



# Walking with James Hogg: The Ettrick Shepherd's Journeys through Scotland

*Bruce Gilkison*

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James Hogg, also known as the Ettrick Shepherd, was a writer, poet, sportsman, musician and larger-than-life personality. In 1802, uneducated and still unknown, he set out on the first of a series of journeys through Scotland, from the Borders to the Highlands and Hebrides. The journeys were inspiring, life-changing and often frightening. They led him to a life of chaos, failures, fame, fun and literary masterpieces.

Now, a descendant follows his footsteps and reflects on his experiences, and on the remarkable rediscovery of Hogg's works a century after his death. It is a story of tenacity, of daring to be different and, against all odds, success and a flourishing legacy. It is a lively look at an extraordinary life and some of his works, including *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, considered by many to be one of the greatest novels ever written.

Bruce Gilkison, a New Zealander and a great-great-grandson of Hogg's, walked through Scotland to discover what was special about him and his journeys. Like Hogg, he had no idea where these travels might lead. He found a world of stunning landscapes, fairies and mystery, genius and ambiguity, friendships and back-stabbings, and learnt about his flawed, lovable and eccentric ancestor.

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