



The Reivers: The Story of the Border Reivers

Alistair Moffat

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Only one period in history is immediately, indelibly and uniquely linked to the whole area of the Scottish and English Border country, and that is the time of the Reivers. Whenever anyone mentions 'Reiver', no-one hesitates to add 'Border'. It is an inextricable association, and rightly so. Nowhere else in Britain in the modern era, or indeed in Europe, did civil order break down over such a wide area, or for such a long time. For more than a century the hoof-beats of countless raiding parties drummed over the border. From Dumfriesshire to the high wastes of East Cumbria, from Roxburghshire to Redesdale, from the lonely valley of Liddesdale to the fortress city of Carlisle, swords and spears spoke while the law remained silent. Fierce family loyalty counted for everything while the rules of nationality counted for nothing. The whole range of the Cheviot Hills, its watershed ridges and the river valleys which flowed out of them became the landscape of larceny while Maxwells, Grahams, Fenwicks, Carletons, Armstrongs and Elliots rode hard and often for plunder. These were the Riding Times and in modern European history, they have no parallel. This book tells the remarkable story of the Reivers and how they made the Borders.

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