

‘Darien: A Journey in Search of Empire’, by John McKendrick.

Most of us knew a little of the story of the ‘Company of Scotland’ and its ill-fated attempts to establish a colony in Panama in the late seventeenth century and hoped this book would help us find out more. However, our discussion highlighted that this was very much a Marmite book - some of the group loved it, others vehemently disliked it. The former found it an easy and informative read which clearly explained the complicated relationships both between the various European powers and between those and the indigenous people. The latter found it a book not only in need of some serious editing but also one which reached simplistic conclusions written in a tone that made some of us deeply uncomfortable.