

Recording Scotland's Heritage



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29123
*The Work of the Royal Commission
on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland*

Kenneth Steer



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The Inventory

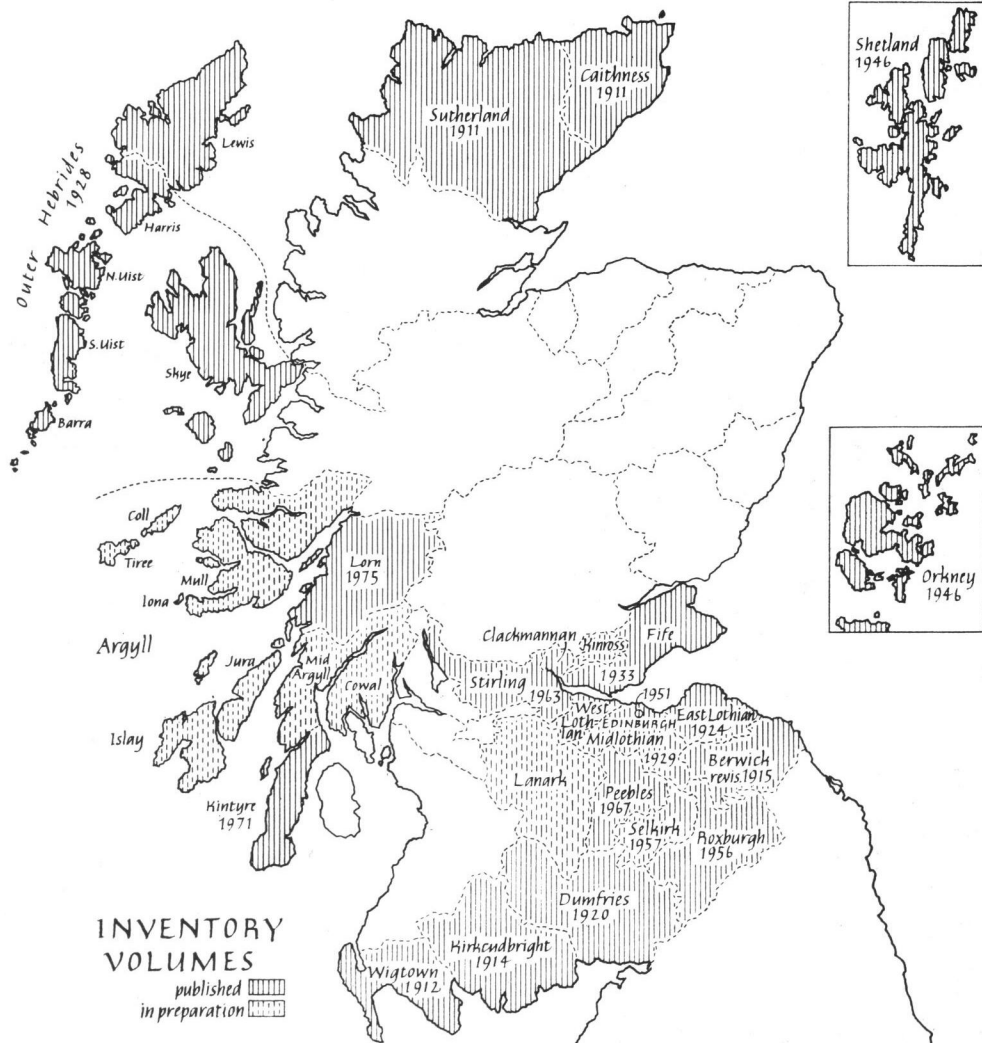


Origin and development

In 1905 Gerard Baldwin Brown, Professor of Fine Art in the University of Edinburgh, wrote a book entitled 'The Care of Ancient Monuments', in which he complained bitterly that up to that time hardly any official measures had been taken to protect the rich heritage of ancient monuments and historic buildings in Britain. He pointed out that in this respect we were lagging far behind many other European countries, and he insisted that one of the most urgent requirements was to make provision for the compilation of a comprehensive Inventory of the nation's antiquities.

This recommendation won the approval of Lord Pentland, then Secretary of State for Scotland, with the result that in 1908 a Royal Commission was appointed, under the chairmanship of Sir Herbert Maxwell of Monreith, to make an Inventory of all ancient and historical monuments in Scotland constructed before 1707, and to specify those most worthy of preservation. Similar Commissions were established shortly afterwards for England and Wales, but the Scottish Commissioners, being the first in the field, found themselves in the role of pioneers, and they took two significant decisions at the outset. The first was that the Inventory should be prepared and published on a county basis, and the second that no item should be included unless it had been personally inspected by the Secretary (the late Dr A O Curle, CVO), who, apart from a clerk-typist, was the only member of the executive staff. The latter decision was particularly important since it ensured that the Inventory would not rely solely on written sources, but would incorporate the fruits of original and systematic research in the field.

The first county to be tackled was Berwickshire, where Curle began work in August 1908, and his daily journal, now preserved in the Commission's archives, gives revealing glimpses of his working methods. Before leaving Edinburgh he had assembled as much information as possible from the Ordnance Survey six-inch maps, from books and papers in learned journals, and from the replies to a questionnaire sent to parish ministers, schoolmasters and other knowledgeable



persons. Armed with this material, and also equipped with a set of surveyor's rods, a clinometer, a tape-measure, maps and a note-book, he spent two of the next three months journeying round the county on a bicycle or on foot, visiting each monument in turn and recording its situation, principal characteristics and dimensions. Inventory entries based on the day's notes were written out each evening after dinner and despatched to Edinburgh for typing, so that by the time the survey was finished in the first week of November the report was practically ready for printing. Published by HM Stationery Office in 1909, it consisted of only fifty-nine pages, contained no illustrations other than an end-map, and sold for sixpence.

Unhappily this first instalment of the Inventory was not favourably received. Lord Pentland, who was thinking in terms of a simple hand-list of monuments, complained that it was too long, whereas in the opinion of many scholars it was too superficial—the lack of illustrations being especially deplored. After much discussion the Commissioners decided to take a wider view of their responsibilities, with the result that the second volume of the Inventory, which appeared early in 1911 and dealt with the county of Sutherland, ran to almost two hundred pages, contained some photographs and line drawings, and was priced at no less than six shillings. From that time work on the Inventory has proceeded steadily, apart from the interruptions caused by the two World Wars, and to date about half of Scotland has been covered in twenty-three volumes.

The scope of the work has, however, been completely transformed since the early years of the Commission's existence. The dramatic growth of public interest in archaeology and architectural history, and their acceptance at University level as academic disciplines, has led to a demand for greater depth of treatment in the descriptions of individual items, and for more and better illustrations, while the extension of this interest into the fields of Georgian and later buildings, and the emergence of the study of industrial archaeology, has made it necessary to revise the Commission's terms of reference. Concurrently the number of field

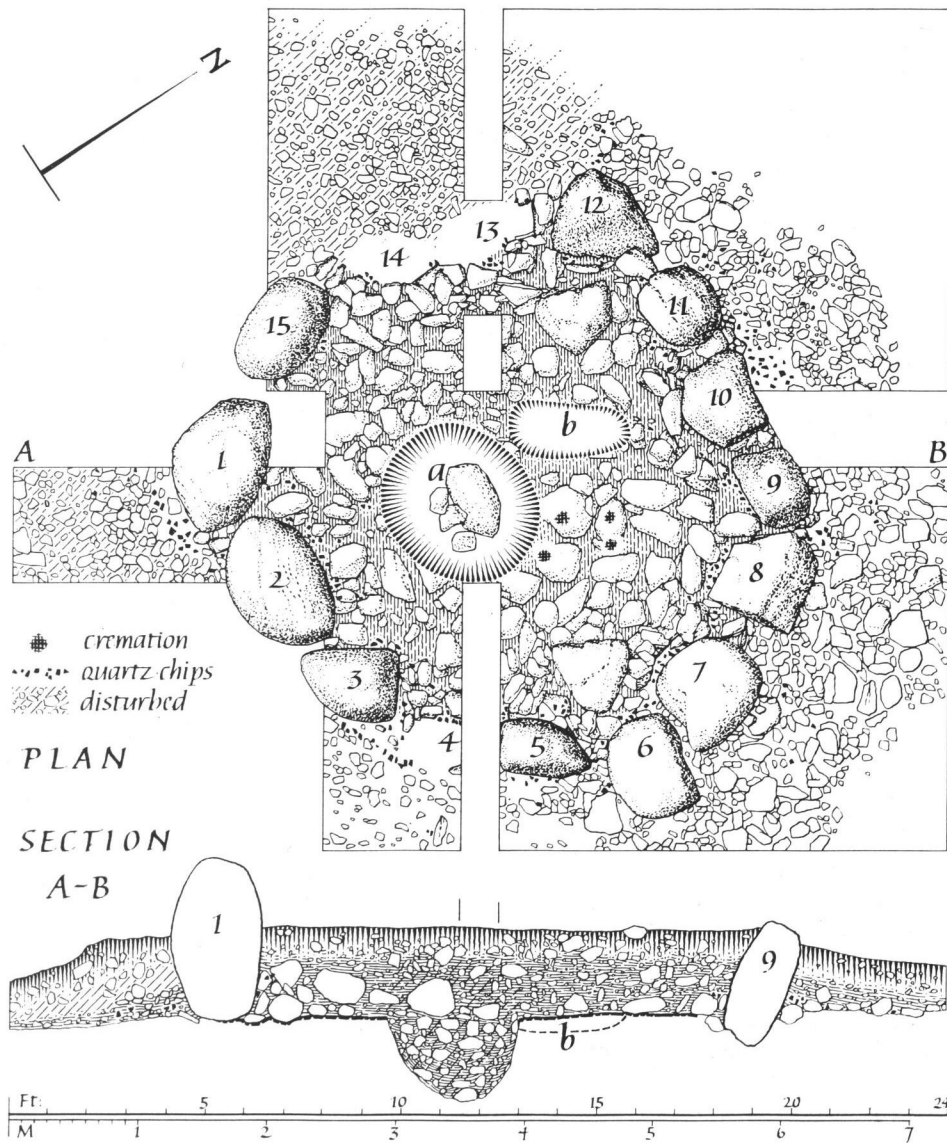
monuments requiring to be recorded has enormously increased as a result of air photography, with its capacity for detecting not only slight surface remains barely visible to the observer on the ground, but also (through the media of crop-marks and soil-marks) traces of ancient sites long since levelled by cultivation. One consequence of these developments is that the limiting date of 1707 has had to be abandoned, and the present practice is to include in the Inventory selected examples of later domestic buildings, and of industrial and engineering works, down to about the middle of the nineteenth century. The progressively higher standards of research and recording demanded, and the consequent need for specialisation, coupled with the additional commitments described in later sections of this booklet, have inevitably led to some increase in staff, which now comprises nine Investigators (five archaeologists, three architectural historians, and an architect), together with a small number of archivists, photographers, draughtsmen, illustrators and executive and clerical officers; the staff is headed by a Secretary and is responsible to a panel of Commissioners, persons eminent in the various branches of learning in which the Commission is involved. With the publication of the Inventory for Dumfriesshire in 1920, the illustrations were given more scope by changing the format from octavo to quarto, and since then the principal development has been the increase in the amount of space needed for the inventorization of any given area. Thus, whereas the Commissioners originally envisaged that one volume would be sufficient to cover the combined counties of Roxburgh, Peebles and Selkirk, in the event five volumes were needed, while the county of Argyll alone, where work is at present in progress, will also occupy at least five volumes.

Working methods

In order that the volumes should be as comprehensive and definitive as possible, the Investigators begin operations on each new area by examining all existing archaeological literature and other printed sources from medieval chronicles to early newspapers, as well as any relevant unpublished material such as state papers, family muniments, municipal archives, and collections of photographs and drawings.

They also make a careful study of Ordnance Survey maps and record cards, early county maps, air photographs (including some which are taken specifically for the Commission), and the contents of national and local museums. Since the short days and prevailing bad weather make out-door surveys virtually impossible in the winter in Scotland, fieldwork starts in the spring and continues until late autumn, the Investigators systematically visiting every monument and analysing and recording the surviving remains. Where the structures are of sufficient importance, measured drawings and photographs are prepared at the same time by drawing-office and photographic staffs. The archaeologists also quarter the ground on foot as far as possible, in search of monuments that have escaped detection, while the architectural historians make a point of examining the exteriors at least of all buildings shown on the six-inch maps, and inspect all known sites of former buildings. Field notes and plans are allowed to accumulate until the end of the season, the descriptive articles being written up and the plans drawn out during the winter months, and this process is repeated until the whole of the region under scrutiny has been surveyed. The Investigators then prepare the introductory sections of the volume, in which the cultural significance and the relationships of the various classes of monument that appear in the main text are discussed, and also nominate the items considered to be most worth preserving. The Introduction is vetted by the Commissioners in typescript, and the rest of the text at galley-proof stage.

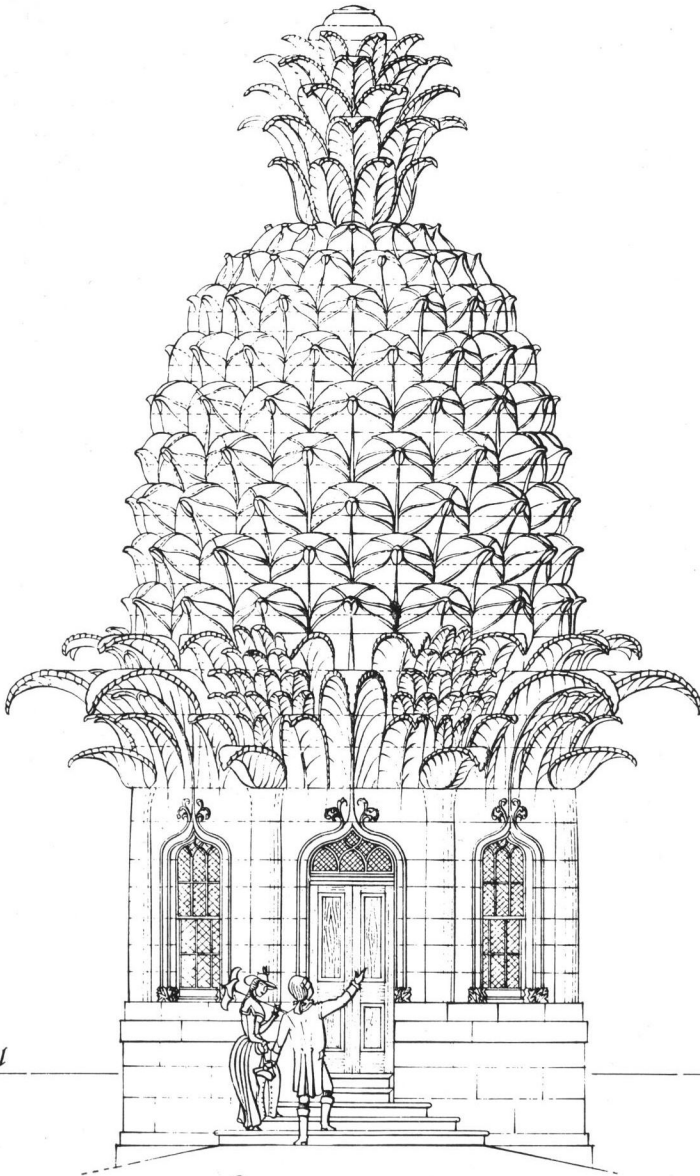
In the course of fieldwork no attempt is made at large-scale excavation since this would inevitably delay the production of the Inventory, but a number of highly profitable short excavations with limited aims have been undertaken within recent years—notably on several types of Neolithic and Bronze Age burial-cairns in Argyll and Lanarkshire, on Early Iron Age habitation sites in Stirlingshire, on Roman forts both on and to the rear of the Antonine Wall, and on a castle and township in Peeblesshire. Occasionally, too, through the co-operation of other archaeologists, it has been possible to arrange for more extensive excavations to be



conducted by independently organised groups of volunteers in conjunction with the Commission's surveys: the studies of prehistoric forts and palisaded works in Roxburghshire, and of medieval buildings in Argyll such as Iona Abbey and the castles of Achadun, Breachacha and Fraoch Eilean have greatly benefited from combined operations of this kind.

Most of the surveying and photographic equipment employed in the field is of a conventional nature but two unusual items are a mobile drawing-office designed by the Commission's architect, which enables plans and elevations to be produced on site in all types of weather, and a Hi-Spy camera mast. The latter consists of an automatic camera mounted on the top of a mast which is portable and can be elevated pneumatically to heights of up to 40 feet. The view from the focusing screen is transmitted by closed-circuit television to a monitor set on the ground, and the direction in which the camera is pointing can be adjusted by remote control. This equipment is ideally suited for recording certain architectural details which, because of their height above ground, cannot be photographed satisfactorily by other means, and also for recording the ground plans of ruined or excavated structures. Land Rovers are used for transporting equipment and personnel to sites on the mainland, while a 14ft. fibre-glass boat and a rubber dinghy have been acquired for visiting monuments on islands in inland lochs or within easy reach of the shore. For survey-work on less accessible islands, such as the Treshnish Isles and the Garvellachs, it has been necessary to charter a converted fishing-cutter, the field teams living on board, while a recent survey of the lighthouse that was built in the second quarter of the nineteenth century on Skerryvore, ten miles south-west of Tiree, was made possible only by the co-operation of the Royal Navy who transported two members of the staff to and from the rock by helicopter in the course of a naval exercise.

Plan of the excavation of the kerb-cairn at Strontoiller, Argyll, a Bronze Age burial-moment belonging to a class first recognised by the Commission



First Floor Level

North Elevation



The Hi-Spy camera in action at Craigmillar Castle, Edinburgh

Drawing of the 'Pineapple', a folly erected at Dunmore Park, Stirlingshire, in 1761



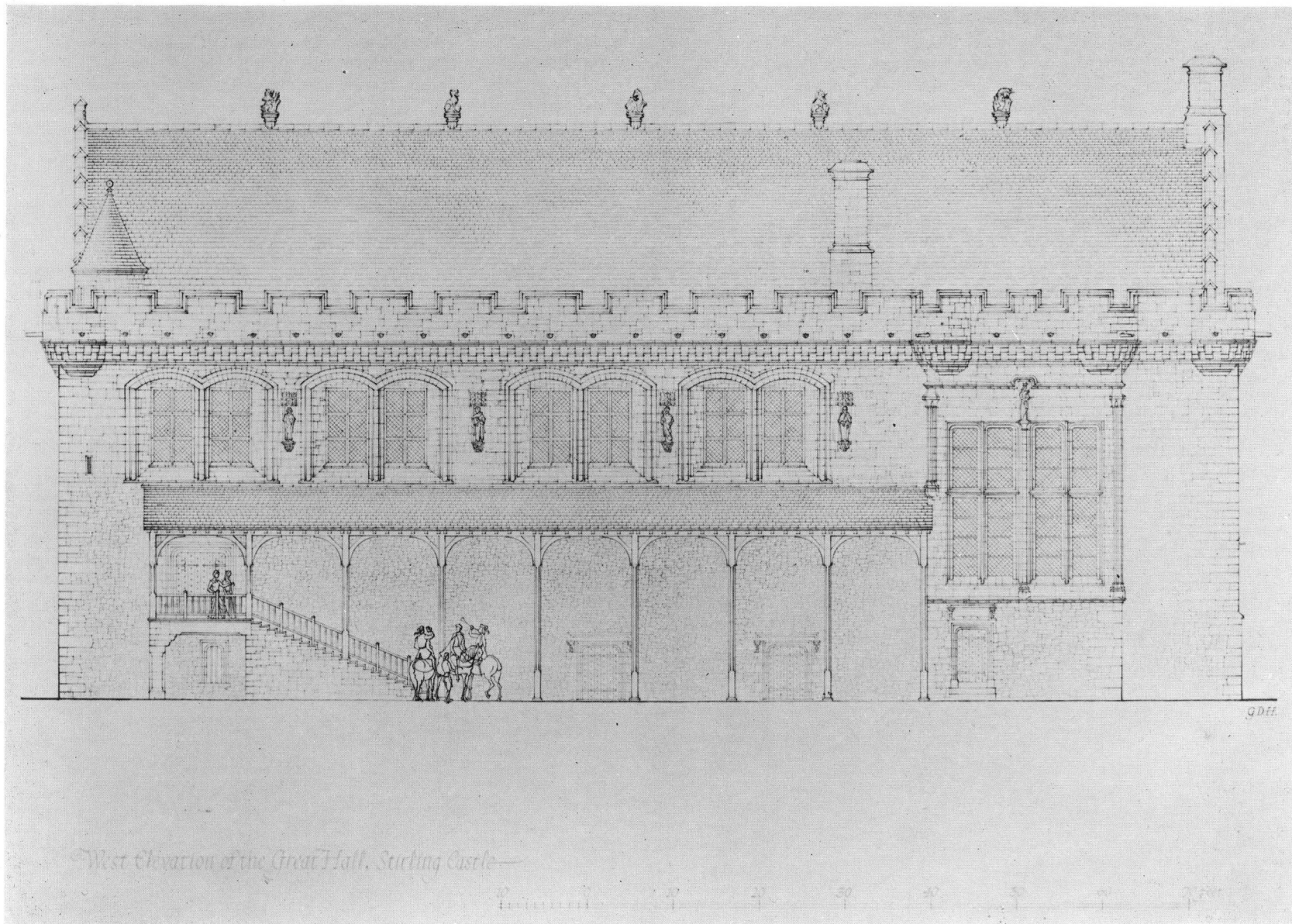
Crop-marks of a previously unknown Roman fort discovered by the Commission at Easter Happrew, Peeblesshire (Cambridge University Collection: copyright reserved)

The significance of the Inventory

From comments made by reviewers, some of which are quoted on the end-paper, it is evident that the Inventory volumes are now widely regarded as being indispensable works of reference for anyone who is engaged on research into the archaeology or architectural history of Scotland, or who is simply interested in obtaining authoritative information about local antiquities. In this context it is worth emphasising that the Inventory, in the form in which it has developed, has a special significance for Scotland because of the wealth of new material that it contains.

From prehistoric times down to the clearances of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many rural areas of Scotland were much more densely populated than they are today, and since the land has always been predominantly pastoral the remains of thousands of early settlements, defensive works, and ritual and burial sites are preserved to a greater degree than in almost any other European country. But because there are comparatively few fieldworkers in Scotland a substantial proportion of these monuments have not previously been recorded. In Roxburghshire and Peeblesshire, for example, the Commission's investigations revealed that more than one-third of the surviving field monuments were unrecorded, and the new discoveries included numerous sites of considerable importance, including hitherto unknown types of prehistoric habitations such as palisaded homesteads and unenclosed platform settlements. In the case of medieval and later Scottish buildings, documentary sources are frequently deficient or even unexplored, and the task of unravelling the complicated structural histories of some of the major items can therefore be a particularly difficult one, calling for a high degree of specialised knowledge and considerable experience which few people, apart from the Commission's Investigators, are in a position to acquire. In consequence the Inventory accounts of even well-known landmarks such as Stirling Castle and Traquair House, Peeblesshire, have revolutionised knowledge of these buildings.

At the present time, however, the Inventory is not solely, or

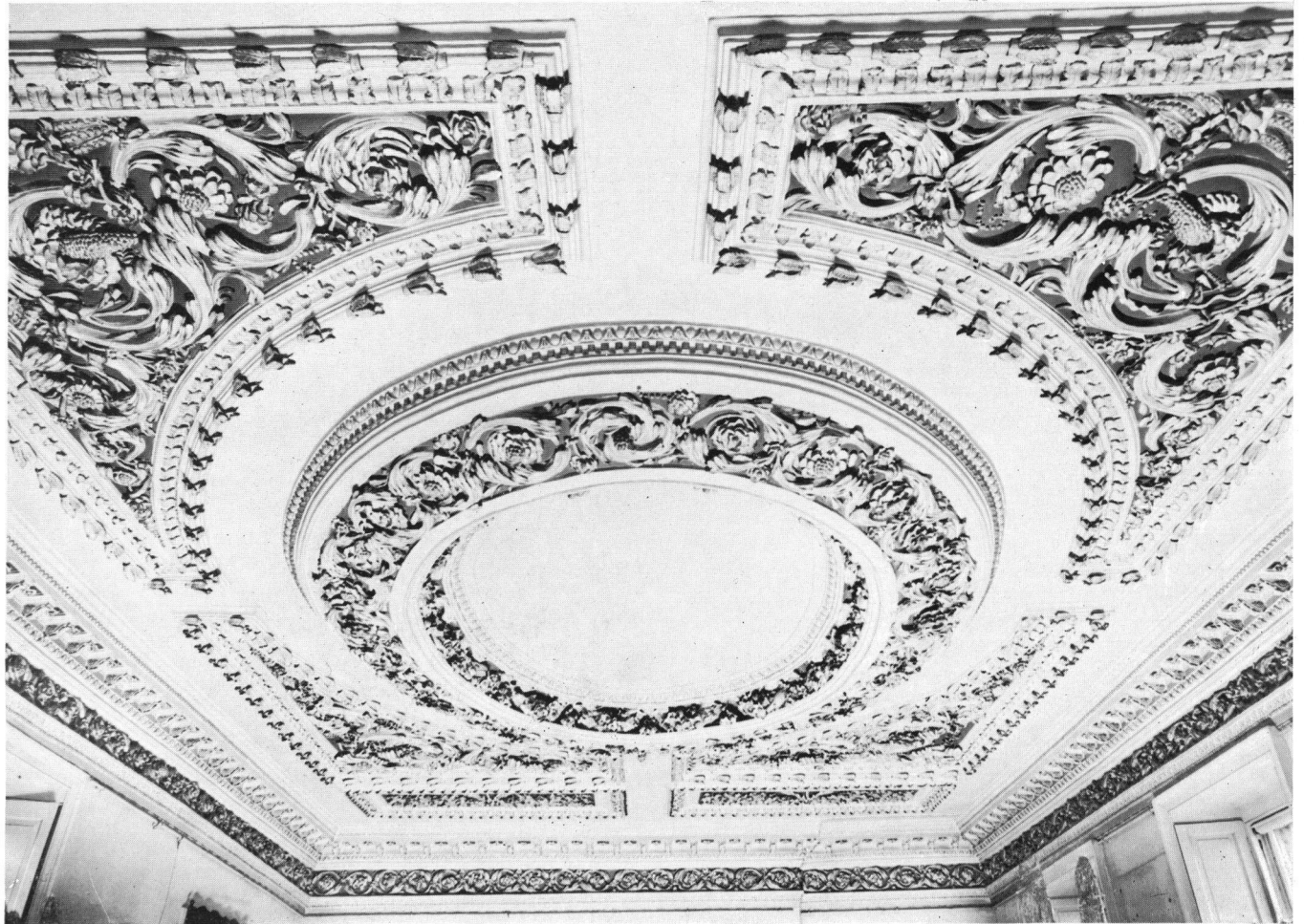


Reconstruction-drawing of the west elevation of the Great Hall, Stirling Castle (c. 1500)

even primarily, a research tool for scholars. Ancient monuments and historic buildings are now recognised to be one of the country's basic resources, and the detailed and comprehensive information that the Inventory provides is much in demand by government departments, independent bodies such as the National Trust for Scotland, and amenity societies, for planning and other purposes at both national and local levels. The lists of monuments specified in the

Inventory volumes as being most worth protecting have no statutory force, but they do in fact constitute a principal source used by the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate of the Department of the Environment in selecting items for scheduling. In Peeblesshire, for instance, the number of scheduled monuments has risen from 12 to more than 200 since 1967 as a direct result of the Commission's recommendations.

*Bannockburn House; ceiling
in old drawing-room
(c. 1680)*



Occasional Publications

One of the Stirling Heads (possibly a courtier in the retinue of James V)



It sometimes happens that the Commission is confronted with a particular class of material which merits fuller treatment than is possible within the confines of the Inventory. An example of this is the remarkable series of carved oak medallions known as the 'Stirling Heads' that formerly adorned the ceiling of King James V's Presence Chamber at Stirling Castle. No detailed study of these medallions had been made before the Commission turned its attention to Stirlingshire, and the majority had been reproduced only once before, in a scarce early nineteenth-century book of indifferent engravings. In view of the importance of the carvings, both as historical documents and works of art, a fully illustrated account was published as a separate monograph in 1960. This is now out of print, but as all the surviving Heads, apart from three in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, have recently been reunited and put on display in Stirling Castle, a revised edition of the monograph has been prepared, especially with visitors to the castle in mind.

A more ambitious project is a book entitled *Late Medieval Monumental Sculpture in the West Highlands*, which is scheduled for publication in 1975 or 1976. One of the most interesting phenomena in the history of the native arts in Scotland is the appearance in the West Highlands and Islands in the later Middle Ages of a distinctive series of elaborately ornamented effigies, free-standing crosses and flat grave-slabs. Examples occur in many pre-Reformation churches and graveyards from the Mull of Kintyre to the Butt of Lewis, and there are important collections on Iona, and at Oronsay Priory, Kilmartin, Keills and Kilmory (Mid Argyll), and Rodel (Harris). Many of the stones bear inscriptions, and the decoration includes representations of ships, weapons, tools, domestic implements, liturgical instruments and other items in contemporary use. Before the Commission began work in Argyll these carvings had never been comprehensively studied, and it was therefore decided that the brief descriptions of the individual stones given in the Inventory ought to be supplemented by a definitive study of the whole body of the material. The survey has shown that the carvings range in date from the first half of

the fourteenth century to the Reformation (c. 1560), and that they commemorate members of leading families and other persons of consequence living within the territory of the Lord of the Isles and his mainland supporters. Many different influences can be detected in the motifs employed, and the work of several local schools, and of a number of independent carvers, can be recognised.



Effigy of Cristinus MacGillescoil, prior of Iona (probably mid-15th century)

Emergency Surveys



Montgomery House, Ayrshire (demolished)

Historic Buildings

In addition to its Inventory work, the Commission is nowadays responsible for making records of all buildings of architectural or historic importance in Scotland which are threatened with demolition. These 'emergency surveys', as they are termed, may be said to have originated in 1941, when a private organisation, the Scottish National Buildings Record, was set up to make and preserve records of buildings of distinction in anticipation of their possible destruction by enemy action. But the main advance was initiated by the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, under which lists of buildings of special architectural or historic interest were compiled for the whole country. Progressively, as the lists were given statutory force, owners of buildings in the higher categories were obliged to give notice and obtain permission if they wished to demolish or substantially alter them.

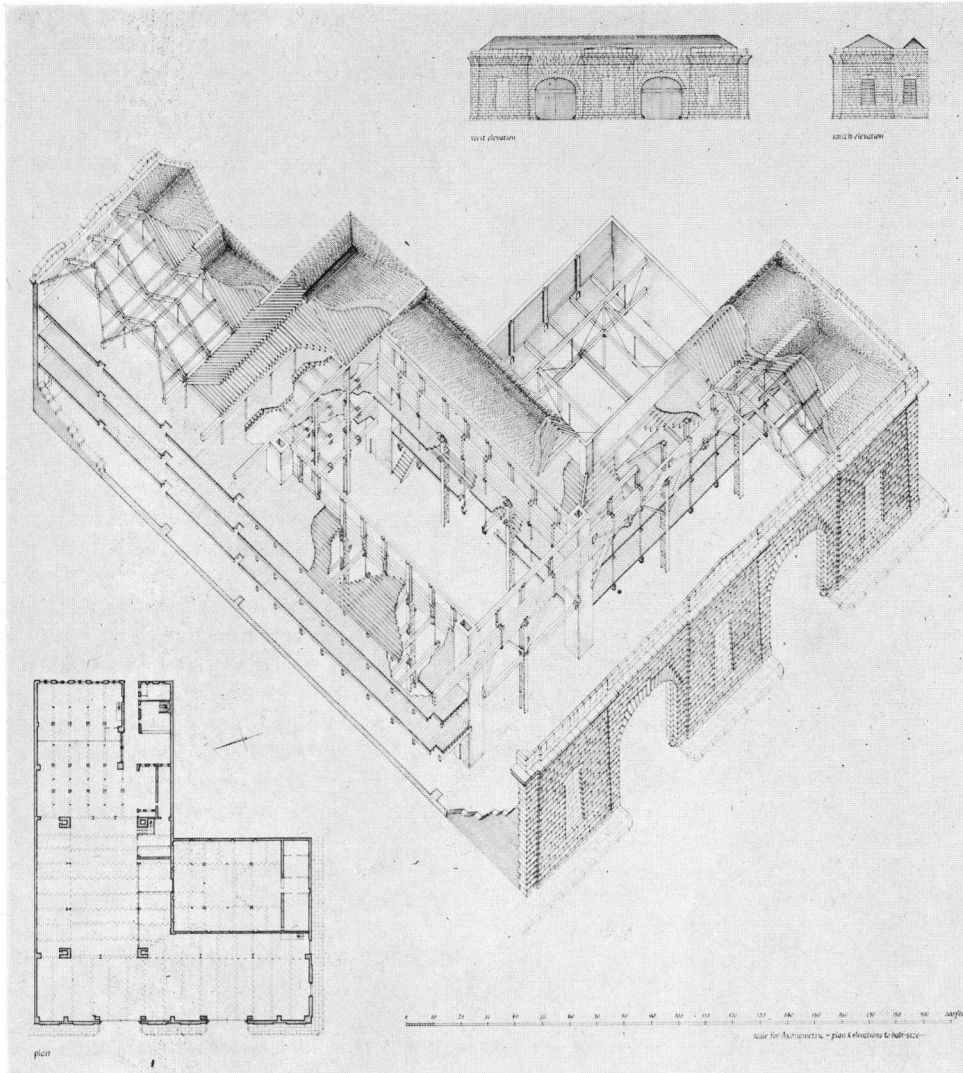
Consequently it became practicable for the first time to obtain advance information of all such impending losses to Scotland's architectural heritage, which reached unprecedented proportions in the years following the Second World War owing to changes in social conditions and the rapid pace of urban expansion and renewal. Deprived of its original *raison d'être*, the Buildings Record turned its attention to this new field, using its limited resources primarily to enlarge its photographic collection of Scottish architecture; but in 1954 it relinquished its independent status on being taken over by the then Ministry of Works, while in 1966, following the recommendation of a Ministerial Committee, it was absorbed into the Commission. Thenceforward, with the support of the Treasury, which authorised the recruitment of additional staff, and with the ready co-operation of the Scottish Development Department and of local planning authorities, the Commission became increasingly involved



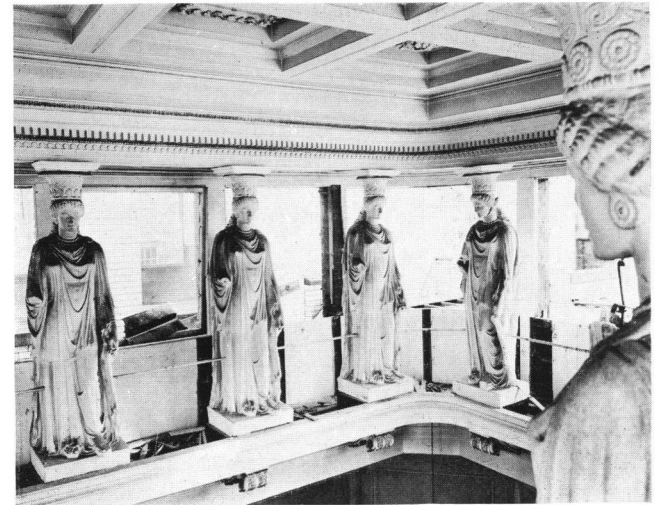
Kinnoull Lodging, Perth, in course of demolition

in emergency survey work; and this commitment received statutory recognition in 1969, when a further Planning Act contained the stipulation that no listed building in Scotland should be demolished until the Commission had been allowed the opportunity of making an appropriate record. In the case of major buildings this normally entails the preparation of measured drawings, photographs and written descriptions, but for buildings of lesser importance a photographic survey alone is usually considered sufficient. Brief accounts of the more significant items dealt with since 1966 have been published in two reports of the National Monuments Record of Scotland, the first covering the years 1966–71 and the second the years 1972–4.

The lengthy roll of casualties during the past thirty years includes a number of works of outstanding interest. The great medieval tower-house of Elphinstone; Kincairney House, Fife (a fine example of a 17th-century laird's house); the unusual little parish kirk of Lasswade; Kinnoull Lodging (a late 16th- or early 17th-century town house in Perth); the Randolph and Elder Engine Works, Glasgow (an impressive mid-19th-century factory with Egyptian-style frontage); and Victoria Arch, Dundee—these are only a few instances of buildings of all types and periods that have disappeared. But it is inevitably the larger country mansions that have suffered the heaviest losses. Moncrieffe (one of the first country houses designed by Sir William Bruce), Craighall, Montgomerie, Tullibody, Fullarton and Seaton among the Classical houses; Tullichewan, Loudon, Rossie Priory, Rossie Castle, Garscube, Inchyrry Abbey and, above all, Abercairney and Millearnie House among the succeeding generation of castellated and Gothic mansions: all these have gone during the past three decades or so. In such cases the material in the Commission's archive frequently constitutes the principal record, especially when, as sometimes happens, the act of demolition or natural processes of decay reveal structural features that were previously concealed. For example, the final dismantling of Kinnoull Lodging enabled a detailed study to be made of the galleried timber frontage, while careful examination of the fabric of Rossend Castle, Fife, a large 16th-century tower-house



Axonometric drawing of the Randolph and Elder Engine Works, Glasgow (demolished).



Plaster caryatids (c. 1822) within the lantern-roof of the former Assembly Rooms at 72 Queen Street, Edinburgh (demolished)

whose future is still in the balance, led to the discovery of 13th-century remains incorporated in the tower at ground-floor level.

Emergency surveys of buildings are not, however, confined to those which are about to be demolished. Although recently much more thought has been given than in former years to trying to find alternative uses for redundant buildings, conversion work may effectively destroy the character of a structure by drastically altering the internal lay-out or by removing original features. Similarly, evidence for the long and complex evolution of a large mansion may be substantially impaired by the removal of later extensions in an effort to achieve a more manageable domestic unit. The successive remodellings of houses of this kind often provide a fascinating illustration of the changing needs, uses and fashions of earlier generations, just as the removal of secondary extensions at the present time may provide future

historians with an insight into the attitudes and constraints of our own day. The Commission therefore welcomes advance notice of any major alterations to listed buildings, and also of maintenance or restoration work which may afford the opportunity of recording hitherto unknown features. In 1973, for example, the re-harling of Craigievar Castle, Aberdeenshire, provided the first (and probably the only) opportunity this century for examining the external fabric of the tower, an operation which brought to light valuable evidence concerning the structural history of the building.

Field Monuments

At the present time field monuments as a class are even more at risk than historic buildings, since they are exposed to ever-increasing assault from a multiplicity of different agencies, such as afforestation, deep ploughing, urban expansion, road construction, mining and quarrying, and industrial developments of many kinds, especially those related to the extraction of North Sea oil and gas. Moreover, large numbers of known field monuments in Scotland that are worth preserving have not yet been scheduled under the Ancient Monuments Acts, while hundreds, if not thousands of others still await discovery.

In these circumstances there is obviously a need for emergency surveys to identify and evaluate all antiquities situated on land earmarked for redevelopment, in order that the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate can either protect the more important items by scheduling, or arrange for them to be excavated. The Inspectorate cannot be expected to cope unaided with a problem of this magnitude, and the Commission, as the chief recording body in Scotland, clearly has some responsibility in this field. Accordingly in the 1950s, when proposals to convert large tracts of marginal land to arable seemed to constitute the main hazard, the archaeological Investigators carried out a systematic examination of all marginal land in the Lowlands, and along the east side of the country as far north as the Moray Firth, using the stereoscopic air photographs of the National Air Photograph Survey to locate unrecorded monuments. The results were

highly successful, many new discoveries being made, including cairns, henge monuments, palisaded works, hill-forts, brochs, duns, pit-alignments, Roman forts and temporary camps, and ancient field systems. On the other hand the survey showed that this method of search had serious limitations. Although even slight traces of standing monuments could be recognised in the grass-covered hills of the Border country, heather- and bracken-covered moorland was much less responsive, while hardly any crop-sites were found since the photographs had usually been taken under unsuitable conditions.

More recently the Commission's archaeological staff has been reinforced to allow it to take a more active part in emergency survey work without disrupting the production of the Inventory, and a comparative study of the dangers to field monuments inherent in all new forms of land use has indicated that the main threat is now from afforestation, which is relatively a more important economic activity in Scotland than in England. In 1973 the reserves of land held in Scotland for planting by the Forestry Commission amounted to no less than 82,400 hectares, and, as trees are rarely planted at heights above 400 metres, any of this land (and equally of any land acquired for the same purpose by commercial forestry companies) may contain field monuments, most of which would be completely destroyed by the deep trenching that precedes planting, and by the subsequent disturbance caused by the penetration of tree roots into the archaeological levels. A request has therefore been made to the Forestry Commission and to the various commercial firms concerned, asking for advance notice of their annual ploughing and planting programmes. If this information is forthcoming, the Royal Commission's archaeologists will arrange for a thorough ground search to be undertaken of as many of the affected areas as possible, supplemented where necessary by low-level air photography. Concurrently other members of the staff will make intensive surveys of archaeologically sensitive regions which are particularly threatened by industrial expansion, the first such region to be chosen comprising adjacent parts of North Ayrshire and Renfrewshire.

The Archive

One of the advantages of the amalgamation of the Buildings Record with the Commission in 1966 was that it enabled the two largest collections of photographs and drawings of ancient monuments and historic buildings in Scotland to be combined into a single archive. This archive, known as the National Monuments Record of Scotland, is housed in the Commission's premises in Melville Street, Edinburgh, and currently contains about 140,000 photographs and 50,000 drawings, together with a library of some 5,000 books and periodicals.

The bulk of the material relates to Scottish architecture of all periods up to about 1930, some of the principal constituents being the plans and elevations prepared from original field surveys by the Commission's staff from 1909 onwards; a series of surveys of historic houses and vernacular buildings

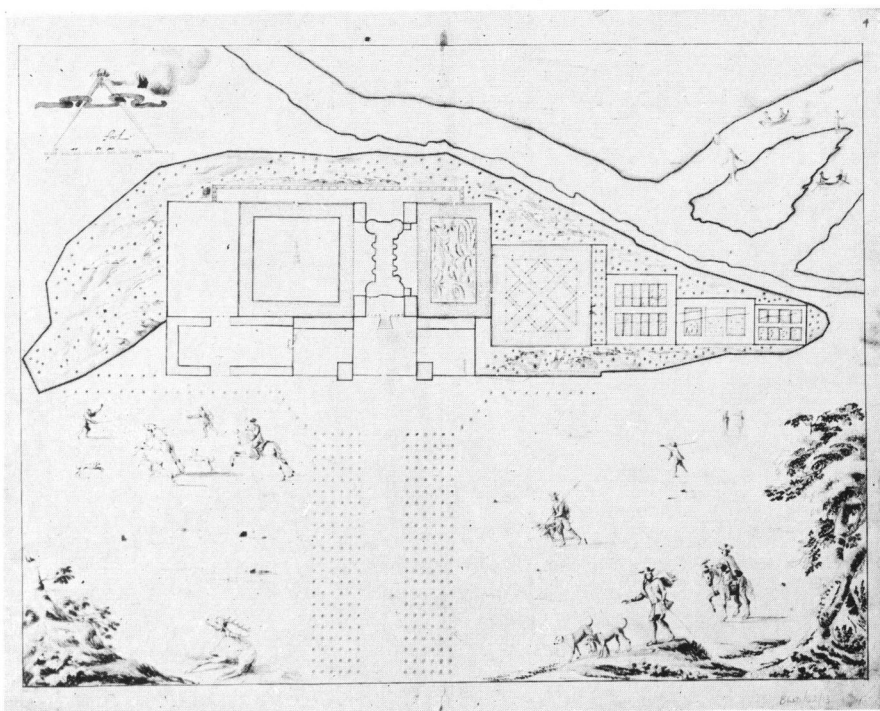
executed for the former Buildings Record, partly by their own draughtsmen and partly by students of the Scottish Schools of Architecture; a collection of drawings from the London office of William Burn (1789–1870), transferred from the Royal Institute of British Architects, which contains plans of most of that architect's Scottish houses; an important corpus of National Art Survey Drawings, transferred from the National Galleries of Scotland; and a large collection of drawings from the office of Sir Robert Lorimer, the architect of the Scottish National War Memorial, extending from 1891 to his death in 1929. The core of the photographic collection is formed by photographs taken specifically for the Commission and the Buildings Record, but material has been contributed from many other sources—the negative collections of B C Clayton, John Forbes White, Erskine Beveridge and Ian G Lindsay being especially noteworthy. The archive also contains a growing number



*Design drawing for Langton,
Berwickshire, by David
Bryce, c. 1862 (acquired
1942)*

of perspective drawings and engravings of buildings, and an interesting group of paintings of 19th-century ceilings from the office of Thomas Bonnar and Son, the Edinburgh painters and decorators. For the archaeologist, the main interest of the collection lies in the original plans and photographs of field monuments that have been included in the Inventory volumes, and the unpublished plans and descriptions of remains found in the course of the Marginal Land Survey (p. 14), but a start has been made to acquire additional items—the principal accession to date being a set of photographic copies of the Ordnance Survey record cards of archaeological sites throughout Scotland. It is also proposed that in the near future a study should be undertaken of the nature and content of archaeological records held by local societies and other bodies in Scotland, in order that information about these can be made generally available.

Garden layout scheme for Thirlestane Castle, Berwickshire, by John Slezer, c. 1680 (acquired 1952)



Designed to serve the same purpose as comparable national collections, such as the Archivio Fotografico in Rome, and the Historic American Buildings Survey in Washington, the archive is extensively used by official agencies responsible for the listing and preservation of historic buildings, and by amenity societies, producers of television programmes, and writers and publishers of books and articles on all aspects of Scottish architecture and archaeology. There is likewise an increasing demand for information from architectural students and from members of the public engaged on private research. Material has also been lent for exhibition purposes to various public bodies, including the Scottish Arts Council, the Scottish Civic Trust, and the Council for British Archaeology, and members of the staff are frequently called upon to lecture on the work of the Record to local historical societies and other groups.

A great deal of the material in the archive has been given in the past by private individuals, and it is hoped that similar gifts will be made in the future. The Record is particularly anxious to obtain unpublished excavation reports, and early plans, photographs and descriptions of all types of field monuments. Equally acceptable would be sketches, photographs, old negatives and newspaper cuttings of the following classes of buildings constructed before 1914: castles, country mansions, lairds' houses, churches and public buildings (including bridges); farmhouses, cottages and steadings; groups of houses or streets illustrating urban development; and industrial buildings, especially mills and warehouses. Original plans or measured drawings of such buildings would be welcome, and the Record would also be glad to know of the existence and location of plans, drawings, photographs, architects' notes and sketch-books which might be examined and possibly copied for the collection. Persons possessing such information, and owners willing to give or lend material, are invited to write to the Secretary, The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland, 54 Melville Street, Edinburgh EH3 7HF.

Extracts from reviews of the more recent Inventory volumes

ROXBURGHSHIRE (1956)

'The Commissioners and their staff are to be congratulated on the extent to which they have raised their report above the level of a mere catalogue of antiquities . . . it would be hard to find any locality in the British Isles whose antiquities have in general been better surveyed than those of Roxburghshire'.

The English Historical Review

SELKIRKSHIRE (1957)

'The text is illustrated by excellent plates, distribution maps and plans maintaining the highest standards established by the Royal Commission. The volume is an indispensable source of reference and a valuable aid to the planning of further research in Border archaeology'.

The Antiquaries Journal

STIRLINGSHIRE (1963)

'The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland adds further distinction to its record by these volumes, especially in the finesse of architectural drawings and the maps. The monuments are presented with great clarity and the reconstruction drawings are most welcome. The whole is admirably done and well produced'.

The Scottish Historical Review

'One feature of the Inventory that deserves particular commendation is the ample documentation of the medieval and later monuments by references to the written sources, whether in print or in manuscript . . . The result is to give these volumes an authority in matters of ascertainable fact that has never been exceeded in a work of this kind'.

Antiquity

PEEBLESSHIRE (1967)

'With the publication of this Inventory, its fifth since the war, the Scottish Commission has completed more than half

its allotted task, and the standard has never been higher. Each entry is a model of accurate and concise description, the plans and architectural elevations are as aesthetically pleasing as they are informative, and the photographs are of astonishing clarity and beauty'.

Archaeological Journal

'The result runs to nearly 400 pages, with a lavish supply of photographs, architectural drawings, plans and distribution maps. The word "inventory" hardly does justice to the breadth and depth of the scholarship which has gone into this list of things found in the county'.

The Scotsman

ARGYLL 1 (1971)

'This magnificent piece of work deals in complete detail with all the archaeological material in Kintyre, extending over six millenia'.

Glasgow Herald

'The Inventories compiled by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland are essential assets to every area they cover. Reference to them solves many a disputed problem and can settle many a heated argument'.

Scotland's Magazine

Note

All the Inventory volumes published before 1956 are now out of print. They are:

Sutherland (1911), Caithness (1911), Wigtownshire (1912), Kirkcudbrightshire (1914), Berwickshire (revised edition, 1915), Dumfriesshire (1920), East Lothian (1924), the Outer Hebrides (with Skye and the Small Isles, 1928), Midlothian and West Lothian (1929), Fife (with Kinrossshire and Clackmannanshire, 1933), Orkney and Shetland (1946), and the City of Edinburgh (1951).

