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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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***Scottish Currency.* Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 2000. ISBN 1 9010663 58 2.**

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 Lochlannach* (1998) and the innovative dual language volume, *Investigating the Lewis Chess Pieces / Sùil air Fir-Taileisg Leodhais* (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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