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Glasgow's going round and round: some recent Scottish urban history*

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If a rural historian who has few credentials¹ to undertake the current review may begin this essay with a point from his own field of research: there is a view of Scottish rural history which argues that far too much attention has been paid to the Highlands.² A similar view could be advanced about concentration on Glasgow in Scottish urban history; in addition to the volumes under consideration have been numerous other recent titles.³ As Professor Morris has noted in a recent review article in this journal, however, other Scottish cities, especially Aberdeen and Dundee, have recently been subjected to variants of the 'urban biography' approach.⁴ Aberdeen, in particular, has come under intense scrutiny with a two-volume history sponsored by the local authority and taking advantage of the rich resources of the city archives.⁵ Edinburgh, by contrast, and notwithstanding the recent culmination of Professor Rodger's extensive researches, remains the poor relation of Scottish urban history: aside from the classic account of the creation of the New Town by A.J. Youngson

* R. Johnston, *Clydeside Capital, 1870–1920: A Social History of Employers*. East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000. ix + 235pp. 13 illustrations. £16.99 pbk.

W. Kenefick, 'Rebellious and Contrary': *The Glasgow Dockers, 1853–1932*. East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000. xx + 284pp. 16 illustrations. 2 figures. 2 maps. 31 tables. £16.99 pbk.

J.J. Smyth, *Labour in Glasgow, 1896–1936: Socialism, Suffrage, Sectarianism*. East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000. 228pp. 6 tables. £16.99 pbk.

M. Moss, J. Forbes Munro and R. Trainor, *University City and State: The University of Glasgow since 1870*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000. xviii + 382pp. 85 illustrations. 11 figures. 2 maps. 23 tables. £38.50 hbk.

¹ My only foray into 'urban history' has been E. A. Cameron, 'The construction of Union Street, Inverness, 1863–65', *Scottish Local History Journal*, 44 (Winter, 1998), 13–18.

² R.H. Campbell, 'Too much on the Highlands: a plea for change', *Scottish Economic and Social History*, 14 (1994), 58–76; R. Anthony, *Herds and Hinds: Farm Labour in Lowland Scotland, 1900–1939* (East Linton, 1997), 1–3.

³ I. Maver, *Glasgow* (Edinburgh, 2000); T.M. Devine and G. Jackson (eds.), *Glasgow*, vol. I: *Beginnings to 1830* (Manchester, 1995); W.H. Fraser and I. Maver (eds.), *Glasgow*, vol. II: *1830–1912* (Manchester, 1996).

⁴ R.J. Morris, 'Urban biography: Scotland, 1700–2000', *Urban History*, 29, 2 (2002), 276–83; see also D. Reeder, 'The industrial city in Britain: urban biography in the modern style', *Urban History*, 25, 3 (1998), 368–78.

⁵ E.P. Dennison, D. Ditchburn and M. Lynch (eds.), *Aberdeen: Beginnings to 1800* (East Linton, 2002); W. H. Fraser and C. H. Lee (eds.), *Aberdeen, 1800–2000. A New History* (East Linton, 2000).

and the late R.Q. Gray's account of nineteenth-century social history, the existing historiography of Scotland's capital city remains interred in the pages of unpublished theses and scholarly journals.⁶ Nevertheless, the volumes under consideration here represent the fruits of yet more labours on the history of Scotland's largest and, arguably, most diverse city; they do not represent yet more urban biography but are specialized monographs on the history of the Labour movement, the Clydeside dockers, employers in the west of Scotland and the history of the University of Glasgow since 1870 published as part of the celebrations to mark the 550th anniversary of that institution.

To return to the opening point, the rural emphasis on the Highlands can be understood with an appreciation of the vivid experiences of clearance, famine and crofting which have drawn successive historians. The case of Glasgow can be seen as similarly attractive: a medieval ecclesiastical burgh with an ancient university which expanded into a crucial port, trading commodities, such as tobacco, across the Atlantic and then, without sacrificing its status as a port, became a massive industrial city with intense concentrations of people, wealth and poverty, and with much greater occupational diversity than other great port cities such as Liverpool. A city which was at once known for the extent of its pollution and the creative exploitation of waste products, such as the piles of 'blue billy' which accumulated from the production of sulphuric acid in Charles Tennant's chemical factories and which became central to the creation of the Steel Company of Scotland, was also noted for its pioneering creation of urban parkland.⁷ These parks were the site of a series of great exhibitions from the International Exhibitions of 1888 and 1901, the Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry in Kelvingrove Park in 1911, to the Empire Exhibition in Bellahouston Park, south of the river Clyde, in 1938.⁸ The 1911 exhibition is particularly relevant to this essay as the proceeds were used to endow a chair of Scottish History and Literature at the University of Glasgow.⁹ These events celebrated Glasgow's connections with the rest of Scotland but also with the Empire, of which Glasgow liked to think of itself as the 'Second City'.¹⁰ Glasgow's urbanization and industrialization were so rapid as to be ungovernable

⁶ R. Rodger, *The Transformation of Edinburgh: Land Property and Trust in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, 2001); A.J. Youngson, *The Making of Classical Edinburgh, 1760–1840* (Edinburgh, 1966); R.Q. Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh* (Oxford, 1976).

⁷ P.L. Payne, *Colvilles and the Scottish Steel Industry* (Oxford, 1979), 24; I. Maver, 'Glasgow's public parks and the community, 1850–1914: a case study in Scottish civic interventionism', *Urban History*, 25 (1998), 323–47.

⁸ P. Kinchin and J. Kinchin, *Glasgow's Great Exhibitions: 1888, 1901, 1911, 1938, 1988* (Wendlebury, n.d.); G. Eyre Todd, *Leaves for the Life of a Scottish Man of Letters* (Glasgow, 1934); R.A. Crampsey, *The Empire Exhibition of 1938: The Last Durbar* (Edinburgh, 1988).

⁹ R. Campbell, 'The foundation of a chair', *College Courant*, 15 (1962).

¹⁰ J.M. Mackenzie, 'The second city of the Empire: Glasgow – imperial municipality', in F. Driver and D. Gilbert (eds.), *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity* (Manchester, 1999), 215–37.

in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, yet the complexity of its urban government and the provision of a multiplicity of municipal services – from water and trams to museums – were unrivalled by the late nineteenth century.¹¹ The population was drawn from all corners of Scotland, especially the Highlands, which begin only a short journey in a north-westwards direction from the city. Glasgow's Highland community has been the subject of some study, although more would be useful, and retained a sufficiently cohesive identity in the 1950s that a Liberal candidate in the Western Isles would place some of his publicity in the 'Hielandman's umbrella', as the railway bridge crossing Argyle Street was known.¹² The Irish community of Glasgow has also been subject to concentrated study and is dealt with further by Smyth and Kenefick in books under review here.¹³

Jim Smyth in his study of Labour politics in Glasgow provides a cogent justification for further Glaswegian urban studies: arguing that it was Scotland's largest city, a major urban centre of the UK, the 'capital' of industrial Scotland and a city with a 'complex social structure with all classes – from the very poorest to the super rich – living within its boundaries' (p. 3). Glasgow has produced a rich historiography because it has had a rich history and the challenge for historians of other towns and cities is to demonstrate, as the Aberdonians have, that the material is at hand to produce similarly rich results.

Glasgow dockers

Glasgow is also part of 'Clydeside', and the river forms an important part of the political, commercial and industrial identity of the city. Mostly it has been seen in historical terms in the context of the history of shipbuilding, although Gordon Jackson has drawn attention to the wider role played by the river in the history of the city.¹⁴ William Kenefick has produced a highly detailed monograph on the history of the Glasgow dockers in the period from 1853 to 1932. This book began life as a doctoral thesis of the University of Strathclyde and, in places, this shows in the relentless

¹¹ C.M. Allan, 'The genesis of British urban redevelopment with special reference to Glasgow', *Economic History Review*, 18 (1965), 598–613; W.H. Fraser, 'Municipal socialism and social policy', in R.J. Morris and R. Rodger (eds.), *The Victorian City: A Reader in British Urban History, 1820–1914* (London, 1993), 258–80; T. Hart, 'Urban growth and municipal government: Glasgow in a comparative context, 1846–1914', in A. Slaven and D.H. Aldcroft (eds.), *Business, Banking and Urban History* (Edinburgh, 1982), 193–219; I. Maver, 'Glasgow's civic government', in Fraser and Maver (eds.), *Glasgow*, vol. II, 441–85; B. Aspinwall, 'Glasgow trams and American politics, 1894–1914', *Scottish Historical Review*, 51 (1977), 64–84.

¹² National Library of Scotland (NLS), David Murray Papers, Acc 7915/1/2, David Murray to Lady Glen Coats, 8 Oct. 1951.

¹³ The bibliography here is a large one but a good starting point is T.M. Devine (ed.), *Irish Immigrants and Scottish Society in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Edinburgh, 1991).

¹⁴ G. Jackson and C. Munn, 'Trade, commerce and finance', in Fraser and Maver (eds.), *Glasgow*, vol. II, 52–77.

empiricism with which the topic is pursued; more judicious editing could have produced a leaner and fitter monograph. Nevertheless, Kenefick has produced the only serious history of dock labour in Scotland's most important port and he should be congratulated for that. He reminds us that half of the Scottish dock labourers worked on the Clyde and the majority of those workers laboured on the short waterfront in the centre of the city. Throughout his book he is concerned to identify the distinctiveness of the Scottish dimension which, he feels, has been neglected in the existing historiography of dock labour in Britain. In many ways, however, this is more than a history of the Glasgow dockers, and includes chapters, in part one, on the port industry of Britain and the development of the Port of Glasgow which will be of much value. Part two contains a detailed examination of the dock labour force and analyses its composition, the modernization of the work process in the docks and health and safety in the workplace. Part three focuses on the fraught industrial relations of the waterfront and the struggles to create a trade union among this casual, but skilled, workforce. The Glasgow dock labour force contained a large Irish presence, mixed with immigrants from the Scottish Highlands, and if Kenefick occasionally lapses into stereotypes of these groups – such as references (p. 244) to their fiery nature – he also makes the important point that the politics of the dock labour force involved a commitment to land reform. It is fascinating for this reviewer to see the familiar figure of Edward McHugh working as hard to organize dock labourers (pp. 189–98) as he had to spread the Georgite land reform message of the single tax in the Highlands in the early 1880s.¹⁵

A particular strength of Kenefick's book is the account of the independence of the Glasgow dockers in their attitude to trades unions. Despite the long efforts to establish the National Union of Dock Labourers it was rejected by the Glasgow dockers in 1910, due to a combination of resentment towards the actions of the Liverpool-based executive of the union and increasingly depressed conditions in Glasgow in the Edwardian period, and the Scottish Union of Dock Labourers was created. This disputatiousness did not disappear, and in 1932 the Glasgow dockers, showing presbyterian levels of schismatic behaviour, seceded from the Transport and General Workers' Union and formed the Scottish Transport and General Workers' Union. Another manifestation of the independent spirit of the Glasgow dockers was their opposition to registration and their defence of the casual labour system. Dockers were opposed to the 'well meant promotion . . . of dockers' registration by amateur social reformers' (p. 54) and viewed it as an underhand means by which the employers could coerce the labour force. A particularly well-argued section of the book discusses the labour unrest in the docks in 1911 and 1912, although it is a

¹⁵ A.G. Newby, '“Shoulder to shoulder”? Scottish and Irish land reformers in the Highlands of Scotland, 1879–1890' (unpublished University of Edinburgh Ph.D. thesis, 2001), 89–127.

little disappointing that the author is hesitant in his willingness to link this activity with the wider unrest in the west of Scotland in this period which he and his colleagues in the Glasgow Labour History Workshop have done so much to illuminate.¹⁶ Nevertheless, this is a solid and workmanlike monograph and one which the reader can be assured that the author has left no stone unturned in his research.

Labour in Glasgow

Glaswegian political history is far more fissiparous than the image of 'the Red Clyde' would have us believe: although Liberalism took all seven of the city's constituencies in the election of 1885; this was overturned in 1900, an unusually good election for the Unionists in Scotland and the occasion of a clean sweep of Glasgow seats.¹⁷ Even in the 1922 election, in which Labour made its breakthrough, there was still a Unionist presence in Glasgow and when the Scottish Unionist Party gained 50.1 per cent of the vote in Scotland in 1955 a substantial number of these votes were cast in favour of the six victorious Unionist candidates in Glasgow. Despite an extensive existing bibliography of works on the political history of the city Jim Smyth has written a book which has been much needed for some time. Based on his doctoral thesis, but much revised, expanded and fine-tuned, it presents a sensible account of the mechanics of Labour's progress, much of it slow, in the Glasgow constituencies and, in an especially important contribution, the wards of Glasgow City Council leading up to their first majority in the City Chambers in 1933.¹⁸ This is a story which is not as familiar as it should be and Dr Smyth has performed an important task in laying it before us in great detail. A minor criticism of the way in which the thesis has been transformed into a monograph would be the dropping of the 1880 to 1896 period, one which helps us to understand the relationship between radical Liberalism and the development of the Labour movement in the west of Scotland; more than adequate compensation is provided, however, in the extension of the discussion from 1914 to 1936.

Part of Smyth's intention, of course, has been to contribute to the debate about the demise of the Liberal party and the rise of Labour. This is an especially important debate in Scotland where Liberalism was dominant in the period from 1832 to 1900, but one which has much wider relevance and which continues to attract interest. Smyth is particularly interesting on the views of Labour on the franchise and the rather condescending, even hostile, attitude taken towards unskilled workers and the unemployed. This created space for those, such as John Maclean and Harry McShane,

¹⁶ See the essays in W. Kenefick and A. McIvor (eds.), *Roots of Red Clydeside, 1910–1914? Labour Unrest and Industrial Relations in West Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1996).

¹⁷ For an especially perspicacious review of this history see J.F. McCaffrey, 'Political issues and developments', in Fraser and Maver (eds.), *Glasgow*, vol. II, 186–226.

¹⁸ J.J. Smyth, 'Labour and socialism in Glasgow, 1880–1914: the electoral challenge prior to democracy' (unpublished University of Edinburgh Ph.D. thesis, 1987).

to the left of the Independent Labour party (ILP) – which provided most of the muscle for Labour in Glasgow – who sought to represent these constituencies.¹⁹ Women, as Smyth notes, were similarly marginalized in the world view of Labour prior to the Great War: a world view which concentrated on the competition with the Liberal party for the votes of skilled men. Emphasis is placed on the politics of property and housing which helped to edge Labour in Glasgow towards a stronger position. This had been developed by John Ferguson, who personally encapsulated the link between radical Liberalism and Labour, and then John Wheatley whose long crusade on the housing question reached a legislative climax in 1924 when he was a successful minister of health in the Labour government.²⁰

The most original parts of the book are chapters three and six which describe Labour's campaigns to take control of the City Chambers, a topic which has not been explored in detail before. Smyth deals with the challenges which Labour faced in these elections, from the 'Progressives' and 'Moderates', to more sinister organizations such as the Scottish Protestant League led by Alexander Ratcliffe. One of the strengths of the local approach is that it does something to exhumate the career of Patrick Dollan from scholarly neglect. As Smyth points out, Dollan was much more than a machine politician; he organized the Scottish Socialist party, after the disaffiliation of the ILP in 1932. This complicated the task of Arthur Woodburn who was trying to establish a direct presence for the Labour party, but both men were in the firing line of criticism from those on the left who deprecated such work.²¹ Since many of the other leading figures of Scottish Labour from this period have been subjected to biographical treatment, especially in the Manchester University Press series 'Lives of the Left' of the 1980s and 1990s, it is unfortunate that there is no detailed study of Dollan.²²

Smyth's detailed work on the constituencies provides some very useful material on the obstacles faced by Labour due to technical difficulties with the franchise; Smyth explains how the franchise for local government elections operated on entirely different principles from the residence-based

¹⁹ For the ILP see the material, including some by Smyth, in A. McKinlay and R.J. Morris (eds.), *The ILP on Clydeside, 1893–1932: From Foundation to Disintegration* (Manchester, 1991); for Harry McShane see H. McShane and J. Smith, *No Mean Fighter* (London, 1978); R. Duncan and A. McIvor, *Labour and Class Conflict on the Clyde, 1900–1950: Essays in Honour of Harry McShane* (Edinburgh, 1992); there are many biographies of Maclean, the most recent scholarly account being B.J. Ripley and J. McHugh, *John Maclean* (Manchester, 1989).

²⁰ I. Wood, *John Wheatley* (Manchester, 1990); E. McFarland, *John Ferguson, 1836–1906: Irish Issues in Scottish Politics* (East Linton, 2003).

²¹ NLS, Arthur Woodburn Papers, Acc 7656/13/4, Arthur Woodburn to Patrick Dollan, 20 Oct. 1939; Acc 7656/4/1, Arthur Woodburn, 'Some Recollections' unpublished typescript, 68–75.

²² For a brief, but very useful, biographical notice see W. Knox (ed.), *Scottish Labour Leaders, 1918–1939: A Biographical Dictionary* (Edinburgh, 1984), 92–9.

qualifications for the parliamentary franchise; these worked against Labour, ensuring slower progress at municipal compared to parliamentary elections. There were also problems with the parliamentary franchise, especially residence qualifications which worked against working-class voters and the Irish community and hence against Labour. Plural voting was also a problem, especially in the Glasgow Central and the Exchange and Blythswood wards within it. In this area, the 'commercial heart of Glasgow', Smyth notes that there were more voters than men of all ages and in Blythswood the ratio was 'almost two to one' (p. 12). This was the only solid Unionist seat in the City, and was held by Andrew Bonar Law from 1918 to his death in 1923. Indeed, there are further sources for the political history of Glasgow in the Bonar Law Papers in the House of Lords Record Office, and also in the papers of Sir John Gilmour, the MP for Glasgow Pollok, in the National Archives of Scotland. Although both men were Unionists there is much in these archives which would be of interest to the historian of Labour in the west of Scotland.²³ Nevertheless, Dr Smyth has produced a monograph, whose publication was supported by the Scottish Historical Review Trust, which is both deeply researched and highly informative.

Glasgow capital

Ronnie Johnston has made an efficient job of transforming his Strathclyde Ph.D. into a well-organized and cogently argued monograph. The research which underpins the book has been exceptionally thorough and the text is more than usually readable for a work of this nature. Clydeside capital has been subject to examination before, for example, in the work of Scott and Hughes which provided much useful information over a century but in a slightly formulaic manner and perhaps lacking in historical context.²⁴ Sterling work has also been undertaken by Professors Slaven and Checkland and their team in producing their two-volume *Dictionary of Scottish Business Biography*; but a multi-authored dictionary of biographical notices lacks the links and connections that can be produced in a monograph.²⁵ The structure of Johnston's book owes much to its original thesis format but is marked by an impressive clarity which takes the reader

²³ Andrew Bonar Law has, on the whole, been well served by his biographers but perhaps it could be said that neither of them has placed enough emphasis on the Scottish and Glaswegian elements of his commercial and political career; he did, after all, represent two Glasgow constituencies at different points in his career, Blackfriars and Hutchesontown from 1900 to 1906 and Central from 1918 to 1923; R. Blake, *The Unknown Prime Minister: The Life and Times of Andrew Bonar Law* (London, 1955); R.J.Q. Adams, *Bonar Law* (London, 1999).

²⁴ J. Scott and M. Hughes, *The Anatomy of Scottish Capital* (London, 1980).

²⁵ A. Slaven and S. Checkland (eds.), *Dictionary of Scottish Business Biography, 1860–1960*, vol. I: *The Staple Industries* (Aberdeen, 1986); A. Slaven and S. Checkland (eds.), *Dictionary of Scottish Business Biography, 1860–1960*, vol. II: *Processing, Distribution, Services* (Aberdeen, 1990).

through complex material and detailed source material with the minimum of fuss. Two initial chapters provide analysis of the historiography and the structure of Clydeside business, prior to three detailed chapters based on a mass of empirical research which form the core of the book. In chapter three the question of trade regulation is examined and the high level of combination among Clydeside employers, large and small, is discussed. This was not always a smooth process, especially in areas of the economy, such as the building industry which were dominated by small firms. The example of the Glasgow Master Painters' Association who, in their 1892 rule book, encouraged their members to clipe on renegades who charged less than the minimum price for work or who used unskilled workmen, is given as an example (p. 65). Another example noted here is the formation of the Glasgow Iron Ring in 1881, the no-nonsense arena which was so important to the development of Andrew Bonar Law's outlook.²⁶ Chapters four and five detail the social and political activities of employers. Johnston demonstrates that a 'shared capitalist consciousness' permeated the social sphere through the activities of the Chamber of Commerce and other organizations from the Guildries to the Freemasons. In a fascinating insight the neighbourhood identity of the capitalist class is examined and the preference of the elite for the comforts of the pleasant towns on the Firth of Clyde, such as Helensburgh and Largs, which were within commuting distance of the city is noted (p. 95). Social activities were rarely neutral in their purposes, such as the inaugural dinner of the Scottish Furniture Manufacturers' Association in 1898 which was held to celebrate a successful lockout (p. 102). The political activities of Clydeside employers are covered in chapter six, and the increasing influence of the business class within local and national politics is noted. Johnston calculates that 18 per cent of the 158 MPs who sat for Clydeside constituencies in the 1870 to 1920 period were employers (p. 110). This group would, from 1922, straddle the political divide; with Unionists such as Godfrey Collins, of the famous Glasgow publishing family, on the Unionist side, and John Wheatley in the Labour party. Much of the political activity of employers, however, was directed towards countering the threat of socialism and government intervention through the Middle Class Union, the Liberty and Property Defence League and other organizations. The final three chapters examine, in different ways, the industrial relations environment on Clydeside, an area where trades unionism was slow to develop, a conclusion echoed by the work of Kenefick, and an additional reason for the slow pace at which the Labour movement developed a political presence in the west of Scotland. Contrary to much previous work, Johnston emphasizes that Clydeside employers did not eschew collective bargaining by the end of the period under examination here. Johnston has presented a sustained analysis of a geographically coherent group of employers who developed

²⁶ Adams, *Bonar Law*, 12–13.

a greater sense of unity in their political and social organizations than the men and women whom they employed, and who were not as authoritarian as they have often been portrayed. In the very final pages of the book some tantalizing questions are raised. Although the 1870 to 1920 period was not without its stresses and strains, especially in the Edwardian period, it did not see the deeply depressed conditions evident in the interwar period. It is a task for a new researcher, responding to the issues raised by Johnston, to examine the extent to which the coherence and unity that he describes was sustained in more difficult conditions. One thinks, for example, of the travails of the Scottish steel industry in the 1920s and 1930s and the inability of the employers to co-operate sufficiently to respond positively to the recommendations of the Brassert Report in 1929, not least because, as Sir Andrew McCance later recalled, 'without exception they all hated each other'!²⁷

The University of Glasgow

Moss, Munro and Trainor have produced a weighty history of the University of Glasgow since 1870, appropriately bound and stitched in black and gold. They begin their narrative, for that is essentially what the book is, with the University sited on the High Street, in the shadow of the Cathedral and becoming increasingly distant from the fashionable west end of the city. The useful point is made, however, that the negative features of the High Street were exaggerated in the interest of boosting the move to Gilmorehill, but: 'a strong underlying motivation for the removal was the chance... for the whole University to associate itself with the most prosperous groups and the most progressive forces in the city, thereby shedding the negative, unfashionable connotations that the institution had acquired in previous decades' (pp. 32–3). The new buildings in the west end gave the University the status it desired within the city, but Glasgow struggled to, in modern parlance, 'punch its weight' as the new civic universities in England attracted increased funding. Glasgow's student body was largely drawn from the youth of the city and its surrounding region. This affected the life of the University in various ways and successive principals tried to develop social and sporting facilities to encourage a more diverse student life, although the relative poverty of the student body affected the take-up of these facilities. Thus, Glasgow was assuredly a University embedded in its local environment, but in a different way to a more residential institution, such as Aberdeen which drew extensively on its rural hinterland. Glasgow had very few residences and spent very little money on this aspect of the University, as the authors make very clear. The staff of the University had to be drawn from a much

²⁷ P.L. Payne, 'Rationality and personality: a study of mergers in the Scottish iron and steel industry, 1916–1936', *Business History*, 19 (1977), 180.

wider region, of course, and a large number of new professors began to migrate from Oxbridge once the curriculum opened up to new subjects, such as history, after the reforms of 1889. Richard Lodge, a future Professor of History at both Glasgow and Edinburgh, for example, escorted his bride to Gilmorehill and 'warned her that we might have to find a home there': Mrs Lodge's views are not recorded.²⁸

A further link between the University and its locality was the uneven performance of the heavy industrial economy in the west of Scotland. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the University was successful in drawing on the wealth of west of Scotland industrialists to fund chairs and other developments. This source of funding dried up during the interwar period, as the economy of the west of Scotland collapsed, and the University was unable to secure adequate funding from the state after the formation of the University Grants Committee (UGC) in 1919 and ran a deficit in the interwar years. The principal during the worst of these years, Professor Robert S. Rait (the first holder of the chair of Scottish History and Literature) is damned with faint praise by the authors, although it is acknowledged that he faced almost insurmountable difficulties.

These themes demonstrate some of the strengths and weaknesses of this book. The 'University' dimension of the book is exceptionally detailed and well informed, as one would expect with the University archivist, Michael Moss, as one of the authors. The 'City' dimension is also well explored and the importance of the relationship of the University with the economy of the west of Scotland is emphasized. The 'State' dimension of the volume, however, is inadequate. This is clear in the chapters on the interwar period but becomes most evident in the account of the post-1945 period when the state becomes the most important source of funding. There is an adequate account of the expansion under the Atlee governments of 1945 to 1951 but the final chapters descend into an arcane discussion of funding models and organizational reforms which leave the reader with no clear sense of the recent history of the institution. The authors have neglected basic sources for the twentieth-century history of Scottish Universities by not visiting – or despatching their research assistants to – the National Archives of Scotland to consult the records of the Carnegie Trust, or to the Public Record Office at Kew to consult the UGC files which repose there.²⁹ This is history from the windows of the Senate room and the Principal's Lodge and has all the merits and demerits of this approach. At times this view can be powerful, such as during the reign of Hector Hetherington from 1936 to 1961, but in the contemporary period this approach does not work, without

²⁸ R. Lodge, 'History in Scottish universities: reminiscences of a professor', *University of Edinburgh Journal*, 4 (1930–1), 97.

²⁹ For the model of how to approach the relationship between a Scottish university and the state see I.G.C. Hutchison, *The University and the State: The Case of Aberdeen, 1860–1963* (Aberdeen, 1993), and many of the essays in J.D. Hargreaves and A. Forbes, *Aberdeen University, 1945–1981: Regional Roles and National Needs* (Aberdeen, 1989).

doing disservice to the contributions of Principals Wilson, Williams and Kerr Fraser. In particular, the student voice, never particularly strong anywhere in the book, is almost completely silenced in the final section, where, ironically, it would have been easiest to research.³⁰ Student activities stretched from spiritualism to shinty, and it is particularly disappointing that there is no mention of the latter (the University Club celebrated its centenary in 2002).³¹ There is a token paragraph on the penultimate page of the text, but it includes the following statement which detracts almost entirely from its credibility: 'There can be no doubt that since 1979 students have borne the brunt of the cuts. However, unlike the 1920s and 1930s, there has been little real student poverty. At a time of relatively full employment, students have been able to get part-time jobs during term-time' (p. 346)! The book contains no real effort to place the history of the University of Glasgow in the context of wider debates current in University history in Britain. Although some of the literature on elites, for example, is referred to the references are fleeting and token and do not disturb the stately progress through the plethora of Senate motions and principals' thoughts which crowd the text. What is most frustrating are the tantalizing references to an unpublished seminar series on the University and the Wider World, publication of which might have broadened the agenda for the celebration of the 550th anniversary. Perhaps Glasgow would have been better advised to follow the example of Aberdeen and produce a series of shorter books.

Conclusion

These four books remind us of the diversity of the City of Glasgow and it is to their credit that they find room in a crowded field and, in their different ways, open up new questions for future research. Scottish historiography has undergone a revolution in recent years but there is still a long way to go and these books serve to remind us of that in a number of ways. First, Scottish historiography is dominated by document crunching empiricists, including the authors reviewed here (and the reviewer); it would not represent capitulation to the forces of post-modernism to welcome a diversity of approaches in the field. The work of Graeme Morton on Edinburgh and Catriona Macdonald on Paisley has shown what can be

³⁰ Again the Quincentennial Studies in the history of the University of Aberdeen provides a model; see R.D. Anderson, *The Student Community at Aberdeen, 1860–1939* (Aberdeen, 1988); L. Moore, *Bajanellas and Semilinas: Aberdeen and the Education of Women, 1860–1920* (Aberdeen, 1991); the shorter companion volume to that under review here provides more insight into the student community, A.L. Brown and M. Moss, *The University of Glasgow: 1451–1996* (Edinburgh, 1996).

³¹ For spiritualism see a letter written by G.B. Clark, then a medical student later MP for Caithness, on the notepaper of Glasgow University Medical Society; British Library, Alfred Russel Wallace Papers, Add. MS 4635, f 210, G.B. Clark to Wallace, 6 Feb. 1871; for shinty see H.D. MacLennan, *Shinty!* (Nairn, 1993), 273–5.

done from a social science or post-modern perspective.³² Secondly, there are few areas of modern Scottish history which are marked by a genuine willingness to enter into healthy debate; the history of Glasgow and of the Scottish Highlands are two areas where such debate is intense and this is a powerful stimulating force. Given the extent of the work which has been done on Glasgow it must now be possible for someone to do for the city what Jonathan Schneer has done in *London 1900* and attempt to draw together such themes as gender, industrial relations, politics and imperial discourse in the 'second city of the empire'; although it should be noted that John Mackenzie, in a typically thought-provoking essay, has made a start on such a project.³³ Another project which springs to mind would be a study of the diverse Glasgow press: the businessman's *Glasgow Herald*, the Labour activist's *The Forward*, Charles Cameron's *North British Daily Mail* and Lord Beaverbrook's *Scottish Daily Express* and many other titles were published in the city. One final point to note is that the works reviewed here were published in the east of Scotland; three by the indefatigable Tuckwell Press and the fourth by Edinburgh University Press for the University of Glasgow. It is sad that the city of William Collins can no longer support a publishing house to produce the continuing flow of titles on the history of Glasgow.

³² G. Morton, *Unionist Nationalism: Governing Urban Scotland, 1830–1860* (East Linton, 1999); C.M.M. MacDonald, *The Radical Thread: Political Change in Scotland: Paisley Politics, 1885–1924* (East Linton, 2000).

³³ J. Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis* (Newhaven, 1999); Mackenzie, 'The second city of the Empire', 215–37.