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Books Received and Noted

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BOOKS RECEIVED AND NOTED

This list is intended to provide information or brief notices on a variety of recently-published books on Scottish literature and related topics; inclusion in the list need not preclude possible subsequent discussion in a more formal review. Where the book or e-text has been made available, entries are based on personal review; some briefer entries have been edited from the publisher's description. The compilers welcome timely information on new publications from publishers or authors.

Douglas Kerr, ed., *Memories and Adventures*, by Arthur Conan Doyle [*Edinburgh Edition of the Works of Arthur Conan Doyle*] (Edinburgh University Press, 2021). Pp. 591. Hardback, \$195.00, ISBN 978-147443338. Also available as an e-book.

—Arthur Conan Doyle (1859-1930) lived a long and very varied life, and wrote prodigiously, though his popular fame now rests chiefly on just one segment of his work. His autobiography, with 32 chapters covering his life in “literature, medicine, travel, politics, war, sport and spiritualism,” was serialized in the *Strand* in 1924, published as a book that October, and republished with an update in 1930. Douglas Kerr's full-scale scholarly edition collates and annotates the various texts, with an introduction on the book's publication history, reception, and literary-historical contexts.

Caroline Macafee, *Scots Folk Singers and their Sources A Study of Two Major Scottish Song Collections* [SCROLL, 31] (Leiden: Brill, 2021). Pp. 232. Hardback, \$81.90. ISBN 978-9004464407.

—A pioneer Victorian statistician once commented approvingly on contemporary eagerness “to confront the figures of speech with the figures of arithmetic.” The title of this fascinating and important book may lull some potential readers into a false comfort about what they will find. Dr. Macafee's study has little in common with traditional histories of ballads, or scholarship on ballad-sources and singers, or histories of ballad

collecting and editing. Instead, she offers what seems to be the first-ever large-scale detailed quantitative analysis of information about folk singers and their sources, based primarily on metadata and recataloguing from recently-digitized recordings and archives at Edinburgh's School of Scottish Studies. To provide comparison with an earlier generation of ballad singers and sources, Dr. Macafee carried out parallel analysis on a more formal scholarly project also based at the School, the multivolume edition of the Greig-Duncan ballad archive. Dr. Macafee is cautious about the comprehensiveness of the data, and modest in claims for what her tables show, but the cumulative effect is to dispel or at least qualify some earlier demographic generalizations about the singers and singing cultures taken as normative by the heroic generation of folksong field collectors.

Jim Mackintosh and Paul S. Philippou, eds, *Beyond the Swelkie: A Collection of Poems & Essays to Mark the Centenary of George Mackay Brown (1921-1996)* (Perth: Tippermuir Books, 2021). Paper, £12.99. ISBN 978-1913836085

—This volume is a centenary celebration of Brown's life and work, with contributions, appreciations, and reminiscences from "poets, as well as writers, academics, friends and family." There are over 80 individual contributors, with poems or short prose pieces from, e.g., James Robertson, Andrew Motion, W.N. Herbert, Stuart Conn, George Gunn, Christine De Luca, and Andrew Greig (on Brown's last words), and essays from Linden Bicket, Stuart MacBeath, and Alexander Moffat (about Edinburgh bohemia and his Brown portrait).

Alexander Moffat, Ruth Nicol and Alan Riach, *Landmarks. Poets Portraits, and Landscapes of Modern Scotland. An Exhibition at the Lillie Art Gallery, Milngarvie, 13th January to 8th February, 2018* (N.p.: n.p., [2018]). Pp. 94. No price given.

Alexander Moffat, Ruth Nicol and Alan Riach, Alexander Moffat, Ruth Nicol and Alan Riach, *Landmarks. Hugh MacDiarmid: The Brownsbank Years. An Exhibition at the Biggar and Upper Clydesdale Museum, 2nd October to 28th November, 2021* (Edinburgh: Rusty's Productions, 2021). Pp. 96. £15 from the Museum.

Alan Riach, with Alexander Moffat and John Purser, *Arts and the Nation. A Critical Reexamination of Scottish Literature, Painting, Music and Culture* ((Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2017, 2nd printing 2018). Pp. 230. Paper, £12.99. ISBN 978-1-912147-10-6.

--These three titles all explore the same argument, about the interrelationship in 20th century Scotland of the arts (literature, painting, music), Scottish national identity, and international context. The most substantial of the three, *Arts and the Nation*, collects 38 of the weekly

articles, chiefly by Alan Riach, originally published in the *National* newspaper between January 2016 and February the following year. Riach's first four items, all combatively titled "Not Burns," indicate the lineal descent of the argument from MacDiarmid and the mid-20th century Scottish Renaissance, and might be seen as an affirmation, or modulation, of the case, increasingly questioned but still widely held, that the rise of modern Scottish nationalism was more cultural than political; the last section of the book contains two manifestos on government arts and education policy, jointly authored by Moffat and Riach (pp. 210-215, 221-226). In some ways, the book makes its strongest case, not in larger cultural or policy debate, but in the broad range of articles on specific topics. There are the expected pieces on Dunbar and MacDiarmid, and there are some well-informed scatter-shot surveys, like Riach's essays on "National Music," pp. 98-103, focuses on Vaughan Williams but includes a roll-call of Scottish composers and passing references to Pound, Whitman, and Ginsberg, or the essay on Scottish genre fiction, pp. 155-160, which ends by printing a Yeats poem. But there are also some less predictable topics: in literature, Duncan ban McIntyre, Elizabeth Melville, Wole Soyinka, the American Marxist poet Edward Dorn. Like the newspaper columns from which it derives, it is perhaps best treated as a book for browsing, a cumulative exemplification of its arguments, and, as with Riach's on-going continuation of the *National* series, which often features brief assessments of specific Scottish writers, some of the individual essays that might be a good starting point for discussion with students at any level.

The two related exhibition catalogues reproduce portraits and sketches by Sandy Moffat, landscapes (and interiors at Brownsbank) by Ruth Nicol, relevant poetry from MacDiarmid and related poets, and a variety of critical text, some by Alan Riach, and some coordinated by him, notably two long "conversations" between the three participants about the exhibitions, paintings and poets (2018, pp. 12-30, 2021 (pp. 21-33). Moffat's major portraits, especially his much-reproduced group portrait of MacDiarmid and friends, "Poet's Pub," are now part of literary history, and the two overlapping exhibitions constitute a useful partial retrospective for his work for those who only know the famous highpoints.

Alasdair Pettinger, *Frederick Douglass and Scotland, 1846: Living an Anti-Slavery Life* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021). Pp. 376. Hardback, £42.50, ISBN: 978-1474444255; paper, £24.99, ISBN: 978-1474444262.

—Most *SSL* readers will be aware that Douglass spent time in Scotland and know his famous account of visiting the Burns birthplace, but anyone wanting to get a better sense of the significance of this period in

Douglass's life, both for Douglass himself and for understanding early Victorian Scottish religion, abolitionism, and racial attitudes, will be grateful for this book. Pettinger's Part III, "Douglass, Scott and Burns," is the most obviously relevant here, but the whole story of Douglass's Scottish lecture tour will suggest new connections both for Scottish Victorianists and for scholars of mid-19th century America.

PRELIMINARY VERSION