

James Hogg

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For the Texas Governor, see *Jim Hogg*

James Hogg
(1770 -
November
21, 1835)
was a
Scottish
poet and
novelist
who wrote
in both
Scots and
English.



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Biography

Hogg was born on a farm near Ettrick Forest in Selkirk and baptized there on December 9. He had little education, and became a shepherd, living in grinding poverty hence his nickname, **The Ettrick Shepherd**. His employer, James Laidlaw of Blackhouse, seeing how hard he was working to improve himself, offered to help by making books available. Hogg used these to essentially teach himself to read

and write (something he had achieved by the age of 14). In 1796 Robert Burns died, and Hogg, who had only just come to hear of him, was devastated by the loss. He struggled to produce poetry of his own, and Laidlaw introduced him to Sir Walter Scott, who asked him to help with a publication entitled *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*. In 1801, Hogg visited Edinburgh for the first time. His own collection, *The Mountain Bard*, was published in 1807 and became a best-seller, allowing him to buy a farm of his own. Having made his name, he started a literary magazine, *The Spy*, and his epic story-poem, *The Queen's Wake* (the setting being the return to Scotland of Queen Mary (1561) after her exile in France), was published in 1813 and was another big success. William Blackwood recruited him for the *Edinburgh Magazine*, and he was introduced to William Wordsworth and several other well-known literary figures. He was given a farm by the

Duke of Buccleuch, and settled down there for the rest of his life.

Hogg had already made his reputation as a prose writer with a practical treatise on sheep's diseases; and in 1824 his novel, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, was another major success. He became better known than his hero, Burns, had ever been.

Today, Hogg's poetry and essays are not as widely read as in his contemporary era. However "Justified Sinner" remains important and is now seen as one of the major Scottish novels of its time, and absolutely crucial in terms of exploring one of the key themes of Scottish culture and identity: Calvinism. In a 2006 interview with Melvyn Bragg for ITV1, Scottish novelist Irvine Welsh cited Hogg, especially "Justified Sinner" as a major influence on his writing.

Other works

- *The Forest Minstrel* (1810) (poetry)
- *The Pilgrims of the Sun* (1815) (poetry)
- *Brownie of Bodsbeck* (1817) (novel)
- *Jacobite Reliques* (1819) (collection of Jacobite protest songs)
- *The Three Perils of Man* (1822) (novel)
- *The Three Perils of Woman* (1823) (novel)
- *Queen Hynde* (1825)) (poetry)
- *Songs by the Ettrick Shephard* (1831) (songs/poetry)
- *The Brownie of the Black Hags* (1828) (short story/tale)
- *The Domestic Manner and Private Life of Sir Walter Scott* (1834) ("unauthorised" biography)
- *Tales and Sketches of the Ettrick Shepherd* (1837)^[1]

Footnotes

1. ^ Bibliographic information from: Bleiler, Everett (1948). *The Checklist of Fantastic Literature*. Chicago: Shasta Publishers, 110.

Reference

- *The Electric Shepherd: A Likeness of James Hogg* (2004) Karl Miller

External links

- Works by James Hogg at Project Gutenberg

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