

Book Reviews

Twelve Modern Scottish Poets, edited by Charles King. University of London, 1971. Pp. 205. £1.25 (school edn. 90p).

This well produced volume is primarily intended for use in schools and as such proves well designed for its market. The output of the twelve poets concerned—Edwin Muir, Hugh MacDiarmid, William Soutar, George Bruce, Robert Garioch, Norman MacCaig, Sydney Goodsir Smith, Tom Scott, Edwin Morgan, Alexander Scott, George Mackay Brown and Ian Crichton Smith—is represented in reasonable depth, allowing the student to come away with something more than the usual frustratingly brief communication of anthologies. The editor, who worked in close association with most of the poets concerned, has obviously been governed in his choice to some extent by the suitability of poems for a youthful audience and by their likely adaptability as teaching vehicles. Given these limitations, it seems to me that he has done a good job in this direction and that the schoolrooms of Scotland may become livelier and more interesting places after the introduction of his anthology.

If there must be criticism, then I confess a regret that Mr King and his committee did not feel able to represent—even by one poet—the work of the younger makars. It may be that they judged their band of twelve to have reached a poetic maturity not yet attained by Robin Fulton, D. M. Black and others. Against this, one might suggest that the inclusion of one of this group could have obviated the impression that our modern makars are alive, thanks, but middle-aged (the youngest represented poet is 43), and instead transmitted the sense of continuity so necessary to a thriving poetic tradition. Equally, it seems to me that in some cases the young scholars would find themselves more naturally in sympathy with poets closer to their own generation. Whether some dominies would share this viewpoint is another matter, but then they have already been put in an embarrassing situation by Mr King's selection of 'Garioch's Reponne till George Buchanan'!

Secondly, although Mr King's brief introductions to each poet are masterpieces in the art of quickly establishing bearings for the student, I was less happy about the notes. If the principle governing these is indeed difficulty, as indicated on page 13, one wonders why, say, MacDiarmid's 'The kind of poetry I want' with all the complex problems of literary theory it raises, is passed over in silence, while Edwin Morgan's self-explanatory 'Aberdeen Train' is re-explained. Moreover, does it really help an understanding of Alexander Scott's 'Doun wi' dirt' to give us a list of the scatological works of the authors referred to or to compare the plight of Edwin Morgan's man in

the coffee bar to that of a mountaineer on Everest? The first is surely an instance of critically overweighing a slight piece, the second a case of re-stating the obvious through a less striking imagistic association.

But mostly these are quibbles of the sort any critic bringing his own viewpoint to a varied collection of verse can raise easily and without universal force. Perhaps too the editor might fairly counter that his experience of what is and is not required by way of explication for the schoolroom is far greater than that of your reviewer. The fact remains that we now have a reliable means of introducing the upper forms at school to the lyricism of Soutar, the sheer brilliance of MacDiarmid, the wry Scottish humour of Garioch, the striking imagery of MacCaig and that unique brand of erudition and compassion, which is Edwin Morgan. Our debt—and, one hopes, theirs—to Mr King is great.

R. D. S. JACK

Gaelic by Roderick MacKinnon. Teach Yourself Books, London 1971. Pp. 324. 55p.

The lack of an up-to-date book for assistance in learning Gaelic has been a source of frustration to learners and teachers for many years. There seems to be a dearth of people with the requisite combination of ability, time and inclination to produce such a book. At last, Mr Roderick MacKinnon, a schoolmaster in Perth who learned the Gaelic of Skye as his first language, has taken on this onerous responsibility.

The purpose of *Teach Yourself Gaelic* is to help students 'to acquire a reasonably competent knowledge' of the language. Mr MacKinnon claims that 'a course of some thirty to forty lessons will enable the average student to tackle successfully the learners' "O" Grade examination' in the Scottish Certificate of Education. The lessons should be seen in that context. The success or failure of the method adopted will be proved by the individual student. In the introduction, the author warns that the language has its own peculiar difficulties. Even so, some of the individual lessons are perhaps too comprehensive, covering a great deal of new ground and vocabulary without enough practice in usage. A student confining himself to this method of learning needs a good retentive memory and must be prepared to work very diligently.

The introduction to Lesson I contains a list of phonetic devices which are used throughout the book. These might not satisfy a phonetician, but they are adequate for the purposes of the book, although I feel that one or two descriptions are not quite accurate. For example 'b' and 'g' are given as sounding in Gaelic the same as in English. This is incorrect. The description of 'the back l' as similar to that in *hall* or *wool* is misleading. The use of [ə], which is 'an indeterminate sound as in the second syllables of *absent*, *infant*', in the second syllables of the words *aran*, *sporan* is also misleading, for in these instances the sound is not indeterminate.

The first two lessons deal with the simple sentence, introducing pronouns, prepositions, nouns and adjectives, and giving plenty of sentences for translation from English into Gaelic and Gaelic into English. The layout of the lessons continues on similar lines. The book deals with the various difficulties in a different order from that of previous Gaelic grammar books, and breaks with conventional practice by introducing passages of conversation and exercises in which blanks are to be filled in. Grammatical features are shown, not with lists of declensions and conjugations, but with examples. The sentences used are credible—not of the ‘A hen is not a fish’ variety—and fairly up-to-date. *A bheil?*, which is colloquially used for the question form of the substantive verb, is given instead of the conventional *Am bheil?* and English words which fit into the orthography are realistically introduced—for example, *gas*, *peansail*.

At the end of the book the student will find a useful glossary running to forty-four pages, passages for reading and synopses of the regular, irregular and defective verb as well as paradigms of prepositional pronouns. Here also the learners’ ‘O’ grade examination paper for 1970 is reproduced. Even considering that the type of examination for which the author is catering may be a restricting factor, there is room for improvement in this book. Long lists of sentences, for example, could be replaced by passages for interpretation. But such a production—in a practical, tidy format—is a matter for celebration after so many lean years, and Mr MacKinnon deserves our admiration and congratulation.

MORAG MACLEOD

A Compleat Theory of the Scots Highland Bagpipe by Joseph MacDonald, with a new introduction by Seumas MacNeill. Republished by S. R. Publishers, Wakefield. Pp. 36. £.2.

This book is in fact a reprint of the 1927 reprint of the original 1803 edition published for Joseph’s brother, Patrick Macdonald.

The original MS (now in the library of the University of Edinburgh) is undoubtedly an extremely important document. It contains, as the title page states, ‘All the Shakes, Introductions, Graces, Cuttings which are peculiar to this instrument. . . . With all the Terms of Art in which this instrument was originally taught by its first Masters and Composers in the Islands of Sky and Mull. Also a full Account of the Time, Style, Taste and Composition of true Pipe Music . . .’ *etc.* With the aid of diagrams and musical examples Joseph MacDonald explains in meticulous detail the technique and art of the Gaelic pipers of the eighteenth century. He also records, for the first time ever in Staff Notation, parts of the grounds of a number of Pibrochs, twelve of which are readily identifiable. He then goes on to deal with the playing of pipe reels and jigs for dancing, commenting briefly in passing on the essential differences between pipe tunes and those for the fiddle.

It is a sad fact, however, that the 1803 publication and both subsequent Reprints represent a gross corruption of the original text. There are errors or omissions in 70 of the 86 musical illustrations. In at least two cases (pp. 20–21 and p. 32) whole blocks of music type have been misplaced by the printers thus making Joseph MacDonald's accompanying explanations read like nonsense. Wrong notes are everywhere in abundance and sometimes whole bars have been omitted. Some strange spelling mistakes add to the confusion (e.g. Iuludh instead of Tuludh—the name of an important type of Pibroch variation frequently called Taorluath these days). In places the original text has been altered considerably and on page 27 there appear four paragraphs, discussing among other things the differing popularity of two-drone and three-drone pipes, which were never in the original MS.

Matters are not improved by the inclusion of a page of corrections (p. 35) in the Reprints. They are misleading because they cover only a few of the many mistakes appearing among the first 19 pages of a 36-page book. Furthermore the corrections are often of little value because of their vagueness. For instance, one correction to a fingering chart reads: 'Various holes should appear between the various relative notes rather than as they are shown.' Those who would like to learn more of the background to the original MS and the 1803 and 1927 books are advised to read Mairi A. MacDonald's article 'The Joseph MacDonald Theory' in the *Scots Magazine* of December 1953 (New Series, vol. lx, no. 3.) where she suggests that there once existed a faulty copy of the Manuscript and that this copy was used by the printers.

One welcomes Reprints of source material, especially something as important as an eighteenth-century piping treatise, for, as Seumas MacNeill puts it in his stimulating foreword to the new edition, 'Literature on the subject is distressingly scarce'. But this particular Reprint is of little use to anyone as it stands, and it is difficult to say what the publishers could have done to make it more useful without modifying drastically the original publication, in which case it would no longer be a straightforward reprint. They could have printed a comprehensive list of *errata* which would have necessarily run to many pages and entailed the preparation of fresh diagrams and music blocks, but the result would have been most inconvenient to use. They could have reprinted, but substituted the hopelessly corrupt diagrams and music with facsimiles from the original manuscript—for they are carefully penned and contain only a few obvious errors. The least the reader could have expected would have been a word of warning, whether in the Foreword or elsewhere. The fact that not even this has been done is surely inexcusable. As it is, no-one can use this book for serious study without first consulting the original MS or a photocopy and making his own numerous corrections. It would then be a debatable matter whether or not the Reprint were as easy to read as Joseph's original.

PETER COOKE

The Industrial Archaeology of Galloway by J. Donnachie. David & Charles, Newton Abbot 1971. Pp. 271. £3.50.

Galloway is a reasonably well-defined region of Scotland, bordering on Cumberland at one end, and at the other well placed for sea-links with Ireland, England, and Western Scotland. But in spite of much coming and going both ways, in spite of the military road built in 1765 as part of a through route to Portpatrick and thence to Ireland, in spite of the movement of men and cattle along the drove roads, the area has retained its individuality without, however, remaining static.

On the face of it, it appears surprising that Mr Donnachie should have chosen such an area of pastoral and dairying emphases for a first regional study of Scottish industrial archaeology. The logic becomes apparent, however, when it is remembered that water power is readily available and that this was what drove the machines in the early days of the industrial revolution. At the same time, the income from the cattle trade gave the landowners and entrepreneurs a financial basis on which they could build. Mr Donnachie's book tells the story of the success and failure or modification of these efforts, and shows how they can be illustrated by a careful study of the surviving three-dimensional evidence and its documentary background. To some extent, the early 'rural-industrial' phase based on water power became fossilised in Galloway, since it did not have the natural resources for participation in the big-scale technological developments of the nineteenth century. A study like this, therefore, has a special value for the pointers it can give to the history of the earlier industrial period, now largely obscured in most other places. It exemplifies the value of in-depth regional research for general historical purposes.

It appears throughout that there was a close integration between industry and agriculture. The growing of grain, which in the first half of the nineteenth century became an important export, led to the multiplication of water driven meal mills to about 140 by 1850. Of these, only a handful survives. There were also a few tower type wind-mills, and in the more isolated areas numbers of corn-drying kilns appeared on the farms. By the end of the eighteenth century, William Gladstone of Castle Douglas had already built over 200 farm mills.

Breweries and distilleries were also widespread, though only one remains at Bladnock near Wigtown. Their numbers were partly due to the grain growing emphases and they further stimulated the growth of increased acreages of barley.

Tanning and leatherworking, already well established in the seventeenth century, were logical extensions of the emphasis on cattle. By 1825, there were twenty-five tanneries, nine of which were concentrated on Dumfries. By the 1870s only four remained in operation, and now the skinworks at Langholm is the last survivor of this old tradition.

The timber reserves of Galloway were an important source for the supply of charcoal, much of it used up for the Cumberland and North Lancashire iron furnaces. The

woods tied up with the tanning industry by providing oak bark for processing the hides, and the clog-maker's craft, still carried on in Dumfries, also represents a link between wood and leather, with an outlet for the clogs in the brewing industry. Estate planting brought a second phase of activity to the forests of Galloway, marked after 1800 by the rapid spread of water-powered sawmills, of which one is still working at Drumburn. A lot of the wood was made into bobbins for the textile trade. Forestry is now a key industry in the south-west.

The processing of textiles was probably responsible for the biggest-scale industrial developments, requiring the greatest infusions of capital. Galloway wool had a good reputation, and supported a number of small-scale production units with water-driven waulk mills, but most of the spinning, carding and weaving remained as cottage industries as in the eighteenth century. Indeed, hand-loom weaving lasted here till the second half of the nineteenth century. Wool mills attracted the attention of the improving lairds, 'who saw in them a means of diversifying their interests from the agrarian sector, and of establishing a settled population in planned villages on their estates' (p. 74). Amongst the products were the widely famed Crawick carpets, made from the coarse wool of moorland sheep; hosiery, originating as a domestic craft; and tweed.

In this field, mechanisation came relatively late, matching the development of the cotton mills (partly financed by Yorkshire business men in the cattle trade) which exemplify an industrial revolution without steam. The linen industry also moved from the status of a domestic activity to that of a country craft but not much more. In every respect, Galloway appears as an area whose natural resources were exploited in the water-powered phase of the industrial revolution, and had enough indigenous strength to keep going in this way for some considerable time after technological developments had shifted the centres of production.

Quarrying also played an important role, stimulated first by the dyke-building enclosure period and the erection of improved farms and steadings. The nineteenth-century village of Dalbeattie owes its existence mainly to the Craginair granite, thousands of tons of which were transported by sea to build, for example, the Liverpool docks. Railway developments gave a further impetus to this industry.

Coalmining was largely confined to the Sanquhar and Canonbie districts of Dumfriesshire. It was also stimulated by the building of railways, and one village, Rowanburn, owes its existence to coal. As frequently exemplified in this book for Galloway, a study of the villages of Scotland that originated or were expanded in the late eighteenth to the nineteenth century would provide an excellent index to the country's social and economic history.

Associated with the coal measures was the quarrying and burning of lime as a fertiliser, and in particular the Closeburn limeworks had national importance, for it was the source of field lime for many parts of Scotland. The large numbers of small lime kilns in the Rhins and Lochryan districts is clear evidence of the local farmers'

desire to make full use of this important source of improvement, for grazing as much as for crops.

Small brick and tile-works were also numerous—it was, in fact, in south-west Scotland that handmade horse-shoe draining tiles first began to be made in the 1820s—and metal ores were mined, chiefly lead (Wanlockhead and Leadhills), zinc, copper, and iron, the latter perhaps in part the source of the metal that was turned into spades and shovels by the spade-making firm of James Rigg & Sons, Sanquhar, established there in 1772 (a small-scale industry not mentioned by Mr Donnachie).

All this information is seen by the writer in its relationship to transport and communications by land and sea, to which he devotes a final chapter. Here, and throughout, there are adequate distribution maps, making the book easily usable by travellers in Galloway who wish to use his 43-page inventory of sites. Numerous manuscript sources are also cited and should certainly be used for further detailed study. The reference system in the book, it may be noted, is a little awkward, since the reader has to turn from the text to the Notes and References section, and from there to the Bibliography.

Mr Donnachie has taken his subject a good step forward, by taking a limited area, and by seeing what it had to say for itself. The interpretation of documentary data is integrated with the study of three-dimensional remains to provide a worthwhile contribution to historical studies in general.

ALEXANDER FENTON

Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture by R. W. Brunskill. Faber and Faber, London 1970. Pp. 230. £2.50.

Vernacular architecture as a subject of study has probably been carried further forward on a systematic basis at the Manchester University School of Architecture than at any other equivalent institute in Britain. The present volume derives from over twenty years' experience of recording and research that has attempted to harness not only the activities of a relatively small number of trained staff and students, but also 'members of archaeological societies and extra-mural classes who had no architectural training but considerable enthusiasm'. In its straightforward, logical layout, in its step-by-step progression through the subject, in its clarity of exposition, it will undoubtedly serve to stimulate and guide beginners into a deeper understanding of vernacular architecture, as well as helping in the interpretation of relevant documentary sources. Although the book deals primarily with England, its method of approach could nevertheless be readily applied in Scotland, with minor modifications to suit local conditions, especially since Dr Brunskill realises clearly that at the vernacular level, social and economic history, farming in the country and commerce in the towns, is as much part of a building as the architecture itself. It is, indeed, this element that permits

'vernacular' to be defined, and by setting together function, size, and period, Dr Brunskill has evolved the useful concept of a 'vernacular threshold' which diminishes rapidly the further back one goes in time, since relatively few vernacular buildings are of any great age. If this concept were applied to rural Scotland, one would find the vernacular threshold not so much tapering off gradually as coming to an abrupt halt in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, when there began in most areas an almost total renewal of farm buildings. At the same time, the 'vernacular zone' between the 'vernacular' and 'polite' thresholds will almost certainly turn out to form a much broader band than in England.

Dr Brunskill has arranged his book in an orderly, architectural fashion which makes it a pleasure to handle and easy to use. The essential data, carefully selected, appears on one page, usually with an appropriate photograph, and on the opposite page there are captioned diagrams that amount to an illustrated dictionary of vernacular architecture. The sequence covers wall construction and materials (stone, brick, earth and clay, timber, wattle), roofing with its forms of inner framing and outer covering (thatch, flags, slate, tiles), plans and sections, general architectural details such as windows and doors, farm buildings with their layout and functional needs, including accommodation for livestock (but an important topic, accommodation for farm workers, is not dealt with), urban and minor industrial buildings in towns and villages, and a section on English influence in the vernacular architecture in North America. There is also a series of maps showing the distribution in England of different walling and roofing materials in relation to the underlying geology, and the fact that such maps can now be constructed is ample testimony to the range of the recording activities already completed by Dr Brunskill's School. Like all such distribution maps, they must be treated as provisional in as far as they simply reflect the state of knowledge at the time of publication, and in their generalised form cannot reflect variations or limitations in the abilities and objectives of the original recorders, but they have real value if used with caution.

Though consummating many years of work, this is still a pioneering work, for vernacular architecture has not yet received the academic attention that it deserves, especially in countries such as Scotland where the vast bulk of the indigenous architecture falls within the vernacular heading. It cannot be stressed too often or too strongly that our buildings are the longest surviving three-dimensional indexes to the history of the country that exist at the present day. They require study and interpretation as much as, and indeed along with, historical documents. This is a task that must not be delayed, for as Dr. Brunskill rightly says, they 'make up a large but swiftly diminishing part of our present environment, they must be studied now, by this generation, or never'.

ALEXANDER FENTON

Books and Records Received

(Some of these may be reviewed later in *Scottish Studies*)

BOOKS

- Directory of Former Scottish Communities* edited by Ian H. Adams, Scottish Record Society New Series 2, Edinburgh 1971. Pp. 281
- Tradition & Folklore, A Welsh View* by Iorwerth C. Peate, Faber & Faber, London 1972. Pp. 147. £3.50.
- In Search of Scottish Ancestry* by Gerald Hamilton-Edwards, Phillimore, Chichester. Pp. 233. £2.75.
- Enclosures and Open Fields. A Bibliography* by J. G. Brewer, The British Agricultural History Society 1972. Pp. 32. 50p.
- The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland: National Monuments Record of Scotland Report 1966-71* Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Edinburgh 1972. Pp. 14 + 15 photographs. 30p.
- Oxford Paperback English Texts: Sir Walter Scott, Selected Poems* edited by Thomas Crawford. Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, London 1972. Pp. 302. £1.30.
- Hrolf Gautreksson* translated by Herman Pálsson and Paul Edwards (The New Saga Library). Southside, Edinburgh 1972. Pp. 150. 95p.

GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

- Sir Walter Scott Bi-centenary Exhibition, Parliament House, Edinburgh 1971: Readings from Scott* (by Ian Gilmour and Meta Forrest) and *Theme for a Bi-centenary* (by Martin Ellis, organ). Published by the Trustees for the Scott Bi-centenary Exhibition, Edinburgh 1971. (Mono SE 1971).
- Isla St. Clair sings traditional Scots Songs* Tangent Records. Edinburgh 1972 (TGA 112 Stereo).

Corrigendum

Vol. 15, p. 133, Fig. 2: numbers 6, 23, 12 and 17 should have been drawn 2 cm higher (vertically), in the segment bounded by circles 8, 31 and 40.

Anthony Jackson