

# REVIEWS:

**Anna Ritchie and David J. Breeze: Invaders of Scotland, an introduction to the archaeology of the Romans, Scots, Angles and Vikings, highlighting the monuments in the care of the Secretary of State for Scotland. HMSO, for Historic Buildings and Monuments, 64pp. illus. in colour, £4.95 paperback.**

Over the past few years, Her Majesty's Stationary Office has been very active in the field of producing concise, well-illustrated guides to Scotland's archaeological resources. Dr. Anna Ritchie has been one of the foremost contributors to these, which includes *Picts* (1989), reviewed in *Northern Studies* 26, and *Scotland BC* 1988. This latest offering from HMSO looks at the archaeological remains of four major peoples who influenced Scotland, in varying degrees, by the process of invasion.

The core of the book is composed of chapters documenting the most important traces of Roman invasion, in Scots in Dalriada, the Anglian move into Southern Scotland, and the Norse raiders and colonists in the Northern and Western Isles. A short introductory chapter, 'The Canvas Prepared' outlines the pre-Roman situation, while a final summary, 'The Tapestry Complete' assesses the cultural impact of the four peoples.

As with the previous publication, the emphasis is very much on the visual. Excellent aerial photographs, such as of Dumbarton Rock (p.vi), and Jarlshof (p.39), are interspersed with colour photographs of the more important sites (Dunadd, p.18, Eileach an Naoimh pp.23-24, and the Brough of Birsay pp.41-42) as well as useful line drawings such as the reconstruction of the Roman bath house at Bar Hill on the Antonine Wall. In addition, the text is liberally scattered with colour illustrations of artifacts, coins, monumental sculptures and detail shots of several outstandingly significant remains such as the Anglian shrine at Jedburgh (p.29), the Ruthwell Cross (pp.33-34) and Sueno's Stone (pp.50-53).

The overall impression is of a well-illustrated paperback which attempts to place the 'invaders' in an overall context, so there is little new in the way of discussion or interpretation of the material. The aim has clearly been to provide the general reader with an overview of the most important remains, rather than giving a detailed guide to individual sites. Anna Ritchie's text is, as usual, concise and should be easily understood by the lay reader. The specialist will find the illustrations pleasant to the eye, but some, I suspect will be put off by the £4.95 price tag, which is an increase of £1.00 over the two earlier publications.

Ian A Fraser

**E.V.W. Proudfoot (ed.), Our Vanishing Heritage, Forestry and Archaeology (Council for Scottish Archaeology, Occasional Papers No. 2, 1989; A4 36pp., £5.50)**

This booklet is a record of history in the making. It contains the papers presented (in some cases in substantially amended form) at a conference on this theme held in Inverness in April 1987, together with an update on subsequent developments.

As is well known, extensive and accelerating programmes of afforestation in the uplands and marginal lands of Scotland excited much public controversy about the threat to many aspects of the natural environment. Even by early 1987, however, there was considerably less public awareness of the threat to the landscape evidence of millennia of human activity, and of archaeologists' struggles to gather and assess their evidence with means that were seriously inadequate and procedurally flawed. The principal objective of the conference was thus to ensure that the special importance and sensitivity of archaeological remains in those same areas would not continue to be overlooked, misunderstood, or accorded negligible status; in the words of its resolution, the conference sought 'the establishment of an integrated and properly funded system of survey and protection, to prevent destruction of archaeological and historical sites, both on a national and regional level, as a matter of urgency'. It is to the great credit of the organisers of the symposium, principally the Council for Scottish Archaeology and the Inverness Field Club, and of the participants, that this objective has been very largely achieved.

A well-balanced sequence of eight papers divides itself into four main categories: firstly, reviews of the actual and potential contents of these upland and marginal landscapes and the reasons for their importance from the point of view of the historical geographer (John Smith) and archaeologist (Roger Mercer); secondly, official arrangements and limitations on the work of surveying and recording (John Dunbar; Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, now Historic Scotland), archaeological monitoring and protecting at national (Tom Band/David Breeze; Historic Buildings and Monuments) and regional (Ian Shepherd) planning levels; thirdly, viewpoints from the forestry industry itself, with generally sympathetic attitudes represented by the Forestry Commission (Alastair Rowan) and private forestry (Richard Ogilvie; Fountain Forestry); and an instructive comparative look at the advantages and difficulties of operating the forestry provisions for nature conservation (Jim McCarthy; Nature Conservancy Council). The report of the Discussion session and Christopher Smout's *Summing Up* bring back vividly the memory of an historic meeting, whilst Smout's Foreword and the various postscripts added to the papers clearly demonstrate subsequent progress.

Since 1987 improved procedures have enabled Historic Scotland and Regional Archaeologists to monitor forestry grant applications, and additional funds have enabled the Royal Commission on Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland to carry out field survey in advance of afforestation on a strategic basis. Archaeological interests are now firmly embedded in the regulations of the Woodland Grant Scheme introduced in April 1988, whilst the Forestry Commission itself now employs an archaeological consultant and officer to assist it in its work. Overall, from the archaeologists' standpoint, the forestry problem is at last beginning to come under control. However, the much-heralded Manual for the guidance of forestry workers, promised throughout the pages of this booklet, has not yet appeared, whilst areas of likely afforestation, especially those containing industrial remains, are confronting archaeological surveyors with unfamiliar features in complex multi-period landscapes. However, these are merely manageable loose ends in an otherwise eminently successful campaign.

Ironically, as is often the way, the pressures and priorities are already beginning to shift. The withdrawal, in the 1988 Budget, of tax relief for private forestry has tended to mitigate the pressures for development on this front. Also, thanks largely to the publicity fostered by the Inverness meeting, forestry may even be approaching a privileged position so far as the manifold threats to Scottish archaeology are concerned, certainly when compared to responses

that can be effected, for example, in relation to open-cast coal-mining. The moral conveyed by this booklet is that the price of an archaeological heritage is eternal – and effective – lobbying!

Geoffrey Stell

**R.R. Davis: The Age of Conquest: Wales 1063-1415. OUP, 1991 530pp., paperback, £7.95.**

**Robin Frame: The Political Development of the British Isles: 1100-1400. OUP, 1990. 256pp., paperback, £6.95.**

It is a pleasure to welcome Rhys Davies' Age of Conquest in paperback. It first appeared in hardback in 1987, under the title Conquest, Coexistence and Change: Wales 1063-1415, and was at once recognised as a masterpiece, the definitive modern account of Wales in the Middle Ages. Professor Davies has a gift for narrative, and scholarly, well-balanced judgements are set out in attractive readable prose.

The period covered ranges from the death of Gruffudd ap Llywellyn in 1063 to that of Owain Glyn Dŵr in 1415. The first hundred years saw the advent and eventual containment of the Normans and the establishment of Marcher society. Davies labels the years 1172-1277 'The Age of Consolidation' and considers the governance of Wales under three of its greatest princes: Rhys ap Gruffudd of Deheubarth, and Llywellyn ap Iorwerth and Llywellyn ap Gruffudd of Gwynedd. Then came the Edwardian conquest and settlement, followed by a century of comparative stability and the last native Welsh revolt under Owain Glyn Dŵr.

But this is more than a political history. Set apart from the main political narrative are three illuminating chapters on the changing face of Welsh society between 1100 and 1350, which consider in turn the bonds of society, the transformation of economic life, and the church and religion. The discussion of the first of these themes, the bonds of society, is of particular interest. Welsh society in the Middle Ages, like Scottish society, was predominantly kin-based, and many parallels spring to mind, not least as regards obligations of clientship, and the blood feud and its consequences.

The book is indispensable reading for anyone interested in the history of Wales or, indeed, in the medieval history of the British Isles. It is a pleasure to read, and remarkable value at the price.

As Robin Frame notes in his preface, although 'British' history has been much in vogue recently, there is not a great deal of it in print. His pioneering Political Development of the British Isles: 1100-1400 aims to remedy the defect. It must be accounted a considerable success. Like Rhys Davies' Age of Conquest it is well informed, well judged and well written. Author and subject have come together at just the right time, and Dr. Frame has been able to draw on much recent research. It is one of the strengths of the book that although he is particularly expert on the Anglo-Norman aristocracy and their far reaching international connections, including their impact on the kingdom of the Scots, Dr. Frame gives full consideration also to the native lords of Wales and the Gaelic lords of Scotland and Ireland. The Scandinavian rulers of Orkney and Dublin, of Man and the Isles, also find a place.