and there, in the river, he got it killed and took the horn off. He brought the horn home and placed it on Duncan Ban's counterpane.

The day was wet and the shepherd was not going to the moor that day. So Duncan Ban said to him, "Since the day is so wet, I think you and I will go to Dalmally, to the smithy, so that I can get a knife-blade made to put in the goat's horn."

The blacksmith was a MacNicol too. They arrived at the place and the blacksmith made a knife-blade and in the handle he put . . . he made the handle out of the goat's horn. When he had finished, the poet asked, "How much do I have to give you?" "Nothing," replied the blacksmith, "except a verse or two."

And this is how I heard the verse:

"I have got the knife of my choice
Fresh from the fire, well beaten:
My blessing on the man who has shaped it
Who has left it keen and thin and hard.

Firm and straight and strong—
Swiftly was it fashioned—
Today it is in the horn of the goat
That last night slept in Creag nan Cuaran.

NOTE

[1] This MacNicol was one of the MacNicols of Arivean, a family 'celebrated for reciting songs and poems, particularly the songs and histories of the Fingalian race' (*Report of the Highland Society of Scotland appointed to inquire into the Nature and Authenticity of the Poems of Ossian* [*Edinburgh 1801*] *270-73*).

[2] Or *Airigh Bheathain.*

JOHN MACINNES

C. BOOK REVIEWS

The Foals of Epona: A History of British Ponies from the Bronze Age to Yesterday. By A. Dent and D. M. Goodall. London: Galley Press. 1962. Pp. x+305, 52 figs., 6 maps, 78 pls. 45s.

This book, as the title indicates, covers a wider field than Scotland, but there are nevertheless many points of particular interest to Scottish studies. It essays first to review current knowledge on the origin and development of the domesticated horse in the British Isles from the Roman Occupation to the

nineteenth century, and then treats of the local variants of ponies still or recently surviving in the various natural geographical areas of Britain. It was an ambitious task to undertake, and to present to a general educated public, not necessarily all hippophil.

Unfortunately, in what was presumably an attempt to achieve a wider reading public than one of specialists, the book has sadly suffered as a work of serious reference. The style is often commendably lively and unpedantic, but in what must have been a desperate endeavour not to be thought stuffy, an embarrassing archness and facetiousness take over from time to time. Worst of all, again presumably following the view of so many commercial publishers to-day, that footnotes and references kill a book stone dead, the often extremely interesting statements and observations in the text are wholly undocumented. A laughable "Select Bibliography of Sources" of 70 entries, most capriciously chosen (according perhaps to some weird *sortes Eponae*), helps us not at all.

These criticisms have to be made because the book does in fact contain a great deal of important material assembled and presented for the first time, and does merit the attention of scholars. It must be admitted that in the early stages the authors are at times adrift in unawareness, but as they move towards source material which can be handled from the practical viewpoint of the horsy man (or woman), they take a firmer grip. Scottish evidence begins to be used with the evidence for the types of horses contained in medieval documents such as accounts in the Exchequer Rolls, or the detailed list of beasts in the Falkirk campaign of 1298. In the seventeenth century the emergence and significance of the Galloway has to be assessed, and we move into a world becoming increasingly familiar in textual and iconographic sources, such as the detail of tinkers' ponies in the Marischal College painting of the 1630s. Such illustrations, of course, tend to show not only the horses, but the carts or ploughs they pulled, and here the value of such representations, many of which are reproduced in the book, is enhanced for students of material culture. Finally, there is an informed discussion of the evidence for regional types of ponies in the north, as elsewhere in Britain.

There are some irritating misprints and perhaps other signs of carelessness. A very minor point, but the "old Berkshire ballad" of the Uffington White Horse quoted on p. 173 is not traditional, as here implied, but was written about 1857 by

Thomas Hughes, author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. Or at least, so he told my grandfather.

STUART PIGGOTT

Shetland Folk Book. Vol. IV. Edited by T. A. Robertson and John J. Graham. Lerwick: The Shetland Times Ltd. 1964.

Once again, but after a lapse of seven years, we are indebted to the Shetland Folk Society for another volume of the Shetland Folk Book. This continuing publication is sufficiently concrete evidence of the demonstrable cultural heritage which Shetland is determined both to nurture and to lay before the world. In addition, a new (and successful) venture is now reported—a gramophone record, "Eftir da Hümin", of representative material from the society's records.

As was clearly stated in the first volume of the series, the main object of the Society is "to collect and preserve what remains of our Folk Lore, Folk Songs, Fiddle Tunes, Traditions, Customs, Place Names and Dialect". It must, therefore, be really indefensible for a reviewer to express even a tinge of regret (this is all it amounts to) that in addition to collection, somewhat more of correlation, analysis and classification is not also given. (This regret may be all the more inappropriate, because there is now mention of a small but active Study Group within the Society.) Nevertheless, as every field-worker knows, the excitement of continued collection can sometimes conceal a morbid shrinking from other not less arduous disciplines.

The President of the Society is, perhaps, aware of this. In previous volumes of the Folk Book, proverbs, for example, have simply appeared in rather lengthy lists. But in his article "The Shetland People and their Proverbs", Mr. Graham now gives us a rough conceptual categorisation—Resignation, Privation, Living Together, etc.—which makes his selection manageable. And his introductory notes make it clear that he is after comparison ("Timbuctoo, Tipperary, or Tresta") as well as collection. It is worth recalling here that Calum I. Maclean and Stewart F. Sanderson set out their own problems of categorisation for a similar corpus of Shetland guddicks in *Scottish Studies* 4:150, and that, in Vol. 8:237-8 the Editor has reviewed "The Nordic Riddle: Terminology and Bibliography" by Laurits Bødker. It appears that here we have "a possible basis for a unified Nordic classification".

Similarly, in the new selection of folk song and fiddle tunes

now given to us, some expansion on the lines of the notes given by Mr. Peter Moar in Volumes I and II might have been welcome. There is, for instance, a brief note in this present volume on the similarity of phrasing between "Da Auld Reel 'o Whalsay" (which is printed) and the Norwegian Halling. A fairly casual, but interested, browser would benefit by a reference to Mr. Moar's notes on the Halling in Vol. II. A "distinctive Shetland version" of "The Greenland Ballad" is also printed and some analytical notes on why it *is* distinctive would have been helpful. The words are certainly English.

A "small local Norwegian Study Group" (how commendable this is!) has obviously worked hard to produce a translation from the Landsmål of Einar Seim—"Shetland Food in Former Times". It is a pity that the exact source of the original is not given. What is here referred to as "these notes" is, in fact, part of an article ("Litt om Levemåten på Hjaltland fyrr i Tida") which Seim wrote for the Hordaland Landbruksmuseums Årbok in 1953-4 after his visit to Shetland. The translators have taken the opportunity to correct one or two of Seim's slips—e.g. "O'Neill" is now given correctly as "Neill" (sc. Patrick Neill)—but why should Seim's (quoted from an informant, apparently) "holy water stins" (sc. "stones" or "steens") be rendered "holy water fonts"? Are they so called in Shetland?

It is melancholy to note that the article "Shetland Croft Houses and their Equipment" by Magnie Smith (a member of the executive committee of the Society) is now published posthumously. It stands, as the editors state, as "the kind of memorial he would have liked". It is packed with detailed knowledge both of words and things from which all students will benefit. Perhaps it is rather too generalised. One wishes, now and again, for a particular statement on a particular distribution. For instance, no mention is made of the kiln which E. S. Reid Tait (alas! also no longer alive) identified as an Orkney type all over the Southern parishes in Shetland (Folk Book, Vol. III).

Folk lore is well represented by a fascinating eye-witness account of witchcraft at work in a byre in the 1920s by Ronnie Sill. E. S. Reid Tait adds to the corpus of Press Gang stories, and the Vice-President, George M. Nelson tells of the tragic background to the name "Sinclair's Hole" at Brough in Nesting. Some precise indication as to sources might have added to our interest. There is local lore on Fetlar from J. J. Laurenson, doubly interesting to this reviewer who has heard some of it

from Mr. Laurenson's own lips and recorded it on tape. His concluding note will alarm all lovers of Fetlar—"the prospects for this beautiful fertile island hang in the balance."

A conspicuous lack in this volume is that there is nothing on dialect. Indeed, always excepting J. C. Catford's article "Shetland Dialect" in Vol. III, none of the volumes has had much to say on this important topic. Simply to give a series of folk tales in conventional Shetland orthography is not dialect in an absolutely exhaustive sense. Here, above all, we need careful analytical and descriptive treatment.

And finally, why, in Shetland of all places, is there so little on the sea? Press Gang stories and Greenland Ballads are all very well, but when, in a publication which displays its material so beautifully, is someone going to draw for us a simple boat?

J. Y. MATHER

Gourlays of Dundee—the Rise and Fall of a Scottish Shipbuilding Firm. By S. G. E. Lythe. Abertay Historical Society Publication, No. 10. Dundee. 1964. Pp. 20.

Professor Lythe's pamphlet for the Abertay Society tells the story of the meteoric rise and abrupt collapse of the largest of the shipbuilding firms in Victorian Dundee. Like many such concerns, Gourlays grew from a heavy engineering base, entering the Tayside business world in 1846 with the purchase of the Dundee Foundry (famous in the first half of the nineteenth century for its mill-machinery and high quality locomotive production). Eight years later they branched out into ship-building and converted the foundry to an ancillary, making marine engines. The partners in 1854 "showed a fine sense of opportunity" in launching a shipyard in conditions of booming world demand, and from the first grasped the technical initiative from their more conservative competitors by going whole-heartedly for the iron ship propelled by steam power and screw. In 1869 another "splendidly timed decision" led to the development of the new Camperdown Yard to facilitate the construction of larger vessels, and Gourlays reaped the reward in the great boom of the early 1870s.

Even in the much more uneven business conditions of the last twenty years of the century the partners succeeded in producing about half the total tonnage launched on the Tay. In this period they constructed some remarkable ships—the all-steel *Dundee* of 1883, another ship of the same name in 1885 lit throughout by electricity (only six years after the first use

of electric light at sea) and the *Brussels* of 1902 for the Harwich packet service, "known to travellers as one of the most sumptuously fitted steamers afloat" with a state room "understood to be reserved for the use of Royalty". Clearly, as the author says, "the firm lived by its versatility, its keenly trimmed prices and its growing reputation for high quality passenger accommodation".

Nevertheless, there were already signs of hardening in the entrepreneurial arteries. None of the sons of the four original Gourlay brothers had the technical interest and ability of the first Henry Gourlay; the yard gradually slipped into tradition-bound habits, while the structure of the firm remained on a narrow family basis. Awakening came, but it came too late: the partnership was reconstructed as a private joint-stock company in 1904, and the following year the yard was expensively re-equipped. Now, however, it proved impossible to repeat the lucky breaks of 1854 and 1867; instead of meeting a steady boom that would have justified the costs of modernisation, they met a demand trough at the end of 1907. Labour troubles and complaints about delivery dates and engine performance added to their troubles, and in 1908 the company went into liquidation. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

Professor Lythe tells his story well, and the Abertay Society maintains its reputation as one of the few local history societies that can bear comparison with their counterparts in England. It is a scandal that local history, which when well done adds much of value and perspective to the national story as well as being a rewarding study in its own right, should be so relatively neglected in Scotland. The fault does not lie at all with the local historians: it should be placed where it belongs, fairly and squarely on the shoulders of those powerful professionals who have for so long advocated the policy of centralisation of records in Register House. The English renaissance of local history studies has been raised on the establishment of County Record Offices. Until we are as enlightened as the English in granting regional devolution, the problem of the supply of raw materials for historians in the provinces, triumphantly overcome though it was on this occasion, will go from bad to worse. Your reviewer is not grinding a private academic axe: this is a problem about one aspect of our culture which ought to be of concern to everyone interested in "Scottish Studies" in the widest sense.

T. C. SMOUT

Archaeology and Place-Names and History. F. T. Wainwright, London. 1962. Routledge & Kegan Paul. xiii+135 pp. 12s. 6d.

In this book the late author meant to pause and reflect on the problems arising from the material, the techniques and the co-ordination of the results of the three disciplines whose enumeration has provided the title of the "essay". This reflection was, one supposes, to have given him a new impetus and new guidance for future research in three fields in which he had been for many years an active and competent scholar. As it turned out, the slim volume written from January to April 1961, became a summing-up, a record, a personal justification of past activities—and not a programme for the future, for less than three months after the completion of this his last study, the author died at the early age of 43, and it was left to his widow to see the book through the press.

Written originally as a chapter for Dr. H. P. R. Finberg's *Approaches to History*, the work soon outgrew the limited requirements of the purpose for which it was intended, and in its present form is itself divided into nine chapters which, apart from two introductory and concluding ones, deal with such subjects within the theme as "Historical Evidence", "Archaeological Evidence", "Linguistic Evidence", "Britons, Anglo-Saxons and Picts", "Scandinavians"; they also truly wrestle with both the "Conflict of Scholars" and the "Conflict of Conceptions", and again and again, without fear of obvious repetition, Wainwright stresses and re-stresses the fact that it is not enough to be an expert in one of the three subjects under discussion while dabbling in the other two, but that, in order to achieve a competent personal synthesis, one has to study archaeological evidence as an archaeologist, place-names as a linguist, and history as a historian. The one scholar who is really three, is ever present in the pages of this book and those who knew him will realise that here the author is undoubtedly looking over his own shoulder. There can have been few who could have "sat" for the picture of the ideal scholar which he paints, as well as he did himself.

For the studious enquirer with a less ideal background and less adequate training and experience, he has, however, much to say with regard to the approach which is open to him if he is a specialist in only one aspect of this trinity of subjects, and an interested outsider in the other two. At the beginning stands a clear division of both material and techniques, and consequently of the type of results which can be expected.

Unless these differences are realised and historical conclusions are reached on the basis of historical evidence alone, archaeological conclusions on the interpretation of archaeological material, and linguistic conclusions from what place-names have to say, results must be suspect and are indeed usually misleading. In this initial division, however, also lies the ultimate synthesis, for the military advice which demands separate marching towards a combined battle and victory, also holds good here. Once independent conclusions through separate analysis have been reached, their careful co-ordination and synthesis is clearly the next step—but only then and not somewhere half way along the road.

Obviously Wainwright's observations on, and demarcation of, these three lines of enquiry and their ultimate co-ordination are particularly applicable to the period which has come to be referred to as the *Dark Ages*, and his triple approach is consequently peculiarly suited to the problems which arise from the study of the people in Britain's history to whom he devotes two of his chapters, the "Britons, Anglo-Saxons, and Picts" on the one hand, and the "Scandinavians" on the other; the five maps at the end of the book make visible the distribution of the archaeological and place-name evidence (maps which, incidentally, both in arrangement and production are perhaps the weakest feature of the volume). If one really wants to see his philosophy at work, however, one would probably even more profitably turn to the three books which the author edited as arising out of some of the conferences of the British Summer School of Archaeology, of which he was Director. These are *Romans and Natives in Northern Britain* and *The Northern Isles*, but one would particularly think of the first of the three volumes in question, *The Problem of the Picts* which, in an admittedly almost ideal setting, demonstrates the practical value of Wainwright's preaching.

We who can test the principles he lays down, the warnings he gives, the encouragement he provides, should be grateful that the author was at least spared to reflect on his life's work and ambitions in this way, even if we have to take as tentative conclusions what were really only initial thoughts at a new beginning. At least here is more than just a memory to handle.

W. F. H. NICOLAISEN

BOOKS RECEIVED

The inclusion of a book in this list does not preclude its review in *SCOTTISH STUDIES.*

Selections from Gavin Douglas. Edited by David F. C. Coldwell. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press. Oxford 1964. Pp. xxix+161. 18s.

Buying the Wind. By Richard M. Dorson. The University of Chicago Press. Chicago and London 1964. Pp. xvii+574. 59s. 6d.

West Country Friendly Societies: an account of village Benefit Clubs and their brass pole heads. By Margaret D. Fuller. Oakwood Press for University of Reading. 1964. Pp. ix+173. 63s.

The Golden Lamp. By Alasdair Alpin MacGregor. Michael Joseph Ltd. London 1964. Pp. 263. 25s.

The Burghs of Scotland: A Critical List. By George Smith Pryde. London: Oxford University Press for The University of Glasgow. 1965. Pp. xvii+88. 20s.

The Life and Death of St. Kilda. By Tom Steel. Edinburgh: The National Trust for Scotland. 1965. Pp. 135. 21s.

Argyll Estate Instructions: Mull Morvern, Tiree. 1771-1805. Edited by Eric R. Cregeen. Edinburgh: Scottish History Society. 1964. Pp. xxxix+227+31.