

ISLAND LIFE

“Folksongs and Folklore of South Uist” is a highly specialised book about the Scottish culture of yesteryear. Originally published in 1955, now in its third edition, it catalogues the oral and musical traditions of “... a time now past in a remote Hebridean community.” South Uist is an island at the end of the world, a hundred or so square miles of wilderness, which, at the time of writing, supported a population of less than 3,000.

Illustrated with over thirty black and white photographs and the melodies and words of over a hundred songs, this is a unique record. It is written in both English and Gaelic and includes proverbs and sayings such as “A (keen) eye keeps cattle”.

Also included are folk remedies for, among other things, nose bleeds, rheumatism and toothache. Not to mention recipes for dyeing wool and special dishes.

Although, like ‘Scottish Archaeology: New Perceptions’ this book will be of interest to a strictly limited audience of (mainly) scholars, it will undoubtedly become a definitive record of a long vanished way of life in the decades and centuries to come.

“Folksongs and Folklore of South Uist” is published in hardback by Aberdeen University Press, 309 pages including notes, index and bibliography. Price: £17.70.

THE OTHER FACE OF SCOTLAND

Scotland contains some of the most beautiful countryside (and last wilderness) in Britain. It is also a place of great antiquity, with ruins dating back to the Neolithic and Early Bronze Ages.

If your interest in exploring Scotland is motivated more by curiosity about its mysterious past than by leisure, and if you want to learn more about this abstruse but fascinating subject, then *Scottish Archaeology: New Perceptions* is an excellent book to begin with.

This book contains over a dozen essays by contemporary scholars, all but one of them based in Scotland, and covers everything from abandoned 19th Century farmsteads in the Orkneys to the distribution of Roman forts, to sights of much greater antiquity. This book is not “light” reading, but anyone who studies it will realise that there is far more to Scotland the Brave than Glasgow Rangers football team, the Loch Ness Monster and shooting grouse in season.

Scottish Archaeology: New Perceptions is edited by W.S. Hanson and E.A. Slater and is published by Aberdeen University Press in paperback at £14.95.

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