The 1856 London Stereoscopic Company’s Catalog (circa May 1856*) is an invaluable resource for historians and collectors. The titles listed in the Catalog’s First Series (by TR Williams) and the Second Series (by James Elliott) provide a good sampling of the bodies of work at the public debut of stereoviews (stereocards). Although never intended for us, it is a gift we most gratefully receive.

The Third Series by Samuel Poulton is even more extensive and more vexing. Samuel Poulton's stereos from this early period are seldom identified as to the maker although some related stereos are signed “Poulton, photg. Reading.” There are, however, enough somewhat later stereos and CDVs with Poulton's stylistic labels and highly variable mount styles to work backwards to the 1856 London Stereoscopic Company catalog Third Series. Although there is the occasional manuscript title that approximates the catalog title, there are seldom exact matches. 'Interior of Larder' and 'The Larder' or 'Summer House' and 'Family in Summer House' are good examples of these minor discrepancies. Poulton's early labels are so scarce that I do not know of a single printed label or vintage manuscript caption for the well known 'Waterloo Veterans at the Three Tun pub' stereos attributed to Poulton. For more on Poulton please see Peter Klein's article 'From Berkshire to the Strand' in StereoWorld May/June 2015 Vol 40 #6.

There are some specific titles in the catalog that help provide keys to the Third Series: examples illustrated here such as 'Packing Soda-water,' 'Young Lady with Hoop; Servant, cleaning Window,' 'Man tying Vine,' and 'Labelling Cask' give a good idea of the range of subjects, mounting styles, and card stocks employed during this period. We also have the series 'Militia Man calls on Mary,' 'Boy Listens to them,' 'Militia Man gets indignant and knocks down Boy,' and 'An old Man interferes' to further extend the examples we can identify with confidence.

Beyond that, attributions rely on experience and sometimes inspiration to match the titles with the relevant images. 'Quaker's Meeting' for instance, is an antique children's quiet game (no speaking, laughing or smiling) that well fits the illustration included in this article. Many of these stereos could also be titled in more than one possible way such as 'Child seen through Anti-Macassar' could easily be 'Child seen through Netting.' There will always be a measure of ambiguity about the titles but at least we can be fairly certain about the general body of work.

CONCERNING THE ILLUSTRATIONS AND ATTRIBUTIONS: The attributions are by Russell Norton; the illustrations are from the author's collection with contributions from photo historian / collector Paula Fleming and additional attributions from the Brian May Collection. Poulton's stereos from the 1850's are wildly inconsistent in mounting and cardstock, as well as essentially lacking period labels or even manuscript titles. The different mount and card styles illustrated here will give an introduction to the complexities of the Third Series.

* When was the 'Spring' 1856 catalog published? There are references in both David Bowen Thomas 1972 (From Today Painting is Dead p. 33 item 225) and BEC Howarth-Loomes 1974 (Victorian photography: a Collector's Guide p. 78) to a 'brochure' that seems to be a copy of the catalog dated May 1856 in the Bodleian Library (Oxford). The British Library Legal Deposit copy of Brewster's book which also was bound with the LSC catalog has as acquisition date stamp of '31JY56' which means 31 July, 1856. Thus it seems safe to call it the 'Spring' 1856 catalog. There is also a 'Christmas Catalog' which largely duplicates the 'Spring' catalog. Finally, the opening night performance of the Winter's Tale at the Princess's Theater seems to have been 28 April 1856, so a May 1856 date for the catalog is entirely plausible.
LONDON STEREOSCOPIC COMPANY Spring 1856 THIRD SERIES TITLES

Miscellaneous Subjects of the "Wilkie" character, very popular, mounted at 1s. 6d. Each.

"Any Brooms or Brushes?" &c.
A Bird.
A Boy's School. [manuscript title ‘The School’ / another example seen in the Jonathan Steele Collection with manuscript title ‘Miss Lamb (of Reading) and her pupils 1856’]
A Solitary Bird. (WE & F Newton Opticians vending stamp)

(Image from the Brian May Collection)
An old Man interferes.

Bird.

Black Letter and Spectacles.

Blacksmiths.

(Image from the Brian May Collection)
Boy listening to them.

Boy on Rocking Horse.
Boys in Punt, Angling.
Carmen and Housewife.

(Image from the Brian May Collection)
Carpenter, Labourers, and Man offering Beer.

Carpenter, Porter, and Boy.

Child seen through Anti-Macassar.
Child seen through Netting.

Coachman talking to Lodge Keeper.

(Image from the Brian May Collection)
Conversing with Neighbours over the Wall.
Departure of the Militia Man. (Image from the Brian May Collection)

Dog and Kennel.

Dustmen and Boys in Yard.
Family at Window and in Garden.

Family Group at and under Willow.
Family Group at Cottage Door.
Family Group at Tea.

Family Group at Tea, with Eagle [Do. do., with Eagle]
Family Group in Arbour.

Family Group in Garden.  (WE & F Newton Opticians vending stamp)
Family Group in Garden.
Family Group in Garden.
Family Group in Garden.

Family Group in Garden. [Do. do., in Garden]
Family Group outside Conservatory.

Family Group. (C.E. CLIFFORD'S paper vending label on verso)
Family Group. (Manuscript title ‘Family Group’)
Family Group.  
(Manuscript title ‘Family Group’ / Paula Fleming Collection)

Family in Garden.
Family in Summer-house.  

(Manuscript title ‘Summer House’)

Family outside Conservatory.
Father nursing Child.

Fortune-teller.
Friendly Visit.

Garden Scene.

Gardener and Boy. (C.E. CLIFFORD'S paper vending label on verso)
Gardener gossipping with Maid.

Gardener Hoeing.
Gardener sweeping Lawn.

Gentleman at Gate talking to the Carpenter.
Gentleman in Conservatory. (Paula Fleming Collection)

Gentlemen and Boy in Summer-house.

Gentlemen at Kenilworth Gateway.
Gentlemen climbing Tree.  
(Image from the Brian May Collection)

Girl on do.

Girls giving the Gardener some Porter.
Group around Fish Pond.

Group of 25 Ladies and Children. [Actual count may be 24]

Group of Anglers and Lady.
Group of Anglers.  

Group of Children in Garden.  
Group of Ducks, &c.  
Group of Game, &c.  
Group of Gentlemen at Boat-house.

(C.E. CLIFFORD'S paper vending label on verso)
Group of Labourers.
Group of Soldiers.  

(ex. William C. Darrah Collection)
Group of Stuffed Birds in Cases.

Group of Surveyors.

Group round Fish Pond.  

(Image from the Brian May Collection)
Group round Fish Pond.

Group seated on Garden Chair. [C.E. CLIFFORD'S paper vending label on verso]

Harrowing Machine.
Haymaking Machine.

Interior of Larder.
Labelling Cask.

Labourers and Shoe-black.

Labourers at meals.

Labourers loading Truck.
Labourers taking their Meals.
Ladies and Children at Door.

Ladies and Maid on Door-steps.

Ladies Conversing.
Ladies playing at Chess. (Image from the Brian May Collection)

Ladies seated outside Lodge-door.
Lady and Children.
Lady and Gentlemen in Garden.

Lady seated at Table. (Paula Fleming Collection)

Large Party of Ladies in Garden.
Maid taking Joint from Butcher Boy.

Mama and Child in Garden.
Mamma and Daughters.

Man and Labourers clearing away Snow.
Man and Woman in Yard – Snow Scenes.
Man tying Vine. (variant mounts)

Man washing Dog-cart.
Man weighing out Coals.

Man with Truck, and Boy drinking Lemonade. (Image from the Brian May Collection)
Mary makes peace.  

Meditation.
Men with Truck.

Militia Kneeling.
Militia Man and Boy on Ladder.
Militia Man and Porter at Door. (5)
Militia Man calls on Mary. (WE & F Newton Opticians vending stamp)

(Image from the Brian May Collection)
Militia Man gets indignant and knocks down the Boy.

Militia Men at Skittles. (Image from the Brian May Collection)
Militia Men under Drill (several Plates).  (Image from the Brian May Collection)

Old Patriarch.

Packing Soda-water.
Papa's Pet in Tree. (Image from the Brian May Collection)

Party playing at Skittles.
Peacock in Garden.

Piece of Coral (very striking). (Paula Fleming Collection)
Piece of Ruined Castle covered Ivy.

Playing at Skittles.
Porters and Boy in Yard.

Porters gossipping in Yard.
Porters in Yard.

Porters with Luggage, &c. - Snow Scene.  (Image from the Brian May Collection)

Portion of Ruins, Kenilworth.
Poultry larder.

Quaker's Meeting. [Children's game]

Recruiting party.

Ruined Gateway, Kenilworth.
Ruins of Convent Garden Theatre (6 Plates). [Destroyed by fire March 5, 1856]

School Boys in Playground.
Shakespeare's House.  (tentative attribution)

Skull and Spectacles.
Smoking Cigar in Grotto.  (Paula Fleming Collection)

Soldiers at Cards.  (Paula Fleming Collection)
Soldiers on Drill. (Image from the Brian May Collection)

Soldiers playing at Cards.
Sportsman and Family in Garden.
Sportsman Firing; Gardener and Boy.
Sportsman, Angler, and Friend.
Sportsman; Child and Labourer in Yard.

Winning the Gloves.
Wooden-legged Man at Kenilworth Castle.
Young Lady with Hoop; Servant, cleaning Window.

All the Paper Subjects can be had, exquisitely coloured, and 6d per Slide, additional.

Fresh Subjects are continually being added to this class.
Third Series:

Miscellaneous Subjects of the "Willie" character, very popular, mounted at 1s. 6d. each.

- Man and Woman in Yard - Snow Scene
- Ladies seated outside Lodge-room
- Maid taking Joint from Butcher Boy
- Lady seated at Table
- Family Group at Tea
- Do. 6d., with Eagle
- Conversing with Neighbours over the Wall
- A Boy's School
- Group of Anglers
- Child seen through Anti-Monster
- Porters gazing in Yard
- Group round Fish Pond
- Group seated on Garden Chair
- Wooden-legged Man at Knollworth Castle
- Family Group in Garden
- Interior of Lodge
- Etoned Gateway, Knollworth
- Harrowing Machine
- Militia Men at Skittles
- Porters with Luggage, etc. - Snow Scene
- Family outside Conservatory
- Group of Game, 6d.
- Men with Truck
- Militia Men under Drill (several Plates)
- Poultry Ladder
- Group of 25 Ladies and Children
- Group of Anglers and Lady
- Family Group in Arboretum
- Ladies playing at Chess
- Family Group at and under Window
- Do. 6d., in Garden
- Group of Labourers
- Boy on Rocking Horse
- Girl on 6d.
- Man weighing owt Coals
- Peace on Garden
- Group of Statues in Clamps
- Smoking Cigar in Street
- Group of Gentlemen at Boat-house
- Gardener sweeping Lawn
- Piece of Reined Castle covered with Ivy
- Family Group at Cottage Door
- Sportsman Firing at Gardener and Boy
- Labourers taking their Meals
- Labourers and Shaw-black
- Black Letter and Spectacles
- Pooling soda-water
- Friendly Visit
- Girls giving the Gardener some Porter
- Man washing Dog-car
- Boys in Pant, Angling
- Blacksmith
- Gardener Horse
- Reeling party
- Party playing at Skittles
- Bird
- Family in Summer-house
- Soldiers at Cards
- Mammas and Child in Garden

- Child seen through Netting
- Family in Garden
- Group of Ducks, 6d.
- Sportsman; Child and Labourer in Yard
- Sportsman and Family in Garden
- Labourers at Meals
- Family Group
- Gentleman climbing Tree
- Family Group in Garden
- Father nursing Child
- Group round Fish Pond
- Haymaking Machine
- Family Group in Garden
- Labelling Cash
- Meditation
- Pap's Pot in Tree
- Ladies Conversing
- Gentleman in Conservatory
- Gardener gazing with Rain
- Soldiers playing at Cards
- Coachman talking to Lodge Keeper
- Family Group
- Carman and Housewife
- "Any Brooms or Brushes?" 6d.
- Sportsman, Angler, and Friend
- Gentleman at Gate talking to the Carpenter
- Family Group outside Conservatory
- Boots and Boys in Yard
- Garden Scene
- Gentlemen at Knollworth Gateway
- Group of Surveyors
- Family Group
- Lady and Children
- Porters in Yard
- Group of Soldiers
- Porters and Boys in Yard
- Group round Fish Pond
- Mammas and Daughters
- Soldiers on Drum
- Militia Man and Boy on Ladder
- Family at Window and in Garden
- A Solitary Bird
- Large Party of Ladies in Garden
- Lady and Gentleman in Garden
- Ladies and Children at Door
- Family Group in Garden
- Man and Labourers driving away Snow
- Labourers leading Truck
- Carpenter, Labourers, and Man offering Beer
- Playing at Skittles
- Man with Truck, and Boy drinking Lemomade
- Quaker's Meeting
- Man Tying Vine
- Winning the Gloves
- Skull and Spectacles
- School Boys in Playground
- Piece of Coal (very striking)

Militia Man calls on Mary
Boy listening to them
Militia Man gets indignant and knocks down the Boy
An old Man interferes
Mary makes peace
Departure of the Militia Man
Gentlemen and Boy in Summer-house
Militia Man and Porter at Door (5)
Dog and Kennel
Gardener and Boy
Carpenter, Porter, and Boy
Militia Kneeling

Portion of Ruins, Knollworth
Group of soldiers
Family Group in Garden
A Bird
Shakespeare's House
Family Group in Garden
Group of Children in Garden
Fortune-teller
Young Lady with Hoop; Servant,Closing Window
Ladies and Maid on Doorsteps
Ruins of Covent Garden Theatre (6 Plates)
Old Parish Church

All the Paper Subjects can be had, exquisitely coloured, at 6d. per Slide, additional.

Fresh Subjects are continually being added to this class.
Miscellaneous Subjects of the "Wilkie" character, very popular, mounted at 1s. 6d. Each.

"Any Brooms or Brushes?" &c.
A Bird.
A Boy's School.
A Solitary Bird.
An old Man interferes.
Bird.
Black Letter and Spectacles.
Blacksmiths.
Boy listening to them.
Boy on Rocking Horse.
Boys in Punt, Angling.
Carmen and Housewife.
Carpenter, Labourers, and Man offering Beer.
Carpenter, Porter, and Boy.
Child seen through Anti-Macassar.
Child seen through Netting.
Coachman talking to Lodge Keeper.
Conversing with Neighbours over the Wall.
Departure of the Militia Man.
Do. do., in Garden. [Family Group, in Garden]
Do. do., with Eagle. [Family Group at Tea, with Eagle]
Dog and Kennel.
Dustmen and Boys in Yard.
Family at Window and in Garden.
Family Group at and under Willow.
Family Group at Cottage Door.
Family Group at Tea.
Family Group at Tea, with Eagle [Do. do., with Eagle]
Family Group in Arbour.
Family Group in Garden.
Family Group in Garden.
Family Group in Garden.
Family Group in Garden.
Family Group in Garden.
Family Group in Garden.
Family Group in Garden. [Do. do., in Garden]
Family Group outside Conservatory.
Family Group.
Family Group.
Family Group.
Family in Garden.
Family in Summer-house.
Family outside Conservatory.
Father nursing Child.
Fortune-teller.
Friendly Visit.
Garden Scene.
Gardener and Boy.
Gardener gossipping with Maid.
Gardener Hoeing.
Gardener sweeping Lawn.
Gentleman at Gate talking to the Carpenter.
Gentleman in Conservatory.
Gentlemen and Boy in Summer-house.
Gentlemen at Kenilworth Gateway.
Gentlemen climbing Tree.
Girl on do.
Girls giving the Gardener some Porter.
Group around Fish Pond.
Group of 25 Ladies and Children.
Group of Anglers and Lady.
Group of Anglers.
Group of Children in Garden.
Group of Ducks, &c.
Group of Game, &c.
Group of Gentlemen at Boat-house.
Group of Labourers.
Group of Soldiers.
Group of Soldiers.
Group of Stuffed Birds in Cases.
Group of Surveyors.
Group round Fish Pond.
Group round Fish Pond.
Group seated on Garden Chair.
Harrowing Machine.
Haymaking Machine.
Interior of Larder.
Labelling Cask.
Labourers and Shoe-black.
Labourers at meals.
Labourers loading Truck.
Labourers taking their Meals.
Ladies and Children at Door.
Ladies and Maid on Door-steps.
Ladies Conversing.
Ladies playing at Chess.
Ladies seated outside Lodge-door.
Lady and Children.
Lady and Gentlemen in Garden.
Lady seated at Table.
Large Party of Ladies in Garden.
Maid taking Joint from Butcher Boy.
Mama and Child in Garden.
Mamma and Daughters.
Man and Labourers clearing away Snow.
Man and Woman in Yard – Snow Scenes.
Man tying Vine.
Man washing Dog-cart.
Man weighing out Coals.
Man with Truck, and Boy drinking Lemonade.
Mary makes peace.
Meditation.
Men with Truck.
Militia Kneeling.
Militia Man and Boy on Ladder.
Militia Man and Porter at Door. (5)
Militia Man calls on Mary.
Militia Man gets indignant and knocks down the Boy.
Militia Men at Skittles.
Militia Men under Drill (several Plates).
Old Patriarch.
Packing Soda-water.
Papa's Pet in Tree.
Party playing at Skittles.
Peacock in Garden.
Piece of Coral (very striking).
Piece of Ruined Castle covered Ivy.
Playing at Skittles.
Porters and Boy in Yard.
Porters gossipping in Yard.
Porters in Yard.
Porters with Luggage, &c. - Snow Scene.
Portion of Ruins, Kenilworth.
Poultry larder.
Quaker's Meeting.
Recruiting party.
Ruined Gateway, Kenilworth.
Ruins of Convent Garden Theatre (6 Plates).
School Boys in Playground.
Shakespeare's House.
Skull and Spectacles.
Smoking Cigar in Grotto.
Soldiers at Cards.
Soldiers on Drill.
Soldiers playing at Cards.
Sportsman and Family in Garden.
Sportsman Firing; Gardener and Boy.
Sportsman, Angler, and Friend.
Sportsman; Child and Labourer in Yard.
Winning the Gloves.
Wooden-legged Man at Kenilworth Castle.
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