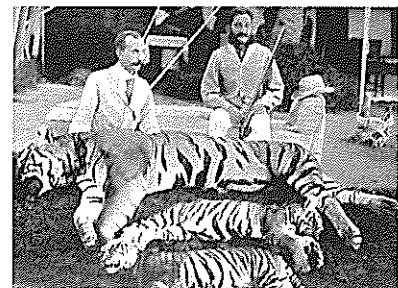
After Rowland Ward's death, the taxidermy business continued apace. Like most other commercial activities it was severely reduced during the First World War, but Rowland Ward Ltd. still remained active. Apparently people went hunting or wanted animals preserved, even with a world war in progress. During the inter-war years the business really flourished, under the management of J.B. Burlace, but few details have survived about the Company during that period. There must have been substantial expansion in employee numbers as well as consolidation of workshops with the establishment of new premises at Leighton Place (see below).

Despite major industrial difficulties, and the General Strike of 1926, wealthy people continued to hunt small game and large, bringing a constant supply of work to Ward's. Customers had always included the higher echelons of Society, starting at the top with British and foreign Royalty. For example, His Majesty the King (Edward VIIth) had shot large numbers of tigers in India during his hunting there. They were later presented to a number of regional museums including Exeter, Bristol and Dublin, with Rowland Ward Ltd. contracted to perform the taxidermy. King George Vth was another customer, along with British and foreign gentry, famous people from the world of entertainment, rich industrialists and the seriously rich who could afford to pay for the best. For example, the full mount rhinoceros that was commissioned by Walter Rothschild cost £240 in 1895, a year's wages for six farm labourers at that time (Bowley, 1900). A pair of full sized tigers might easily cost £150, the price of a two-bedroom house.

Winston Churchill was another of Ward's famous customers (at least in the period 1908-1914), according to his papers deposited in Churchill College Cambridge. In later years, Ward's prepared large numbers of hunting trophies for many other famous people, including General Franco and various American and European film stars. Customers also included many Army officers (especially those seconded to India and the Colonies). This was a great era for big game hunting, when it was both exciting and quite



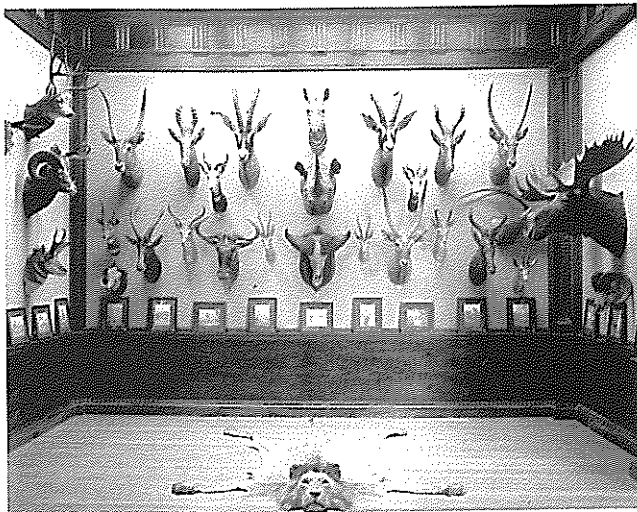
Hunting was popular among expatriates in India as they were unable to take holidays at home due to the long journeys involved.



The local nobility also joined in, and some even sent their trophies to London to be prepared.



Hunting safaris to Africa were also popular in the inter-war years and again after the Second World War.

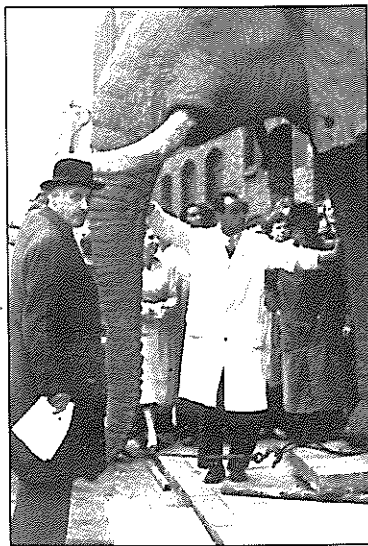


Many of Ward's products went to America to line the walls of homes such as this one in Philadelphia. Later, much of this lucrative trade would be taken over by the steadily improving American taxidermists, who began to exceed Ward's in the quality of their work.



Stately homes and elegant country residences in Europe and America (such as this one in Greenock) were graced by Wardian trophies. Staff from Ward's made special visits to inspect and maintain the trophy collections of their major British and European clients.

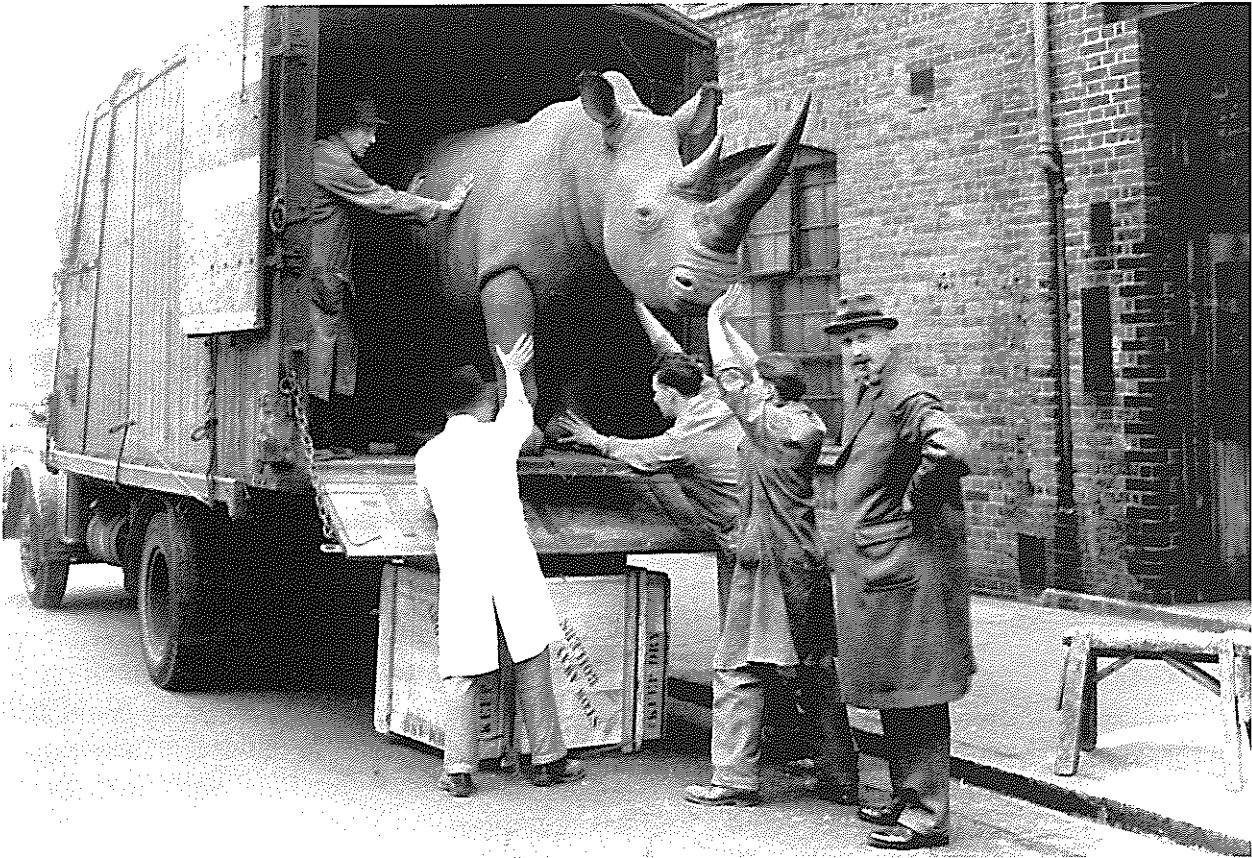
normal to go abroad for several months seeking animal trophies. The main venues were parts of the British Empire, especially India and Southern and Eastern Africa. Trophies collected in far-away places had to be shipped to London, an expensive process that often took many weeks. They were sent direct to Ward's, often in batches of a hundred or more, but customers had to be patient as at least a year would probably pass before a trophy head finally hung on a sportsman's wall.



Gerald Best (with bowler hat) bringing out an elephant from the workshop in front of a crowd of onlookers about 1955.

The Gerald Best era

By 1939, the Company Chairman was Martin T. Stephens, formerly of *The Field* magazine, but he was killed during the Second World War. His shares were bought by Gerald A. Best in 1946, adding to those he had owned since 1941, to assume a controlling interest in the Company. (The Hon. A.D. Tryon was Co-Director until 1959). Gerald Best was an Old Etonian who had served with the Wiltshire Yeomanry and became a Lieutenant Colonel. A tall man with a distinguished air, he was an avuncular, pipe-smoking gentleman. He was socially closer to his customers than to his employees, but was nevertheless respected by them. They always referred to him either as 'Mr Best' or 'Colonel Best'. He died in 1969 (*The Field*, October 1969), aged 58. The



Colonel Best (right) overseeing the loading of a white rhinoceros outside the Leighton Place workshop on the first stage of its journey to Copenhagen in the early 1950s.

business was divided into different trading sections (separating off 'publications' for example) and passed to his two sons, Anthony and Tim.

Gerald Best re-built the business from scratch following the Second World War and he ran it successfully for over twenty years, developing an extensive overseas clientele and exporting about 80% of Ward's output. This was no mean achievement, given the serious interruption to world trade caused by the War. Another difficulty was the rapid development of American competitors. The Jonas Brothers of Denver, James L. Clark and Carl Akeley for example were all superlative and innovative taxidermists, all had links to major museums and sportsmen in the USA and their activities had expanded steadily in the inter-war years. American taxidermists now offered serious competition, but Rowland Ward Ltd. remained taxidermists to the world.

Arthur Manning became responsible for the whole workshop operation and took every detail very seriously, inspecting, criticising and complaining about the shortcomings of his younger men and the work they did. He had exacting standards and little tolerance of the less committed staff. His perfectionism was no doubt a factor responsible for the high esteem in which the quality of Ward's work was held, and for the attention to detail that characterised some of his trainees. He was highly respected and was always addressed as 'Mr', but he did not suffer fools gladly.

His own commitment was absolute. The story is told (possibly apocryphal) that he did not arrive for work one morning but telephoned to apologise: "Wife's just died, won't be in until this afternoon". He subsequently took only half a day off for her funeral. A former employee told me in 1991: "Mr Manning (*sic*) was the conscience of Rowland Ward's. He really *cared* about keeping up standards,Ward's meant a lot to him".

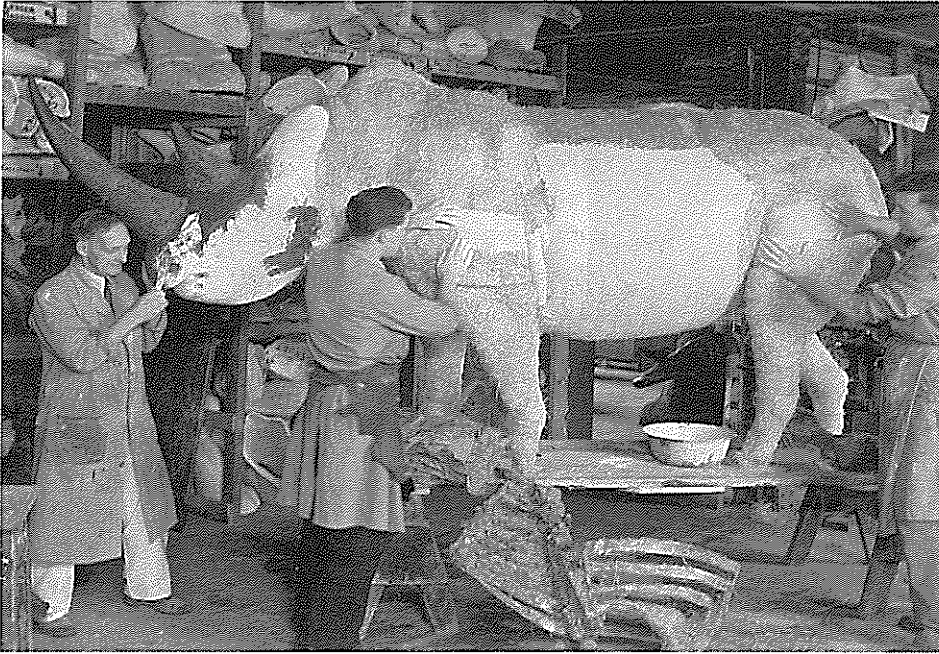
After retiring he lived on a housing estate outside Ipswich. There he was very active in the local community, especially in respect of Armistice Day and other events involving the local airbase.



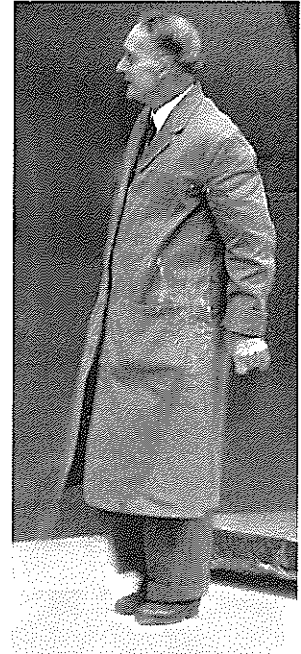
Alf Bannister ('Banni') was responsible for most of the bird taxidermy for half a century.

Alfred Bannister (c1890-1971) joined Ward's in 1903 and worked there for more than sixty four years. He was a highly skilled bird taxidermist, but a curmudgeonly colleague to work with. Dressed in a linen apron, with white hair and glasses, he worked alone in a separate area on the top floor at Kentish Town. His work space was partitioned off for his own use. He would close the door and cover partially finished work so that others could not see how he did his job. A group of the younger staff reacted by nailing his door shut. He seems to have been responsible for most of the birds prepared by Ward's, at least since the 1930s (see Chapter 4).

Alfred ('Alf') J. Taylor was another very significant long-time employee. He retired in April 1958 aged 72, having served the Company for fifty nine years, all his working life. He rose to become Foreman in charge of large game animals and supervised this work for many years. He was described variously as 'an adamant type' and 'a tyrant'. He was evidently a strict man to work for, but a superb craftsman with a lifetime of experience.



Mr Taylor (left) working on a white rhino, assisted by Roy Hale and Eric Hare. Note the ribs in the foreground. Taylor was an exacting taskmaster and strict foreman, but with enormous experience going back over half a century.



Alfred Taylor was in charge of preparing all the large mammal taxidermy.

He must have been involved with practically all of the large mammals set up by Ward's during their heyday in the first half of the twentieth century.

William ('Bill') J. Brisley was a small balding and bespectacled man who served the Company continuously for sixty years. He was a dab hand with the paintbrush, putting finishing touches to trophy heads, fish and other items in need. A useful and versatile employee, he was evidently very skilled, especially at achieving good results with minimal materials. He was taken ill in late 1963 and retired in the following April. He died soon after.



Bill Brisley was a master finisher, able to turn his hand to a variety of paintwork jobs, bringing life back to all kinds of mammals, reptiles and fish. Here he is working on the head of a lion skin rug, with his paintbrushes on the table.

These were the men who formed the core of the workshop team. It was they, and some new recruits, who began the post-war rebuilding of Rowland Ward Ltd. as business began to pick up again. Geoffrey Kinns (who later became a photographer at the Natural History Museum in London), and Eric Hare were taken on in early 1949. Eric became a freelance fish taxidermist when he left Ward's nearly 30 years later. Roy Hale was another of those recruited soon after the War. He had served in the Royal

Chapter 5

Whole mount mammals: small, large and challenging

The quality of a taxidermy mount depends a lot on the way an animal was treated when it was first killed. The huge cost of a safari, and the expense of the subsequent taxidermy, could easily be seriously compromised if trophies were not treated quickly and correctly in the field. Animals needed to be skinned as soon as possible, especially in hot countries, and the work often had to continue long after dark. The skinners were usually local people who specialised in this type of work and were much in demand from hunting expeditions. They well understood the need to remove all surplus flesh and fat, then to stretch the skin out and dry it slowly away from the heat of the sun. Skinning required care, especially with species that have a delicate skin or very short hair, as do many tropical antelopes. Even a tiny hole, so easily made by a hasty stroke of a sharp knife, will enlarge as the skin dries and require additional time in the workshop to sew up. Short-haired animals are a particular problem as such repairs cannot be hidden under long fur. The skull was also carefully dried in the sun after all the excess flesh had been removed, as it would be needed to build up the head accurately for the finished mount. Sometimes the skeleton was also retained, particularly in the case of rare species where it could be used for scientific study or sold as a separate item.

With zoo animals or small specimens that could be delivered to the London workshops, skinning could be controlled by Ward's staff. However, many major trophies were obtained in the field, often in faraway countries and in hot climates where decomposition was accelerated. Careful treatment *in situ* was vital for high quality taxidermy, a major reason for Rowland Ward to publish his *Sportsman's Handbook*, giving precise instructions on how dead animals should be treated in the field. He also emphasised the need for careful measurements to assist accurate mounting of the specimen later, advice that was frequently not heeded.



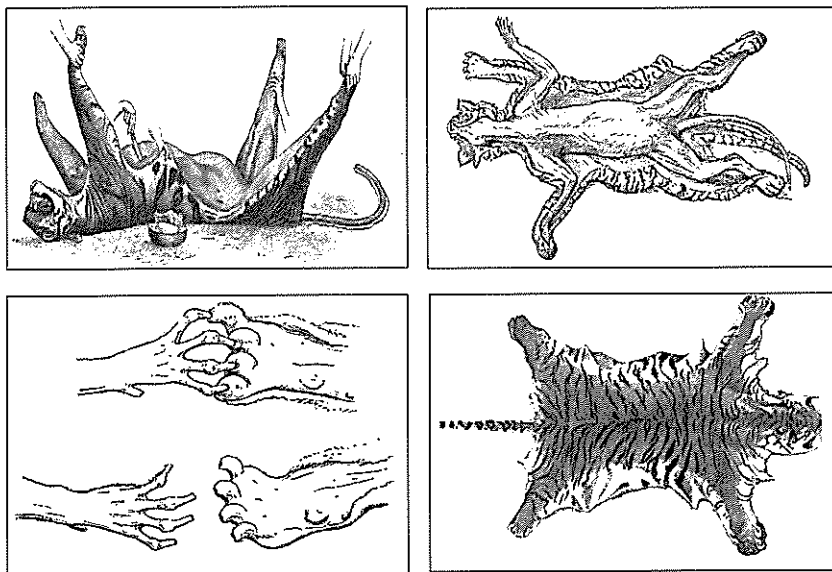
Large animals presented a major physical challenge. They took a team of men hours to skin, often working overnight or through the hot part of the day. Even turning the animal over was a big task. The skin of large species was often removed in sections.



Many big game hunters relied heavily on local people to assist with the treatment of their trophies in the field. Much depended on careful work at this stage. Dragging specimens about, bad skinning, or allowing decomposition to loosen the hair would all result in poor quality mounts later.

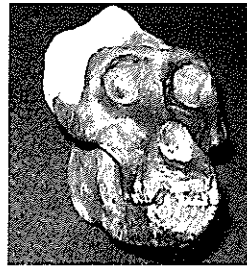
This is not the place to describe practical details of specimen preparation; such information is widely available in standard taxidermy manuals (e.g. Browne, 1896; Davie, 1894; Hornaday, 1892- etc, and briefly outlined in Ward's *Sportsman's Handbook*). However, in general terms, small mammals (up to the size of a fox) were opened by a mid-ventral incision limited to the abdominal region. The skin would be taken off the legs and head by turning it inside out. Larger mammals have the skin opened out flat with incisions from the chin to tip of the tail and transversely up the inside of each leg. Very large mammals such as elephants and rhinos would sometimes have the skin removed in three or more sections. Skins were dried as flat sheets or preserved using large quantities of salt.

Skins which had been taken off and dried in the field, often many months earlier on another continent, would be shipped to London and arrive at Ward's folded or rolled up and often as stiff as sheets of plywood. Some of these skins could remain in store for decades before being processed. Roughly- cleaned skulls of particularly rare mammals (gorillas for example) were sometimes

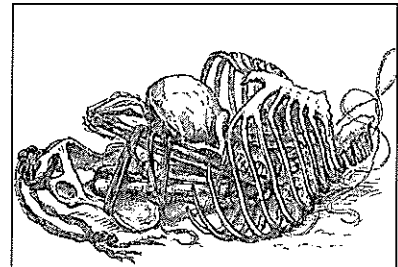


In skinning a large mammal like a tiger the animal lies on its back, often supported by several men, and the skin is removed by a mid-ventral incision, peeling it back from the flanks and legs. The feet are skinned out to the tips of the toes, with claws (or hooves) remaining attached to the skin. The skin is staked out to dry. This particular tiger was shot by the Maharajah of Cooch Behar. Its dried skin was over 3.3 metres long.

replaced by a plaster cast inside the mounted specimen, so that the real skull could be cleaned up and sold separately or with the full skeleton. Skulls that had been roughly cleaned and dried in the field needed to be boiled clean and bleached for display or prepared ready to insert later into the mounted specimen. Boiling up was carried out on the roof at the Leighton Place workshop.



A plaster cast of a gorilla skull, removed from a dismantled mounted specimen where it had been used to replace the real skull.



Sometimes the whole skeleton would be roughly cleaned and dried in the sun with the skull and limbs packed inside the rib cage, like this orang utan. The bundle would be sent to London for sale separately from the mounted skin.

Large skins, of rhinos and elephants for example, needed to be softened sufficiently to unfold them. They also needed to be made flexible so that they could be pared down to a manageable thickness. Dried elephant or rhino skin is up to 2cm thick, very hard and intractable. It needed to be reduced to a few millimetres thickness, otherwise it would not fit properly on a body form. Softening ('relaxing') of skins was done in a large brick tank, lined with bitumen, in the yard at the back of Leighton Place. This would be filled with water and a vat of carbolic (phenol) tipped in. The latter was stirred by hand with the sleeve rolled up "... and your arm went white". After some days the skins would be kneaded, dragged out and left to drain before paring them down. This was done on the ground floor, often with the skin shavings accumulating in the drains and the smell of phenol percolating everywhere. Elephant feet were also prepared on the ground floor, packing them with sawdust, which was renewed regularly as the skin dried out.

Smaller skins were sent to a specialist tannery to soften and tan them. A bill sent to Ward's from Whitehead's ('Practical fur skin dresser and cleaner') dated 4th July 1933, listed no fewer than fourteen tigers, four lions and four leopards (plus one Angora goat) being processed at a total cost of £20/10/11d. Dressed skins would arrive back at the workshop several weeks later, needing to be reunited with the correct skulls or horns. This requirement meant that unpacking trophies and the tagging of individual items was an important part of the whole

STATEMENT.
Phone: AMHERST 3255. Est. 1830

July 4th 1933

DR. TO *Mr. Rowland Ward Ltd*
J. WHITEHEAD,
Practical fur Skin Dresser & Cleaner.
116 & 118, HIGH STREET, HOMERTON, E.9.

3065	2 lion skins	29	2	10	0	0
3137	1 sheep (Angora)			10	6	
3127	1 lion		1	5	0	
3175	1 leopard			10	6	
3171	1 "			10	6	
3162	1 lion		1	5	0	
3182	4 tigers	20	4	0	0	0
3159	2 "		2	0	0	0
3193	1 "		1	0	0	
-	1 leopard			10	6	
3197	2 tigers	20	2	0	0	0
3200	5 tigers		5	0	0	0
-	1 leopard		1	10	6	
				21	12	6
				1	1	7
				20	10	11

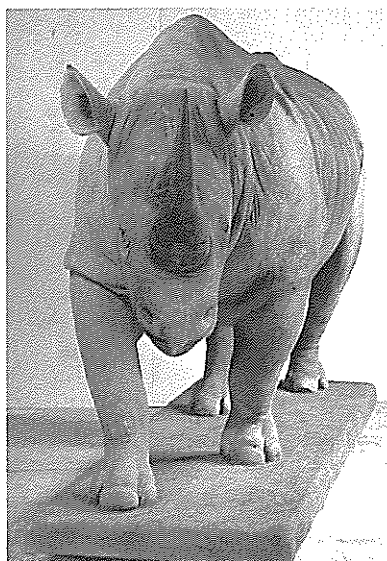
£20 10 11

8/1

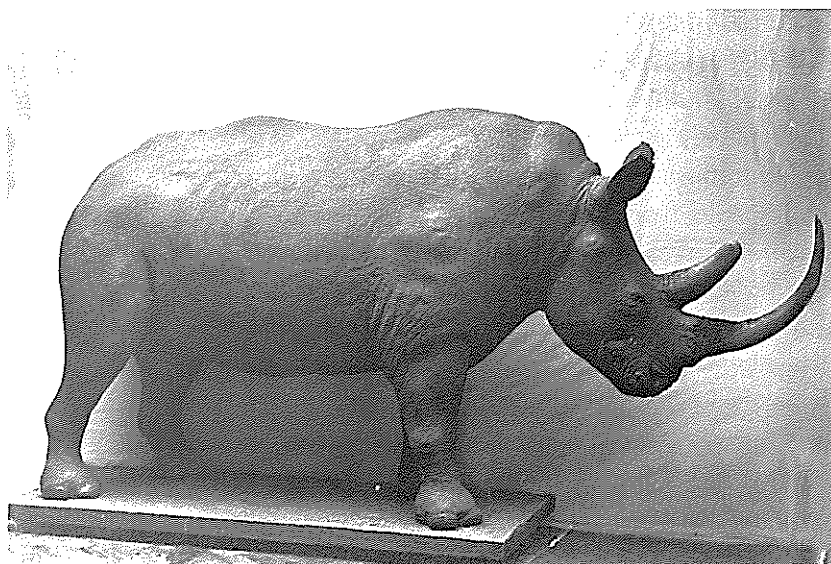
21 SEP 1933

Processing of skins only. 4/11.

Bill from the tannery, 1933. In those days, postage stamps had to be attached to such bills as a form of Government tax.



A later black rhino, benefiting from the technique of manipulating a soft layer below the skin so as to retain the folds as the skin dried out. Using clay for this subcutaneous layer significantly increased the weight. This rhinoceros probably weighed as much as a small car.



An early rhinoceros in which the skin has dried taut over the false body underneath, obliterating the folds that characterise this species. This rhino was prepared in 1869, so it may not have been done originally by Rowland Ward, but it turned up later in the workshops needing refurbishment.



A fine whole mount tiger set up for a private collection.

Very large specimens would have a hollow torso, built like a barrel around the centre board, with wood wool bound over the top. Taylor and his assistants would cover it with strips of sacking ('scrim') dipped in plaster of Paris. When this was dry, papier maché would be added to create a malleable layer, allowing the skin to be manipulated from the outside to create folds and natural cavities. This technique overcame the problem that a drying skin will go taught and 'drum', creating a flat surface where there ought to be folds and depressions. A thin layer of sticky paste or malleable material under the skin also ensured a smooth finish, vital for mounted reptiles and for the many sleek and short haired species of antelope. It also helped attach the skin firmly to the underlying body form.

Reaching this stage of completion, with the skin covering the artificial body and modelled into place, would take at least a week for a large mammal like a rhinoceros. The job could then only be finished when the skin had fully dried, a process that might take several more months for a hippo-sized animal.

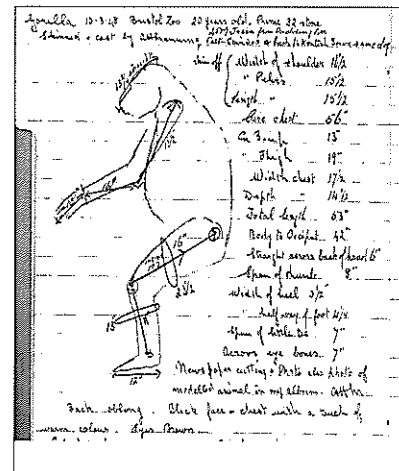
These traditional methods were augmented by using pre-formed manikins, particularly for heads (see Chapter 6). Manikins were

hollow structures made by laying down strips of plaster-coated sacking inside a prepared mould, building up layer upon layer creating a sturdy false body. With hollow mounts you can often hear bits rattling inside. Taxidermists in America had developed whole-body manikins back in the 1920s, often creating dozens of manikins from the same mould. This was highly efficient, despite the cost in time and materials of making the original moulds. It also meant that a uniform high quality could be maintained, even with relatively unskilled labour. However, this technique does remove some of the artistry and individuality from the finished specimens. Ward's continued to create each whole mount as a 'one off' item and bind ups were still being routinely used, even for the largest specimens, well into the 1950s and beyond. A sales brochure dating from 1971 makes a virtue of the situation, proclaiming that "we do not use casts or forms in modelling whole animals. Each specimen is prepared individually so that... we can follow a client's own wishes meticulously as regards the positions of his own trophies". Nevertheless, some medium-sized whole mount mammals were prepared using hollow plaster manikins, perhaps helping to reduce costs at the customer's request. Hollow mounts were also lighter and therefore easier to move about. Portability was a particularly significant issue when dealing with the largest species, where several men or even a small crane would be needed to shift a full mount animal.

Small mammals (and also reptiles) were mounted using a 'bind up' body supported on suitable wires. The artificial body would be smeared with clay or modelling compound to provide a smooth finish so that the skin did not shrink to reveal lumps or hollows, a common fault in reptiles that were prepared by many other taxidermists.



Taylor (right) and Manning bringing out the finished mount of 'Alfred', destined for Bristol Museum. After 18 years at Bristol Zoo, the 450 pound gorilla had died there in 1948. It was measured, cast and skinned all in one day, but the rest of the job took nearly a year.



were famous examples of their breeds, and many of them were preserved by Ward's. Some were submitted to the breed judges for approval before being added to the collection, surely the ultimate test of quality. Today these dogs offer a valuable insight into what the breeds looked like a century ago, even though some types are now extinct. They also provide a showcase of excellence in early 20th century taxidermy.

The cost of full mount mammals

Full sized mounts were expensive, especially large mammals as they took a lot of manpower, time and materials to prepare. Costs increased steadily. For example in the 1890s, a full mount zebra was available for £35, but by 1936 a similar specimen cost £75. Preparing a customer's full mount leopard cost £350 in the 1970s and a dog was upwards of £30, but back in 1936 a leopard could have been purchased 'off the shelf' for £40 to £50. By 1975, preparing a customer's full mount lion cost £780, nearly twice the price of a smaller head/shoulders mount.

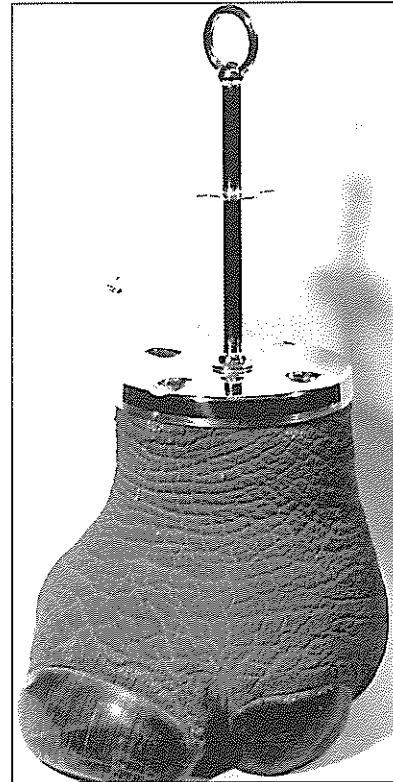
Prices in £ for whole mounts at various dates

ten shillings (10/-) = half of £1

Species	1901	1912	1917	1922	1936	1948
Warthog	15	15	15	-	15	35
Zebra	30	25	35	70	-	85
Coyote	-	-	-	-	15	-
Stoat	-	1	1/10/-	-	3/10/-	-
Spotted hyaena	-	12/10/-	-	15	20	-
Hyrax	-	3	-	4/10/-	6	-
Various bats	-	-	-	1-2	-	-
Tiger	-	45	125	-	125+	165+
Monkeys	-	-	-	-	6-10	15
Polar bear	-	-	-	-	95	-
Puma	-	12/10/-	-	-	-	-
Gorilla	-	-	135	-	345 family group	-
Giraffe	-	-	-	-	250	-
Black rhinoceros	-	115	-	-	-	265



A selection of feet from the 1970s, including antelope feet as bookends and table lamps, buffalo foot ashtray and various uses for rhino feet.

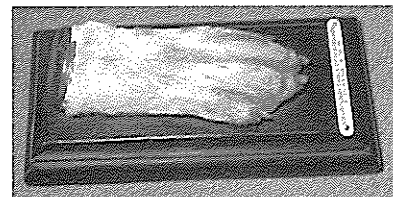


A rhino foot made into a doorstop.

Prices of ornamental feet

(cost in £ in 1974)

Species	Lion/ Leopard	Hippo/ Rhino	Buffalo Zebra/ Eland	Large Antelope	Small Antelope
Foot table lamp	44	39	39	34	-
Pair of bookends	-	-	36	33	31
Paper weight.	-	39	33	29	-
Candelabra	-	132	120	105	-
Biscuit barrel	49	-	-	-	-
Ashtray	38	31	31	29	-



An otter foot made into a paper weight as a memento of October 8th 1919, the day the Courtenay Tracey Otterhounds caught up with this animal. By the 1970s, otter hunting had become illegal in Britain as the population had crashed due to pesticide pollution.

Chapter 7

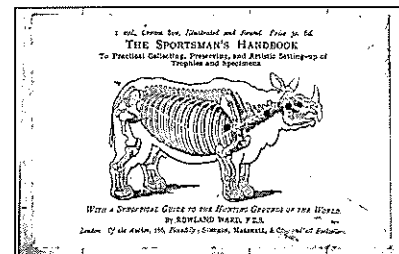
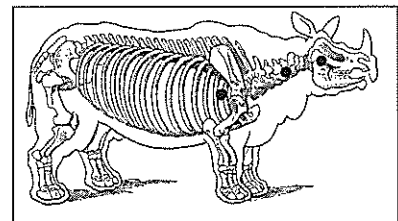
Rowland Ward as a publisher

Rowland Ward published many books. Five were written by himself and the rest by various other authors. Publishing represented a commercial diversification of his business and also provided an encouragement to travellers and hunters, who in turn would later require his services as a taxidermist to preserve their trophies. Two of his own books (*The Sportsman's Handbook* and *Records of Big Game*) represent innovative and ground-breaking publications. They are reviewed separately below. The rest, beginning with Ward's first publication *Travel and adventure in southeast Africa* (Selous, 1893), comprise a selection of natural history and travel books that are important records of their day, but similar to many from other publishers.



A full bibliographic analysis is not offered here, but some notes and comments are appropriate as publishing was an important part of the Rowland Ward enterprise. His books remain famous and are eagerly sought after even today. Some were published only in limited editions and most are now valuable collector's items, costing many hundreds (or thousands) of pounds when they become available for purchase.

After closure of the taxidermy business, bookselling continued into the early 1980s in partnership with Holland and Holland of London. Game Conservation International (based in Texas) then purchased Rowland Ward Publications from Tony Best in 1982. That company was sold again and is now based in South Africa (see below). No attempt has been made here to list editions and supplements that were published outside Britain.

The printing blocks for certain images in his books appear to have been actually owned by Rowland Ward, who then used the same illustrations repeatedly in many of his publications and trade advertisements. The sketch of where to shoot a rhino for example turns up in the *Sportsman's Handbook*, *Records of Big Game* and on many handbills and other publicity material. Some of the volumes published by Rowland Ward Ltd. also included photographs of actual mounted specimens (particularly in *Records of Big Game*), and one book (*The Sportsmans British*



The printer's block (top) showing where to shoot a rhinoceros was evidently owned by Rowland Ward. It was used repeatedly in various books, advertisements and even (bottom) on the backs of special envelopes.

11/611
G. H. Bankes Esq
 Winstanley Hall, Wigan.
 LONDON *July 24. 1894*
 W.
ROWLAND WARD & CO
 LIMITED.
NATURALISTS.
 TELEGRAPHIC ADDRESS, "THE JUNGLE LONDON". TELEPHONE NUMBER 3644.
 "THE JUNGLE"
 166, PICCADILLY.

 TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
 THE PRINCE OF WALES.

 TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS
 THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH.
 "THE SPORTSMAN'S HANDBOOK,"
 BY ROWLAND WARD, F.Z.S.
 AND
 "HORN MEASUREMENTS,
 WEIGHT, LENGTH, &c.,
 OF THE
 GREAT GAME OF THE WORLD,"
 BY
 ROWLAND WARD, F.Z.S.
 TERMS: 2 1/2 PER CENT. DISCOUNT
 FOR CASH.
 5 PER CENT. INTEREST CHARGED
 ON ALL ACCOUNTS EXCEEDING
 6 MONTHS.
 HALF-PRICE ALLOWED FOR
 PACKING CASES RETURNED WITHIN
 14 DAYS.
 BANKERS: LONDON AND WESTMINSTER
 BANK, ST. JAMES'S SQUARE.
 NOTICE.—ROWLAND WARD, F.Z.S., IS THE ONLY MEMBER LEFT IN THE PROFESSION OF THE WARD FAMILY, LONG UNRIVALED FOR THEIR ACCUMULATED
 EXPERIENCE, AND THEIR SKILL IN PRACTICAL TAXIDERMISTRY, ESPECIALLY IN ITS ARTISTIC DEPARTMENT.
 1894
July 24. 2 Tins Insect death powder 2 2/6 5:0
Postage
£: 5: 9

Bird Book by Lydekker, 1908) was extensively illustrated with photographs of birds mounted in the Rowland Ward studios (these were done by George Griffin, according to Arthur Manning, then presented to the British Museum).

Rowland Ward seems to have had a close and mutually beneficial relationship with his authors. These included many of the major big game hunters of the day, such as Count Potocki whose *Sport in Somaliland* is a very rare book with only 200 copies printed. Some of the authors published by Ward (including Dollman, Lydekker, and Powell-Cotton) wrote for him repeatedly. Many of these men were house guests at Rowland Ward's Norfolk estate during the shooting season.

Another well-used printer's block featured two Indian rhinos. This same design was embossed in gilt on the cover of later editions of *The Sportsman's Handbook* and also used as the centrepiece for this letterhead in the 1890's.

This bill was for two tins of 'Insect Death' powder, plus postage.

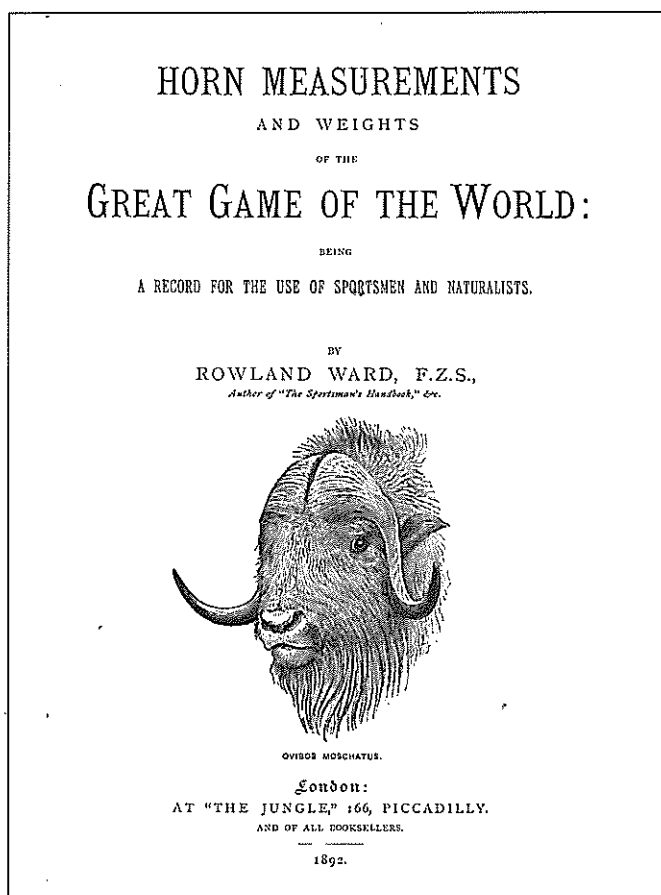
Rowland Ward and his staff were particularly good friends to the African explorer, author and big game hunter Frederick Courtenay Selous for a considerable part of his life. Ward always purchased his specimens for a good price and looked after his affairs at home before Selous got married and also while he was abroad. In addition, Ward published his books, paying their author well and helping to make him famous (Millais, 1918).

Records of Big Game

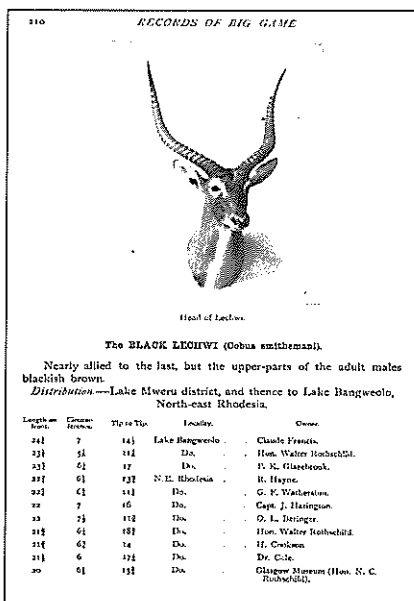
Arguably this was the most famous, most successful and the most innovative of Ward's books. It was a valuable reference work and also provided a subtle boost to taxidermy as it probably helped encourage further hunting and collecting in Britain and abroad. The first edition was published in 1892 under the title *Horn Measurements of the Great Game of the World*. This was changed to *Records of Big Game* for the second edition (1896), with at least 16 further editions published in Britain. Most editions were bound in coloured cloth boards and some had distinctive zebra stripes on the covers. Striped endpapers also conveyed a distinctive appearance to these volumes and at least one edition (the 6th) included a small personal trophy record notebook in a concealed pocket inside the back cover.

The English and scientific names for each game species were given, together with a brief account of the animal's distribution and natural history. A photograph or other illustration, often of a mounted trophy head, was provided and the account included a table giving the maximum dimensions of the largest recorded individuals. The book comprised a valuable reference work and an updated catalogue of the mammals shot for sport. These were mostly ungulates, but also included other species such as walrus, elephants and the big cats. Measurements of horns, tusks or body dimensions were listed, all taken in a standardised manner, and duly verified by independent observers wherever possible. The specific instructions issued included a cautionary note to wait 60 days for a trophy to dry before measuring it, to allow for natural shrinkage to occur.

The hunter who obtained the biggest specimen was thus formally recorded for all time and for all to see. This was significant because hunting prowess (and the social cachet that went with it)



The first edition of *Records of Big Game* was published with this more cumbersome title, abandoned thereafter. This is why there never was a first edition published under the title *Records of Big Game*.



A typical page from *Horn Measurements and Weights of the Great Game of the World* showing a table of maximum dimensions and a picture of the animal itself, in this case a head mount trophy. The subsequent editions of *Records of Big Game* later followed a similar format.

focussed on numbers shot in the case of birds, but where mammals were concerned, the size was all important. Implicitly, larger animals required greater skill and bravery to obtain, although the principle was then extended to species as small as dik diks. Later, special hat insignia were produced for individuals to wear to indicate that they had obtained a record trophy.

Intuitively, one might imagine that there could only be one 'biggest specimen', but in fact 'biggest' could be defined in several ways. For example, one buffalo could have the widest spread of horns, but they might be quite spindly in appearance, so another will have the heaviest horn bosses. The curvature of horns also allows for further different versions of 'biggest' and therefore more than one sportsman could be included among the list of successful 'biggest' trophy collectors. In this way many of Ward's customers could be featured in his book, not just a lucky few. Doubtless this spurred on some to further hunting, and more large male mammals making their acquaintance with Ward's workshops.

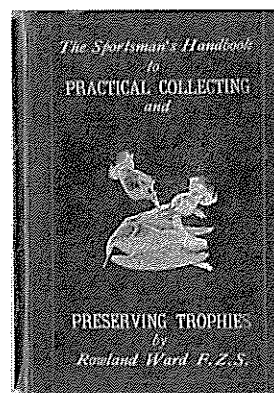
Records of Big Game
Publication dates of the various British editions
first edition 1892 (as <i>Horn Measurements and Weights of the Great Game of the World</i>)
second edition 1896
third edition 1899
fourth edition 1903
fifth edition 1907
sixth edition 1910
seventh edition 1914
eighth edition 1922
ninth edition 1928
tenth edition 1935
eleventh edition 1962
twelfth edition (apparently comprises the addenda of 1964, 1966 and 1969)
thirteenth edition 1969
fourteenth edition 1971
fifteenth edition 1973
sixteenth edition 1975
seventeenth edition 1977
eighteenth edition 1981
nineteenth edition 1984 (this and later editions were published in the USA or South Africa)

The Sportsman's Handbook

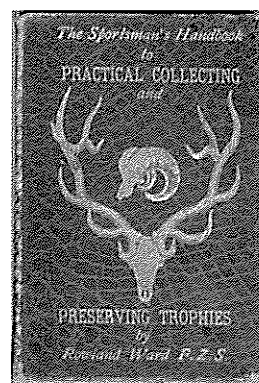
This was another highly successful and innovative book, of which 10 editions were published under Rowland Ward's own name, spread over 31 years. An 11th edition was produced posthumously in 1923 (a 15th edition has just been published by Rowland Ward Publications, South Africa). The full title was *The Sportsman's Handbook to practical collecting and preserving trophies*. The first edition, published in 1880, was an ordinary looking volume, whose front cover featured a bird being skinned, embossed in gold. Subsequent editions were bound in mock crocodile skin, made from flexible card with a scaly pattern pressed into it and dyed to resemble leather. This was a highly distinctive and very original presentation. The covers of the 2nd and 3rd editions were embossed in gold with images of the skulls of a bighorn sheep and a large set of stag's antlers. Subsequent editions, beginning with the 4th, featured an embossed image of two rhino heads, based on the same printing block that Ward used so many times elsewhere for letterheads and advertisements.

The 1st edition included 24 line drawings (many showing the skinning and mounting of birds). The 2nd edition added three pages of drawings to assist identification of species, but little else. Each subsequent edition differed slightly (sometimes very little, despite words in the Preface suggesting otherwise), usually mainly by adding more advertisements for Ward's wares at the back. These often featured interesting illustrations of taxidermy products and details of the other books he published. The 10th edition was enlarged to include a much more extensive text (now three times more pages than the 1st edition) and a cloth covered version was also issued.

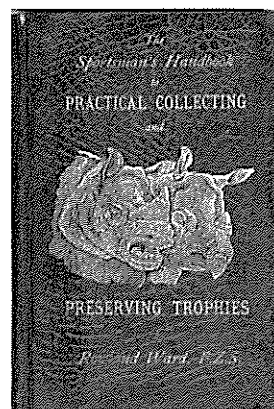
The final British edition was published in 1923 in plain cloth covered boards. Its title was *Rowland Ward's Sportsman's handbook...*, and it was edited by J.B. Burlace, general manager of Rowland Ward Ltd. at that time. His introduction asserted that the book had been completely revised removing "much irrelevant and superfluous matter". As a result, it comprised only 75 pages, plus 13 pages of advertisements (and a supplement of 16 pages of identification drawings), evidently removing substantial amounts of the text that had been present in the previous edition.



The Sportsman's Handbook, first edition.



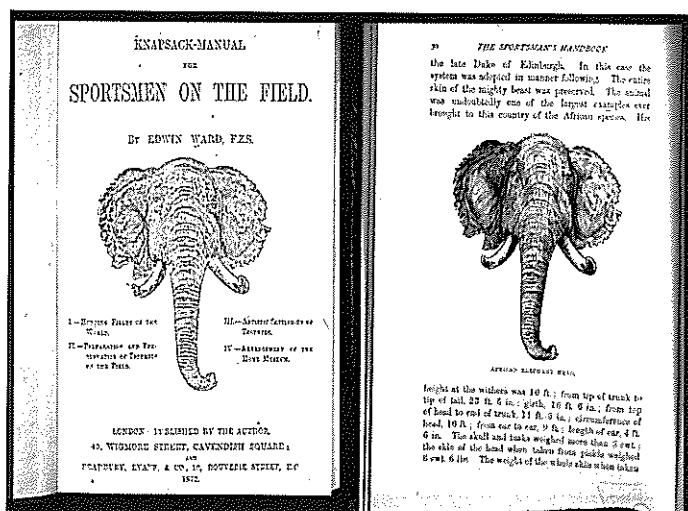
The Sportsman's Handbook, second and third editions.



The Sportsman's Handbook, fourth and subsequent editions.

The entire section on 'hunting fields' of which Ward himself had been proud, was omitted probably because it was now considered obsolete. This slimmed-down version was explicitly intended to be a guide to the handling of trophies after they had been shot, to ensure they were in the best possible condition when dispatched to the workshops in London.

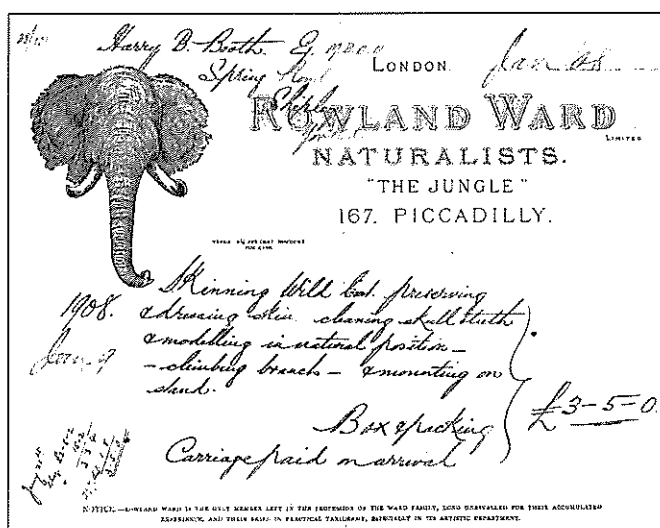
Rowland Ward was wrong (Ward, R., 1913) to claim that *The Sportsman's Handbook* was the first manual of taxidermy, as many others had preceded it, notably those by Bowditch (1821) and Brown (1833), both of which had already been published in multiple editions by the time of Ward's first edition of *The Sportsman's Handbook*. By 1884, Montagu Browne's *Practical Taxidermy* had reached its second edition, and was more than three times the size of Ward's book. However, his was indeed the first aimed specifically at sporting huntsmen, telling them what to do with their trophies in the field and where to hunt them. The later editions had an explicit subtitle "*to which is added a synoptical guide to the hunting grounds of the world*", making clear that this really was meant to be a practical manual for sportsmen engaged in seeking and collecting trophy specimens. In this respect it was indeed an innovation.



Title page of Edwin Ward's book, with the same illustration of an elephant reproduced (right) in Rowland Ward's *Sportsman's Handbook*, first published 8 years later. The picture was re-used frequently and also appears on the front cover of Rowland Ward's autobiography.

Rowland Ward was also perhaps being disingenuous in claiming originality. In 1872, eight years before the first edition of *The Sportsman's Handbook*, his brother Edwin had published a *Knapsack Manual for Sportsmen on the Field* (Ward, E., 1872). This included a brief review of where to go hunting in the world and also instructions on skinning and preserving trophies. That book is small and runs to less than 60 pages, but it is obviously the forerunner of his brother's more famous sequel. Its title page features a head-on view of an elephant, from the same printing block that Rowland Ward used so often in his later publications (and on page 22 of his own first edition of *The Sportsman's Handbook*).

Edwin's book had only one other illustration, of a lion set up to show its wires and centre board, again from the same printing block used repeatedly by his brother in later publications. Moreover, sections of Edwin's text (e.g. that on 'Large Game' on page 27) are reproduced verbatim in Rowland Ward's first edition of *The Sportsman's Handbook* (page 29) and also in later editions. Sections of Rowland Ward's 'synoptical guide' to hunting areas, which he claimed as his own, are word-for-word copies of the relevant sections in Edwin's book published earlier. Instructions for preparing birds are also copied verbatim (although with some small additions by Rowland) as are those for fish and reptiles.

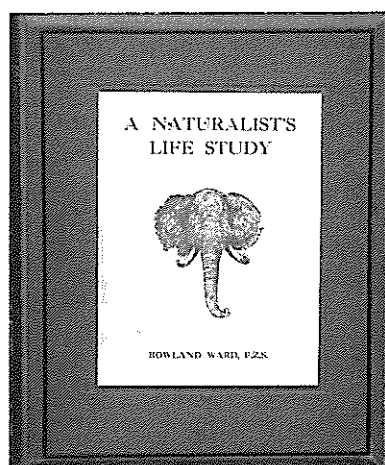


The same illustration as appeared on the title page of Edwin Ward's book was used on Rowland Ward's fancy notepaper in the 1890s and early years of the 20th century. This bill was for setting up a wild cat, uncased, for £3/5/-, carriage extra.

In his own Preface, Rowland Ward paid full tribute to his brother's consummate skills as a taxidermist, but made no reference to his book. Instead he merely stated that "I have had the benefits of his advice and help, and have been greatly assisted, moreover, by the information given me by many travellers and true sportsmen". Perhaps Edwin handed over the torch, so to speak, when he left for America, and made no claims to authorship himself? Maybe Rowland bought the rights to his text? Maybe he just used it anyway. Rowland did unquestionably enhance the publication. Edwin's manual comprised only 57 pages, whereas Rowland's first edition ran to 103 pages (and the tenth edition extended to over 300 pages), but the claim of originality seems misplaced.

A second edition of *The Sportsman's Handbook* was advertised in 1882, with review copies being generously distributed. Fulsome reviews duly appeared in many newspapers and other periodicals, in Britain and also in India, still the most important of the Empire's hunting grounds.

The first edition of *The Sportsman's Handbook* had been priced at 3/6d, and the tenth edition cost the same. This was in spite of its larger size and being published thirty one years later, a reminder that the modern curse of inflation had not yet taken



Rowland Ward Ltd. also published Rowland Ward's autobiography shortly after his death (see Chapter 9), but only "for Private Circulation".

The Sportsman's Handbook publication dates of the various editions published in Britain

Dates given here are taken from the actual title pages and suggest that there were errors in the list that was published in the 11th edition, which gave incorrect dates for the 4th (1887) and 8th (1899) editions.

first edition 1880
second edition 1882
third edition 1883
fourth edition 1888
fifth edition 1890
sixth edition 1891
seventh edition 1894
eighth edition 1900
ninth edition 1906
tenth edition 1911
eleventh edition 1923



Rowland Ward Ltd. published a 19-page booklet of photographs that had first appeared in *The Field* in 1929. The illustrations showed the extensive dioramas that Ward's created for the Duke of Orléans, like the one above. The booklet was not a formal publication, but it is perhaps ungenerous to classify it as 'ephemera'. Nevertheless, copies are rarely seen today.

hold. Nevertheless, when copies are offered for sale by specialist booksellers today they are often priced at £50-£80, sometimes very much more. The first two editions are particularly rare now and usually more expensive. The commonest edition is the tenth and best, as it is not only larger than the others, but also contains substantially increased numbers of interesting advertisements for the various products and services of Rowland Ward Ltd.