

Book Reviews

The Festival of Lughnasa by Maire MacNeill. Oxford University Press, London 1962. 698 pp. 84s.

As her central theme, Miss MacNeill takes an Irish calendar feast, the Festival of Lughnasa, which had its origins in ancient Irish mythology and its final phases in the present day. It has been associated with Christianity and given such names as Garland Sunday, Lammass Sunday and Domhnach Chrom Dubh, but the fundamental pagan origins of these are always demonstrable. In some instances the link with the pre-Christian past has gone, and we are shown the last stages of the old celebration. Only a skilled scholar can trace the steps which lead from the vestigial festival to the pagan gathering. In other cases the relationship between the two has been of a more durable kind and Miss MacNeill is able to bring to our notice survival of tradition and practice which is truly remarkable. She makes her basic study that of the popular festival as celebrated in Ireland during the last two hundred years. Her work is based largely on the oral tradition which has been to a great extent preserved by the questionnaire method of collection. She claims that the festival can be shown to be a survival of Lughnasa, the Irish feast connected with the Celtic god Lugh, known from the Continent and from Ireland. The feast day was 1 August, and it was associated with the beginning of harvest—in fact an ancient harvest festival. She presents her evidence in a calm and objective fashion, and the reader feels its weight steadily building up as the final picture takes shape and coherent form. Although one may not always be in whole-hearted agreement with Miss MacNeill in respect to her interpretations of certain aspects of the material, this is inevitable in dealing with evidence which is capable of a variety of different approaches. But one is constantly re-assured by the fact that her methods are valid and her approach always highly objective and scholarly.

The Lughnasa festival consisted of an assembly of the people of a locality at a traditional site, and this was always a natural feature of some prominence, or having some significant legend associated with it. Of great interest to folklorists is the large body of wider custom and belief which has attached itself to the focal point of the actual festival. Of especial interest is the fact that as the tradition grows weaker in certain districts, the dates vary. Miss MacNeill remarks 'A few straggling bands of children going to the hills on July Sundays to pick bilberries represent a dying phase of an immemorial custom'. And how familiar is this picture to all who attempt to record the last stages of folk traditions and gatherings!

Miss MacNeill's study is presented in a lively and interesting manner, and although

it relies on many examples from the folklore archives of Ireland, it is never tedious to read. The appendices are most useful, as is the map of sacred and traditional sites at the end of the book. This is a work which both inspires and causes a feeling of despair. It inspires because of what it sets out to achieve and its success, and because it is based on fine scholarship stemming from a splendid scholarly background; and because it uses to such effect the magnificent archive of the Irish Folklore Commission. It also causes despondency on account of what it achieves. It demonstrates all too clearly that only by such single-minded, intensive studies and objective research into what is on the face of it a very small aspect of Celtic folk tradition—but what in fact turns out to be the focus of a vast repertoire of tradition of all kinds—can we ever really advance in our understanding of the relationship between the early mythology and the folk survivals. Only by such means can we hope to recognise things which lurk hidden under different names, or are disguised by unfamiliar dates—and the combination of such factors is rare. We need many more excellent studies of the kind Miss MacNeill has produced in order to make real progress towards gaining a picture of the nature of the survival of pagan beliefs and their role in the popular life of the Celtic peoples.

ANNE ROSS

Bàrdachd Mhgr Ailein: The Gaelic Poems of Fr Allan McDonald of Eriskay, edited by John Lorne Campbell. T. & A. Constable, Edinburgh 1965. 136 pp. 18s.

But for the efforts of Dr J. L. Campbell, the editor of this book, the chances are that Fr Allan McDonald would hardly be known now outside the southern Outer Hebrides except as one of many contributors to 'Bàrdachd Ghàidhlig' and an assistant of Mrs Kennedy-Fraser. Dr Campbell, however, has kept Fr Allan before our notice by publishing extracts from his work from time to time in various places. The publication of odd poems and pieces of prose in various magazines did not really do sufficient justice to him and it was with 'Gaelic Words and Expressions from South Uist and Eriskay' that Fr Allan was first shown to be the real authority that he was claimed to be. We should, therefore, be extremely grateful to Mr Campbell for gathering into one book Fr Allan's poems which not only fill a gap on the Gaelic bookshelf but establish on a sure footing his position as a poet of worth and a man of letters in Gaelic who may rank among the best.

The book is primarily for the Gaelic reader although there are précis in English of all the poems and translations of six. It is a commonplace to say of Gaelic poets that the original can never be given a good rendering in English but this is undoubtedly true of Fr Allan's poetry, not only on account of his extensive vocabulary of Uist words and command of idiom, but also on account of his own unique control of the language. Such lines as

H-uile h-imcachd ni a 'ghrian
 Ceum 'na thionnal
 Sin aig grinneig
 Air an t-slighe am bheil a miann

would be extremely difficult to put gracefully into English. It may be almost a cliché to say 'Tha biadh 's ceòl an so' but it is nevertheless true and a reading of these poems leaves one full of admiration for Fr Allan's language and also enriches one's own understanding considerably. As Mgr Canon MacKintosh said in his obituary, Fr Allan 'spoke and wrote it [Gaelic] with a fluency and purity that few have equalled' and a close examination of the text demonstrates that this is not empty flattery.

The editor did well to introduce Fr Allan with this obituary for it gives an account of the poet's life and character briefly but efficiently. It builds for us a picture of a man of single-mindedness and strength of character, handsome (as his picture shows) and a great admirer of virtue. He spared no efforts in the service of his Church and his parish, so it is small wonder that in Eriskay his name is still mentioned with affection and a respect approaching awe.

'Tha biadh 's ceòl an so.' The poetry is about a variety of subjects connected with island life and except for those plays in verse depicting comic situations it nearly always has great beauty. The book cover describes Fr Allan as 'a poet of sensitivity and charm' and most of his poems reveal him to be so, some more so than others. His poetry reveals also great depth of feeling and gentleness, especially his religious poetry. His 'Rannan do'n Chuilein' shows his love for his dog in affectionate but not sentimental terms, illustrative of the companionship of man and the animals. It may be compared with the friendship of the unknown scholar for his cat Pangur Bàn, each poem showing the different nature of the cat and the dog. Pangur Bàn the cat goes about his business of hunting indifferent to his master, while Fr Allan says of his puppy

Gur bòidheach do shùilcan,
 Gur gaolach do dhòigh leam

and

Cha saor thu bho'n ghòraich
 Tha strìth ris an òige;
 Ged nach sin thu spòg dhomh
 Cha dìth dhomh do phògan.

Apart from its poetic merit, the poet's work is worth considering for other reasons. Against the background of rock and sea, storm and fair weather, the life of the people is clearly pictured; death, marriage, work, leisure, religion, gossip and local characters. All these things are the components which made up daily life, and religious belief and practice form an inseparable part of nearly all Fr Allan's poems just as they are much to the fore in every day life on Eriskay today, being among the oldest and most vigorously surviving traditions of the people. It is, therefore, highly appropriate that the

first poem in the book should be 'Adhram Thu, Adhbhar mo bhith', a poem of deep religious feeling. On reading it one reaches for *Carmina Gadelica*, asking oneself where one has read it before. The familiarity does not stem from its being a crib, however, but from two causes. Firstly, the sentiments expressed are familiar to all people brought up in the Catholic tradition anywhere and secondly, the mode of expression is that of the Gaelic folk prayers, and this one may rank as a particularly fine example of that art. This type of prayer seems peculiarly Celtic and doubtless is in direct descent from the poems of the early Celtic monks. Compare for example

In Spirit noeb immun,
innunn, ocus ocunn

of the eleventh century and

Mo smaointean a bhith unmad,
Mo bhriathran bhith umad,
Mo ghniomhan bhith ugad

of Fr Allan. 'Adhram Thu, Adhbhar mo bhith' is a powerful but simple summary of Christian daily practice, a rule of life to be followed each day, and composed in a style obviously well known to the author through experience. Presented here in full and not in sections as previously, it makes a fine unity, and knowing the name of its author does not make it any the less a Gaelic folk prayer of excellent quality.

None of the poetry in this book is modern in form, and the second poem, 'An Eaglais', on the Church, is in the form of a waulking song since, as the editor says, 'Fr Allan McDonald was interested in using the traditional forms of oral Gaelic Literature as a means of imparting religious instruction'. The first three groups of lines where he is describing the boat (*i.e.* the Church) in vigorous language are effective but when he moves to more direct theology it misses the mark, I feel, as the subject-matter is too ponderous for the mode of expression. The poem should be judged by its effectiveness as an instruction, however, and for this reason it would be interesting to know if Fr Allan ever made use of it in that way and with what effect. 'Sgeul nam Buachaillean' is another waulking song intended to give religious instruction. It is less ponderous in subject matter than 'An Eaglais' though the first 32 lines wander far from the Christmas setting. There are also some effective passages such as

Bu bhlàth a dà shùil chaomh a'gabhail,
Còimhead gu dùrachdach a macan,
Shìn gu gaolach anns an leabaidh,
Leaba b'fheàrr a bha ri faighinn,
Bho'n a dhiùltadh fàsgadh taighe,
'S bho nach robh na b'fheàrr aice,
Thàlaidh i E agus dh'altrum,
'S chuir gu lurach E 'na chadal,
Rìgh nan Rìghrean anns an fhraisaich.

The editor has unfortunately not been able to trace the tunes of these two instructional songs. There are in addition three carols, different from the main stream of European carols in that they are composed to the tunes of waulking songs which gives them a form foreign to non-Gaels. The tunes of these carols are given and it is interesting to note that they have been sung in the church on Canna.

Although the religious poems give expression to an important element of the life of the people, they do not reveal the island itself and its inhabitants. 'Side Chorrach Ghruamach', a winter poem, gives a realistic picture of Beinne Sgrìthinn shrouded in mist while the people huddle at the edge of the fire in their storm-beseiged houses, scattered round the foot of the mountain on the rocky sea edge. A different impression of the island is presented in 'Eirisgeidh Mhic Iain 'Ic Sheumais' where we see it in peaceful weather. It is on a calm sunny day that the Hebrides appear at their best and on such a day the fresh colours and beauty of this part of the world cannot be equalled anywhere. Take for example these lines:

Eilein bhòidhich, làn thu dh'èibhneas,
Leug an domhain thu madainn Chéitein,
An driùchd 'na chaoirean gcala sheudaibh,
Boillsgeadh bristeach 'nad ghorm éidcadh,
Rìochd nan reul air cluain speuran.

Various aspects of the people's life are brought in also: the sea and fishing, cattle, calves, lambs; St Michael's protection; and the smoke rising from the houses like a prayer to God's throne. This poem, I feel, is a masterpiece.

The best known of Fr Allan's poems beginning 'Ged a gheibhinn-sa mo thaghadh' is a mine of information about life on the island of Eriskay. Apart from its literary quality, being swift in rhythm and a superb exercise in language, it contains an account of life in his day that equals the best of guide books. Its appearance, history, people and occupations, especially the latter, are described in great detail. Waulking the cloth, spinning, music, the céilidh-house, every kind of fishing from boats and rocks, children's games, sea-birds and natural life, agriculture with traditional implements, and watching the ships go by—all these are there. The poet was a good observer and the two phrases

Marcan-sine bharr na Sgrìne,
Nuas 'na mhill 's na dheann-ruith

and

Tràigh as gile, cnuic as grinne,
Ragha suidhe samhraidh

accurately convey the appearance of the island under its two most characteristic aspects. In this poem as in most others, no matter what the subject, Fr Allan sees a connection with religion. So the subject of his 'Daisy' is suitable company for hermits in their solitude: it is so white and delicate it should be growing on heaven's floor; fresh water cleans every stain from it and as the sun takes its way through the universe the daisy

follows it. How sad that man is not wise enough in the same way to keep before him the narrow path Jesus took. In the poem 'Gu robh cliu dhut is urram' he praises God for giving the people of Eriskay Our Lady with her storehouse of fish to keep them fed on an island with insufficient land to support them. A clue to the hardships of the islanders' lives is given here, as also in the interesting account by Peigi Anndra about the epidemic and the hope of the people removing and burying the corpses that whisky would be some help in protecting them from infection. The lack of medical aid is brought home by the fact that only Fr Rigg's self sacrifice enabled any relief to be given at all to the sick. Fr Allan celebrates him on account of this aid which resulted in his death.

Fr Allan also wrote some playlets in verse about courting and marriage. 'Parlaimaid nan Cailleach' is one such playlet. A group of women are gossiping about marriage and the young men are advised to beware of plans to trap them. The women are weaving ropes out of heather and various other natural materials, while a particularly un-presentable character is discussed, and his hopes of winning a proud girl. The young man comes supported by a bottle and a group of friends, one of whom acts as his spokesman to the girl's parents. The father gives them a poor welcome but his wife makes him listen. Meanwhile the girls are outside at a distance wondering how long it will take to come to an agreement. The wife accepts 'Giobain' for her daughter, but the father says it is for him to decide, and puts them out of the house. Unfortunately the poem is unfinished and a little confused but as a description of marriage gossip and custom it is extremely interesting and valuable. There are also interesting poems about actual people on the island.

There are twenty-six poems in all in this book and it would be hard to find a clumsy line among them. There is no glossary because, as the editor says, unusual words are to be found in the book *Gaelic Words and Expressions*. He also points out that Fr Allan's prose will probably fill another book; it is to be hoped it will not be too long before we are given it.

ANTHONY DILWORTH

Leslie Mitchell: Lewis Grassie Gibbon by Ian S. Munro. Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh 1966. xiv+224 pp. 42s.

'Lewis Grassie Gibbon' died in 1935 and a generation has passed before a formal biography has appeared from the pen of Mr Ian S. Munro. This considerable interval has allowed most of the chaff of Gibbon's work to blow away and the solid grain to settle and the biographer has been the better able to organise his material in the light of the judgment of time, which has discarded much of his hectic output with the exception, the magnificent exception, of *The Scots Quair* and a few short stories, and possibly also of *Spartacus*.

Not that Mr Munro ventures very far on the turbulent seas of literary criticism, for which he has been man-handled by the critics, who have themselves been curiously shy of embarking on a study of Gibbon's work themselves, and though the number of Ph.D. aspirants who have talked about 'doing something' on Gibbon must be quite considerable, little has in fact been done till recently.

Mr Munro confines himself in the main to the plain story of Gibbon's life which in itself needs some explaining, but there is so much autobiography concealed in Gibbon's work that he is involved willy-nilly in interpretation. Some of this interpretation is obvious and superficial, at times even naïve, but his repeated insistence on the importance of the background in Gibbon's life and Gibbon's remarkably sensitive response to it is basically sound.

One need not hesitate to call Gibbon the typical Peasant. He himself gloried in being a peasant and as Scottish culture is, or was, largely a peasant one, Gibbon was well equipped by birth and upbringing in that most peasant of all Scotland's provinces, the North-East, to write of it. Mr Munro labours away at this point and all Gibbon's critics have indeed paid tribute to the extraordinary vividness and intensity of the atmosphere of the North-East countryside which the *Quair* communicates, the feeling of stoniness and clay, the sting of sleet, the smell of grass and trees after rain, the cry of peewits in the night.

All this of course shows him to have been very responsive to his surroundings, not unusual in the countryman, whose real difficulty is in being articulate enough to express it. It is in this that Gibbon was uncommon, for words never failed him; and here his schooling comes into the account. He was fortunate enough in having an intelligent and sympathetic schoolmaster who apparently encouraged his pupils to interest themselves in their own parish, a piece of good sense that one does not usually associate with Scottish educational practice, and he developed a fluency with his pen and a prolific use of words for their own sake that never left him and is largely responsible for the more obvious faults (and merits) of his style. Yet he was unhappy at the secondary school and left it prematurely basically for some psychological reason that Mr Munro hints at and which sounds like some kind of love-hate relationship to his parents.

One is struck incidentally by some remarkable resemblances between the Mitchell household and that of William Burnes and the position of the gifted son in each, which may mean simply that this situation is not uncommon in Scottish rural areas. 'The House with the Green Shutters' provides yet another instance.

Henceforward young Gibbon had to educate himself while making a living in journalism and his eclectic reading (another Scottish trait) led him into the favourite subjects of his generation, politics, popular science, H. G. Wells, exploration and archaeology (furthered by service in the East with the R.A.F.), the last especially in its anthropological aspects. Lacking a proper academic training, he tended to swallow holus bolus any plausible theory, like that of Diffusionism, which Mr Munro should have explained for the benefit of his readers, and he did in fact write an impressive re-creation of the culture

of the Maya from books in the British Museum. It is a pity that Mr Munro tells us so little about what Gibbon actually read in his omnivorous way. For he had a remarkably perceptive imagination, which in its prophecy in 1928 of the helicopter and the landing of men on the moon within half a century is obviously not to be derided.

It is in fact this imaginative power taking a cosmic view of the history of Scotland that makes the *Quair* so tremendous, for all the jumble of diffusionism, Rousseauism, primitivism, and what not, that gets mixed up with it. Here one thinks in this connection of Scott, and though Gibbon lacks the richness, universality and optimism of Scott, though his broad strokes are often crude as compared with the fine-drawn lines of the *Waverley Novels*, the -isms not infrequently help to produce a deeper perspective.

What has escaped most critics of Gibbon, especially the Scottish ones as one would expect from the generally prevalent ignorance of Scottish history, though the Germans and Americans have tumbled to it, is that the *Quair* moves on three different levels; the personal, the life story of Chris Guthrie *qua* Chris Guthrie, a Scots girl of the twentieth century in her youth, marriage and widowhood; the social, the analysis of three different types of society, the rural parish and the individual farm, the village and the small croft community, the great manufacturing city, each with its own particular organisation, through which Chris passes as a kind of lay figure, with appropriate social commentary; and finally the historical, the myth of Scotland in which Chris is the allegorical figure of a nation, the daughter of John and Jean Guthrie, the eternal peasant and his wife, of Ouranos and Ge, or Adam and Eve, according to whichever mythology one follows, whose lot is set among the stones and hills and rivers and moors of the northern part of an island off Europe. She marries the Celtic peasant whose blood flows in the veins of most Scots and of young Ewan Tavendale, the Scotland renewed in each generation. Old Ewan has to turn back from the trenches in Flanders and be shot because the Highlanders turned back at Derby and the Celtic culture he impersonates was crushed at Culloden. Then comes Chris's union with the parish minister, the Kirk of Knox and Melville and the struggles of the seventeenth century, the period when the clouds of creeds and dogmas flitted over the Scottish sky, a union whose fruit was still-born in the eyes of the sceptic Gibbon, and finally there is her third marriage in the city with the joiner Ogilvie, the mechanic of the Industrial Revolution, which Gibbon with fine insight makes altogether barren. There can be no true spiritual offspring when the ties with the land are broken; the affection for Scotland is tepid, and does not stand the competition of the call to America. Young Ewan after a love-affair with an English girl in which the supposedly more thorough-going left-wing Socialism of the Scot is subtly contrasted with the pragmatic compromising bourgeois Fabianism of the other (Gibbon's comment incidentally on the Union) walks out of the novel on a march with the unemployed to London for the battles for Scotland's future may no longer be solved inside her own boundaries. And at the end Chris melts into her allegorical alter ego in the most literal sense by turning to stone.

Mr Munro hints several times at symptoms of split personality in Gibbon though in a

sense this is true for historical reasons of most Scots. For all his harsh realism his allegory is essentially based on a kind of mysticism, not uncommon in some types of humanists. One suspects too that Gibbon was torn at heart between Nationalism, which he publicly derided, and what he called variously communism, revolutionism, cosmopolitanism. He could not get away as a peasant from the fact of the land or as a Scot from history and the time-forces which have affected this particular region of the earth—and the old dictum of Heraclitus that the only reality is change, which he quotes several times, is worked out simultaneously in the life-story of a twentieth-century girl and on the vaster canvas of two thousand years of Scottish history. The one thing that does not change is the land itself (Gibbon keeps on stressing the metaphor of stone, flint, granite, as the symbols of eternity); all the rest are the accidents of history, the movements of peoples, the impacts of religions and superstitions, the development of society and community, the growth of science and industry, the wars of classes and creeds, man's humanity and inhumanity, the conflicts of social interests, and so on. The land has its rhythms and changes, summer and winter, seed time and harvest, and the human beings, creatures of clay as they are, have their corresponding rhythms too, birth, sex, bringing up of children, work and death, and hence the force of the equation Chris Guthrie and Scotland. But there is more to Scottish humanity than the mere physical. There is the long tradition and history of the folk from the aborigines who put up the standing stones and left the flint arrowheads for twentieth-century Ewan to pick up, through countless generations since, Picts, Celts, Normans, soldiers of fortune, like Will Guthrie, who comes back to visit his sister with his French uniform on, Covenanters, Radicals, all the rest; and their experiences, hardships, hopes and fears have all gone to moulding the characters of their descendants. There is a traditional wisdom, a way of life, an attitude to things which we inherit from our forebears and which in a sense becomes an inalienable part of us, and this is especially true in country districts where oral tradition still exists and where the continuity of life is so much more obvious than in the towns. So Chris Guthrie is Scotland in that sense also. Theories and creeds and slogans will come and go as clouds but their truth can only be tested and proved against the grey granite of time and experience which will sort out the dross in due course; and in practice this is often done best in a simple society which in its very simplicity can see through nonsense and is practical enough to know when an idea will work in the world of reality—something worth thinking about in this age of froth and gimmicks. The *Quair* in fact is a kind of spiritual or psychological history of Scotland written as a novel with long passages of rhythmic prose, at times almost incantation, by a journalist turned anthropologist. It is in this third dimension that the greatness of the *Quair* lies, and for folk-life students, this folk-life interpretation of history is of the utmost interest and importance.

If Mr Munro has not quite got round to this, he can of course legitimately say that it was outside his purpose of telling a straight life story. On this simple uncomplicated level Mr Munro's work is adequate, easy to read, and interesting as a picture of the less

obvious and more tortuous traits, tensions and attitudes of life in the North-East of Scotland which made up the life of Gibbon and are so truly reflected in his masterpiece, and as showing how in such a milieu the individual and his community are inextricably involved and how indelible is the effect of immemorial traditions and centuries of common living.

On the other hand one of the most interesting and ponderable passages of Mr Munro's biography deals with the unfavourable and scandalised reaction of the same community to Gibbon's picture of it. No doubt some of his analysis was a bit too near the bone to be comfortable but it is worth considering whether the imposition of an alien culture with different habits and standards does not produce a confusion of values and undue touchiness in those who have changed sides and reduces the faculty of sober self-criticism which a living community needs.

D. MURISON

Dunbar: A Critical Exposition of the Poems by Tom Scott. Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh 1966. 389 pp. 50s.

William Dunbar was, if one may be forgiven the phrase, not the most Scottish of Scottish poets. He was writing in the period immediately after Chaucer, when the Scottish tradition in literature had moved very close to its English counterpart. As a result he could proudly name Chaucer and Gower as his masters and compose a panegyric on the town of London, with the following refrain,

London, thou art the flour of Cities all.

Such sentiments to say the least seem out of place on the lips of a Scottish poet, but then Dunbar was in all probability a native of East Lothian, a district which at that time had close ties with the northern counties of England.

Nor was he greatly interested in oral literature or the common people. He was primarily a court poet and his duties therefore involved composing poetry which pleased the upper classes. For this purpose he turned to the intricate stanza forms popular in France, England and Italy rather than to national folklore for inspiration. His attitudes too betray a snobbery, wholly lacking in his democratic, near-contemporary Henryson. He is indeed a very 'professional' poet, possibly the greatest technical virtuoso this country has produced, but his works lack the common touch, that warm human understanding, which characterises so much of what is best in Scottish literature. It may be because of this 'professionalism' that McDiarmid urged modern poets to return to his verse rather than that of Burns, while many ordinary readers find themselves alienated from him in outlook.

In his book Tom Scott ostensibly presents us with 'a critical exposition of the poems'. In fact he does much more. He not only presents a commentary on all Dunbar's verse,

he also translates any difficulties in the original Middle Scots, sets the poetry against the historical background of James IV's court, uses it as an exposé of the poet's character and places it in the context of the Scottish poetic tradition. Above all perhaps he throws the emphasis away from Dunbar the stylist to Dunbar the thinker and satirist.

Although at times his revolution in approach threatens to produce as distorted a view of the poet as its predecessor, it does have the excuse of reaction on its side. In addition two main points arise. Concentration on Dunbar as stylist results in the magnifying of those poems which are the most manneristic in his collection. Dr Scott is correct in looking for the essential Dunbar among his satirical poems rather than the 'Golden Targe' or that 'Who's Who' of the lower creative orders, 'The Thrissill and the Rois'. He is also correct in emphasising the detrimental effect of allowing personal obsessions to pass off as matters of general concern. The great tragedy of Dunbar's life is that he was a little man with big poetic powers and this Dr. Scott realises,

Dunbar . . . missed the greatness of a national reforming poet which his gifts thrust upon him, and allowed himself to be turned aside by pettiness into a merely personal one.

Alas, how true!

On the other hand there are times when Dr Scott allows his concern with Dunbar's 'pettiness' to become confused with his skill as a poet. He dismisses the 'Advice to Spend anis awin Gude' as 'the worst poem Dunbar wrote' and advances as his reason,

this poem is mean and vile, its theme being not to spend in order to enjoy life, but in order to prevent your heirs getting what you have not been able to spend.

What he means is that the theme is mean and vile. It is in fact expressed with all Dunbar's usual skill and the poem cannot possibly be seen as the worst in Dunbar's output. The same confusion of standards for judgment is noticeable in Scott's assessment of 'The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedie' and 'Of ane Blakmoir'. The poet's limitations of personality cannot wholly be separated from his literary abilities, but the two should not be equated.

The poems are themselves grouped thematically and each is discussed singly. The grouping is quite successful and as a commentator Dr Scott is illuminating and controversial. The book as a result is eminently readable, but one wonders at times if the scope is not rather wide. In attempting to translate and to commentate he is performing two useful functions, but often the one flourishes at the expense of the other. 'In Prais of Wemen' for example demands a page of translation, before being dismissed as 'slight and of little worth in itself'. Dr Scott takes it at face value as 'a blatant piece of flattery', whereas it is more probably a skilful piece of satire. The praise is immediately modified in the line,

Off ertily thingis nane may bettir be.

Women are throughout flattered only as the bearers of children (especially male children), while Eden imagery is used to remind them of their rôle as the original sinners.

The poem, I feel, should have been related to the prevalent theological views on women and the subtle modifications of flattery noted.

But let us get our proportions right and not emulate those scholars who will condemn a 700 page tome because they have discovered an anachronism halfway down page 386! This is an enjoyable and a profitable book, of which one might rightly remark that its weaknesses are a condition of its strength. Dr Scott's overall attitude to Dunbar is a sane one and although his work will cause many arguments, it is a valuable contribution to Scottish literary criticism.

RONALD D. S. JACK

The Traditional and National Music of Scotland by Francis Collinson, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1966. xvii+294 pp. 63s.

Some of us have been aware for a good many years that Mr Collinson was at work upon a comprehensive study of our musical heritage; as the time of its appearance has drawn nearer, it is possible that the eagerness of our anticipation has led us, gradually and unwittingly, into a position of expecting more than is reasonable from an author, scholar and practical hardworking musician with interests so many and so far-reaching.

No attempt at so complete a study has been made before; but the volume before us does far more than merely fill a nasty gap on our bookshelves. It is in large part a succinct, readable, informative and at times amusing gathering-together and summary of information which has hitherto been hidden in many volumes and periodicals, some of them hard of access. Thus, for the most practical of reasons, everyone with an interest in Scottish music has cause for gratitude to Mr Collinson.

What one was not quite prepared for was the realisation, which this book brings out most vividly, of the vastness of the subject, and of the impossibility of any author doing equal justice to all its branches, or indeed complete justice to any, in a single volume of fewer than 300 pages. Mr Collinson is at his best when dealing with Scottish fiddle music, which is accorded comprehensive consideration in a splendid chapter that is all the more interesting for the fact that this branch of his subject is usually accorded little more than lip-service; but against this, the lyric songs of the Lowlands receive treatment that is relatively scant, while just enough is written about the Gaelic Long Tunes and allied matters to stimulate the reader's interest without satisfying his curiosity to know more.

In 268 pages of text there are footnotes to no fewer than 170; sometimes as many as seven in a single page, and often occupying nearly half the page (in one case more than half). This is surely excessive; what is at best an irritating necessity here becomes positively maddening at times, especially as it does seem to this reviewer that many of the notes might without great difficulty have been incorporated into the text, while the

purely formal ones could have been tucked away at the end of each chapter, or of the book.

One of the causes of this cornucopia of footnotation is Mr Collinson's wish to be scrupulously fair to his reader; very often when venturing an opinion, he feels compelled to draw attention to the fact that one or more of his colleagues disagrees with it. But is this *really* fair? Time and again the seeker after truth is left in a puzzled state, and occasionally one of bewilderment, at this revelation of the extent of the differences existing between experts. Space does not allow discussion of many examples, but I may perhaps draw attention to two: on page 69 (n. 2) the author quotes the comments of two authorities as questioning his own scholarly inference. The first comment I find completely baffling; the second is mildly questioned, still in the footnote, by Mr Collinson, despite the fact that it offers him the chance to demolish a very weak argument, which could have been the more thoroughly and effectively done in the main text. Again, in footnote 1 on page 178, there is quoted an epigrammatic opinion from Mr R. L. C. Lorimer, commenting upon a factual statement in the main text about the phrase-structure of the piobaireachd ground. Mr Collinson remarks that 'this is not the place to discuss the subject in greater detail', but one cannot refrain from questioning the advisability of introducing such a technical detail at all, unless the reader is to be helped to find out the truth of the matter, instead of being left with such a bald case of experts differing. A couple of examples might have gone far to clarify this particular issue, and one feels that there are other places in the book where it would have been better if Mr Collinson had come down more firmly, backing his own opinion by printed musical evidence, and perhaps inviting arguments in the pages of appropriate journals, rather than leaving them lying about unresolved in his own book.

This review would get entirely out of hand if I were to draw attention to every pleasure that it has brought me, and every question and doubt that it has raised in my mind; but I propose to mention some details seriatim.

The chapter on 'The Native Idiom', full as it is of good things, seems to me to fall between two stools: is it not too technical for the lay reader, and not technical enough for the professional musician? Page 10 illustrates what I mean: simple arithmetic shows that there must be twenty hexatonic scales according to the methods of evolution described in the first two paragraphs. Experiment shows that four of these are duplicates, leaving *sixteen*. In paragraph 2, the author says, 'not all combinations possible by this procedure are used in folk-music'. In paragraph 3, however, he says, 'Scots airs may be found on *all fourteen* different hexatonic scales'. Already too much has been said, or not enough; and the matter is made more puzzling by the nine examples cited, which are restricted to only four different scales, and which include two which are well-known in *pentatonic* versions—'Auld Rob Morris' as printed in *Orpheus Caledonius*, and 'Lassie wi' the lint-white locks', which is actually quoted in a later connection (p. 22) along with its characteristic *five-note* scale. No doubt the footnote to page 10 goes a little way to explain all this, but it is very confusing. I think that despite Mr

Collinson's statement that 'it would add unnecessarily to the bulk of the book to give them all in their staff-notation', he might have increased clarity by printing perhaps half-a-dozen, each in a different scale.

We come next to the chapter 'Gaelic and Lowland Scots Song', and I am bound to say that it is this more than any other in the book which does not quite come up to one's over-high hopes; for, as Mr Collinson says, 'the whole subject of the early Gaelic poets is fugitive and thinly documented' . . . 'we still await a definitive work on the songs of the Gaelic poets—and indeed on Gaelic songs in general'. I wonder if we shall ever get it? Mr Collinson has done his brave best, but on his own admission he is making bricks with precious little straw, and his speculations, so often modified or contradicted by the footnoted remarks of his colleagues, add sadly little to our meagre fund of real knowledge of the subject. In passing, I am struck so much by the *differences* between 'Allt-an-t-siucair' and 'The lass of Patie's mill' in basic features such as cadence, and by the relative unimportance of their *resemblances*, that I am bold enough to question whether they are in fact versions of the same tune.

Mr Collinson next deals with the vocal music of the Lowlands. Perhaps it is because this aspect of his subject has attracted much more notice from commentators in the past that he does not dig very deep. The definition of 'ballad' on page 132 is the best I have come across, but once again we run into the difficulty that the subject is so vast that the author tends to be content with a summary of present knowledge and a quick survey of earlier writings on the subject. Incidentally, should not Pinkerton and Sibbald have been mentioned in this connection?

I find myself, against my will, forced to question what Mr Collinson has to say about the Guthrie manuscript. In describing this important source, he seems to rely largely upon Dauney and John Glen, who found themselves unable to make sense of the tablature. The latter, in a frustrated paragraph, says that he believes that it contains not one of the forty [actually 46] tunes supposed to be included in it, and that his belief is that it consists entirely of accompaniments for the tunes named. This, of course, was in 1900, and it looks as if Mr Collinson has not had access to some later research on the subject. In 1945 the late Harry M. Willsher, in his thesis 'Music in Scotland during three centuries', now in St Andrews University Library, not only fully described the Guthrie MS, but explained the difficulties that had beset earlier scholars, and produced photographs and transcriptions of its contents. Willsher demonstrated that the MS does in fact contain all the airs claimed, in very simple melodic versions, and that once the fact is realised that they are not in lute tablature, but in Italian tablature used for certain members of the viol family, there is no great difficulty about transcribing them. There is, however, still a puzzling detail: although on page 133, Mr Collinson seems to follow the error of Glen in referring to the lute in this connection, we find earlier (p. 123) an unequivocal (and correct) statement that the tablature is for *viola da braccio*. Nowhere else have I found this point mentioned, and I am intrigued to know how Mr Collinson was aware of it, and yet not familiar with Willsher's work.

The section on Bothy Ballads is concise and helpful; in a footnote on page 150 there is a reference to an Irish connection with the tune 'Drumdelgie', and I have an idea that the tune of 'Nicky Tams' quoted on page 151 is also known to Irish words. This aspect of the Bothy Ballads may have been thoroughly explored elsewhere, but some fuller reference would have been welcome, and without doubt illuminating.

Since, presumably, Mr Collinson was short of space to write on some matters as fully as he would have wished, I find it hard to understand his devoting four whole pages to the scientific arguments about the minute details of the tuning of the bagpipe-scale. A short summary of the most recent findings would have made room for fuller information on the subject of *canntaireachd*, which is of greater interest to most readers of the book, and about which little is widely known; as things are, this section seems rather rushed, and to one reader at least was very difficult to follow. I am surprised to find Mr Collinson giving space in a long footnote to the absurd suggestion that the sol-fa system 'came to its inventor through this ancient pipe-notation,' especially as it is clear that he doesn't believe a word of it. Despite these small criticisms, the chapter on the bagpipes and its music is the first of the three on instrumental music which I feel sure many will regard as the best part of the book.

Orkney and Shetland come in for some informative treatment, making one eager to learn more. It is not too easy to come by authentic writing on this subject, and the natives of the northern islands may feel a little aggrieved that they should have received such a small allocation of space.

One last grouse and I have done. I have already alluded to the Long Psalm-tunes; these and their successors receive rather scant attention in the last and shortest chapter of the book; yet many people, aware of their existence, would have liked to see at least one of them in notation alongside the plain form, so that 'the melody twining round the notes of its Psalter original like a Celtic knot-pattern' might become more of a reality to them. I do not say that Mr Collinson's book would be the appropriate place for a full discussion of the connection between the psalm-tune ornamentation and that of *piobaireachd*, let alone possible analogies with other folk-cultures, but I do feel that there was scope for a little more stimulating treatment of what is, no doubt, a border region of the country which the author is helping us to explore.

The photographs are splendid, and it is a real pleasure nowadays to be able to say that there are very few misprints (though I came on a wrong key-signature on page 24, and one or two other trifles).

No book of such importance as this can fail to arouse some critical comments from a careful reader; I hope that my few reservations will not make anybody feel doubts as to the need not only of reading the book, but of having a copy at hand for quick reference; for it is one of the major services that Mr Collinson has done us, that he has made it easy for us to get at the essentials of his subject, and (equally important) has lavishly provided us with bibliographical information whereby those who want to dig more deeply in any particular patch may find their tools.

CEDRIC THORPE DAVIE

The Painted Ceilings of Scotland: 1550-1650 by M. R. Apted. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Edinburgh 1966. III pp. 50s.

This is not a monograph with illustrations but a very superior picture book. As that it is very good value for money—105 excellent photographs, six in colour, forming an anthology not only of painted ceilings, but of the types of buildings which contained them, the construction of the ceilings, the state they were in when they were discovered and the action taken to conserve them. Full use is made of the size of page, so that one is not annoyed by large white, wasted spaces as so often happens. The chapters deal with the right subjects, but they are woefully short and one has the feeling that a lot of information has been kept back so that the size of type could be large and that the picture book buyer would not be bored with too much detail. It may be pointless to criticise a book for not being what the reviewer thinks it ought to have been, but when the Ministry of Public Buildings and Works and the Stationery Office have produced such a pleasing book, surely they could have gone a little further and given the reader a full bibliography, a full list of buildings and museums in Scotland containing painted decoration and a more professional index. Dr Apted has written at length in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries* on individual ceilings and Ian Hodkinson has contributed a most interesting study of the Prestongrange ceiling to the *East Lothian Transactions*. The reader should also have been told that the conservation work is being carried out at Stenhouse House, the centre jointly used by the Ministry and the National Trust which owes its origin to the need to do something about all the ceilings discovered in recent years.

Leaving aside the medieval wall paintings, what do the ceilings tell us of life in Scotland between 1550 and 1650? Primarily that it was more colourful for the landowners and merchants who had only to look up from the carved oak armchairs in their public rooms or peer out from their carved oak beds to feast their eyes on a riot of colour—the blue sky and fleecy clouds of Cullen, the prancing monarchs of Stobhall and the birds, fruit and flowers of Northfield. Even biblical texts and pictures were presented in a colourful way at Dean House (Edinburgh) and at Traquair. But the ceilings tell us practically nothing directly, for the buildings, the costumes and the animals (with one possible exception) are not Scottish. The Kinneil Priest and Levite are not Scots; the details of the Skelmorlie scenes are not Scottish; only the heraldry and the inscriptions are native. Conversely this means that Scots learned about other places from them, for the sources were foreign, though Dr Apted claims that the painters were not. The sources were 'book illustrations mostly imported from the Continent'. Further research will reveal what more of these sources were, and, almost as important, how long they took to reach Scotland. Did they remain the same throughout the century, and are there no signs of direct copying from English or European ceilings in this or another medium?

Scots were too fond of heraldry at that time not to take advantage of the bright colours and display their Arms prominently among the foreign designs. Very Scottish

too is the combination of initials and Arms (particularly the pairing of the husband's and wife's initials), as found on wood and stone carvings and in embroideries. The placing of the initials on the entwined hearts on the Earls hall ceiling is a pleasing variation, not known to me elsewhere, on the very Scottish love of the heart shape.

The biblical texts and pictures have already been mentioned; both were to be expected in the context of Scottish life in the century after the Reformation. That the Renaissance tradition of interest in Classical themes would persist was perhaps not so obvious, but here are Diogenes in his barrel, the Muses, the Sibyls and the Siege of Troy. Was it a real interest, or was it just a case of slavish copying from the models? That might have been answered if painted woodwork had passed into folk art, but it is useless to look for the influence of the ceilings for two good reasons. They were seen by relatively few people, since unlike the earlier Church paintings they were private, not public, decorations. And the European and English fashion for plaster ceilings reached Scotland little more than halfway through the painted century, and it was the plaster ceilings which literally obliterated the paintings, most of which were not seen again until last century. The fashion for painted woodwork did not spread to furniture and this may have contributed to Scotland's failure to develop a peasant art on Scandinavian lines.

STUART MAXWELL

Northwards by Sea by Gordon Donaldson. John Grant, Booksellers, Edinburgh 1966. 113 pp. 36 photographs, 6 plans. 30s.

It is possible that inside every scholar there is a seaman struggling to get out. Moreover since voyaging northwards by sea has filled a certain part of my own life, and since this is the book (well, perhaps not *quite*) which I myself wanted to write, it is also possible that outside every seaman there is a scholar struggling to get *in*.

From this hard-luck story of one who is now an academic longshoreman, one or two lessons can be learnt. First of all—as Henry David Thoreau pointed out in his 'Walden'—since it is now admirable to profess because it was once admirable to live, let us have more professors writing books of this sort and good luck to them if they beat the longshoremen to it. Second, it confirms my long-held conviction that seafaring and scholarship have much in common and this especially in emotional matters like departures, horizons, landfalls and longings:

ac ā hafað longunge se þe on lagu fundað.

Clearly, Professor Donaldson (the scholar of my parable) is afflicted in some such way as this. In addition to his conspicuous scholarly achievements he obviously cares greatly about the northern islands, and the ships that ply thereto. And so do I. But, of course, different ships, different longsplices. My first reflection after reading his generally excellent book is that we do not have longings for exactly the same things. Although he

writes concisely and with an excellent command of technical terminology, he writes mostly like an agent or a supercargo (sometimes, indeed, like a professor) rather than like a seafarer. He does, it is true, pay some attention to the ships, but my criticism is that he is so occupied with business (including the tourist business) that he altogether forgets the great waters. It is significant that, although he gives us six ship plans, he gives us no chart.

Hence, of Sumburgh Roost, the Shalds of Foula, Liddel Eddy, the Fall of Warness, the Wells of Swona, the Swelkie, the Bores of Duncansby—the very names would charm a man away from the counting-house—or even just the rate of the tidal stream off Buchanness at ordinary springs, there is no mention. Even the least nautical of Professor Donaldson's readers might have been persuaded to take an intelligent interest in the difference between H.W.F. and C. at Kirkwall and Leith had it been pointed out to him. Furthermore, he is not very keen on allowing things actually to *happen* at sea. Collisions, strandings, and total losses appear as rather subordinate material, and sometimes dramatic incidents which all the world knows about, do not appear at all. Thus the *Earl Thorfinn* is sent to the breakers at Bo'ness without mentioning, or even hinting at, her desperate passage in that fateful year of '53 when, in trying to make Stronsay out of Kirkwall in a north-easterly storm, she failed to come up into the wind, tried again for Sanday, failed again to come up, and finally ran along to the Start, bore away and ran before it to Aberdeen. Not a word of this. All that he says of the poor old *Thorfinn* (and her sister the *Sigurd*) is that they 'being coal-burning steamers were outmoded and increasingly uneconomic to run' (p. 49). We all know how shipowners feel about the price of coal, but couldn't *someone* spare a word for the works of the Lord and His wonders in the deep?

However, having said all this, I now propose to absolve Professor Donaldson completely because we are all so indebted to him for recording, with care and accuracy (and in spite of such immense factual losses as the records of the North of Scotland Shipping Company by bombing in the Second World War) such close-packed information about Services (Part I) and Ships (Part II) to the north of Scotland and the northern islands. His record is historical and brings us down to the present day. Above all, we cannot thank him enough for gathering together, in one place, his thirty-six splendid photographs. These alone are worth the money and collectors and ship-spotters will be delighted, even if he only gives us ships from the main Company. Thus, none of the vessels of the Orkney Steam Navigation Company is shown, or those of Messrs Bremner on Scapa Flow, or yet Messrs Dennison's old *Iona* (seventy when she retired) and new *Klydon* (the fourth of that name and incorrectly given as *Kyldon* in the book). No sailing vessels are shown. Professor Donaldson might, perhaps, have referred his readers to little works like Sinclair Ross's *Sail Ships of Orkney* (Kirkwall 1954). There is, incidentally, no bibliography and no index.

Professor Donaldson does not tell us exactly what has had to be extrapolated, or filled out from other sources, because of the loss of the records, and occasionally he has

to be vaguer than, as a good historian, he would wish to be. Hence, for the middle of last century and in dealing with the uncertainty of the service all he can permit himself to say is that 'it may well be that steamships were proving unsatisfactory in those northern seas in winter' (p. 18). It occurs to me that up there, there was no dramatic (or melodramatic) *Forfarshire* incident to demonstrate, in a blaze of publicity, the failings of boilers and paddle-boxes.

In his Part II, *The Ships*, which are listed alphabetically with notes on each, I find myself wishing that the actual data had been given in a suitable Appendix and more comment and generalisation—on build, type, working, manning—given in the text. Thus, the incredible incident of the grounding of the second *St Sumniva* at Fidra in 1934 (p. 103) could have been given less as a casual anecdote and more as a serious consideration of how such things can happen. Was there no enquiry? I find it most unsatisfactory merely to be told that 'the chief officer omitted to alter course at the May Island'. I would also like to know what has been learnt, in the long history of the North of Scotland Company, of ships, seas, tides and weather. The body of knowledge must by now be vast and obviously it is not the sort which can be bombed out of existence. Are we ever to know anything about it? There are lesser matters too. Professor Donaldson tells us, rightly, that the ships are designed to work starboard side to, but I wish he had told us of another matter, the history of which I do not know but it is obviously a rule in the Company, namely, that the second officer is in charge of the for'ard watch and the chief officer of the after watch. This is not the usual practice. Also, what is the history of ticket-checking (by the chief officer) on board? The passengers for'ard in the *Forfarshire* aforesaid were much cheered when Captain Humble appeared in person, in worsening weather, to collect their fares.

I wish such things had been included. But, excluding the alphabetical lists of ships and accompanying notes (24 pages) there are only eight pages of general discussion on the ships, and their working, and of these four are taken up with a discussion of the provenance of the saints which compose their names. One cannot quite pass over Professor Donaldson's hagiology for it is very interesting and will be appreciated by many who like to know in whose company they are travelling. There was that wretched *St Giles*, for example: 'One can see that *St Giles* can hardly have been considered a lucky name, for the first ship of that name was wrecked after only ten years' service and the second was sold after another ten years' (p. 80). But, in general (see especially p. 20) the saints have served the North of Scotland people well—as well, perhaps, as the shipmasters with whom they appear to have something in common, for even among the masters there were those 'who had and those who lacked the special flair, the touch of instinct or genius which went beyond any mere calculations' (p. 112). I am ready enough to believe in special flair, but 'instinct' in scamen has, I think, been overworked. I fancy it was always rather lubberly to believe in it. Besides, what does it mean?

Finally, on terminology and like a niggling dialectologist I must tell Professor Donaldson that there are no 'stokers' (p. 32) in the Merchant Service. The other people call

them that, but we say 'firemen'. And he is wrong to call a 'well' an 'open hatch' (p. 76). No hatch is 'open' on the main deck and a 'well', by definition, is on the main deck between, say, a topgallant fo'castle and a midship house. (He may, of course, mean storm hatches on a shelter deck which are often left open.) The word is correctly used, however, on page 85 where the first *Earl of Zetland* is said to have had 'an open well surrounding the hatch (forward), for convenience of working with flitboats'. Incidentally, what Professor Donaldson calls a 'conventional' coaster (the *Amelia*, Plate 29, for example) has a short well for'ard and a long quarter-deck.

If, as some choice spirits among seamen know, the home and short sea trades have their own peculiar fascination, they also bear their own reproach. They invite, from arrogant deep-water men, indecent comparison with trains and railway-lines, and since Professor Donaldson insists, rightly enough, on the steamship in the northern seas as 'the most important revolution in their social and economic situation which the islands have ever experienced' (p. 25), I fear he comes even nearer to laying a permanent way to Lerwick in a close parallel with the English railway revolution. Therefore, although I like his book enormously I must say again that I wish he had said something of the waters. I wish, so to speak, he had covered his tracks. For, through all revolutions—as Conrad observed long ago—this is what the sea does and what the sea demands.

J. Y. MATHER

Books Received

Some of these books will be reviewed later in *Scottish Studies*

- Scott's Novels: The Plotting of Historic Survival* by Francis R. Hart.
University Press of Virginia, Virginia 1966. Pp. 372. \$6.75
- Estate Villages: A Study of the Berkshire Villages of Ardington and Lockinge* by M. A. Havinden (with Contributions by D. S. Thornton and P. D. Wood)
Lund Humphries, for the Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading, London 1966.
Pp. 214. 50s
- John Soulby, printer, Ulverston*. A Study of the work printed by John Soulby, father and son, between 1796 and 1827 by Michael Tweymair with an account of Ulverston at the time by William Rollinson.
Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading, London 1966. Pp. 53
- Thomas Seget: A Scottish Friend of Szymon Szymonowicz* by Otakar Odložilík.
Reprinted from *The Polish Review* XI.1 (1966), New York. Pp. 38
- Oxford Book of Scottish Verse* edited by John MacQueen and Tom Scott.
Oxford University Press, London 1966. Pp. 633. 45s
- The Historic Architecture of Scotland* by John G. Dunbar.
Batsford, London 1966. Pp. 268+illustrations. 5 gns
- A Bibliography of South Asian Folklore* by Edwin Capers Kirkland. Folklore Institute Monograph Series, vol. 21, 1967.
Publication of Indiana University, Indiana. Mouton & Co., The Hague. Pp. 291. Dutch Guilders 36-, \$10

- The Iron Age in Northern Britain* edited by A. L. T. Rivet.
Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 1966. Pp. 156+illustrations. 2 gns.
- Pagan Celtic Britain: Studies in Iconography and Tradition* by Anne Ross.
Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1967. Pp. 433+96 pp. illustrations. 6 gns
- Studia Celtica*, vol. 1, edited by J. E. Caerwyn Williams.
University of Wales Press, Cardiff, for the Board of Celtic Studies, University of Wales. Pp. 169
- Irish Wake Amusements* by Seán Ó Súilleabháin.
Mercier Press, Cork 1967. Pp. 188. 8s 6d
- The Early History of Islay (500-1726)* by W. D. Lamont.
Dundee 1966. Pp. 90. 8s
- The Islands of Ireland* by Thomas H. Mason.
Mercier Press, Cork 1967. Pp. 142. 15s
- The Years of the Great Test 1926-39* edited by Francis MacManus. (The Thomas Lectures.)
Mercier Press for Radio Telefís Éireann. Cork 1967. Pp. 184. 10s
- The Mercier Book of Old Irish Street Ballads*, vol. 1, edited by James N. Healy.
Mercier Press, Cork 1967. Pp. 368. 18s
- Folk Music Journal*.
English Folk Dance and Song Society, London 1966. Pp. 62
- Stromness. 150 years a Burgh 1817-1967*, by James A. Troup and Frank Eunson.
Stromness 1967. Pp. 32. 4s
- Folklore Fellows Communications* vol. lxxxiii.
Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, Academia Scientiarum Fennica. Helsinki 1966. Pp. 84. 8 mk
- Koninklijke Belgische Commissie Voor Volkskunde Jaarboek XIV, XV*.
Ministerie van Nationale Opvoeding en Cultuur, Brussels 1964, 1965. Pp. 78, pp. 122
- Volkskunde-Atlas voor Nederlanden vlaams-Belgie*. Commentaar Aflevering II.
Standard-Bockhandel, Antwerp 1965. Pp. 220
- The New History of Cumnock* by John Strawhorn.
Town Council of Cumnock, Glasgow 1966. Pp. 255. 20s
- Local History in Scotland* edited by J. B. Barclay. Report of Residential Course at Carberry Tower
19-21 Nov. 1965.
University of Edinburgh, Department of Adult Education and Extra-Mural Studies, 1966.
Pp. 42. 4s
- Robert Henryson: a Study of the Major Narrative Poems* by John MacQueen.
Clarendon Press, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1967. Pp. 239. 30s