

## BOOK REVIEWS

### LIVING IN SCOTLAND: SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE SINCE 1980

Lindsay Paterson, Frank Bechhofer and David McCrone (2004) Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. ISBN 0 7486 1785 X (pp. 236, £16.99, pb.)

Review by TOM BRYCE

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In the final verse of 'To a Louse', Burns famously remarked:

*O wad some Power the giftie gie us  
To see oursels as ithers see us!  
It wad frae monie a blunder free us...*

There are other human weaknesses of course, perhaps most obviously the converse, that 'we see ithers as we see oursels' – or see them as not *very* different from oursels. That is, when we hear about the lives of other people, we can rely too much on our own personal experiences to make sense of their circumstances. Less elegantly, in making any 'reality checks', we can assume that what we have known and lived is typical and common, perhaps even 'normal', and applies to the social conditions in which others live their lives.

What we need of course is more objective data to shed light on matters of social concern, more evidence to ground our understanding of how people actually live. The filters through which we see and interpret what others experience need to be clearer. Certainly in education we need to know what life is like for the pupils, the students and the families we teach. All of the paraphernalia of professionalism, from action, to intervention, to evaluation, requires that we have an informed knowledge of what society is and how it functions. For many mid-career educationists who have themselves lived steadily through a period of comfortable times, it is particularly important to understand how widespread that experience is and to know where it is not the case. And when we read about the reality of children's lives (for example, in the government's *Snapshot* (SEED, 2001), which contains disturbing statistics of deprivation, exclusion, family dislocation and violence) we really must be able to contextualise the harsh facts.

*Living in Scotland* does this very well indeed and does so by interpreting a wide range of social data pertaining to the last two to three decades. It maps out the changing social structure of contemporary Scotland, examining the reality of communities, the new patterns of work and employment, the distributions of income, wealth and poverty, social class and social mobility, the changes in educational opportunities, and emerging patterns of consumption and lifestyle. The data which Paterson *et al.* explore are drawn from government statistics, census figures, and a variety of social surveys and longitudinal studies, selected for their sociological significance and subjected to thorough analysis and interpretation. Admirably clear tables and figures are provided and, rather unusually, a free CD of the tables in the text and in the many appendices accompanies the book. While much of the information demands careful attention, the authors are to be commended for the ways in which they interpret the numerical data and take the reader through tables and charts. The guidance is always focused and effective – an excellent model for those who seek to present quantitative results informatively. It is impossible in a short review to do justice to what the text reveals, but a few examples might suggest the richness of the analysis and how it is used to illuminate issues which affect everyone who lives in Scotland.

In the opening chapter on population and demography we are taken through the patterns of population decline and migration in Scotland. The present dramatically falling birth rate is not compensated for by sufficient inward migration. The population shift from west to east is greater than most of us will presume, with Edinburgh's numbers being 78% of Glasgow, as against 50% in the 1960s. Small town rural populations in the Highlands have above-average fertility and low mortality and attract net inwards migration. The Glasgow conurbation has 'very low birth rates, high mortality, levels of morbidity well above the average and continuing out-migration; these present the country's leaders with perhaps their greatest challenge' (p. 28). With regard to families and households, the traditional family pattern of two parents and dependent children is now the exception rather than the rule and there is real complexity to the ways in which people move in and out of different household forms as they age – these household structures being significantly driven by the higher percentage of women who work and the greater financial independence of women and young people. The detail in chapter 4 concerning employment patterns is worthy of close reading, these indicating just how great has been the movement from manufacturing to services (without that implying a shift to the 'middle class', or with people even thinking of themselves as such). The hours which women work, full-timers and part-timers, are notably high. The shifts away from unskilled manual to skilled manual, and from manual to non-manual, are considerable. In tracking the general growth of income and wealth in the population, the analysis reveals just how unequal is Scottish society with dramatic increases at the top end of the social scale. The authors contend that, with regard to areas of multiple deprivation, some one in seven in the population are 'severely disadvantaged and unlikely to escape from this situation into better circumstances' (p. 78). While the majority of people living in Scotland now enjoy a comfortable lifestyle, the gap between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots' is greater than ever before.

In chapter 6 on social class and social opportunity, we note that Scotland is becoming a professional society in a 'much more thorough way than it was even in the 30 years after the Second World War, when the professions came to dominate social policy and public life but still from their inherited position as a relatively small elite. The class of professionals and managers now makes up over one-third of the population ... and came to support an elected parliament during the 1980s and 1990s, as they became alienated from the policies of the Conservative government' (p. 101). Paterson *et al.* show how the new middle class contains a greater proportion of women than ever before (but still less than half) with Catholics 'more or less in proportion to their share of the population'. And the authors reason that over the next half of the century Asians are 'very likely to become as prominent in the leadership of Scotland as people of Jewish, Italian or Irish family origins were in the second half of the twentieth century' (also p. 101). The conjunction of middle class economic position and left wing politics is putting Scotland in a position more akin to its Scandinavian neighbours than to England.

Chapter 7 is concerned with education and life chances. Mass education has certainly become extended, where with well over 80% experiencing no more than five years of full-time education a century ago, everyone now goes through eleven years of it and half stays on into higher education. Paterson *et al.* speculate on the effects of the expansion of higher education; it might lead to the emergence of a more critical citizenry, though 'not in ways that would be comfortable to political elites, and requiring much more participation than representative structures have traditionally allowed' (p. 127). The sheer size of the professional class and its ability to communicate and debate so effectively might even be a block between parliament and the rest of society. Furthermore, the very success of education means that formal qualifications and credentialism devalue any alternatives for those who do not succeed.

*Living in Scotland* is to be recommended for the lucid way in which these

sociologists have described the dramatic transformation in Scottish lives since 1980, each part of their analysis being rooted in hard data and quantified trends. But the picture of communities enjoying measurably more wealth and better quality of life than a generation ago is coupled with the evidence of deep division and worrying stratification. All of the text should be read but the concluding chapter is worth several reads (and it summarizes the text well). Acknowledging Scottish social character and the stamp of the parliament, it worries over what can be done next with regard to real inclusion. All of us should indeed be concerned.

#### REFERENCE

SEED (2001) *For Scotland's Children: Better Integrated Children's Services*. Edinburgh: SEED. [www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/education/fcsr-02.asp](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/education/fcsr-02.asp)

#### INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: LEARNERS AND LEARNING CONTEXTS

Melanie Nind, Kieron Sheehy & Katy Simmons (eds) (2003) London: David Fulton. ISBN 1 843212 066 6. (pp. 304, £18.00, pb.)

Review by FIONA LAVIN

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Library shelves are stacked with books on inclusion and inclusive practices, not to mention associated issues such as meeting individual needs, additional support needs and curriculum differentiation generally. What then sets this book apart from the others?

In their introductory chapter the editors refer to this collection of articles as a 'rich resource' for those interested in and involved in working towards more inclusive approaches in education. An added bonus for readers in the more northern parts of the United Kingdom is the number of contributions from academics and practitioners in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

In my opinion, the assertion that the book contains a mixture of new material and the best pre-published material is probably true, although it brings with it the danger that many professionals in this field have already accessed and read some of the articles in the original publications. However, the convenience of having this diverse range of topics together in one volume has its attractions. Not least it serves to demonstrate the extent of the continuum of need that exists and the additional support that must be put in place if educational systems are to be able to meet current legislative demands. Providing appropriate and effective education for all learners has never been a cheap option; nor does it come without demanding great commitment to a cause.

The arrangement by topics under five broad umbrella headings provides a route map through which readers can navigate their own course according to their interest and need as they embark on their own challenging journey towards 'inclusion'. The 'pick and mix' approach appeals, and can serve a useful purpose in that easy-to-access research articles can provide an immediate source of reliable and helpful information on specific topics. Research that has, in the main, been the result of reflective and considered classroom practice usually appeals to practitioners.

The editors offer brief descriptions of the chapters as they appear and conclude each chapter with a short paragraph which highlights what they see as the key issues. It is not difficult to see how useful this might be in introducing, for example, students in initial teacher education or teachers engaging in continuing professional development, to important factors worthy of more open debate.

Many professionals grapple with definitions of ‘inclusion’ and ‘inclusive practice’. They struggle to reconcile the theoretical descriptions in the literature with their day-to-day experiences of the settings in which they work and live. This book reflects not just the shift in values and attitudes that is beginning to happen in education, but the connection now being made to the ‘outside world’ – including those learners who still find themselves marginalised in society.

Part 1, *More than just the 3R's*, begins by looking at learners in a more holistic way and drawing on all the resources necessary to make this possible. Partnership approaches play a big part in this section. It is easy to see the link with, for example, Children’s Services Plans in Scotland, and how our attitudes to collaborative practice must shift to embrace the knowledge and skills of professional colleagues outside the classroom who are involved with the same learners and their families as we are in schools. Reminders are there – if we need them – that working together is no longer an option. It is a requirement.

Part 2, *Transitions*, provides five separate chapters on quite diverse topics including experiences based on inclusive practice in relation to culture, ethnicity and special need and the challenges and decisions faced by professionals and parents. Some key issues are there to be developed further by the reader.

Following this, part 3, *On the margins*, deals with a range of people who find themselves on the outside looking in. The disaffected learner, the ‘looked after’ young person, the discriminated against and the excluded are represented in this section. These sensitive areas within education are often neglected both in practice and in the literature, not least because professionals can feel uncomfortable with some of the issues. It is quite refreshing to see the awareness being raised of the very real issues affecting many of these often forgotten groups of learners.

In part 4, *Inside classrooms* considers some subject-based approaches that lead to more inclusive approaches. There is emphasis on equality of opportunity with a plea to include special educational needs as one aspect within the diversity portfolio. This is followed by the final part, *Beyond classrooms*, which comprises just one chapter. This examines the influence and impact of the experience in literacy and the contribution of the home. It provides quite a positive end to this collection of articles, linking home, school and community and highlighting the efforts being made to meet the challenges of coping with diversity in society.

This book is a valuable addition to the field of inclusive practices. The editors began by saying some of the material is challenging; yes, inclusion can be uncomfortable. Not least is that challenge to our own understanding of life chances and circumstances and how we as professional educators rise to that challenge. Much still needs to be achieved in terms of attitude change if inclusion is to be a reality. Only then can work in progress begin to influence practice in the wider sense. Engagement with this book will add to our knowledge and understanding of diversity in education. The attitude change and ensuing practice is then up to us.

## LEARNING WITHOUT LIMITS

Susan Hart, Anabelle Dixon, Mary Jane Drummond & Donald McIntyre (2004) Milton Keynes: Open University Press. ISBN 0-335-21259-X (pp284, £17.95, pb).

Review by TOM CONLON

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In Scottish education, ability labelling is so pervasive that it can seem bold even to query its vocabulary. Although the use of terms such as 'stupid' and 'thick' might not be acceptable in school staffrooms, labels such as 'low ability', 'less able' and 'bright' are part of the routine discourse. Such language is legitimised from the very top. Scottish school inspectors recommend ability-based setting and their documents are peppered with ability labels. Even the Scottish Executive's recent curriculum review, for all its progressivism, falls back upon the familiar slogans: 'At all stages, learners of all *aptitudes and abilities* should experience an appropriate level of challenge, to enable each individual *to achieve his or her potential*.' (A Curriculum for Excellence, p. 14, my emphasis).

Susan Hart and her colleagues have produced a book that opens with a powerful critique of ability labelling. Acknowledging that this has become a 'commonsense' way to talk about children, they disentangle the cloud of meanings that surround the term 'ability'. One meaning, antiquated but still highly potent, derives from the notion that individuals differ in terms of inborn intelligence. An ability label in this view serves not only to explain differences in attainment but also to predict future attainment, since each individual is presumed to have fixed limits derived from a genetic inheritance. Can this be what the authors of *A Curriculum for Excellence* mean by their reference to the 'potential' of each individual? Surely not. But it is the very sloppiness of the language that surrounds this area that leads to confusion and difficulty. Teachers may accurately observe that children show differences of performance when assessed on a specific task at a specific time. They may summarise these differences using the language of ability as a kind of convenient shorthand. But this second, more respectable meaning of ability can easily and insidiously slide towards the first, especially when the differences seem stable over time. A label that starts as descriptive can become one that seems explanatory: the child's performance is poor *because* of her low ability. The label for the attainment becomes the label for the child.

At this point the practical reader may feel sceptical. After all, most teachers are every bit as humane as the authors of *A Curriculum for Excellence*. Granted, teachers' theories of ability may be vague and their labels rough and ready but can any real harm stem from a sloppy shorthand? The authors of *Learning without Limits* argue strongly that ability labels are indeed harmful, as well as being unjust and untenable. They claim that a teacher whose thinking is shaped by the 'template of ability' will approach a class of diverse pupils expecting to find three levels of ability (bright-average-weak) normally distributed across the group. Thus 75% of pupils will pick up from the teacher negative messages about their ability, at least in comparison with those judged most able. The result is a 'destruction of dignity' from which few can recover. Ability labelling harms teachers too, not only because it fuels a depressing cycle in which low expectations shape practices that fulfil their own predictions but also because it traps them within a paradox: the teacher's role is to promote learning, but the most important determinant of learning is something (fixed ability) that lies beyond their control.

This critique is not new, of course, and the book is dedicated to the late Brian Simon, the pioneer of comprehensive schooling whose guiding principle was that education and not heredity is the key to human development. Quoting Clyde Chitty's

remark that ‘comprehensive reform has no meaning unless it challenges the fallacy of fixed ability or potential in education’, the authors regret that this challenge in practice became bogged down in fierce debates over the best forms of grouping learners into classes (‘mixed-ability’ versus setting, etc) while efforts to develop new and more enlightened pedagogies were neglected. The specific contribution of this book is to address the pedagogic deficit. The authors, based in Cambridge University and supported by a research grant from Wallenberg, approached their task in an unusual way: they advertised in the national press for teachers who identified themselves as having rejected ability labelling. They selected and studied a group of such teachers, all of whom worked in mainstream schools where they were exposed to the normal pressures of Ofsted inspection, repeated testing, league tables and so on. The aim was to develop a collaboration that would elaborate practices and perspectives consistent with the idea of ‘learning without limits’.

What emerged from this inspiring project is the identification of *transformability* — defined as the potential for transforming learning capacity — as the core idea that provides an alternative to the ability mindset. Instead of viewing differences between learners as reflecting fixed and stable differences of ‘potential’, the approach of transformability arises from the belief that everyone has a capacity to learn and, given the right conditions, that capacity can be increased in ways that promise to disrupt present patterns of attainment. According to Hart and her colleagues, the concept of learning capacity differs from ability in several important ways: it is constituted by ‘external’ forces such as activities and relationships as well as by the ‘internal’ forces of cognitive resources and emotional states; it has a collective as well as an individual dimension; it recognises that internal forces are the result of learning, instead of being mysterious entities acquired genetically or otherwise; and it grants to teachers the prospect of achieving real progress because to an extent, it is within their power to shape the conditions that transform learning capacity.

This is in many ways an optimistic and life-enhancing perspective. It might easily be dismissed as an idle academic dream, but for the fact that it has emerged in part from observation of what can be done in current classrooms by real teachers (and in the land of the national curriculum! Surely a minor miracle). In the final chapter, the authors set out some of the implications and these are acknowledged to be challenging. For example, teachers should apply a ‘principle of everybody’ which avoids not only grouping learners by attainment but also overt differentiation between young people in tasks or activities. Learning activities should be constructed ‘as a common endeavour in which everybody can take part on an equal footing’.

This is a provocative book and one that has far-reaching implications. On both sides of the Tweed, national policies for curriculum, assessment, teaching and learning, and accountability are arguably rooted in the fixed-ability mindset. Susan Hart and her colleagues conclude with the claim that this mindset is responsible for inertia in the system because it induces in teachers a sense of powerlessness and acceptance of limited achievement. If this is accurate then perhaps the authors of *A Curriculum for Excellence* should be invited to prepare an early revision. *Learning without Limits* ought to be high on the reading list for everyone from BEd and PGCE students to government ministers. The Scottish government should insist that our school inspectors study it particularly carefully.

#### REFERENCE

SEED (2004) *A Curriculum for Excellence: Report of the Curriculum Review Group on education 3–18*, Edinburgh: HMSO.

## SCHOOLS OF HOPE: A NEW AGENDA FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

Terry Wrigley (2003) Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books. ISBN: 1 85856 302 X (pp. 208, £16.99, pb.)

Review by AUDREY HENDRY

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Why, Wrigley asks in *Schools of Hope*, does school improvement seem to many teachers like an alien force imposed from outside and above? Why, when efforts to improve are integral to a teacher's professionalism, is change often greeted with apathy, cynicism or hostility? Wrigley does not doubt that school improvement is necessary, nor does he doubt that it is possible. Rather, he details serious misgivings about the current agenda for school improvement, which he argues, often leads to change that is superficial or misdirected. School improvement, as it is portrayed here, is in crisis, responsible for rising stress levels among school staff, disaffection in pupils while, at the same time, failing to close gaps in attainment or tackle issues of social exclusion. *Schools of Hope* invites policy makers, practitioners and researchers to consider a new agenda for school improvement, one which gives careful consideration to the purposes of schooling, to the rights of young people, to equity and to social justice. The invitation is difficult to ignore.

In the opening section of the book Wrigley provides a cogent and powerful critique of what he sees as the dominant model of school improvement with, it is argued, its roots in school effectiveness. The point is made that defining improvement in terms of effectiveness has consequences. Too frequently what is easily measured is privileged over what is valuable but difficult to quantify. Outcomes are likely to include work intensification, de-professionalisation, contrived collegiality and a culture of surveillance. This current model of school improvement, it is suggested, denies the need for debate about educational aims, values, the place of the curriculum and pedagogy. Most importantly, it fails to take seriously the needs of young people.

In *Schools of Hope* we are asked to accept an invitation to create hope: hope for better schools and better lives. In section two of the book, Wrigley reminds us that school improvement is 'hollowed out' if it does not take into account issues of achievement, social justice and equity in such a way that eschews quick instrumental fixes and promotes sustainable responses. School improvement, according to the writer, is at a crossroads. Schools have 'transacted and transformed, restructured and re-cultured, distributed leadership and internalised school review' (p. 176) and yet, we are asked to accept, little has changed because improvement as intensification or control stands in the way of meaningful development. Having reached the crossroads, Wrigley is clear which path school improvement should take and in sections three and four he suggests a route to meaningful school improvement.

Wrigley suggests practitioners need to begin by rethinking accepted notions of intelligence and models for learning, arguing that without this schools cannot become stimulating and cooperative learning communities, capable of engaging more of our young people more of the time. School improvement, it is asserted, must build learning organisations. Wrigley questions the rigidity of the curriculum, where authorship and creativity, for both teachers and students, are missing and the means by which it has been imposed on schools. The current emphasis on transmission models of teaching is criticised and the reader is asked to consider how schools might develop alternative pedagogies where the cognitive skills of students are emphasised and learning becomes engaging and reflective, and where curricular design is underpinned by the curricular values of openness and flexibility.

To illustrate what might be possible, Wrigley draws on examples of school improvement from other countries, suggesting ways in which we might rethink

curricular aims and content, teaching and assessment. Wrigley accepts that any such change is likely to be difficult. He acknowledges that school structures, lack of time, people and resources are likely to hinder attempts to transform schools into learning organisations but, in a spirit of hope, challenges schools to consider alternative futures.

In addition to being learning organisations, according to *Schools of Hope*, schools must become communities of learning. Too little attention, the author states, is paid to how schools function as communities of young people and to how schools relate to the wider communities they serve. In a discussion of the relationship between schools and their communities, Wrigley queries the extent to which schools develop meaningful two-way relationships and criticises school improvement theory for its unwillingness to acknowledge the potential of community perspectives on learning and improvement. Failure to explore the concept of learning communities is seen as restricting the ability of schools to build models of cooperative and situated learning and as a result opportunities for engaged and active learning are missed.

Throughout this book Wrigley makes his concern for social justice clear. In the final section he brings together notions of school improvement and social justice. He begins by challenging discourses of deficit. Schools of Hope should consider student *at promise*, rather than *at risk*. Wrigley urges policy makers, practitioners and researchers to face up to problems caused by social exclusion and resist solutions which rely on 'back to basics' responses. In their place he advocates Schools of Hope that emphasise authentic curricula, reflective pedagogies and cognitive challenge, that value the voices of pupils and the community, and that are committed to school development based on inclusion, social justice and global citizenship. It seems clear that Wrigley feels we may have little hope of progress if we do not accept the invitation to rethink schools and schooling. Despite providing the reader with a strident critique of school improvement and school effectiveness, Wrigley manages to leave the reader with the feeling that hope does still exist and his invitation might just be the thing we are looking for.

#### THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF EDUCATION AFTER DEVOLUTION.

Willis Pickard & John Dobie. (2003) Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press. ISBN 1 903765 16 1 (pp. 80, £11.95, pb.)

Review by RALPH CATTS

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This publication is the eighth of eleven so far in the *Policy and Practice in Education* series, under the guidance of series editors Gordon Kirk and Robert Glaister. The editors indicate on the back cover that the remit was to seek 'to elucidate the extent and nature of (the) changes to the way that Scottish education is governed from pre-school to the Universities.' As a newcomer to Scottish education policy, but with many decades of experience in Australia, I approached this brief with considerable interest. I am in Scotland because I perceive the current context of devolution as providing a window of opportunity for renewal and enhancement of opportunities for learners. Pickard and Dobie have convinced me that this is an opportunity that was much needed. They outline decades of inertia and largely unsuccessful efforts to devolve opportunities to schools and teachers, interspersed with what they describe as radical policy changes by government.

The authors write very much from their perspectives as a former Editor of *Times*

*Education Supplement Scotland*, and an acting Director of Education respectively. For an academic, the lack of distance from their former roles evident in their writing is initially perplexing. However, it provides an insight into these perspectives that might not often be available given the expectations held of people in their roles to be 'even handed'. For instance, the authors comment that 'the unions resorted... and refused', while the conservative government became 'more centralist and authoritarian' (p. 43). In contrast, the views of the Council of Scottish Local Authorities are quoted with sympathy, and when they are reported to have confronted political directions this is reported without value-loaded terms (p. 30).

The authors explain the processes and actions that underpinned negotiations on the pay and conditions of teachers, especially in the decade prior to devolution. Through this they illustrate the practical policy issues that need to be addressed in achieving a decentralised education system. The description is detailed and allows a reader to perceive the roles of stakeholders in the political system. The authors leave the analysis and conclusions to be drawn from this material to the reader.

Those seeking an analysis of the complex cultural and economic forces involved in the devolution of authority to the Scottish parliament will not find this book meets their needs. Given their self declared mission, I am curious why a book about the political context of education after devolution does not focus on the nature of the 2000 Act, the forces that framed it, and the implications of the Act for the future of Scottish education. The Act calls for securing improvement for each child, rather than adequate provision of schooling. The political context in which this change occurred is significant, but is not discussed.

There is no substantive comment on the significant initiatives that emerged in the first five years of devolved responsibility for education. The Higher Still reforms, the experiments with an Education Maintenance Allowance, and other initiatives aimed at addressing unsatisfactory outcomes of education for young people from deprived backgrounds are not addressed. There is however, a relatively lengthy commentary on what they term the 'debacle' of the 'SQA exams Fiasco' (pp. 19, 20). No doubt it caused some heart burn at the time, but it is not an event that will have a lasting impact on the lives of students. The references on which the authors rely are limited in the main to newspaper articles, parliamentary speeches, and documents from the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) and its precursor prior to devolution.

The conclusions about the state of Scottish education policy and practice drawn by the authors are negative. For instance, comments about Scotland's place in international league tables for mathematics and science need interrogation. Likewise, a remark about the claimed unwillingness of older men to re-enter education deserves some comment on whether the current provision is suitable for their needs.

This small book is interesting to read for what it reveals about the focus of reporting on education policy, and about managerial concerns about the day to day workings of a bureaucracy, rather than on the issues that should inform a consideration of policy and practice. Fortunately, my observations so far suggest to me that personnel currently responsible for policy within SEED, and for implementation of reforms through the Area Directors of Education (ADEs), are more aware of the wider issues.

## SCOTTISH EDUCATION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Lindsay Paterson (2003). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press ISBN: 0 7486 1590 3. (pp. 228, £16.99, paperback)

Review by ALASTAIR MCPHEE

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We have been fortunate in recent years that a number of key texts on Scottish Education have been available to us. Perhaps the most obvious of these is Bryce and Humes' monumental 'Scottish Education' with both pre-devolution and post-devolution volumes. But one also thinks of McPherson and Raab, in comparatively recent times, and the work of Humes. Lindsay Paterson's 'Scottish Education in the Twentieth Century' is an important further addition to this body of scholarship.

Although it is necessarily a historical text in that it explains how we got to where we are now, at the beginning of the twenty first century, this is not a narrative history. Rather, it is described by the author as an 'explanation'. It is an explanation which is much needed in a period characterized by enormous change in Scottish life and society and concomitantly, in Scottish education. Perhaps in no other period of our history has there been educational change on such a scale, or with such far-reaching effects: it is therefore right that these processes of change should be explained.

The book is divided into two parts. The first of these deals with the period from the 1880s to the 1930s and the second from the 1940s to the 1990s. While the Second World War acts as a dividing agent in its own right in that it began processes of change in Scottish society which were of enormous importance, it is seen as more than that in this text. The period before the Second World War is designated as one of Competition and Opportunity, and that which succeeded it, as one of Welfare and Individualism.

Within each of these periods, the discussion is conducted on a sectoral basis: that is, primary, secondary, tertiary and community education are each analysed in turn. And the analysis itself is just as one would expect from one of Scotland's leading commentators and scholars: painstakingly conducted from review of an enormous range of data. This range of data includes a huge amount of official documentation, but that is supplemented and interpreted by substantial reference to secondary sources including contemporary and more recent academic commentary. Within the lenses which he gives us, Lindsay Paterson looks at the ways in which Scotland's system has responded to currents and changes in wider society, and also at ways in which the system has predicated change itself.

However, the book does much more than this. It establishes the peculiarly Scottish aspects of change and reform, in the ways in which the system absorbs and interprets *in its own way* wider currents which were flowing. For example, Paterson points out that educational democracy in Scotland is a peculiarly Scottish variety – 'ordered freedom'. When one looks at the major post war debates about child-centredness, for instance, we see that this process had indeed commenced before the war – but in a Scottish way where neither the dominance of the teacher nor the intensely academic nature of the curriculum were usurped. This process continued, of course, in the post war period. What is very interesting is the way in which Patterson demonstrates how Scottish education tends towards compromise and consensus and how, in a sense, these features have held the system together as innovations have come and gone.

There are other aspects of the text which are entirely praiseworthy. For instance, the sections on Higher and Further and Community Education in Scotland seem to me to be insightful commentary which genuinely expands the scholarship available in these areas. However, the culminating chapter, the 'Conclusions', is quite masterful in the way in which the author brings together all the threads which have

been running through the text – and which, at times, can leave the reader looking for the overview which makes sense of it all. In this chapter, Lindsay Paterson reaches three main conclusions: that education had an instrumental role in shaping the relationship between the individual and the community: that the only ‘seriously worthwhile’ education to be had was the traditional broad and general one: and that ‘if the main twentieth century tradition was academic, it was also institutional’ (pp. 195–197). He also demonstrates that although there was enormous change in the latter part of the twentieth century, in light of the esteem in which education is traditionally viewed in Scotland there was surprisingly little debate on the far reaching innovations which occurred.

This book has a number of real merits. Firstly, it offers a thorough and thought provoking grounded analysis of Scottish education in the twentieth century. Secondly, it conducts an analysis which goes beyond the UK and places Scottish education in an international context. Thirdly, just as HL Mencken pointed out that one can only evaluate the present in terms of the past, it provides a very interesting basis for analysis of twenty first century trends within the system – and in particular, of education in the post-devolution context. Fourthly, it provides the reader from outwith Scotland with insight *into why we are different, and what makes us different*. In an era when there is continued reference in academic texts on education – even by commentators who really should know better – to the ‘UK’ system, Paterson’s work reminds us of our identity, and of the journeys which we have made – and have still to make.

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#### *Erratum*

In the review of Gaelic Medium Education in *Scottish Educational Review* Vol. 36 (2) (November, 2004), on page 245, paragraph 2, we failed to point out that the opening chapter, providing an historical overview of the place of Gaelic in Scottish education since 1872, was written by Donald John MacLeod (GME Coordinator for Highland Council). We apologise for this omission.