Book Reviews

Travellers' Tales

Fireside Tales of the Traveller Children by Duncan Williamson. Canongate, Edinburgh 1983. 153 pp. £5.95. Second (Illustrated) edn. 1985. 159 pp. £3.95 paperback.

The Broonie, Silkies and Fairies: Travellers' Tales by Duncan Williamson. Canongate, Edinburgh 1985. 157 pp. £3.95, now £4.95 paperback.

Tell me a Story for Christmas by Duncan Williamson. Canongate, Edinburgh 1987. 117 pp. £7.95 hardback, £4.95 paperback.

A Thorn in the King's Foot: Folktales of the Scottish Travelling People by Duncan and Linda Williamson. Penguin Folklore Library, Harmondsworth 1987. 304 pp. £6.95 paperback.

The King o the Black Art and other folk tales, edited and introduced by Sheila Douglas. Aberdeen University Press, 1987. 170 pp. £12.90; £7.95 paperback.

Exodus to Alford by Stanley Robertson, pictures by Simon Fraser. Balnain Books, Nairn 1988. 215 pp. £7.95 paperback.

May the Devil Walk Behind Ye! Scottish Traveller Tales by Duncan Williamson. Canongate International Folk Tale Series, Edinburgh 1989. xii+134 pp. £9.95; £5.95 paperback.

In the thirty-seven years since Hamish Henderson first brought Jeannie Robertson to public notice, the quality and quantity of the Scots songs preserved in oral tradition by the travelling people has been widely appreciated almost from the start. Jeannie was no mean storyteller too, as may be seen by the tales printed in *Tocher 6* and Katharine Briggs' *Dictionary of British Folk-Tales in the English Language*. The latter includes texts or summaries of two or three dozen fine stories, mostly international wonder-tales, recorded from other travellers in the '50s. But it is hardly fifteen years since we began to realise that the prose narrative repertoire of the travellers was as extensive as that in song, and a good deal more individual. Like traveller society, traveller storytelling has absorbed whatever it wanted from the outside world and transmuted it all into something recognisably its own. In *Scottish Studies 24* I drew attention to the way the repertoire includes traditional tales from Scots and Gaelic sources alongside stories from Hans Andersen and Greek myths retold by Nathaniel Hawthorne, and sentimental stories that for all one can tell may come from an old *People's Friend* or the like. Moreover any part of this repertoire can be re-combined to make new stories, and entirely new wonder-tales seem to have been made up to point a moral. A little of this repertoire was published by the School of Scottish Studies in Nos. 21 to 24, 33 and 40 of *Tocher*, and makes up the greater part of *The Green*

Man of Knowledge and other Scots Traditional Tales (ed. Bruford, Aberdeen University Press 1982), but the book-length collections of travellers' tales considered here are mostly produced by travellers themselves, and run in parallel with a new interest in oral story-telling; both Duncan Williamson and Stanley Robertson now tell stories in schools, folk clubs and other venues as professionals, and Sheila Douglas and her husband have joined them. The stream of books started slowly in 1983, but is now moving rapidly: there are three more books from Duncan and at least one from Stanley in preparation as I write.

The published repertoire is not, I believe, a representative sample of the remembered repertoire of travellers as a whole. This is partly because publishers have asked, for instance, for examples of local supernatural legends, a genre which belongs essentially to one place and is not properly appreciated by migratory families; and partly because the storytellers involved are rather exceptional in their memories, and (apart from Willie MacPhee) seldom tell clear unaltered versions of recognisable international folktale types such as were more often collected from a number of narrators in the '50s. This review will deal first with the content of the volumes listed above (titles generally abbreviated for convenience as *Fireside Tales, The Broonie, Christmas, A Thorn, Black Art, Exodus* and *The Devil* respectively), and will then discuss their presentation, where the order of merit is quite different, separately.

Fireside Tales, being the first of Duncan Williamson's books accepted by a publisher, was naturally designed to include some of his most attractive stories. As one who advised on presentation but had no substantial influence on the contents, I think I can fairly say that this selection is the most representative and would make the best textbook of all Duncan's books to date. The title does not mean that these are all stories for children: there are dramatic, amusing and even gruesome elements for any audience to enjoy. Six of the twelve tales are recognisable versions of international folktales in the Aarne-Thompson (AT) catalogue: some may have come into oral tradition from books, but 'White Pet' differs significantly both from the story that Campbell of Islay published under that title and from the better-known 'Musicians of Bremen' of the brothers Grimm. 'The Pot that Went to the Laird's Castle', like the very similar 'The Three Fittit Pot' (*Black Art*: 124), is a clear traveller variant of type AT 591, already printed in Scots as 'The Wee Wifie and her Coggie' (Hannah Aitken, *A Forgotten Heritage* [Edinburgh 1973] p. 108). 'The Goat that Told Lies' (AT 212) is surely not expanded from a mere introductory episode (to 'Table, Ass and Stick') in Grimm: it has a different sequel and in any case the vivid dialogue is much more dramatic than the conventional rhyme of the German tale. There are also two traveller creations in the mould of international wonder-tale or *Märchen*, 'The King and the Lamp' and the ingenious 'Jack and the Witch's Bellows', a sinister traveller variant on the story of Lot's wife, a 'holy story' for Christmas and two other rather sentimental tales, 'Mary and the Seal' and 'The Hunchback and the Swan'. The latter to me has a musty smell of the Edwardian drawing-room, and could well have been written originally by some magazine romancer of the period, but modern children seem to accept this sort of thing.

The Broonie, Silkies and Fairies was produced in response to the publisher's request for more like 'Mary and the Seal' and was at first to have been a full dozen of 'silkie' stories. (Duncan himself pronounces the word quite normally as 'selkie', but the spelling follows the popular misconception of the pronunciation of Captain Thomas's 'Great Silkie of Sule Skerry', and with typical traveller readiness to oblige Duncan provides a derivation from the silky softness of sealskin: he also explains that 'not all seals are silkies', endorsing another misconception derived from the ballad, that 'silkie' means only a seal with the power to take human form. For the facts see *Scottish Studies* 18: 63 ff.) In the end only five seal stories went into the book, along with other supernatural legends: as I have said such tales are not typical of traveller repertoires, and indeed over half of them and four of the five seal stories are said to have been learned from settled Highlanders. In any case the seal stories have little in common with older Gaelic legend and read like modern romantic inventions. The four tales of the Broonie (a rather more impressive being than most people's concept of a brownie, and one who means a lot to Duncan) are far more traditional, while the fairy tales include an elaborate re-telling of a standard changeling legend, 'The Taen-Awa', a tale with an old-fashioned moral, 'The Tramp and the Boots', and an enjoyable attack on the work ethic, 'Archie and the Little People'. The book is worth reading for these, but it is not a representative sample of traveller or any sort of Scottish traditional storytelling.

The next Williamson volume, *Tell Me a Story for Christmas,* again seems to reflect the publisher's request for a repeat batch of one of the less traditional kinds of story in the first book; and again it is saved by those items which do *not* meet the specification, animal fables and moral tales which might be told at Christmas but are not actually about it, including the long and symbolical 'Jack and the Silver Keys'. *May the Devil Walk Behind Ye!* is quite a different sort of Canongate book, probably because the success of *A Thorn* had weakened the publishers' monopolist control. It is still a selection of twelve stories on one theme, but not for children, as its placing in the 'International Folk Tale Series' shows. Only the sub-title 'Scottish Traveller Tales' is shown on the spine, though the preface explains the sinister-sounding title as a good wish rather than an ill one. In most of the stories the Devil, or an almost equally evil character, like the 'Sea Witch', is defeated after a struggle; but the totally black and cynical 'The Minister and the Devil', with its horrific picture of the torments of an inescapable Hell awaiting everyone, is certainly not for children and has no hint of the vaguely Christian moral that usually comes with traveller tales.

A Thorn in the King's Foot is a handsome volume with twice as many items as the Canongate books (two ballads as well as 22 stories, both newer recordings of Child types already printed in *Tocher*, but here with the music to every verse). None of them has the journalistic flavour of some of those in *The Broonie,* or was learned outside the traveller culture: but I hope this will not remain the only volume to represent Scotland, or even the Lowland travellers, in the Penguin Folklore Library. The trouble is that travellers, or at least some travellers, cannot let well alone, and there are only four 'straight' inter-

national tale-types in the book. More than twice as many are recognisable as supplying elements that have been combined or transmuted to make new stories. 'Mary Rashiecoats and the Wee Black Bull', for instance, sounds as if it could be related to 'Rashiecoat', the Scots Cinderella (AT 510B) or to 'The Black Bull o' Norroway' (AT 511A+425 vars.), both published by Robert Chambers over 150 years ago and still known to some travellers. In fact after a novelettish beginning about an orphan girl, her granny and her pet calf, it ends as a variant of 'The Magic Flight' (AT 313). 'Jack and the Water fae the World's End' uses the quest for the traditional remedy as the frame for an entirely new adventure in which Jack is joined by a band of pilgrims seeking cures for their problems very much in the manner of *The Wizard of Oz* (there is even a cowardly giant taking the Cowardly Lion's place on the end of the line). The title story similarly hangs a new story on an element from 'The Maiden without Hands' (AT 706), known to other travellers as 'Daughter Doris'. There are also purely moral tales like 'The Happy Man's Shirt' (AT 844), gnomic allegories like 'The Henwife and Aul Father Time' and a strange tale of a merman, 'La Mer la Moocht', which surely goes back to someone's short story, written perhaps in another language. More traditional are the tales of 'George Buchanan the King's Fool', the Burkers and their 'noddies', or the well-known Highland legend of 'The Tailor and the Skeleton'—'I see that, but I'll sew this.' But the balance of the book is typical of no other oral storyteller's repertoire.

The King o the Black Art contains fifty stories, more than the four Canongate books put together. Certainly some are very short—'The Whitterick and the Crow' is a single paragraph of dubious natural history from an unnamed narrator—and the editor has admitted to pruning her texts (of which more below) to get more of them in. There is at any rate a better balance between 'straight' and traveller-altered *Märchen*—about a dozen of each—though 'The Little Herdsman and the Master Bull' is still not 'The Black Bull o' Norroway'. Half the stories are Burker or ghost stories—the travellers' own substitute for the local legends of settled folk—or instances of other beliefs, with only a couple of broad comic tales. A representative sample would probably include some more of the last sort, though the international trickster tale or *Schwank* is relatively unpopular with travellers. But with so much to choose from this would certainly be a possible textbook. My main criticism of the content of this very readable book is that for understandable reasons of sentiment the editor has included too much. The contents list does not name the storytellers, but John Stewart, the only surviving son of John, the Duke of Atholl's piper (see *Tocher* 21: 165 ff. for Maurice Fleming's account of this family, whom he was the first to record, and 31: 35-49 for this member of it), is the teller of 24 of them, nearly half the total. His late brothers Alec and Andrew provide eight and one respectively, Alec's wife Belle, six, and their daughter Sheila, one, and nine are from their cousin Willie MacPhee. It would have made sense to confine the book to John and Willie, who tell most of the longer, more traditional and better-told stories. Thirty-five stories from Alec, Belle and their children were already included in Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger's collection *Till Doomsday in the Afternoon* (Manchester University Press, 1986). This is perhaps more

a volume for libraries and specialists: it includes song, autobiography and a variety of curious lore—some of which gave offence to other travellers when it was published without consulting the Stewarts. Dr Douglas did have some notice of what was going to go in, but perhaps she felt that it was worth repeating a dozen of the tales in a lighter-weight book, and could not pass over the family members she had known longest. Unfortunately her recordings of Alec Stewart were mostly made in his last illness, and the version of 'The Three Feathers' (AT 402) in *Black Art* is not nearly as good as that in *Till Doomsday*, recorded a decade or more before, and that in turn is nowhere near as good as his brother Andrew's racy version (*Tocher* 14: 225-34) or as I have heard John tell it: it really does no credit to Alec's memory to include this one. John Stewart feels that his contribution to the existing book has been too little recognised, and I agree: it would have made more artistic sense to acknowledge John as providing the best part, and choose the rest of the contents accordingly. Incidentally Willie MacPhee's good selection of stories includes one, 'The Devil's Money', which he says he learned from Duncan Williamson, and another, 'The Blacksmith', which closely follows a recording printed in *A Thorn* as he told it to Willie—a rare opportunity to study the process of oral transmission using printed books.

Stanley Robertson's *Exodus to Alford* differs from all these books transcribed from recordings of oral storytelling. Stanley is an excellent oral storyteller (see *Tocher* 40 for samples and some discussion of his technique) but he is dissatisfied with the way his words come out on paper and prefers to keep full control by writing his stories out himself. The resultant language will be discussed later: the form of the book is also markedly stylised. It is framed by a journey, like the *Canterbury Tales*, though there is sadly little description of the trip of the Robertson family to the flax fields at Alford on the Don and back down the Dee in the summer of 1946, when Stanley was six and recovering from his first experience of prejudice at school in Aberdeen. The 34 stories are told at sixteen camp-sites in three groups: sets of four stories at Alford itself and Echt and Lumphanan on the way there, three more sets at Aboyne, Tarland and Strathdon ('Alford and Beyond'), and ten longer stories at ten sites on the way 'Home with Jack' to Aberdeen. The 33 storytellers are described in a sentence or two at the head of each story, but their voices in the stories do not usually throw much light on the characters of the real travellers who, Stanley told me, lie behind the disguised names and nicknames: the lively bit of husband-and-wife bickering quoted on the cover of the book is unfortunately the only such passage.

The first two parts consist mainly of 'memorates', accounts of personal experiences with the supernatural—ghosts and other spirits, good and evil, wise women, cannibals, nemesis, curses, answers to prayer and so on. There is one purely romantic tale of a traveller girl who falls in love with a gentleman who proves to be her half-brother, one well-known local legend about the Maiden Stone of Bennachie, and fairly traditional tales of a broonie's gifts and a supernatural wife. The ghost and horror stories do not work so well on paper as they do with Stanley's range of oral techniques. The remaining twelve tales—two told by Stanley's mother and father at the end of the first part, and the ten in

the third part—are all wonder-tales with Jack as hero: mainly contests with the Devil, black lairds (enchanters), witches or the Black Knight. There are variants on old patterns—the quest for the Water of Life (AT 551), the three tasks (AT 577), the three riddles (AT 922), the rescue from the underground kingdom (AT 301), the magic flight (AT 313)—but all changed: the underground kingdom is the Land of Dreams, the magic flight is escape from a witch—a girl's tale, where Jack is rather awkwardly brought in by using the King Thrushbeard motif of the too-proud princess (AT 900) as introduction. The concluding riddle tale, linked to a prophecy of Stanley's own role as chronicler of his people, is simply what other travellers tell as 'The King and the Miller', with the role of the miller (bishop in other versions) taken by a symbolic Clever Man, who falls into the power of the Devil instead of the king. It is a bit of a disappointment that Jack, the poor traveller who takes the Clever Man's place and answers the Devil's questions, is given no more brilliant answers than 'the moon his four quarters and four quarters mak a pound, so that means that the moon weighs one pound'.

Stanley's second volume, *Nyakim's Windows* (1989), has still more of the supernatural and horror stories, less of the traditional wonder-tale, and is too much a book of short stories by a coming fantasy author to be considered as a folktale collection. (Nyakim is an ancestral figure met in a dream who acts rather like a medium's spirit guide.)

All the other books follow the recorded words of storytellers in some way but the presentation is very different in each. The Canongate books for children put all Duncan Williamson's Scots pronunciations and most of his Scots words into standard English, as the publishers felt was necessary for a school-age audience. However, Dr Linda Williamson, who transcribed her husband's stories from her own recordings for all the books, has preserved his individual choice and arrangement of words as exactly as possible through the standardisation, and much of the idiom comes through unharmed, even if the full oral flavour is diminished by the loss of superfluous repeats and digressions and 'he says' used as punctuation throughout reported speech. Duncan himself, who only wants to tell his audience what happens in a story and has little interest in traditional verbal formulas, is quite happy with this. In *Fireside Tales* Linda has been able to keep a few evocative Scots and cant words, especially in the specifically traveller tales, glossed in footnotes. In later volumes she may leave the words of the characters in Scots, amidst the English narrative—following the practice of Scottish novelists since Scott and Galt—and provide a brief glossary. Left a free hand in *A Thorn*, she transcribes exactly what she hears, and indeed goes further than I would from standard spellings: I see little advantage to 'Dher wur' over 'There were' (or 'The war') in what must anyway be unstressed words. The many inconsistencies are typical of the way many Scots speak, so you have 'over the brig', 'ower the brig', and 'over de bridge' in successive speeches. There are still minor cuts, and a few words missing probably through hasty proof-reading, not to mention some longer digressions silently dropped, but the overall effect is evocative of the storyteller's voice and generally not hard to read. Linda Williamson is happy to report that her own children

find it easier to read than the Canongate books, though no doubt teachers who have to teach children to write standard English would be less happy.

The treatment of the Stewarts' stories is different again. Both Dr Douglas and the MacColls probably tend to use standardised Scots spellings (Dr Williamson too follows the *Concise Scots Dictionary* in most cases, according to her Preface). The occasional departures seem to be due to the editors' preference, like the MacColls' tendency to use the Geordie 'wor' for 'wir', or Sheila Douglas's demotic 'affy' and 'gonny' for 'awfae' and 'gaunnae'—though 'canny' and 'cannae' appear in successive paragraphs on page 135, in the same sense and surely with the same sound. The MacColls occasionally misspell names, as when Meikleour of the Beech Hedges becomes Muckle Hour (in accordance with its folk etymology), but the stories generally read like minimally edited oral texts. The Douglas texts seem shorter, and this is evidently not just because they were recorded when the tellers were older.

In her introduction Dr Douglas describes how 'An oral tale is very different from a literary one . . .' and goes on: 'Many of the story collections of the past, even John Francis Campbell's, have consisted of polished up or summarised versions of stories. Nowadays the tape recorder has made it possible for us to record and transcribe the stories exactly as told with the whole atmosphere of the story occasion and the flavour of the storyteller's personality to bring it to life. I have tried to present the stories in this way, with a minimum of editing.' These are noble sentiments, apart from the unnecessary and unjustified slur on Campbell of Islay (who hardly ever left out a word that his collectors presented to him from his main text, as against comparative notes.) Unfortunately the author does not live up to them, and her 'minimum of editing' proves on examination to involve a lot of cutting and compressing, with the aim, she has told me, of fitting more stories into the book. I feel it would have been better with fewer stories and less surgery. One can compare 'Jack and the Seven Enchanted Islands' with Dr Douglas' own earlier transcription in *Scottish Studies* 24; 'The Water of Life' can be compared with her text in *Tocher* 31, and 'Geordie MacPhee' with Robert Garioch's transcription from the same tape in *Tocher* 11. In all three cases the earlier text is about half as long again as that in the book, not just because it has been pruned of 'he says' and other repetitions and digressions: whole paragraphs are rewritten, sometimes losing the sense. "So he's lyin there till the morning cam, it was near daylight, and he rose and he kennled a fire, and he tellt his wife to get up and get some breakfast made. So Geordie had an old razor, an open razor and he's shavin himsel—aye when he shaved hissel he was going some place, ye see. The wife says, 'Where are ye goin tae?' she says" boils down to "So next mornin Geordie's shavin himsel and his wife kens he's goin some place. 'Where are ye goin?' she says"—and both flavour and clarity are boiled out of it. Jack in 'The Water of Life' tells his father of the woman he met at the kitchen door, " 'But', he says, 'I was at the cook about her,' he says, 'this morning, and nane o them can mind o a wumman bein at the back door' "—and a good deal more, telling how his father fails to recognise her from his description. None of this is in the book, and some of the magic and mystery of Jack's helper is lost.

This treatment seems risky when dealing with John Stewart, whose vivid descriptions Dr Douglas rightly praises: he makes words work for him, defining 'courtiers' as 'thon men wi white stockins an spears tae bump on the grun' and happily throwing off terms like 'illimosity' (animosity?) or a 'great inorjurous roast' (inordinate?). These are kept, but 'I wad raither loss ma legs as dae that' is turned into 'I wad raither lose ma legs than dae that'—to avoid corrupting young readers' English? It is even more annoying that 'Geordie MacPhee', the only story not recorded by the editor herself but 'too good to leave out', is treated the same way, though its goodness is all in Andrew Stewart's oral style. Occasionally Douglas is more accurate than Garioch: 'I used tae play the village tae mak pennies' makes more sense than 'I played the tune wi my pipes, like in Venice', though what Andrew said was 'I used tae play the village here . . . I played the toon wi ma pipes, beggin pennies.' Elsewhere she distorts: the story ends with two sentences not in *Tocher* about Geordie MacPhee's return to poverty, but the last is editorial interpretation: 'He's the happiest man that was ever playin his pipes an goin roon the doors tae make a livin!' All Andrew seems to say as his voice tails off is 'Ye'll see him playing his pipes at that pub in Newbiggin . . .' and a later and still longer recording of the tale ends with Geordie pushing all his worldly goods about in a pram, the poorest sort of traveller—not unhappy at the easy loss of his easily found fortune, but not notably happy.

I accept that some readers of what is intended to be a popular edition may be glad to sacrifice accurate transcriptions for the sake of more stories; but others might have appreciated a few words explaining what had been done. It is only because the implication remains that these stories have not been 'polished up or summarised' but are given 'exactly as told' that I have dissected at such length what is nevertheless the best collection of traveller tales to date.

Stanley Robertson has avoided editorial interference by writing down his own words: unfortunately this also results in the loss of most of the oral flavour, apart from some favourite clichés like 'the deed ceelings o the night'. He compensates by using far more cant than he would in telling a story orally to a non-traveller audience—some travellers might say, more than they would use among themselves with nothing to hide. These are surely the longest continuous texts in Scots cant yet printed. With up to a dozen words to look up at the bottom of a page and probably others to seek in the glossary at the end if you don't remember them from earlier, it can be slow reading until you learn the basic vocabulary. This includes Scots and slang as well as words from Romani and Gaelic, and, I suspect, a few words used only by Stanley himself or his family. Now and then a story-teller uses a phrase that comes from Stanley Robertson the much-travelled Mormon elder, and would jar by a Deeside camp fire—'it works the same wye as the great Oracle o Delphi' or 'fin I wis a young gade (oh! eons ago)'. ('Gade' is a young man, pure cant, but Stanley uses the same spelling for his Scots for 'gave', or 'went'.) The Scots spellings are sometimes idiosyncratic, confusing or indeed irritating: 'he asked mi, "faa I wis gang?" ' for 'far I wis gaun'; 'aye' for 'ae', one and even 'aa', all; 'were' where the MacColls use 'wor'. Folk etymology or reinterpretation may influence spelling and form: 'spey wife' for

'spaewife' is also in the late Betsy Whyte's *Rowans and Wild Honey* and may rest on a traveller's feeling of the holiness of the River Spey; 'leaf alane' for 'lee-lane'—well, why not? There are nice (unglossed) phrases like 'It's jist eexie-pixie tae the gate-hoose first'. The traditional inventiveness which allows a story to be built round playing an 'ancient game' called *Brackie brackie* with seventy-seven cards in seven coloured suits of ten 'spotted cards' and a 'swan' is the great attraction of the book. On the other hand Stanley's free handling of words can cause trouble with the glossary: it may not matter to him that 'foumart' means 'polecat', rather than 'fox' as he says, but he gives wrong meanings for some cant words too. 'Sweetny' normally means 'sugar', not 'sweets', and 'chore (a branch aff mi ain tree)' means 'steal', not 'saw'. Were these supplied by the publishers in a hurry to fill a gap (as I confess I did with Stanley's own 'dry-hunt', not realising it was hawking *without stock*, in *The Green Man of Knowledge*)? But I cannot believe anyone thought 'bold middens' on page 140 meant 'maidens' . . .

Stanley has no notes on anything but words, and his too-brief Introduction simply sets the scene and emotional background for Part 1. Sarah Fraser, presumably the wife of the illustrator and publisher Simon Fraser, adds a short Foreword, drawing woolly romantic parallels with other nomadic races such as the 'Mongolian hoards' and the 'Laps'. Sheila Douglas' Introduction, apart from the omission noted and an inability to copy the titles of Gaelic parallels cited correctly, is an excellent concise outline of her storytellers' lives and techniques, which the interested reader can flesh out by consulting their own words in *Till Doomsday*. Sadly she gives no notes at all, no doubt to save space, though it would not have taken a line more to add AT numbers where appropriate to the storytellers' names scrupulously given in all but one case below the tales. Again the MacColls can help, for they give type and even motif numbers where they can. Among the Williamson books only the first edition of *Fireside Tales* gives AT numbers in the notes at the end, but most of the relevant ones for *A Thorn* can be tracked down in Hamish Henderson's characteristically ebullient Introduction. Informative as this is, it is an outsider's account and rather less evocative than the Introduction to *Fireside Tales,* which is transcribed from Duncan Williamson's own words describing 'The Traveller Children's way of life, 1914–1955' and 'The Importance of Storytelling to the Traveller Children'. In the later Canongate books both the introduction and notes on the sources and meaning of the tales are given in Duncan's own words, with the notes before and after the stories just as they were recorded. However the adult reader may be glad of Linda Williamson's comparative notes at the end in the original *Fireside Tales* and *A Thorn*, where, even if there are no type numbers, there are details of Duncan's own different renderings of a type, which are valuable evidence for his narrative technique.

Alas, Canongate dropped the notes from the second edition of *Fireside Tales*, apparently in order to include some drawings of variable quality by Alan Herriot, who illustrates later volumes. His silhouettes between stories in *The Broonie* can be amusing, but some of the larger pictures just do not get it right: for instance, the insect-winged fairies in 'Archie and

the Little People' ('nasty little buzz-flies' as Kipling's Puck calls them) are a Victorian conceit with no basis in country belief and no relevance to the tipsy dancers of Duncan's story. (Incidentally, this story has something which I wished for in some of Stanley's—the music which is sung in the telling.) *The Devil, Black Art* and *A Thorn,* less closely aimed at children, get by without illustrations, apart from Bill Sanderson's lively cover for the last, which has very little to do with any of the stories inside, but the wood-engraved textures look as if you could reach out and touch them. *Exodus*, however, was published partly as a showcase for Simon Fraser's pictures. These are perhaps inspired by Stanley's more mystic stories in general, but they hardly ever illustrate the story they stand beside. Mr Fraser provides at the end an explanation of the symbolism in the full-page colour plates (unfortunately with the wrong page numbers) which shows that most of these are not tied to any of the stories in this book; and while some of the spidery drawings among the print show camp-fire scenes or travellers with horses, more show mythical beasts or winged figures on tenement roofs. The maps of the storytelling locations have some relevance—even if you have to read them from several different angles and the travellers in the foreground look disconcertingly like Bacchanals. But at least the pictures do not interfere with the visual imagination of the scene in the story, which is an essential part of the experience for most readers and listeners.

Whatever the faults of the presentation, and however much invention has been added to tradition, these books make up an immensely enjoyable addition to the body of Scottish traditional tales in print, which until recently still tended to be very heavily weighted towards stories collected in the nineteenth century; and they are evidence of a repertoire and a creativity which give cause to respect the once despised travelling people.

ALAN BRUFORD

Books Received

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

Béaloideas 1988. The Journal of the Folklore of Ireland Society, edited by Padraig Ó Héalaí. General Editor, Bo Almquist. Dublin. 247 pp.

The Innes Review. The Journal of the Scottish Catholic Historical Association, edited by Michael Lynch.

Index of Authors and Titles Vol. 1-40 1950-89. 50 pp.

Vol. XLI No 1. pp. 1-135, £12.

Vol. XLI No 2. pp. 139-253, £12.

Études Celtique XXVI 1989, fondées par J. Vendryes Editions du Centre National de la Récherche Scientifique, Paris. 311 pp. 330F.

Mauricewood Disaster: Mining in Midlothian by Andrew B. Donaldson. Midlothian District Libraries, Roslin 1989. 64 pp. £2.95.

Bebyggelsenamnen i Björkekinds härad av Gösta Franzén. Ortnamnen i Östergötlands Län 4. Skrifter Utgivna Genom Ortnamnsarkivet i Uppsala, Ser. A: Sveriges Ortnamn. Ortnamnsarkivet i Uppsala 1989. 104 pp. [N.P.]

The Making of Scotland: Nation, Culture and Social Change, edited by David McCrone, Stephen Kendrick and Pat Straw. Explorations in Sociology 29. British Sociological Association and Edinburgh University Press 1989. 234 pp. [N.P.]

The Life and Work of Samuel Rutherford Crockett by Islay Murray Donaldson. Aberdeen University Press 1989. 357 pp. £19.50.

East Perthshire Gaelic: Social History, Phonology, Text and Lexicon by Máirtín Ó Murchú. Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies 1989. xi+432 pp. IRE £24.

Bryght Lanternis: Essays on the Language and Literature of Medieval and Renaissance Scotland, edited by Derrick McClure and Michael R. G. Spiller. Aberdeen University Press 1989. 482 pp. £16.50.

The Shaping of Scotland. Eighteenth Century Patterns of Land Use and Settlement by R. J. Brien. Aberdeen University Press 1989. 140 pp. £7.50.

The Scottish Dog, edited by Joyce and Maurice Lindsay. Aberdeen University Press 1989. 281 pp. £12.95 (hardback) £7.95 (soft back). (An anthology. Illustrated with 67 black and white photographs and drawings).

Improvement and Romance. Constructing the Myth of the Highlands by Peter Womack. Language, Discourse, Society. General Editors: Stephen Heath, Colin MacCabe and Denis Riley. MacMillan, Basingstoke 1989. 212 pp. £29.50.

Traditional Music of Britain and Ireland: A Research and Information Guide by James Porter. Garland Publishing, New York 1989. 408 pp. $50. (A select bibliography).

Review of Scottish Culture (ROSC), edited by Alexander Fenton, with Hugh Cheape and Rosalind Marshall. John Donald and the National Museums of Scotland, Edinburgh.

Number 5, 1989: 112 pp. £10.

Number 6, 1990: 102 pp. £10.

Cromartie: Highland Life 1650-1914 by Eric Richards and Monica Clough. Aberdeen University Press 1989. 536 pp. including 68 photographic illustrations and 7 maps. £29.50.

Sexuality and Social Control: Scotland 1660-1780 by Rosalind Mitchison and Leah Leneman. Basil Blackwell, Oxford 1989. 254 pp. £27.50.

Battlefield Band. Forward with Scotland's Past: A collection of their Songs and Music. Kinmor Music, Temple, Midlothian 1989. 126 pp. [N.P.] (Pipe tunes, fiddle and other tunes, and songs).

The Prisoners at Penicuik: French and other Prisoners of War 1803-1814 by Ian MacDougall. Midlothian District Council 1989. 94 pp. £3.95.

Rob Stene's Dream, edited by David Reid. University of Stirling occasional publications, Stirling 1989. 112 pp. £6.50. (Dream vision, fable and satire 1591-2).

Sword and Pen: Poems of 1915 from Dundee and Tayside, edited by Hilda D. Spear and Bruce Pandrich. Aberdeen University Press 1989. 136 pp. £6.95.

Eastwood District History and Heritage by Thomas C. Welsh. Eastwood District Libraries 1989. 232 pp. [N.P.]

Gaelic and Scotland. Alba agus a' Ghaidhlig, edited by William Gillies. Edinburgh University Press 1989. 250 pp. £29.95.

Politics and Reviewers: The 'Edinburgh' and the 'Quarterly' in the early Victorian Age by Joanne Shattock. Leicester University Press 1989. 174 pp. £25.

The French Revolution: A History by Thomas Carlyle, edited by K. J. Fielding and David Sorensen. the World's Classics, Oxford University Press 1989. 528 pp. £7.95.

Gaelic and Scots in Harmony. Proceedings of the Second International Conference on the Languages of Scotland at the University of Glasgow, 1988, edited by Derick S. Thomson. Department of Celtic, University of Glasgow 1990. 192 pp. £9.

Studia Celtica Volume XXII/XXIII (1987-8), edited by Professor J. E. Caerwyn Williams. Published on behalf of the Board of Celtic Studies of the University of Wales. University of Wales Press, Cardiff 1990. 290 pp. [N.P.]

The Comic Poems of William Tennant, edited by A. Scott and M. Lindsay. The Association for Scottish Literary Studies, Scottish Academic Press, Edinburgh 1990. 232 pp. £15.

The Ballad and the Matrix: Personality, Milieu, and the Oral Tradition by William Bernard McCarthy. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, USA. 1990. 192 pp. $27.50. (Examines the songs of Agnes Lyle of Kilbarchan).

Iona: The Living Memory of a Crofting Community by Mairi MacArthur. Edinburgh University Press 1990. 260 pp. £14.95.

An Album of Scottish Families 1694-96: being the first instalment of George Home's Diary, supplemented by much further research into the Edinburgh and Border Families forming his extensive social network by Helen and Keith Kelsall. Aberdeen University Press 1990. 158 pp. £14.95.

Dundee's Suffragettes: their remarkable struggle to win votes for women by Norman Watson. Published by the author, Perth 1990. 46 pp. [N.P]

Tracing your Scottish Ancestors: A Guide to Ancestry Research in the Scottish Record Office by Cecil Sinclair. HMSO, Edinburgh 1990. 154 pp. (Photographic illustrations in the text.) £5.95.

North East Castles: Castles in the Landscape of North East Scotland, edited by John S. Smith. Aberdeen University Press 1990. 126 pp. £5.95.

King's College, Aberdeen, 1560-1641: From Protestant Reformation to Covenanting Revolution by David Stevenson with a translation of the New Foundation by G. Patrick Edwards. Quincentennial Studies in the History of the University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Press 1990. x + 180 pp. £8.90.

Covenant, Church and Party: Traditions of Revolt and Protest in Modern Scottish History, edited by Terry Brotherstone. Aberdeen University Press 1990. 143 pp. £16.50.

Scotland: Literature, Culture, Politics. Verantwortlicher Herausgeber für den thematischen Teil dieses Bandes, Peter Zenzinger. Anglistik & Englischunterricht Band 38/39. Heidelberg 1990. 358 pp. DM 50.

Beyond the Brochs: Changing Perspectives on the Atlantic Scottish Iron Age, edited by Ian Armit. Edinburgh University Press 1990. 228 pp. [N.P.]