# *Book and Record Reviews*

*The Bagpipe—the History of a Musical Instrument* by Francis Collinson. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London and Boston 1975. Pp. xx+257. £7.50.

A new full-length book on the bagpipe is a notable event by any standards, and this one deserves to be welcomed by all lovers of the pipes and pipe music, as well as by the more academic students of Scottish music and tradition. And yet it makes curiously unsatisfactory reading, for reasons which the author himself quite frankly confesses. His original intention was to write a book on the Scottish Highland bagpipe, with only a minimum of early historical introduction. But as is the way with introductions, this part of the work grew out of all proportion to the rest. The result is a book which though excellent in many places, ultimately lacks any clear sense of direction. The topics treated in detail are the reed pipes—not bagpipes—of antiquity; the rather thinly scattered historical evidences of bagpiping in the British Isles; and the history of the Highland bagpipe from its first appearance to the early part of the nineteenth century. The general development of bagpipes in relation to other instruments, and the place of the Highland bagpipe as a member of a wide and diverse family of instruments, are implied but never brought out into the foreground. There is little discussion of music and no actual examples of tunes; and technical details of pipe construction are confined to an appendix. Another appendix is a list of bagpipes in different countries, with some historical references. This is drawn mainly from the well-known monograph by Anthony Baines, and from earlier compilations: the later works of Marcuse (1964) and van der Meer (1964) seem to have been overlooked.

Chapter 1, 'Antiquity', is undoubtedly too long for its purpose, but it is not irrelevant to the story of the bagpipe. The points which are rightly stressed are that the pipes of antiquity, typified by the Greek *aulos*, were reed pipes, not flutes as translators persist in calling them, and that their sound must have had much in common with the wild and colourful tones of the later bagpipes. Moreover they were blown with continuous nasal inhalation, the player using his own cheeks as air reservoir while snatching a breath. But more could have been made of these facts by showing how this kind of playing still persists among horn-pipe players in many parts of the world and by discussing the character of their music. For as Baines observed 'the historical implication is that wind music no different from the more primitive kinds of bagpiping may have been familiar . . . two thousand years before the bag idea is first recorded'. It is this, rather than the occasional far-fetched comparison between ancient Greek and modern Scottish customs, which justifies any claim for continuity in the tradition of pipe-

playing. A curious omission in this chapter is the clearest known depiction of a bagpipe in antiquity, to which the author himself has called attention elsewhere (Collinson 1969; see also his note in the *Piping Times* Dec. 1970).

In Chapter 2, 'Britain after the Romans', Collinson follows the sensible plan of chronicling the appearance of the bagpipe in all four countries—England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland—in a single sequence, beginning with the first references to 'pipes' in Irish and Welsh texts and working through to the decline and disappearance of the bagpipe in England (outside Northumberland), with brief mentions of the appearance of two new forms, the Irish and Northumbrian bellows-blown pipes. An admitted problem is the use of the undifferentiated term 'pipe'—in the texts cited it is certainly not always a bagpipe and could just as well be a flute or shawm. But in one case Collinson has found irrefutable proof in the excellent picture, drawn from life *c.* 1770, of the town piper of Haddington marching with his bagpipe, the town drummer following after.

In the Irish section Collinson has been led sadly astray by his reliance on that most unreliable scholar, W. H. Grattan Flood. Without entering here into a dissertation on the subject, it is sufficient to say here that no-one has yet produced evidence of the term 'uillean pipes' being used before Flood himself introduced it in the early 1900s; and there is no trace of the instrument itself earlier than the eighteenth century.

The early history of the Scottish Highlands is of course shadowy in the extreme, and it must be said that the clarity of Chapter 3, 'The Great Highland Bagpipe', is not enhanced by the author's method, with its extensive quotation of secondary sources and of traditions for which there can be little foundation. For example, the 'Glen' bagpipes dated 1409 are described fully, and only afterwards admitted to be spurious; the 'tradition' of bagpipes being played at the Battle of the North Inch of Perth is introduced with a lengthy quotation from Scott and no word of his possible sources, and only afterwards is it acknowledged that early chronicles contain no such reference. The use of traditional material is indeed surprisingly uncritical. When for example we have numerous stories of the origin of the MacCrimmon family, it is not good enough simply to complain that none of them is 'verifiable'. What is required is some assessment of their relative value: Who told this story? When, and to whom? Has it been retold since? By no means all the assertions which have gathered around the bagpipe can justly be assigned the status of 'tradition'. The aim of the historian in this area should be to distinguish the original data (for what they are worth) from the romantic fiction of later writers.

But while one can easily find fault, one must also appreciate the difficulties confronting a writer grappling with such a peculiar subject—the first time it has been done for over seventy years. Considering the interest in bagpipes and pipe music which has existed now for some two centuries, the lack of really sound research on detailed aspects of the subject is extraordinary. Writing on bagpipes has been almost exclusively the province of the enthusiastic amateur and the results have been sometimes first-rate,

sometimes fair, and only too often deplorable. The pipers with practical, traditional knowledge who could have recorded their experience in writing, have been strangely reluctant to do so, and the academics who could have explored the relationships between piping and other musical traditions have not, until recently, shown any interest at all.

And against the criticisms one must also set the abundance of new material and exact references. Some of the most persistent errors in the older literature are cleared up, one hopes for the last time. The ghosts of the 'Roman' bagpipers at Richborough and Stanwix are laid to rest; and the peculiar tale of the Italian origin of the MacCrimmons is dealt with as well as could be expected in view of the exceptionally poor source material. In addition, we have confirmation of the existence of an Irish *piob mòr*, now unfortunately lost but formerly in the Musée de Cluny, Paris; an early reference by Edward Lhuyd to official pipers in the Highlands; citations of an old bagpipe-maker's account book; of a manuscript with two more piobaireachd in Gesto canntaireachd notation; and many other data hitherto buried in libraries and generally unknown.

So if this is not a perfect book, it is timely and relevant. It consolidates such research as is available, and it is essential reading for every student of the bagpipe and its music.

R. D. CANNON

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*Selected Reports in Ethnomusicology* volume 11, no. 1, general editor: Mantle Hood; special editor: P. Crossley-Holland. University of California, Los Angeles 1974. Pp. viii+175. $4.75.

This is part of a multi-volume work planned by Mantle Hood when he was director of the Institute of Ethnomusicology at the University of California, Los Angeles and now available from the Department of Music, U.C.L.A. into which the Institute has recently been absorbed. During the 1960s and early 1970s the Institute was one of the foremost centres of ethnomusicological research and training in the world with a large and distinguished staff and an emphasis in its teaching on practical performance of non-western music (in particular oriental music). The Reports themselves were intended to be 'progress reports of unusual depth and breadth on ethnomusicological theory,

methods, world areas and comparative analyses': volume II, no. 2 (in the press) will feature studies in different musics of south-east Asia.

The present volume is devoted to the Melograph Model C, a sophisticated piece of electronic machinery designed by Charles Seeger as an aid to musical analysis. The Melograph is a sound analyser that produces from live or tape-recorded material a graphic record of the three elements of sound, *i.e.* pitch, amplitude and spectrum (tone quality) and combines them with a time base on to 16 mm film which can then be viewed on a microfilm reader, projected on a screen, or processed further for reproduction in a variety of forms. This we are told and much more about the workings of the Melograph in an excellent opening article by Michael Moore, one of the recording technicians in the institute. The rest of the volume, lavishly illustrated with diagrams, musical transcriptions and melograms contains a series of short articles by eleven different scholars who have used the Melograph to throw light on aspects of vocal or instrumental music. Its usefulness is impressively demonstrated.

Two approaches are evident. One is that of the researcher who resorts to the Melograph in an attempt to solve a specific problem which cannot be solved by means of subjective transcriptions or less sophisticated machinery. For example, Morton's problem with a Thai lament was to establish the pitches sung by the voice—despite the fact that the pitch graph produced by the Model C Melograph is often the hardest of the three lines to read, because it consists of a series of dots which are sometimes rather diffusely scattered. For his pitch reference lines (horizontal lines running along that part of the melogram where pitch is graphed) he used the pitches of an equiheptatonic Thai xylophone and compared his vocal pitches with them. Morton knew that 'In the Thai lament style, then, the ear can perceive that pitches other than those of the fixed pitch system are used by the vocalist. The ear cannot judge accurately exactly where these pitches lie in regard to the fixed pitches or to the details of the vocal tone. Melograms show these clearly . . . '. Alice Moyle used the Melograph to examine relationships between pitch and loudness in the 'tumbling strains' (Sachs) of North Australian aboriginal songs: Walcott used it to make a spectral analysis of a peculiar style of overtone singing practised in Mongolia: Giles hoped to get spectral information on the acoustics of Javanese gongs and in particular the phenomenon of amplitude vibrato known to the Javanese as *ombak*.

The second approach is exemplified by Owens's application of the Melograph (to an alto saxophone jazz solo) more or less in the spirit of open enquiry: 'what can the Melograph tell me that I don't already know?' This is a perfectly valid approach if made with caution. For Owens the result was 'simultaneously a revelation and a frustration. It reveals much about complexities of time-values, deviations in pitch from the theoretical norm of equal temperament, subtleties of phrasing, variations in vibrato width and speed, and fluctuations in tempo that either elude the ear completely or defy precise aural conceptualization. On the other hand, it leaves many questions unanswered . . . Some of these questions may not even have been imagined prior to

studying the melogram'. The wealth of detail presented in a melogram is, it seems, both an advantage and a disadvantage. Unlike the human ear, the machine is not selective and one of the problems in interpreting the resulting melograms is to separate out those details which have significance for the performer, and his audience within the culture concerned, from those which do not.

None of the contributors attempted to use the Melograph purely as a substitute for more conventional European notation, though it was a search for a substitute which led Seeger at an early date to experiment with hand graphs and, in the 1950s, to invent his 'instantaneous music notator'. At the same time Olav Gurvin was working on a rather similar means of automatic transcription in Norway. This volume has, in fact, a Norwegian precursor in Dahlback's *New Methods of Vocal Folk Music Research* (Oslo 1958) where machine transcriptions were also used in a study of the singing style of 125 Norwegian folk singers. Both books are powerful testimonies to the usefulness of machine transcription in musical analysis.

PETER COOKE

*Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada: A Study of Cultural Transfer and Adaptation* by John J. Mannion. University of Toronto Department of Geography Research Publications No. 12. University of Toronto Press, Toronto 1974. Pp. xii+219. $5.00.

In *Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada* Dr Mannion approaches the subject of the modification of European culture traits in the New World through the analysis of data from three widely separated pockets of nineteenth-century Irish settlement in Canada: communities in the Avalon Peninsula of Newfoundland, in the Miramichi district of north-eastern New Brunswick, and near Peterborough in south-central Ontario. The three study areas were largely settled in the period 1810–35 by a culturally homogeneous group of emigrants from the far south and south-east of Ireland, and the work describes and assesses the extent to which aspects of Irish material folk culture and settlement morphology were maintained, modified, or lost in each area, focusing on settlement patterns, field systems, farm tools and technology, farm outbuildings, and dwelling houses.

While it may be said that in general the Atlantic migration of the Irish resulted in the rapid loss of culture traits, the three areas studied here provide evidence of varying rates of attrition. Dr Mannion shows that these variations depended not on the social and economic conditions of the migration, but on the contrasting conditions encountered by the settlers in the separate areas—differences in physical features, economic potential, already-established patterns of settlement, land measurement and organisation, and proximity to settlers of other cultures. The survival and non-survival of the Irish system of joint farming and the openfield provides a good example of this. In the main, the emigrant groups were composed of nuclear families and unmarried

individuals rather than of extended families, and in most of the communities studied a pattern of dispersed farmsteads evolved, single family farmsteads in contrast to the farm clusters of the homeland tradition. In Miramichi and Peterborough the land had been surveyed for purposes of taxation and was divided into hundred acre lots. Here there was no necessity for the subdivision of farms into equal shares for the male heirs, for in Miramichi the possibility of employment in lumbering reduced the demands made on the land by growing families and in Peterborough the dominating grain economy encouraged extensive farming. The lands in the Avalon had not been subjected to cadastral survey, and the farms were smaller than in the other study areas. In the Avalon settlements near St John's, however, sons for whom the land could not provide a livelihood could find work in town. But in the more remote Avalon settlements on the Cape Shore of Placentia Bay, the soil varied in quality and fishing came to be combined with subsistence farming. It was here, on the Cape Shore, that the custom of subdividing the ancestral land was maintained, and as time went on and families intermarried, kin group settlement clusters did emerge.

The tasks of clearing the land and bringing it under cultivation posed problems for the Irish settlers never encountered at home, and necessitated the adaptation of homeland techniques and the adoption of new ones. In the country they had left, land pressure had made intensive farming essential; in the New World, resources were abundant. Techniques of land clearing, especially in the Miramichi and Peterborough study areas, where the forest was more dense than in the Avalon, were learned from men engaged in lumbering, or from earlier settlers who had mastered the skills. Fences were constructed of the materials removed from the land—logs, tree stumps, stones, and while some of the fences built by the Irish settlers were constructed from New World models, others may have called into use aspects of Old World technology. The 'stake and longer' fences of the Avalon, built of horizontal poles tied to upright posts by means of withes or *gads*, and the wattled or 'wave' fences of the same study area, may show the adaptation of homeland techniques to the demands and materials of the new environment.

In the Avalon too certain homeland methods of ensuring soil fertility, such as the application of the burned refuse from land-clearing operations, were carried on. The Irish settlement on the Cape Shore of Placentia Bay was the most ethnically isolated of the communities studied. Dr Mannion reports that the *grafán*, or mattock, used in all the study areas, is still the main tool of cultivation there. Similarly, potato ridges or 'lazy beds', used for growing root crops in the Miramichi and Avalon, are still to be found on the Cape Shore. The one-sided southern Irish spade was brought to all the study areas, and was used in the Avalon and Miramichi, but in the area near Peterborough it was replaced by the two-sided spade of the Ulster Scots, Scots and English settled in the vicinity.

Few elements of the arrangement of the south-east Irish farmyard were transferred, but some traditional methods of tying cattle in their stalls continued to be used. On the

other hand, the most uniformly transferable of Irish trait complexes to all the study areas appears to have been the interior layout and furnishing of the dwelling house.

The data presented in *Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada* has been assembled through both archival and field investigation, the latter including the collection of individual farm histories and the recollections and oral traditions of descendants of the original settlers. There are as well references to the transfer of certain beliefs and customs traditionally associated with seasonal activities and work practices. The text is accompanied by numerous helpful maps, plans, charts and illustrations, a glossary of relevant dialect terms used in the study areas or referred to in the volume is provided, and there is in addition a selected bibliography on European ethnic settlement in rural North America.

The great value of Dr Mannion's work lies, however, not simply in the presentation of a detailed analysis of the manifestation of Irish material culture traditions in the three New World study areas, but in the method which he follows consistently throughout the study of introducing the discussion of each trait or trait complex with a description of its appearance in the Old World setting known to the emigrants, commenting on changes in those traditions in the period leading up to the migration. By offering a quantitative analysis of aspects of the culture of emigrants from the same ethnic group and homeland region as found in separate settlements, by comparing a range of data from both homeland and New World communities, and by making use of the evidence provided by the oral record as well as by the written sources, Dr Mannion provides a sound basis on which to attempt an assessment of the nature of cultural transfer. This approach and methodology is currently being employed in research undertaken by the School of Scottish Studies in a number of communities in Canada settled in the nineteenth century by emigrants from the Hebrides. In the past, studies of European ethnic settlement in the New World have frequently been too general in their approach, or have lacked the important dimension of comparison with the pre-emigration Old World culture. In contrast, *Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada* offers a model for future studies in the field of Euro-American ethnology.

MARGARET A. MACKAY

*The Folklore of Ireland* by Sean O'Sullivan. B. T. Batsford, London 1974. Pp. 189. £3.

Seán Ó Súilleabháin (as he generally prefers to be spelt), for nearly 40 years Archivist and lynch-pin of the Irish Folklore Commission, is the obvious choice to edit a book on the folklore of Ireland. The fact that it does not really fit into the publishers' series is the fault of the publishers, who have evidently decided to cover Ireland in one volume, Scotland rather more generously in three, and England almost county by county—at least, their first two volumes are on Sussex and East Anglia. This may be in proportion to population, or bookshops, but it is in inverse proportion to the availability of what

most people think of as folklore—though urban lore might well play a part in such a series. The English volumes deal largely with calendar customs and local festivals, haunted manors, place-name legends and all the picturesque details beloved by guide-books, and inevitably such literature has been their main source, though Enid Porter's East Anglian volume does have a little from recent oral tradition. Seán has quite reasonably bypassed all this and devoted the volume entirely to newly-collected folk literature, merely remarking that 'folk belief, which forms a very important part of oral tradition in Ireland, will be illustrated to a certain extent in the legends which follow the main folktales'. As Venetia Newall, the series editor, says in her Foreword, 'the fact that [this volume] varies slightly from its predecessors arises from the importance of making this wonderful material available to a wider public'.

It is a pity, all the same, for Seán himself has written an excellent short guide to *Irish Folk Custom and Belief*, and could easily have expanded it, or some of the index headings of his comprehensive *Handbook of Irish Folklore*, into a fine book which would have fitted better into the series. The Folklore Commission (now the Department of Folklore, University College, Dublin) could have supplied the material for that too; but their emphasis has always been on folktales, and this is really a book of folktales. The interesting dozen pages of folk prayers, charms, triads and riddles (translated mostly from published collections), and the half-dozen Anglo-Irish songs which end the book are merely a sop to the wider plan suggested by the title. It was sensible to use Anglo-Irish songs rather than attempt to translate Gaelic ones—everything else but a few riddles is translated from Gaelic—but the selection is a curious one. The songs are all recent compositions connected with actual events or localities, sent in to the Commission from schools in different parts of Ireland—not untypical of the Anglo-Irish song tradition as a whole, but hardly a fair sample, especially since the pedestrian words have to be printed without the tunes which carry them.

It is best to forget the title, then, and enjoy the book for what it is—a collection of fine Irish Gaelic folktales in translation, and an excellent complement to the author's *Folktales of Ireland* (Chicago 1966). Four tales from the latter reappear in this collection, two from different storytellers, one (*The Fairy Frog*) from different recordings of the same storyteller, and one (*Cromwell and O'Donnell*) from the same source. Both the tales in the brief section of 'Historical Tradition' are among these four, which may illustrate the surprising poverty of Irish tradition as against Scottish Gaelic in this field. *Folklore* relies more than *Folktales* on a few well-tried storytellers. Over half the twenty-six tales are from three sources, one from each Western province: Éamonn a Búrc from Connemara—also well represented in the other book—Peig Sayers from Kerry, and Micí Sheáin Néill Ó Baoill from Donegal. But this in no way detracts from the quality and variety of the selection, which is rich in the most characteristically Irish types of story—native hero tales, religious and supernatural traditions. International folktale types are almost entirely absent from *Folklore*, and relatively few in *Folktales*: this does not mean that they have not been collected in their thousands in Ireland, and often with

a characteristic Irish flavour to the telling, but the editor's decision has been to select tales that are even more typical of the country, and it is quite justified. The translations are readable, with the mingled colloquialism and formality which a Gaelic speaker's English speech might have in it, and the notes at the heads of the tales are informative without being too dauntingly learned. Notes with more details of manuscripts and motifs are given at the end. The proof-reading here could have been better: a stranger could not be sure that Micí (Sheáin) Ó Baoill and Micí (Sheáin Néill) Ó Baoighill, or the Éamonn a Búrc who was at Aird Mhór in 1933 and the one at Aill na Brón in 1942, are the same person. The note on page 171 that 'The application of the title "King" to the Deity in connection with the days of the week is usual in Irish poetry and religious tales, *e.g.*, the Irish name for Sunday is *Dia Domhnaigh* (the day of the Lord)' has surely lost a line after '*e.g.*'. But many books have misprints: few manage to be so enjoyable and informative at the same time. To have such an interesting collection available in English will make it easier for both folklorists and ordinary readers to appreciate the riches of Irish tradition.

ALAN BRUFORD

*Scots Songs and Music: recorded at the Kinross Festival of Traditional Music and Song.* Springthyme Records SPR 1001. 1974. £2.11.

This brave example of private enterprise (published from Woodmill, Auchtermuchty) deserves a welcome from everyone interested in keeping Scottish music alive. Its faults are largely those of the Traditional Music and Song Association of Scotland's Kinross Festival which it represents: the laid-down categories for instrumental competitions which mean that the piano-accordion, too new to be traditional in any real sense, is represented and the Jews' harp is not. (To be fair, the record wisely omits mouth organ and concertina, for which competitions exist, but also, alas, diddling.) The recordings were necessarily made at the concerts where guest performers and competition winners appeared, not at the informal gatherings where, at Kinross as at the Irish *fleadhanna ceóil* from which it was imitated, the best music is to be heard. Easily the best playing I heard at the 1973 Festival, on which the record is based, was at such a chance gathering of Scottish, Irish and Shetland fiddlers in a hotel lounge after Sunday afternoon's concert—impossible to foresee and capture on record, of course.

The Irish origins of the Festival concept seem to be reflected in the contents and presentation of the record. Aly Bain, the Shetland fiddler, and Jim Bainbridge, the Northumbrian melodeon champion, both play only Irish tunes; Cameron Turriff's hilarious 'Hame drunk cam I' is hailed on the sleeve as a Scottish version of the Dubliners' hit 'Seven drunken nights', not as Child 274, 'Hame cam oor guidman', still common in Scotland; The Clutha open their selection with a beautiful slow air best known from Ireland and played in an Irish style. A protest should be entered too against another

ill-considered Irish borrowing: the labelling of the competition won by The Clutha as 'for ceilidh band'. The Irish céilí band is just a dance band—*céilí* is used in modern Ireland for a dance, which will probably include step-dancing in the Irish style through the evening, but is nothing like the informal (not necessarily musical) visiting which *céilidh* used to mean in Scotland, or even the compèred concert which it has unfortunately come to mean. In any case the style in which The Clutha play is not that of the average céilí band, I am glad to say, but derives really from the brave and partly successful attempts of the late Seán Ó Riada to make chamber music out of the playing of the same tune on different instruments which seems to come more naturally to Irish traditional players than to Scottish. Hence their use of miniature Scottish bagpipes to get an effect very close to the Irish union pipes. Their combination of pipes, fiddles, concertina and guitar is neither Scottish nor traditional, but, except where the concertina tends to hold back the other instruments in the reels, it sounds splendid.

On balance the instrumental parts of this record are disappointing. The Clutha and the equally untraditional combination of tin whistle and guitar, played in a sprightly and not at all Irish manner by Alex Green from Aberdeenshire and Jack Robertson from Shetland, come out best. The most interesting fiddling is Angus Grant's playing of the slow pipe air 'Crò Chinn t-Sàile' (both misspelt and wrongly described as 'Kintail lullaby' on the sleeve); his 'Crossing the Minch' (surely a march rather than a hornpipe) is more uneven, and Aly Bain and Tom Anderson's party from the Shetland 'Forty Fiddlers' play nothing but reel after reel. The three tracks of the Shetland fiddlers are frankly below their usual standard, partly because ten unaccompanied fiddles lack the power of the bigger band without gaining the freedom of a single player, but partly because the playing is ragged. They were probably dog-tired when the recordings were made, but it is hardly fair to expose this again and again. Alan Clark does his best to get a swing into the marches he plays on the piano-accordion, but the instrument defeats him, and almost totally drowns the guitar accompaniment: the result is no better than Jimmy Shand—a good rhythm to dance to, but no character. And if Jim Bainbridge keeps winning the melodeon competitions, it says nothing for the Scottish competitors.

Fortunately, though the sometimes barely literate sleeve notes refer to the instrumental items as 'the musical aspect of the record', there is plenty of musicianship in the singing. All the four Scots songs are in North-Eastern styles, but they represent two different schools. Stanley Robertson sings in the dramatic traveller style of his aunt Jeannie Robertson, and so basically does the young Ayrshire singer Heather Heywood: though neither of them can match the rich depth of Jeannie's voice, it is good to know that her technique will be so well carried on after her death. The songs they sing are good too: Stanley's is a version of 'Clyde's Water' (Child 216), and Heather's 'Bonnie laddie ye gang by me' is a beautiful jilted song whose tune and last verse seem to be derived from 'The trees they are so high' ('Still growing', or 'The College boy'). In contrast, Cameron Turriff, another singer who will be sorely missed, and Charlie Murray represent the more straightforward, cheerful style of the bothies, though it is

odd to hear Charlie singing a woman's song, 'When I wis just but sweet sixteen'. It is a pity that the Gaelic tradition and Flora MacNeil are represented by only one song, and that the brisk, not to say breathless waulking song best known as 'Cha téid mise, cha téid mi', to which the audience stamp their feet with enthusiasm: one of her lovely slow laments would have balanced the selection better. But the singers go a long way further than the instrumentalists towards justifying the claim that 'this record presents a selection of the best of this genuine traditional music'. Which brings us back to the Irish origins, for it is in song that Scottish traditional music is stronger than Irish, and in instrumental music that it is weaker or at least less varied, especially if, as this selection does, you leave out the more 'literary' side of the fiddle and pipe traditions. At any rate the record gives a fair enough picture of the sort of music which the T.M.S.A. is helping to keep alive, and it is an encouraging picture for the future of Scottish music.

ALAN BRUFORD

*Andrew Crawfurd's Collection of Ballads and Songs* by E. B. Lyle. Vol. I. Scottish Text Society, Edinburgh 1975.

This is the first of two volumes containing the songs and ballads collected in and around Lochwinnoch in Renfrewshire for William Motherwell's *Minstrelsy* (1827) by his friend Andrew Crawfurd, a doctor there, who had been permanently crippled by fever as a young man and devoted most of his time as a semi-invalid to amassing a very large amount of local lore—genealogical, antiquarian, literary, musical, philological, proverbial, *etc.*—in manuscript books of which some are in the National Library, but the large majority, which he called the 'Cairn', came to rest in Paisley Public Library. Of the latter, three volumes contain the ballads and songs.

There was at this time a literary group in the West, based chiefly on Paisley, which in its own westland manner set up as a small-town rival to the metropolitan coteries of Blackwood and the Edinburgh Review, of which Motherwell was the leading light, with J. D. Carrick, the editor of *Whistle-Binkie* and *The Laird of Logan*, the best selling anthologies of comic and pathetic verse and the pawky prose anecdote till Dean Ramsay came along, Andrew Henderson, the proverb collector, and in so far as his physical condition permitted his participation in its activities, Andrew Crawfurd. They were all of them rather quizzes, the last two being the most eccentric.

Crawfurd was an avid hunter of miscellanea, a snapper-up of unconsidered trifles, and though frequently his notions and judgment seem a bit off beam, he is usually pretty accurate on facts, of which he had a very considerable accumulation. He was the very man to collect local variants of ballads and folk-song and his notes on his informants, most assiduously followed up by Dr Lyle, must be about the fullest and most helpful of any ballad collection in dating the tradition and assessing its authenticity.

It is interesting to note even at that relatively early date that his best singer, Mary

MacQueen, was of 'a travelling or tinklar family' and that another, John Smith, was 'a very thirsty man'. Obviously the ballad traditions are still very much alive today! Crawfurd took down most of the songs at first hand though sometimes an intermediary acted as amanuensis and the ostensible purpose was to help Motherwell, though in the event Motherwell had most of his *Minstrelsy* published before Crawfurd got his material into a usable state. Motherwell received it in time only to incorporate some portions of it into the end of his text and into his notes and introduction, although he preserved other sizeable portions in MSS which have never been printed except where Child made use of them. Thus *Crawfurd's Collection* represents another Renfrewshire tradition more or less independent of Motherwell and for that reason is important in itself. It is incidentally instructive to compare the five or so ballads they have in common as an object lesson in how texts fluctuate and corruptions creep in. Out of 81 items in Crawfurd in volume I, 35 are variant texts of ballads in Child; most of the remainder have been traced indefatigably by Dr Lyle to some broadside or chapbook, generally of Scottish provenance; one is a fifteenth-century ballad which had sunk without trace till it re-emerges here; only one or two have eluded her eagle eye; one was practically produced for Crawfurd's occasion by a poetic relative of the singer. Most of the latter are of course songs, not ballads, Nos. 27, 56 and 81 are English; No. 75 which came via the thirsty John Smith from an Irishman is somewhat anglicised, or perhaps more correctly is an English version, slightly scotticised. No. 62 reads as if it had been copied from a book from the outset.

The general literary quality of the *Collection* naturally varies; some are as flat-footed and pedestrian as many a ballad. No. 53, a version of *Lizzie Lindsay*, has not been well remembered by the singer and halts considerably. One or two of William Gemmell's contributions are on the scabrous side and lack the saving grace of humour but no doubt they will be hailed as masterpieces by the 'rantin rovin' school of critics. But *The Widow's Dochter*, well enough known from broadsides, and *The Wooer came to the Widow's Door* are amusing and witty, and *The Mailin* has some charm. Among the ballads themselves, the versions of Child's *Gill Brenton*, *Child Maurice* and *Lord Derwentwater* are all lively and singable. *The Mason's Dochter* is grim even for a ballad; for sheer dramatic power and directness *Lamkin* and *Lady Jean* are among the best of them.

The editing of the collection must have presented some fairly formidable problems, especially in the matter of the text. Crawfurd was an enthusiast for Scots and he even writes a kind of Lallans prose at times (as he had already done in that quaint little periodical *The Scotchman* of 1813–4). He did not hesitate therefore on taking down the words verbatim from the singers, to go over them again and put them into their Scots form, at times even substituting a Scots word for its English equivalent where he thought it more effective. And he did the same with the texts supplied by his collaborator, William Orr. On top of this, probably because of his semi-paralysed condition, he frequently missed out words or repeated words and made his texts

even more intractable. A diplomatic text therefore would have been of little use and Dr Lyle has superimposed her own ideas on Crawfurd's with a general tendency to consistency, clarity and tidiness. This seems perfectly legitimate, especially as Dr Lyle is most scrupulous and meticulous in recording everything that both Crawfurd and she have done with the text.

The chief criticism one would offer is that all this *apparatus criticus* is scattered about the book and not easy to piece together from the two or three or even four places where it occurs. It would have helped comprehension to have provided an *apparatus* with each poem where all these changes have been gathered together in their appropriate place. The same stricture applies to the notes on parallel versions which the editress has hunted out, Crawfurd's own notes on local background to the ballad stories and on his sources, and other miscellanea. The first are rather cluttered up in the introduction and would have been much more assimilable attached with the rest of the annotation to each several ballad or song, pretty much as Child sets his information out.

A few trifling points remain as to the language. At 17.10.1. 'gown' is presumably a mistake for 'grown'; at 48.15.2. 'tweed' is certainly surprising and can hardly be right. 'Weed' seems the simplest emendation; at 51.8.1. 'fil' seems to have given trouble, and Dr Lyle says it might simply be H, which is in fact Crawfurd's way of writing 'aitch', an adze, and which gives complete sense in the context; at 71.6.7. it might be noted that if 'sadly' is right, it is a very rare survival of the medieval usage of 'bunched together'; in the notes to 22.5.1. 'clever' might be better glossed as 'nimble, agile'; and to 63.4.3. 'rug' is somewhat more emphatic than 'portion', having additional connotations of getting more than one needs or deserves, a 'haul, a glutton's share', or the like. In the final appendix on actual or possible tunes for the songs, for No. 51 *The Faughhill Shearing*, surely the appropriate air is "The Rock and the Wee Pickle Tow."

The whole volume is an able and workmanlike piece of scholarship and bodes well for Volume II which it is to be hoped will follow next year.

DAVID MURISON

*Neil M. Gunn: The Man and the Writer*, edited by Alexander Scott and Douglas Gifford. Blackwood, Edinburgh 1973. Pp. 400.

*Beyond the Sunset: A Study of James Leslie Mitchell (Lewis Grassic Gibbon)* by Douglas F. Young. Impulse Books, Aberdeen 1973. Pp. viii+162.

Between them, these two works cover the writings of the two greatest Scottish novelists of the last half-century, the only two who are likely to be of permanent and international significance. They are besides the first and to date the only far-ranging

and thorough critiques of their subjects and for that reason are important in themselves; their value is enhanced by the fact that they bring out, incidentally to their main purpose but in a striking manner, the remarkable similarities and equally profound differences between the philosophies of Gunn and Gibbon as historians, sociologists and anthropologists, for in the case of both their novels were merely the vehicles for their wider speculations on man and society.

The first is a collection of essays on Gunn written in honour of his eightieth birthday by some twenty contributors from almost every aspect, but the bulk of them are skilfully arranged to deal chronologically with the thematic groups into which his novels fell and hence with the development of his thought.

At the best of times Gunn is not an easy writer and there is a good deal of diffusiveness and obscurity in his commentary (as contrasted with his narrative style which is usually most vivid and limpid), and some of the essayists have only too truly succeeded in reproducing it in their own analysis. The best essays are those towards the end which take a general look at Gunn: that by J. B. Pick is perhaps the most understanding and the best interpretative one though it tails off rather incoherently. Alexander Reid's contribution on the mysticism of Gunn is in fact conspicuous for its comprehension and clarity and one will learn a very great deal about Gunn from it. That his novels are all part of 'a Scottish Mystic's Search for the Conditions of Human Fulfilment' is Reid's neat and pretty accurate way of putting it, but the other contributors all concur in saying the same thing in their several ways.

It is this aspect of Gunn rather than the purely literary one of novel-writing that most concerns us here. He was essentially a primitivist in the Rousseau tradition, a believer in nature unspoilt by the meretricious values of so-called civilisation, especially modern civilisation with its technology, its computerised statistical outlook which dehumanises and imprisons the spirit of freedom which is every man's birthright. Not that Gunn was naïve enough to think that all this could be undone by going native, but he had seen with his own eyes the fishing and crofting communities broken and ruined by the havoc of war, the 'system' and 'progress', all the human ties binding man to man in a small self-dependent society torn apart, and of course the cultural emanations of such, the folk-song and tale, the ballad, the dance, the traditional wisdom of the past swept away, and it stirred him with resentment to his depths. There is indeed much more suppressed volcanic anger in the gentle Gunn than is popularly supposed.

When it comes to the problem of what is to be done about it, it is not so easy. Gunn has to deal with this by means of allegory and psychology. Hence the constantly recurring figure of the river of life which we must all trace back to its source in our introspection, all this being mingled with Celtic folk-lore concepts of sun-circles, the salmon of wisdom, the hazel nuts of knowledge and so on. In the end the individual and the community are as one in having shared experience from the immemorial past and it is in this unity that a man finds his own wholeness as in *Highland River* and

the *Silver Darlings.* When a man gets cut off in some way from this folk-wisdom, he becomes rootless and a source of dispeace to himself and trouble to others.

It is on this philosophical level that Gunn's work ties up with Gibbon's, and Alex. Scott and Douglas Gifford make the point effectively and repeatedly, and Dr Douglas Young corroborates from his side in his study of Gibbon, quoting interestingly from an article by Gunn on Gibbon to much the same effect. Both in fact hark back to the notion of a Golden Age of human innocence, and to the Diffusionist theories which Dr Young traces in Gibbon in the most painstaking detail throughout all his stories, and which affected Gunn too although he does not explicitly profess allegiance to Diffusionism.

Both writers however are at one in their bird's-eye view of Scottish history and in using it allegorically as well as literally in expounding their views. Gibbon with his Diffusionism and his Marxism is more categorical in his approach, as Dr Young points out, but in the end his conclusions are more relativist and agnostic than Gunn's. To put it in very simple and more concrete terms, Gibbon ends up in a dilemma at the parting of the ways between Chris Guthrie and Ewan, her son, and at this point Gunn would have followed Chris. With Ewan he would have had little in common.

Dr Young's book examines all this clearly and methodically, though he does not deal with the *Scots Quair* as allegory, which, as the present reviewer has already argued in *Scottish Studies,* volume 11 page 109, is one of the main aspects of the book. He is particularly good in his analysis of *Cloud Howe;* he is a little too patient with Oliver Brown's notions about Gibbon's debt to Frenssen's *Jörn Uhl.*

The two books complement one another in reinforcing the importance of both novelists not only in Scottish literature but in Scottish social and political thought and in their imaginative interpretation of aspects of Scottish history about which our conventional historians are often singularly clueless and which are the chief business of the School of Scottish Studies.

DAVID MURISON

# *Books Received*

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

*A History of the Old Icelandic Commonwealth: Íslendinga Saga*, by Jón Jóhannesson translated by Haraldur Bessason. University of Manitoba 1974. Pp. 407 (13 plates+map).

*A Forgotten Heritage: original Folk Tales of Lowland Scotland*, edited by Hannah Aitken. Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh and London 1974. Pp. 168. £2.50.

*The Hugh MacDiarmid Anthology: Poems in Scots and English*, edited by Michael Grieve and Alexander Scott. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1975. Pp. xxiii+115. £2.75.

*Scottish Literary Journal: A Review of Studies in Scottish Language and Literature* vol. 1 no. 1 1974, edited by Thomas Crawford. Association for Scottish Literary Studies, University of Aberdeen. Pp. 80.

*Critical Essays on Robert Burns*, edited by Donald A. Low. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1975. Pp. 192. £4.25.

*The Standard of Living in Britain in the Industrial Revolution*, by Arthur J. Taylor. (*Debates in Economic History*, edited by Peter Mathias) Methuen, London 1975. Pp. lv+216. £5.40 (paperback £2.90).

*The Tobacco Lords: A Study of the Tobacco Merchants of Glasgow and their Trading Activities c. 1740–90*, by T. M. Devine. John Donald, Edinburgh 1975. Pp. 209+7 plates. £8.

*Gypsies, Tinkers and Other Travellers*, edited by F. Rehfisch. Academic Press, London, New York, San Francisco 1975. Pp. 303. £5.80.

*The Days That We Have Seen*, by George Ewart Evans. Faber & Faber, London 1975. Pp. 224+16 plates. £4.95.

*Hume and the Enlightenment: Essays presented to Ernest Campbell Mossner*, edited by William B. Todd. Edinburgh University Press, 1975. Pp. 216. £5.50.

*John Knox: A Quatercentenary Reappraisal*, edited by Duncan Shaw. The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh 1975. Pp. 79. £1.75.

*The Church in Victorian Scotland 1843–1874*, by Andrew L. Drummond and James Bulloch. The Saint Andrew Press, Edinburgh 1975. Pp. 368. £5.75.

*Ayrshire: The Story of a County*, by John Strawhorn. Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, Ayr 1975. Pp. 244. £3 (paperback £2).

*Dae Ye Min' Langsyne? A Pot-pourri of Games, Rhymes and Ploys of Scottish Childhood*, collected and edited by Amy Stewart Fraser. Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1975. Pp. 210+line illustrations. £4.50.

*The Mauchline Account Books of Melrose Abbey 1527–1528*, by Margaret H. B. Sanderson (Ayrshire Collections vol. 11 no. 5). Ayrshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, 1975. Pp. 87–107. 25p.

*Orkney: Kirkwall and St. Ola 1793* (reprinted from *The Statistical Account of Scotland* by Sir John Sinclair Bart. vol. 7 pp. 529–69). The Pentland Press, Thurso 1975. Pp. 42. 60p.

*The Scots Language in Education*, Association for Scottish Literary Studies: Occasional Papers No. 3. Papers presented during an in-service course organised jointly by Aberdeen College of Education and the Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1975. Pp. 70. 60p.

*Oor Yird and other Poems*, by Norman Halkett (author and publisher). Aberdeen 1975. Pp. 16.

*The Confederates and Hen-Thorir: Two Icelandic Sagas*, translated by Hermann Pálsson. Southside, Edinburgh 1975. Pp. 139. £1.95 (hardback £2.95).

*Two Men and a Blanket: A Prisoner of War's Story*, by Robert Garioch. Southside, Edinburgh 1975. Pp. 183. £4.50.