

This is altogether an admirable presentation of considerable interest to enthusiast and visitor alike.

The weakness of 'Orkney and Shetland' lies in part in the fact that G.W.W. made only two field trips and visited but few locations. He was forever in Edinburgh, it would seem! But in part it lies in the treatment. The general introductions to the island groups provide a useful background for the uninitiated; the individual plates would have benefited from closer research.

It is a happy touch, however, the placing of contemporary photographs alongside G.W.W.'s of Stromness, Stenness and Rackwick for instance; and it is a particularly fine series for Rackwick. Additionally, there are many fascinating photographs of fishing and crofting, and of distinctive small boats at Fair Isle, Symbister and Lerwick (yoles and sixerns as opposed to the Scottish herring boats). An ethnological approach to the commentaries would have well-suited the distinctively Norse heritage of the islands which survived in so many ways well past G.W.W.'s day.

Both volumes provide a most valuable dissemination of some particularly fine photographic material. Let not any comments or commentaries detract from that! They are much to be welcomed.

John Baldwin

***Ouncelands and Pennylands*, L.J. Macgregor and B.E. Crawford, eds., University of St. Andrews, St. John's House Papers No. 3, 1987 (Price £3.75 + 25p. P&P)**

The above proceedings of the day conference held in St. Andrews in 1985 are now available and those who were present will remember with pleasure the day-long pursuit of the elusive answer to the question originally posed by Captain F.W.L. Thomas – 'What is a Pennyland?'

There are four contributors to this short volume and each of the four has a detailed knowledge of a particular part of Scotland which enables him/her to tackle the problem of land measurement/assessment authoritatively and, when all four papers have been digested, one has a

reasonably comprehensive view of the present state of knowledge about ouncelands and pennylands and their relationship to other land assessment units. The contributors, in order of occurrence in the volume, are as follows: Alexis Easson who concentrates on the West Highlands and Islands; Malcolm Bangor-Jones on Sutherland and Caithness; William Thomson on Orkney and Shetland; Richard Oram on south-west Scotland. This latter contribution substitutes for a paper presented at the conference by Professor John McQueen who, as noted in the preface, 'discussed the distribution of place-name elements which denote land assessment units in south-west Scotland'.

All the papers in the volume are very useful in that they succinctly summarise the status quo of knowledge about ouncelands, pennylands and that other well-known mediaeval land-unit, the davach, before proceeding to present new theories arising out of each writer's own research in progress. There is general agreement on the longevity of a system of territorial organisation underpinning the ounceland and pennyland system. Malcolm Bangor-Jones would, in fact, look to the first millenium B.C. for the origin of the territorial organisation which was to persist into early modern times. Given this extraordinary longevity it is hardly surprising that many questions remain to be answered but perusal of the St. John's House Paper will provide many insights, thanks to the painstaking research of the contributors. The only real weakness of the volume is its brevity and it is to be hoped that we can look forward to future volumes on a similar theme.

Finally, it would be inappropriate to conclude without praising the work of the two editors who have taken care to present the material in the most accessible form. The clarity of the illustrations which follow each article is particularly pleasing and the placing of the detailed combined bibliography at the end of the volume certainly facilitates the pursuit of references at the end of a stimulating read.

Copies of *Ouncelands and Pennylands* are available from Dr. B. Crawford, St. John's House, University of St. Andrews, 69 South Street, St. Andrews.

Doreen Waugh