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to be a discussion of eco-
ketting? (national parks).
Scotland, one which, in
natural environment. The
foreign visitors is never
d Japanese visitors come
mountaineering, bird
spelled despite the fact
-evidence that Scottish
ironment. Organisations
RSPB, do uphold eco-
gement systems, ranger
ies, involvement of local
uch: a point missed. The
existing and potential
Lomond and Trossachs
author concentrates on
irring theme in the book)
the proposed legislation
amongst the Scottish
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of Scotland’s landscape
ents of the landowners,
ising that these groups
issue of communities
apathetic.
an areas, therefore the
ets’ is appropriate. The
mean either individual
struction of community
d environmental impact
ations to the widespread
le building materials and
oplistic building trade
true, Patterson is overly
ological principles.
: the discussion included
one is frustrated by the
is perhaps a failure by
key saving) aspects of
of environmental busi-
unities, nationally and
cision of the discussion
about research and development in the countryside in the following chapter
misses the mark completely. Rural development is not simply about farming and
forestry. The comparison with English farming not appropriate: many of
Scotland’s farms are non-intensive and have therefore conducted good
husbandry. Forestry in Scotland, whilst important, will never create the
economic stability required in rural areas especially in the present economic
climate.
The repeated assertions that Scotland’s landscape is an integral part of
Scottish identity is unsupported by evidence leaving the reader frustrated by,
what amounts to, overstated sentimentality. Although Patterson raises some
interesting and pertinent points, there is a lack of critical appraisal of the
information derived from her interviews and reading, leading to a feeling of
superficiality. There is a naivety in the writing which is borne from the
continual (glowing) references to nations across the North Sea, in particular
her native (?) Sweden. The book raises and highlights issues and areas for
environmental improvement but little else.

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The Multimedia team at the National Museums has produced a number of
ground-breaking, and very useful, CD-roms. Among their first productions
were Looking for Vikings / Air Lorg Nan Lochannach (1998) and the
innovative dual language volume, Investigating the Lewis Chess Pieces / Sàil
air Fir-Taileisg Leòdhais (1999), as well as the (rather more cursory)
Scotland’s Crafts (2000). Primarily aimed at a schools, and possibly at a basic
tourist market, these are easy to load and to use, making full use of the potential
of the medium for three-dimensional representations.

Scottish Currency is visually very pleasing: bright and colourful with
attractive features such as the icons of golden coins. In an imaginative touch,
when viewing a particular coin, you can virtually flip it over to look at
the reverse, and also zoom in to see the item full screen. The coins are shown
larger than life size so the details are exceptionally clear: this is first-rate
photography.

This CD-rom is an imaginative illustration of how objects can tell a story
about a country’s past. There are well-researched sections, with illuminating
comments on design and thoughtful passages relating currency, for instance,
to the creation of Scottish burghs and their role in gathering royal taxes. ‘This
focusing of trade and gathering of profits for the royal household depended
upon a unitary means of exchange, not barter. So, coins were produced and
circulated’.
The information is well organised, with a useful timeline, from 1100-1800, which allows the user to choose a period and view a monarch’s coins. Under John Balliol’s reign, for instance, there is a brief survey of the period, along with detailed images of the two issues of coins Balliol struck, probably at Berwick with some at St Andrews. Contextual information includes place-based observations on the history of minting coins within Scotland; there is also parallel data on trade tokens (organised with choices of ‘town’ or ‘subject’) and their usage, as well as banknotes (presented chronologically) and this sort of information, combined with the very beautiful and beautifully reproduced images of Scottish coinage, makes this an aesthetically pleasing, and informative, introduction to numismatics.

Sometimes, though, an incompleteness in the information offered can be frustrating (this is a by-product, I suspect, of a perceived school-age audience). For example, in cataloguing a copper coin from Gatehouse of Fleet – it features a griffin on the obverse and the motto ‘IMPERO’ ‘I command’ – we are told the designer is ‘unknown’ and that the die sinker and manufacturer were from Birmingham: the immediate (and unanswered) question is: why Birmingham? What were the Scottish links with the manufacturing industry there? There is information on griffins, and on the crest (probably of the Murray family from Kirkcudbrightshire) but the missing detail is a little irritating.

More text-based content would be useful and, in the CD-rom format, not hard, or space-consuming, to include (the inclusion of academic articles, for instance, on the subject, could have been discretely organised, so it was accessible to an adult audience). The package is – as would be expected – quite museums-orientated, with detailed cataloguing on objects (date, material, weight, size, NMS accession numbers). A section of further information (bibliography, places to visit) would also have been useful here.

Despite these minor reservations, overall this is an ambitious and exciting CD-rom. Its physical presentation is fantastic, and the clarity of images hugely commendable. For the schools market, if it is viewed in conjunction with a visit to the National Museums of Scotland, or to local collections of coins, Scottish Currency could be immensely useful.

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