

Illustrated travels in Scotland

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ILLUSRATED TRAVELS IN SCOTLAND. The book *Old Ways New Roads: Travels in Scotland 1720–1832*, by Anne Dulau Beveridge, John Bonehill and Nigel Leask, was intended to accompany an exhibition at the Hunterian

Museum in Glasgow which, because of covid-19 events, had to be recast as a digital presentation on the museum's website (contributions by Hugh Cheape, Fredrik Albritton Jonsson, Christopher Dingwall, Vicky Coltman, Christina Young, Mary-Ann Constantine and Finola O'Kane, Edinburgh, Birlinn Ltd in association with The Hunterian, 2021, 240 pp., 231 ill., £20). The introduction acknowledges a debt to James Holloway and Lindsay Errington's pioneering 1978 exhibition 'The Discovery of Scotland: An Appreciation of Scottish Scenery through Two Centuries of Painting'. The catalogue under review broadens the scope beyond paintings to other literary and pictorial media, including maps, illustrated tour journals, guidebooks, panoramas and 'knick-knacks', as well as drawings and prints (fig. [##1](#)). It aims to offer 'a new and compelling narrative about the Scottish landscape', building on new research and wider contexts (p. vii).

The multi-authored text is divided into four thematic sections and then into chapters, not without some confusion; it is hard to see, for instance, how the chapter



1. Paul Sandby, *View of Leith from the East Road*, 1751, etching, trimmed 274 x 370 mm (Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland).

on Natural History fits into the section on Antiquities. However, there is much for the general reader to enjoy. Themes range widely from the ethnology of the 'old ways' to the designed landscape, from the theatre of war to theatre scenery. The chapter on Natural History covers inter alia botany, animal husbandry, the kelp industry and mineralogy. The 'Panoramas and Landscape' chapter provokes awe at the logistics of moving the large painted panoramas of Scottish landscape that were toured around various towns. And the list of items in James Plumptre's luggage for his walking tour in 1799, including the number of sets of linen required, makes fascinating reading (p. 170).

Although engravings, aquatints and lithographs are illustrated throughout, the book is not specifically intended for the print historian. While the assiduousness of the travellers and writers is acknowledged, there is little about the enormous print industry underpinning their endeavours. The landscape etchings of John Clerk of Eldin (1728–1812) are mentioned in several chapters and references to Geoffrey Bertram's publication *The Etchings of John Clerk of Eldin* (Thurloxton, 2012) might have rounded out the reader's understanding of them.

Paul Sandby (1731–1809) features in seven of the twelve chapters as an important pioneer in the discovery of Scottish landscape, yet not one of the nine authors appears to have consulted my *The Prints of Paul Sandby, a Catalogue Raisonné* (Turnhout, 2015).

While the text is liberally illustrated with Sandby's watercolours and drawings, it is worth noting that these would have been known to only a small circle of acquaintances. It was his etchings and engravings of Scottish views that reached an infinitely wider audience and had the greatest impact on travel and taste. As Richard Gough remarked in his *British Topography, Or, An Historical Account of what Has Been Done for Illustrating the Topographical Antiquities of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1780), 'Scotland had but a small share in topographical illustration ... Those given us by Mr. Paul Sandby served but to make us wish for a further acquaintance with the many wild prospects of this country ... himself and others have since gratified the curiosity he awakened'. Thomas Pennant, whose tours feature prominently in this publication, advertised Sandby's aquatints of Welsh scenes in the preface of his *Tour of Wales* (London, 1778): 'Those that wish to anticipate the views in the intended



2. William Byrne after George Walker, *Fall of Acharan (Acharn)*, in J. Cririe, *Scottish Scenery: or, Sketches in Verse, Descriptive of Scenes Chiefly in the Highlands of Scotland* (London, 1803), engraving, book c. 250 x 200 mm (University of Glasgow, Archives and Special Collections).

progress may satisfy themselves by the purchase of the late publications of the admirable Mr. Paul Sandby’.

A few comments can be added. Sandby’s *Six Views in Scotland* engravings, published simultaneously in Edinburgh and London in 1751, marked his professional debut (Gunn 129–34). They were republished in 1753 by Robert Sayer with French inscriptions, indicating they were targeted at a wider, international audience. These prints embody themes covered in the book, from military fortifications and personnel to elegant tourists visiting Bothwell Castle, indicating that tourist activity started earlier than assumed by the authors. Much is made of the 1749 watercolour of a *View of Leith*, but its engraved counterpart of 1751 would have provided a clearer illustration (fig. ##2). The carriage identified as a ‘fashionable coach’, which is barely visible in the watercolour, is crisply engraved in the print and labelled *New Stage Coach* and thus pertinent to the story of travel on the new roads. Writing about the later eighteenth century, Bonehill states, ‘There had been a lively demand for prints that encourage admiration of native ‘picturesque’ and ‘romantic’ scenes for several decades: the publication of an engraving like that after Sandby’s views of Leith [of 1751] was an attempt to profit from that growing popularity’ (p. 138). In fact, Sandby’s view predates this development by several decades. The scene of Madge and Bauldy from the illustrations by David Allan for Allan Ramsay’s poem *The Gentle Shepherd*, which Bonehill attributes to Allan’s eye for the ‘droll and eccentric’ (pp. 103–04, fig. S3.19), is copied from Paul Sandby’s 1758 print of the scene (Gunn 115). The detail of a dog hanging on to Madge’s skirt is not included in the poem, as was also pointed out by Holloway and Errington in *The Discovery of Scotland* in 1978. Despite these comments, the catalogue has much of interest to say on the perennial topic of the rediscovery of Scotland.

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