



JAMES HOGG

POETRY TRAILS

Discover Hogg's poetry through the
landscape that inspired him

**OFFICIAL
TRAIL
GUIDE**

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From Selkirk through the valleys of Ettrick & Yarrow

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Cover Painting
Portrait by Sir John Watson Gordon,
James Hogg, 1770 - 1835. Poet; 'The Ettrick Shepherd'
National Galleries of Scotland. Purchased 1987

Key

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The James Hogg Poetry Trails pass through the beautiful scenery of the Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys. The roads can be twisty and sometimes narrow, so please drive with care.

The minor road from the B709 to Ettrick village and The Ettrick Poetry Trail Extension is single track with passing places.

* The information given about the James Hogg Exhibition, local cafes, restaurants and accommodation is accurate at the point of going to press (November 2022). You are advised to check for any changes and websites have been cited wherever possible.

Foreward By Bruce Gilkison

Bruce is the great-great-grandson of James Hogg descended from Hogg's daughter, Harriet. She married Robert Gilkison in 1855 and the couple left Scotland for New Zealand in 1879 with their 9 children.

The Ettrick Shepherd, James Hogg, was my great-great-grandfather. He travelled throughout Scotland, but his heart was never far from where he was born and died - the Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys. It's easy for me to understand why. It's a wonderful area, with music and literature and history and nature and fun around every corner, and the James Hogg Poetry Trails are a great way to experience it!

It is exciting to hear about their launch, even from here in New Zealand, where my Hogg ancestors made their home after leaving Scotland, many, many years ago. I am lucky to have explored the places he lived and travelled when I was writing *Walking with James Hogg: The Ettrick Shepherd's Journeys through Scotland*.

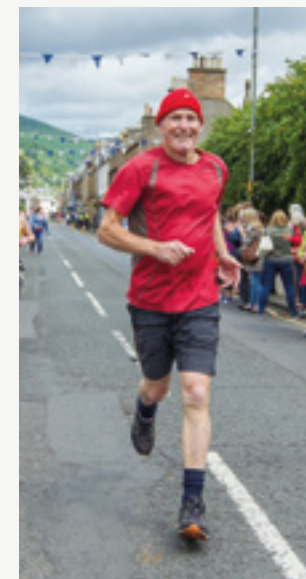
I commend those involved in preparing this Guide. They obviously love this area too.

For some visitors, this might be their first introduction. Others will know it well, but will still discover new ways to appreciate it.

Visitors can enjoy the Trails in different ways: driving, cycling, walking. For me, these are in ascending order, the slower the speed, the greater the enjoyment. So there are ways that are even better: to stop a while, to eat, to drink, to chat. To enjoy the scenery, the history or the silence. Or to sleep here, to doze off on a sunny hillside or to stay overnight, under a roof or under the stars. My favourite ways are the ones that take the longest.

I write this in December 2020. James Hogg (like Beethoven) has just turned 250.

Enjoy the Trails – it's hard to think of a better way to celebrate!



Bruce Gilkison

Welcome



Welcome to Selkirk and the Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys, the beautiful birthplace and home of the Scottish poet and writer James Hogg (1770-1835).

William Shakespeare is known the world over and Robert Burns is renowned for his poetry and music such as “Auld Lang Syne”. But who was James Hogg?

“The Ettrick Shepherd”, as Hogg was known, was inspired by Robert Burns, admired by Walter Scott, and was an acquaintance of Wordsworth, Byron and Coleridge.

He grew up in a valley community of story tellers and his writing celebrates the stories of that time – of mysterious spirits, persecuted Covenanters, evil priests and abandoned women. A poet and a shepherd, he was also a novelist, a singer/songwriter, a sportsman, a lover, a misfit, and a voice for the disadvantaged.

Hogg left school at around 6 years old and had a very hard early life as a shepherd. As a writer, he often felt looked down upon by the literary elite of the time.

“ Poetry Point
From ‘The Queen’s Wake’

*But when the bard himself appeared,
The ladies smiled, the courtiers sneered
For such a simple air and mein
Before the court had never been.*

His 1824 novel ‘*The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*’ is his best known and most controversial work, brilliantly portraying the power of evil. “One of the best, most brilliant books ever written” according to the writer Irvine Welsh (*author of Trainspotting*). The French writer and Nobel Laureate Andre Gide, who discovered Hogg and ‘*The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*’ in 1947, is quoted as saying “It’s a long time since I can remember being so taken hold of, so voluptuously tormented.”

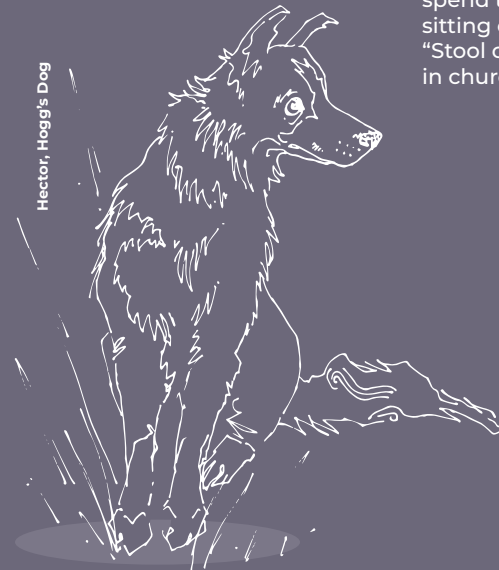
Throughout his life, Hogg travelled all around Scotland but he always returned to his beautiful Ettrick and Yarrow Valleys. Please enjoy using these Poetry Trails and the fold-out Trails Map to discover Hogg through the places and landscapes that inspired him. Let the Ettrick Shepherd be your guide.

“ Poetry Point
From ‘*Extempore Effusion upon the Death of James Hogg*’ by William Wordsworth

*When first, descending from
the moorlands,
I saw the Stream of Yarrow glide
Along a bare and open valley,
The Ettrick Shepherd was my guide.*

10 Fascinating Facts about James Hogg

1. James Hogg’s grandfather William Laidlaw (Will o’Phaup) was reputedly the last person in the Ettrick Valley area to speak to the fairies.
2. When James started work at the age of 6 or 7, his wages for the first 6 months were a lamb and a pair of shoes.
3. William Wordsworth described him as “undoubtedly a man of original genius but of coarse manners.”
4. Hogg was a local celebrity with, at one point, waist length hair and plenty of female admirers due to both his rock star looks and abilities in running, wrestling, fishing, curling, and archery.
5. Rock star style behaviour included spending lots of money and regular heavy drinking. He died of liver failure - possibly not unrelated.
6. James fathered two children out of wedlock and had to spend time publicly sitting on the “Stool of Repentance” in church.
7. He had a dog called Hector who liked to “sing” - outside church was a favourite place.
8. Hogg formed a club with friends in Edinburgh called “The Right and Wrong Club”. Members had to support whatever any other members said, no matter if it was right or wrong. Alcohol was definitely involved.
9. 25 years after he died, 2000 “fans” turned up to the unveiling of his statue at St Mary’s Loch in 1860.
10. Hogg was very full of himself and was his own biggest fan. He wrote: “I like to write about myself. In fact, there are few things which I like better.”



“ Poetry Point
From ‘The Queen’s Wake’
(describing himself)

*At evening fall in lonesome dale
He kept strange converse with the gale
Held worldly pomp in high derision
And wandered in a world of vision*

Ettrick Poetry Trail

Selkirk to Ettrick Village,
the birth and final resting
place of James Hogg.

View
map
here >



To follow the Ettrick Poetry Trail

Starting from the Market Square in Selkirk ①, take the A707 (signposted *Peebles* (A72) and *Moffat* (A708)), heading down the hill. Follow the A707 down the hill for about a third of a mile. The road bends to the right and there is a red telephone box on the right hand side. After this the road bends to the left. On this bend, turn left onto the B7009. The road is signposted *Ettrickbridge* 7, *Langholm* 48 and has several brown tourist signs too (*Ettrick Valley Hotels B & B*, *Aikwood Tower* 4, *Honey Cottage*). (**All mileage is from Selkirk**)

Selkirk to Ettrick Village



Hogg Highlight Selkirk

Sitting on a hill above the Ettrick Water, Selkirk has a population of around 6,000. One of the oldest Royal Burghs in Scotland, it is supposedly in the church at Selkirk that William Wallace was declared Guardian of the Kingdom of Scotland.

The people of the town are known as Souters, which means shoe makers and menders. James Hogg's short story *The Souters of Selkirk* tells the tale of how two drunken noblemen tricked the town's souters into making expensive boots and singing the insulting song 'Souters ane, souters a', souters o' the Back Raw'.

James Hogg's great friend Sir Walter Scott was Sheriff of Selkirkshire for 30 years until his death in 1832. Hogg and Scott shared a great love of the Ettrick and Yarrow valleys, and of the songs and traditions of the area. The two friends also shared a sense of humour and a love of collecting and performing stories and songs.



Poetry Point From 'Lines to Sir Walter Scott, Bart'

*Old songs of other times,
most uncouth chants
and crabbed rhymes.*

In the market square of Selkirk stands Sir Walter Scott's statue with his courtroom behind, preserved as a museum. Hogg was actually taken to court here in 1821 in a dispute over non-payment of a bill for sheep and the cost of grazing. The unpaid bill was £31.17s.10d - around £3,000 in today's money! Walter Scott found in favour of the complainant, ordering his friend Hogg to pay the amount due.




Worth a visit Inside the Courtroom Museum you get a sense of life at that time. You'll also see the beautiful portrait of Hogg, holding what is thought to be a Dandie Dinmont terrier, a unique Borders' breed. The breed is named after a character in the Walter Scott novel 'Guy Mannering.' (Check Courtroom seasonal opening hours)

Sir Walter Scott's Courtroom, Selkirk




To Carterhaugh

Ettrick Poetry Trail: 0-3 miles

2  **I Spy**
Ettrick Valley View
(0.75 miles)

As you drive out of Selkirk on the B7009, the road turns to the left after around 400 metres. Look to your right for an impressive view of the Ettrick Water and the Ettrick Valley. This gives you a flavour of the beauty and majesty of the area in which Hogg grew up and of the landscape that had such an influence on him.

3  **I Spy**
Carterhaugh
(3 miles)

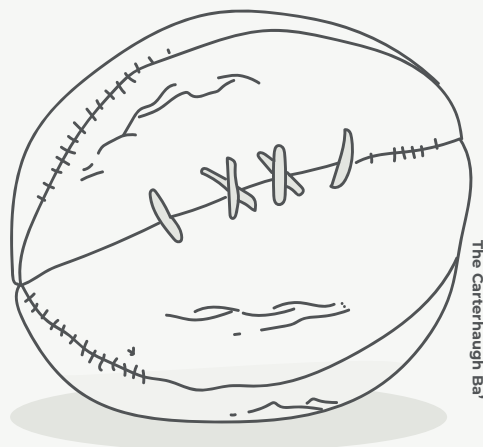
Just under 3 miles from Selkirk there is a narrow road going off on the left, signposted *Ashkirk*. The B7009 bends to the right after this junction and there is a small lay-by on the left hand side. If you pull in here and look over the Ettrick Water below and across the valley to the fields to the right, you will see the location of the famous Carterhaugh Ba' (football) game, played in 1815. The game was organised by Sir Walter Scott, collaborating with the 4th Duke of Buccleuch, to mark the Battle of Waterloo and the end of the Napoleonic Wars.

Hogg Link
James Hogg led the Vale of Yarrow team and Walter Scott led the Selkirk team, with hundreds playing on each side and thousands watching and cheering. The Ettrick and Yarrow rivers, almost a mile apart, served as the goal-lines for this extremely large pitch. After several hours, when darkness fell, the final score was 1-1.

This particular game included running with the ball, kicking, tackling, scrums and a lineout and many now believe this to be the beginnings of the game of rugby. The game played at Rugby School, England, in which William Webb Ellis supposedly invented rugby, took place 8 years later.

The Carterhaugh Ba' game was re-enacted in 2015, exactly 200 years later including drummers, flagbearers, halberdiers, musketeers and jesters, as part of a tribute to the late, great, local rugby commentator and TV personality, Bill McLaren.


Walter Scott wrote a song entitled '*The Lifting of the Banner*' to coincide with the game. The banner in question was that of the Dukes of Buccleuch which was traditionally used to rally the locals to repel the English invaders. The banner still exists in the Buccleuch collection at nearby Bowhill House, as do copies of Scott's song and another by James Hogg which were collectively known as '*The Ettrick Garland*'.



View
map
here >


To Aikwood Tower

Ettrick Poetry Trail: 3-4.5 miles

4  **Worth a visit**
(3.5 miles)

A few miles out of Selkirk, via a signposted turning to the right, is Bowhill House and Estate. This majestic house and its grounds have been the centre of life in this rural oasis for more than 200 years. This is worth a detour from the Poetry Trail, especially in July when the house is open to the Public. The road is signposted *B7039 Yarrow Valley* with a brown sign saying *Bowhill House & Theatre*.

Hogg Link
Bowhill House and Estate are owned by the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, whose ancestors were benefactors of James Hogg. Hogg's favourite daughter Harriet was named after the then Duke's wife. ([Click here for events and seasonal opening times](#))

5  **I Spy**
Aikwood Tower
(4.5 miles)

Continue for almost another mile from the signposted turn to Bowhill and look for a small square brown sign at the roadside saying *AIKWOOD TOWER Entrance 200m*. Slow down here and look up to your left and you will see a tall, square, defensive tower, perched high on a bank on the left above the B7009. Hogg used Aikwood as a location for several of his works. Aikwood is typical of the many peel towers found in the border country and was, until recently, the home of Lord David and Lady Judy Steel. It is still privately owned and is now used as a wedding venue and holiday business.



Hogg Link
In his novel *The Three Perils of Man*, Hogg places the character Michael Scott the Wizard at Aikwood. Michael Scott holds a short story contest featuring a friar, a border warrior, a high-minded poet, a thief and a laird - the loser of the contest to be eaten by a hungry prisoner.

Aikwood Tower was also the location of the home of Willie Scott of Harden in the poem '*The Fray of Elibank*'. Willie is caught stealing cattle from Sir Gideon Murray and is given the choice of marrying the ugliest of Murray's three daughters or be hanged. Willie chooses marriage to Muckle-Mou'd Meg (Big-mouthed Meg) and it turns out to be a good choice - they live happily ever after!

Poetry Point
From '*The Fray of Elibank*'

*So Willie took Meg to the Forest sae fair;
An they lived a most happy and social life;
The langer he kend her, he lo'ed her
the mair,
For a prudent, a virtuous and
honourable wife.*

To Ettrickbridge

Ettrick Poetry Trail: 5-7 miles


View
map
here >

6  **I Spy**
Fauldshope Farm
(5 miles)



Continue for another 0.5 miles along the B7009 from Aikwood Tower and look for a small road to the right with the sign *Fauldshope* on the fence.

Hogg Link
Over the centuries, many Hogs lived at Fauldshope Farm, including the witch, Lucky Hogg, whom Hogg believed to be his ancestor. Legend has it that Lucky Hogg turned Michael Scott the Wizard into a hare, to be chased by his own dogs. She was less lucky on her next encounter with Michael - a spell was cast upon her and she was forced to dance until she died of exhaustion.

7  **Worth a Visit**
(7 miles)

Ettrickbridge is an attractive village set on the Ettrick Water. Here you will find the historic 17th century Cross Keys Inn which offers accommodation and refreshments. ([Click here for opening hours](#))

There is also a charming little church and to the left of the village there are linns (or waterfalls) where

the Ettrick Water has cut an impressive rocky gorge. The Linns can be viewed from the bridge over the Ettrick Water (at the bottom of the village).

Hogg Link
Hogg regularly visited the Cross Keys and The Linns are mentioned in *Justified Sinner*.

"We rode through the ancient royal burgh of Selkirk - halted and corned our horses at a romantic village nigh to some deep linns."

I Spy
Kirkhope Tower

As you leave the village of Ettrickbridge you can catch a glimpse of Kirkhope Tower on the right and up the hill. If you want a better view you can turn right off the B7009 about half a mile outside the village and follow the narrow road for about 1/4 mile (retracing your route to rejoin the Hogg Trail).




To Tushielaw Inn

Ettrick Poetry Trail: 8-17 miles

8  **I Spy**
Singlie Farm (9.5 miles)


Just over 2 miles from Ettrickbridge, look out for a very small sign on the left side of the road saying *Singlie*. You will see the farmhouse and steadings to your left.

Hogg Link
James worked on Singlie Farm for several years and here he learned to play the violin.

9  **I Spy**
Clydesdale Horses (12 miles)

If you travel in spring or summer you may be lucky enough to spot some gorgeous Clydesdale foals with their mothers in the fields of Gilmanscleuch Farm.

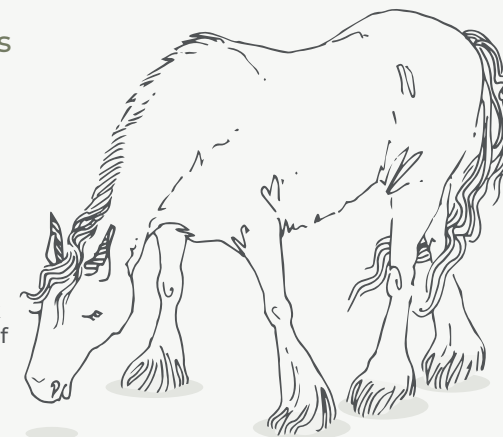
Hogg Link
This ancient breed would have been used to work the land in Hogg's time.

10  **I Spy**
Crosslee Farmhouse
(14.5 miles on the right hand side)

Hogg Link
Mr Walter Bryden who lived at Crosslee was a great help to Hogg's father when he became bankrupt.

11  **I Spy**
The Tushielaw Inn (15 miles)

On the left half a mile after Crosslee, is the Tushielaw Inn, a former coaching inn established in 1750 which today offers accommodation and refreshments. Look out for the original servant bells that still hang in the hallway. ([Check online for opening hours](#))



Clydesdale Horse

Hogg Link
Hogg would undoubtedly have visited the Tushielaw Inn and 2 miles further on you will be passing the ruins of Thirlstane Tower **12** (not visible from the road), the setting for Hogg's poem *The Pedlar*. A Laird's wife turns away a travelling pedlar from the Tower. He is murdered and his ghost returns to haunt the valley.

Poetry Point
From *'The Pedlar'*

*'Twas late, late, late on a Saturday's night,
The moon was set an' the wind was low;
The lazy mist crept toward the height,
An' the dim, livid flame glimmered laigh
on the downe.*

*O'er the rank-scented fen the bittern was
warping,
High on the black muir the foxes did howl,
All on the lone heart the cricket sat harping,
An' far on the air came the notes o' the owl.*

*When the lady o' Thirlestane rose in
her sleep,
An' she shrieked sae loud that her maid
ran to see;
Her e'en they were set, an' her voice it
was deep,
An' she shook like the leaf o' the aspin tree.*

To Ettrick Village

Ettrick Poetry Trail: 17-18.5 miles

View
map
here >

Driving Instructions

At around 18 miles from Selkirk, you go over a small bridge, then the road forks. The left hand (main) road drops downhill to your left. Take the fork to the right. There is a very small sign pointing right saying *Ettrick* and also a *No Through Road* sign.

Hogg Highlight

Ettrick Village
(18.5 miles)

Ettrick is a tiny, atmospheric village towards the head of the beautiful Ettrick Valley where Hogg was born and is buried. Here you will find the James Hogg Exhibition, the James Hogg Monument and the graves of Hogg, his family and friends at Ettrick Kirk.

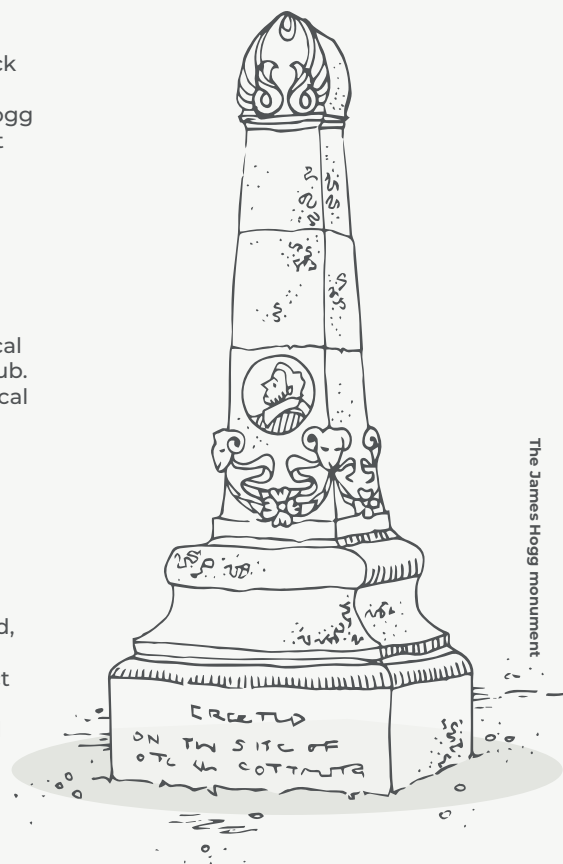
Worth a Visit

James Hogg Exhibition
(18.5 miles)

The James Hogg Exhibition is in the local Community Development Company Hub. It contains personal belongings, historical artefacts and documents relating to Hogg's life. It is open part-time during the summer months only.
(Click here for details)

Opposite the Exhibition is the Boston Memorial Hall which still serves as the village hall for the community. Thomas Boston, after whom the hall was named, was an early 18th century fire and brimstone preacher who used to attract up to 800 sinners here for a sermon. Of course, some of these sinners would have been James Hogg's ancestors.

You can drive or walk the short distance from the exhibition along the single-track road to get to the James Hogg monument. This marks the site of the cottage that was James Hogg's birthplace. Hogg wrote that when he was born, a brownie (a type of benevolent elf known for doing housework secretly) not only helped the midwife to cross the flooded river but was also present at his birth!



The James Hogg monument

To Ettrick Kirk

End of the Ettrick Poetry Trail: 19 miles

Hogg Highlight

Ettrick Kirk and Kirkyard
(19 miles)

Further along the road, the Ettrick Kirk appears on the right, almost hidden amongst the trees. It is a charming little church, still in use today, and here James Hogg is buried along with many of his friends and family. Hogg borrowed some of the names on the headstones in this graveyard for characters in his writing.

Poetry Point

From 'Extempore Effusion upon the Death of James Hogg' by William Wordsworth

*The mighty Minstrel breathes no longer,
Mid mouldering ruins low he lies;
And death upon the braes of Yarrow
Has closed the Shepherd-poet's eyes.*



Ettrick Kirk



This is the end of the Ettrick Poetry trail. You can extend this trail by continuing further up the valley (see pages 14 and 15), or retrace the road back to *Tushielaw Farm* and find the Trails Link Road.

Worth a Visit

(19 miles)

Close by Hogg's gravestone, you will also find the grave of his maternal grandfather, the 'far-famed Will o'Phaup' (William Laidlaw), A renowned sportsman like Hogg, his gravestone is inscribed with "*for feats of frolic, strength and agility, he had no equal in his day*".

Hogg's great friend Isabella (known as Tibbie) Shiel, who owned an inn in the Yarrow Valley, is also buried here. She shares a gravestone with her husband, Robert Richardson, and died "in the 96th year of her age".

To Nether Phawhope

Ettrick Poetry Trail Extension: 19-24 miles

Ettrick
Poetry Trail
- Optional
Extension

View
map
here >

15 Worth a visit

Will o'Phaup's Leap
(22.5 miles)

Towards the head of the valley, around 4 miles from Ettrick Kirk, is Nether Phawhope where, on your left, you will find a bridge over a pretty burn. The bridge is just after the second cattle grid and has been widened to facilitate the extraction of timber.

Hogg Link

Just below the bridge here is a site known as 'Will o'Phaup's Leap'. Will (Hogg's grandfather) is said to have leapt across the river when it was in full flood in order to get emergency medical help and it was believed that no one else in the region could have done this. He is also said to have leapt over the gorge here every year until he was 82! James Hogg and his brother Billy were regular visitors to these upper reaches of the Ettrick Water.

I Spy

Stone Sheep Stell
(23 miles)

As you continue up the valley, look out for the ancient stone sheep pens or stells (from the old Scots word "to put" or "to place"). There is a fine example on the left hand side of the road about 250 yds from Will o'Phaup's Leap. Around a mile further, on your right hand side, there is a stell with a tail, the latter giving extra shelter for the sheep from the harsh upland climate. James Hogg would have used stone stells when working with his flock.

Driver Instructions

Continue up the valley until you come to the place where the metalled public road ends. You can park here, so please do not drive beyond this point.

“ Poetry Point

From 'A Boy's Song'

*Where the pools are bright and deep,
Where the grey trout lies asleep*

*Up the river and o'er the lea,
That's the way for Billy and me.*

*Where the blackbird sings the latest,
Where the hawthorn blooms the sweetest,*

*Where the nestlings chirp and flee,
That's the way for Billy and me.*



From 'A Boy's Song'

To Over Phawhope Bothy

Ettrick Poetry Trail Extension: 24-25.5 miles

16 Worth a visit

Over Phawhope Bothy
(25.5 miles)

The head of the Ettrick Valley is wild and beautiful and here you can find Over Phawhope bothy (not visible from the road). The bothy is on the 'Southern Upland Way' and has been restored by the Mountain Bothies Association. The public road ends at a gate (24.5 miles from Selkirk). Park where the road finishes (known as Potburn) and walk about a mile along the forestry track.

Hogg link

This bothy, is understood to have been the home of Hogg's maternal grandfather 'Will o'Phaup' and his wife Bessie. Hogg later described this area as "one of the most lonely and dismal situations that ever was the dwelling of human creatures". Nevertheless, he and his young shepherd friends sometimes met here to write and read poetry. One night in 1794 there was a terrible storm and they were blamed for causing it by raising the devil in this wild landscape.

“ Poetry Point

From 'A Witch's Chant'

*Thou art weary, weary, weary,
Thou art weary and far away!
Hear me, gentle spirit, hear me;
Come before the dawn of day.*

*I hear a small voice from the hill,
The vapour is deadly, pale, and still
A murmuring sough is on the wood,
And the witching star is red as blood.*

*And in the cleft of heaven I scan
The giant form of a naked man;
His eye is like the burning brand,
And he holds a sword in his right hand.*



From 'A Witch's Chant'



Retrace the road back towards Selkirk. Turn left, just opposite Tushielaw Farm and join the **Trails Link Road**, a continuation of the B709. The road is signposted to **Yarrow Valley**. This will take you north to the Gordon Arms Inn where the **Yarrow Poetry Trail** begins.

James Hogg Timeline

1770-1835

1770: James Hogg is born in Ettrick.

1776: Hogg's father's bankruptcy; Hogg begins work as a farm servant.

1778: Death of Will o' Phaup, Hogg's grandfather.

1788: Hogg begins work as a shepherd.



1790: Hogg starts work as a shepherd at Blackhouse Farm. He reads, plays the violin, and meets with friends and relatives as part of a literary society.

1794: Hogg's first publication, *'The Mistakes of a Night'*, published in October in the Scots Magazine.

1800: Hogg has his poems printed. His patriotic song, *'Donald Macdonald'*, becomes famous around Britain during fears of invasion by Napoleon.

1802: Hogg collects Border ballads for William Laidlaw; meets Walter Scott.

1802: Start of journeys to the Highlands, looking to lease a sheep farm, which continued until 1804.

1807: *'The Mountain Bard'*, a collection of poems, published. *'The Shepherd's Guide'*, a practical guide to sheep farming, published, and proves one of Hogg's best sellers. Hogg's first child, the daughter of Catherine Henderson, is born out of wedlock but baptised Catherine Hogg.

1809: Hogg is in love with Margaret Beattie, but bankrupt and disgraced in Ettrick.

1810: Hogg in Edinburgh: launches the weekly magazine *'The Spy'*, which runs for a year. Elizabeth Hogg, Margaret Beattie's daughter, is born out of wedlock.

1813: Hogg's greatest literary success: *'The Queen's Wake'*, a poem imagining a succession of bards celebrating Mary Queen of Scots, is published.

1816: Hogg parodies Byron, Scott and Wordsworth and publishes the collection as *'The Poetic Mirror'*.

1817: Launch of Blackwood's *'Edinburgh Magazine'*, one of the most important places for Hogg's publications up until the end of his life. Hogg helped launch the magazine with the scandalous Chaldee Manuscript which used Biblical language to mock Edinburgh literary society.

1818: Hogg publishes the novel *'The Brownie of Bodsbeck'*.

1819: Hogg proposes to Margaret Phillips in Edinburgh; they marry the following year.

1822: Hogg publishes the novel *'The Three Perils of Man'*; George IV visits Edinburgh and Hogg writes *'The Royal Jubilee'* in celebration.

1824: *'The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner'* is published anonymously to little acclaim. It goes on to be Hogg's most influential work.

1826: Hogg is in debt for his rent at Mountbenger farm; a period of crisis for Hogg, as well as the nation, following a financial crash.

1829: *'The Shepherd's Calendar'* is published as a book, collecting together essays and stories about the Borders published in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.

1830: The Hogg family move from Mountbenger to Altrieve (Eldinhope).

1831: Hogg visits London on a promotional tour and is celebrated around the city as a literary star.



1832: Death of Walter Scott

1833: Hogg falls through the ice while playing curling in Edinburgh and is seriously ill.

1834: Hogg's account of Walter Scott, *'Familiar Anecdotes of Sir Walter Scott'* is published in America, causing a serious rift with Scott's family.

1835: Hogg dies 21 November, aged 65.



Trails Link Road

Tushielaw, Ettrick Trail
to Gordon Arms Inn
Yarrow Trail

View
map
here >

Poetry Trails Link Road Ettrick to Yarrow

6 miles from Tushielaw Farm to Gordon Arms

17  **I Spy**
Berrybush
(2.5 miles)

Berrybush, like many parts of the Borders, is a heavily wooded area used by the forestry industry and so looks very different to how it would have done in Hogg's time.

Hogg Link
It is one of the areas where the grave of Robert, the suicide, is said to be uncovered in Hogg's *Justified Sinner*. Robert, the Sinner in the title of the book, is found hanged in a hayrick and is carried three miles to be buried.

Driver Instructions
After Berrybush, the Link Road bears sharply to the right, descending down towards the Yarrow Valley. After about 3 miles, look out for a cottage beside the road on the right hand side, with an old farmhouse tucked into the trees down a short track on the left hand side.

18  **I Spy**
Eldinhope
(5 miles)

The house down the track on the left is now called Eldinhope, though it was known as 'Altrieve' in Hogg's day. The house, which was rather grand in its time, is now a private residence although unoccupied at the time of publication.

Driver Instructions
Continue 1 mile to the Gordon Arms.

Hogg link
Altrieve became Hogg's final home where he lived with his wife and children thanks to the generosity of the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch who allowed them to live there for the rest of Hogg's life, free of charge. The Duchess was fond of Hogg and before she died, told her husband to "look after the shepherd". Hogg offered a poetic tribute to Anne, the daughter of his benefactors. It is affectionate but is not servile and he reminds his aristocratic patrons of the sufferings of the common people who fought and died for political and religious liberty.

Poetry Point
From 'Dedication to the Right Honourable Lady Anne Scott, of Buccleuch'

*And hadst thou lived where I was bred,
Amid the scenes where martyrs bled,
Their sufferings all to thee endeared
By those most honoured and revered;
And, where the wild dark streamlet waves,
Hadst wept above their lonely graves,
Thou wouldst have felt, I know it true,
As I have done, and aye must do.
And for the same exalted cause,
For mankind's rights, and nature's laws,
The cause of liberty divine,
Thy fathers bled as well as mine.*

Turn opposite the entrance to Tushielaw Farm **10** onto the B709, signposted *Innerleithen B709* and *Moffat A708* and this Trails Link Road takes you to the crossroads with the A708, where the Gordon Arms Inn is situated. **(All mileage quoted on page 19 is from the start of the Poetry Trail Link Road which is opposite Tushielaw Farm)**

Yarrow Poetry Trail

The Gordon Arms Inn
to St Mary's Loch

View
map
here >

The Gordon Arms Inn to St Mary's Loch and Loch of the Lowes



The Gordon Arms

Worth a Visit

The Gordon Arms  is an old historic coaching inn and is currently a restaurant with rooms. [\(Click here for opening hours\)](#)

Hogg Link



This hotel and restaurant has a strong historical relationship with Hogg - he is said to have founded it in 1821, perhaps as a way of diverting the many visitors away from his house nearby at Altrieve (Eldinhope). Hogg had entertained a constant stream of visitors who tended to take full advantage of his hospitality.

He regularly came to drink here at the Gordon Arms with his friend Walter Scott and they met and parted here in 1830 for the last time. They walked together from the inn, Scott supporting himself on Hogg's

shoulder, saying he had never leaned on one "firmer or surer". There is a plaque on the front of the building commemorating this moment.

In the bar area there is an original letter written by Hogg, framed and mounted on the wall. In it, Hogg recommends that the landlord of the inn should have his licence renewed.

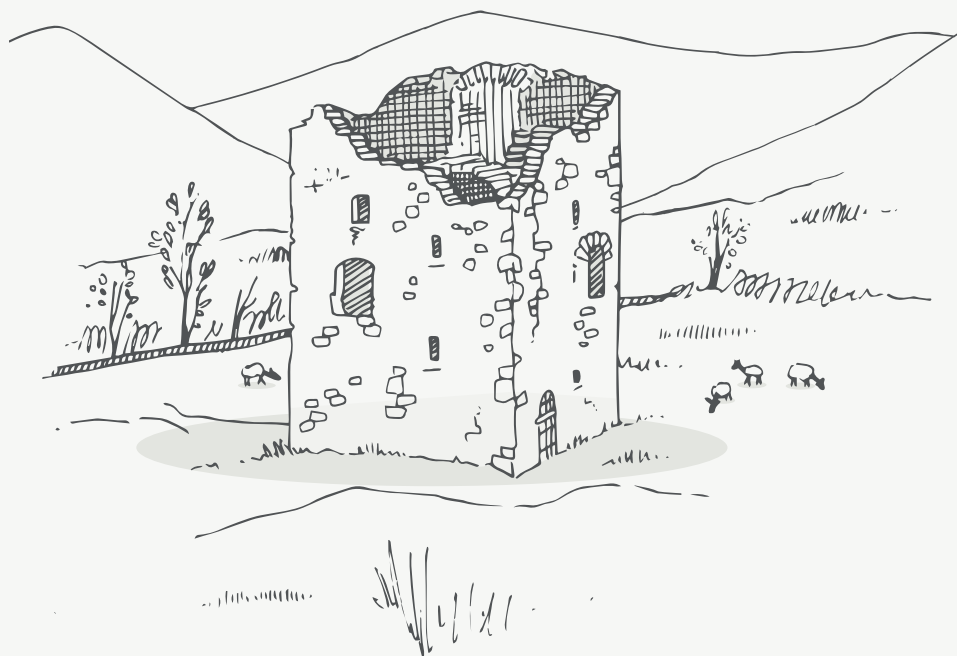
Near the hotel was a small school that Hogg established in 1828, so that his children would get the education that he missed out on. At times his children would have to cross the Yarrow Water on stilts to get to school from home! The school continued in use for more than 130 years, though nothing remains of it today.

 **The Yarrow Poetry Trail begins at the Gordon Arms Inn , where the Trail Link Road finishes, and takes the A708 towards Moffat.** If you are joining the Yarrow Poetry Trail from Selkirk, take the A707 out of the market place (signposted Peebles (A72) and Moffat (A708)). Follow this road (A707) down the hill for just over 0.5 mile and it crosses the Ettrick Water. The second turning on the left after this bridge is signposted St Marys Loch and Moffat A708. Turn left onto the A708 here and drive for 13 miles till you arrive at the Gordon Arms Inn. *(All mileage for the Yarrow Poetry Trail is from the Gordon Arms)*

To Dryhope Tower

Yarrow Poetry Trail: 1-3 miles

View
map
here >



Dryhope Tower

20 **I Spy**
Blackhouse Farm
(1 mile)

Almost exactly 1 mile from the Gordon Arms is a track heading off on the right to Blackhouse Farm and the ruined Blackhouse Tower. The track is signposted *Peebles via Birkscairn Hill and Old Drove Road*. Blackhouse can be reached after a very pleasant 2 mile walk along this clear track.

Hogg link
Hogg worked at Blackhouse Farm as a shepherd for ten years in his twenties and it was here that he really started to write seriously.

21 **Worth a visit**
Dryhope Tower
(2.5 miles)

Dryhope Tower has been restored and offers lovely views of the surrounding landscape, including St Mary's Loch, from the top (which is accessed by an internal spiral staircase). You can park in a small layby on the right hand side of the A708, close to where the path is signposted (part of the Southern Upland Way). The path to the tower is easy to follow.

Hogg link
Dryhope Tower will give you a good sense of what the ruined Blackhouse Tower looked like in Hogg's day – and it's a nice short walk!

To the Kirk of St Mary's of the Lowes

Yarrow Poetry Trail: 4 miles

22 **Worth a visit**
The Kirk of St Mary's of the Lowes
(3.5 miles)

This ancient burial place is a short but steep walk uphill and appears in several of the Border ballads, usually in sorrowful circumstances. The kirk itself is long gone, but the graveyard lives on and outdoor Blanket Preaching Services are still held here annually in July. In 2018, the service was led by a woman for the first time and around 100 people climbed up the hill to experience it.

It is a very beautiful and atmospheric spot with stunning views that are well worth the climb. It is also said to be the site of the very "Kirk in the Forest" where William Wallace was made Guardian of Scotland. (A similar claim to that made by the town of Selkirk). The path itself is marked by a blue sign and there are two parking laybys beside the A708, also on the right hand side.

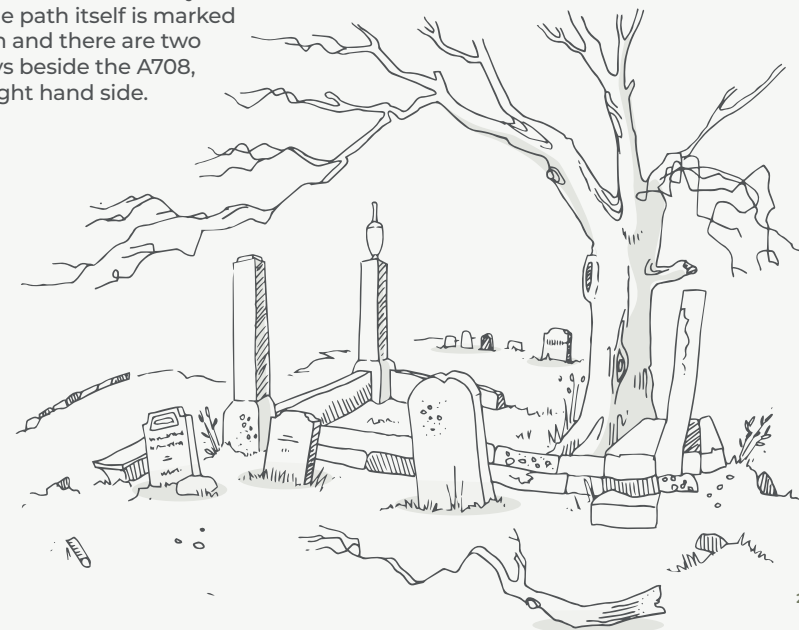
Hogg Link
Hogg sensed the presence of the spirits at St Mary's and standing amongst the ruins and looking over the loch you can hear the mournful sounds of the birds - or the dead - as he describes.

Poetry Point
From 'St Mary of the Lowes'

*O Lone St Mary of the waves,
In ruin lies thine ancient aisle;
While o'er thy green and lowly graves,*

*The moorcocks bay, and plovers wail;
But mountain spirits on the gale*

*Oft o'er thee sound the requiem dread,
And warrior shades, and spectres pale,
Still linger by the quiet dead.*

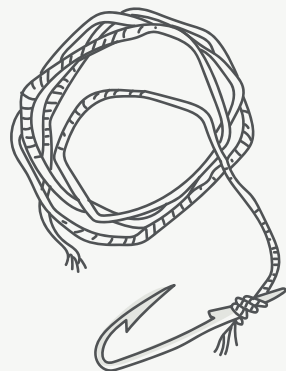
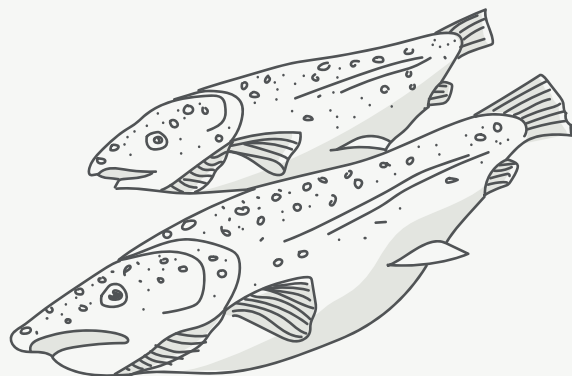


The Kirk of St Mary's of the Lowes

To St Mary's Loch and the Loch of the Lowes

View
map
here >

Yarrow Poetry Trail: 6 miles



St Mary's Loch & Loch of the Lowes

23 Q Hogg Highlight

St Mary's Loch, Loch of the Lowes and The James Hogg Statue (6 miles)

There are two lochs. The larger one is St Mary's Loch, the smaller, more westerly one is the Loch of the Lowes.

Situated between the two lochs is the Tibbie Shiel's Inn. The Inn was a favourite haunt of James Hogg and was run by his great friend Tibbie Shiel who is buried near Hogg in the graveyard at Ettrick Kirk. The Inn was a respectable business - Tibbie did not sell whisky or tolerate swearing. She had 13 beds but could accommodate up to 35 people. However, she would take in gentlemen only as she apparently thought that women were too fussy!

Walter Scott frequented the inn which was also visited by William Wordsworth, Robert Louis Stevenson, Thomas Carlyle and future Prime Minister, William Gladstone. Tibbie knew James Hogg for much of her life and reportedly said of him "he wrote a deal of trash but was a sensible man".

A self-catering caravan and camping are available beside the former Inn, which is open as a part-time Cafe/Bistro. The Glen Café offers refreshments and light meals from Easter and through the summer months.

“ Poetry Point

From 'The Queen's Wake'

*Oft had he viewed as morning rose
The bosom of the lonely Lowes;
Oft thrilled his heart at close of even
To see the dappled vales of heaven
With many a mountain, moor and tree
Asleep upon St Mary.*

Hogg loved to fish here and in 'Note to Mess John' he tells us of a local farmer who bred a type of Kelpie, a shape-shifting water spirit.

*"On some outrage or disrespect on the
farmer's part towards them, the old dam
Kelpie came out of the lake one pleasant
March evening, and gave such a roar
that all the surrounding hills shook again,
upon which the progeny, nineteen in
number, followed her all quietly into the
Loch, and were never more seen."*

To the James Hogg Statue

End of the Yarrow Poetry Trail: 6 miles

23 人 Worth a visit

The gorgeous white statue of Hogg was unveiled in 1860 in front of a crowd of 2,000 people who had gathered for the event. The statue looks down on the loch, his right hand grasping a shepherd's crook and his left holding a scroll inscribed with the last line of 'The Queen's Wake':

*'He taught the wandering winds
to sing'.*

Hogg's favourite sheepdog Hector sits at his feet, and they look out forever over some of his beloved hills, fishing and drinking spots. Hogg loved dogs, and as a shepherd knew how important they were. In an essay in 'The Shepherd's Calendar' he explained that:

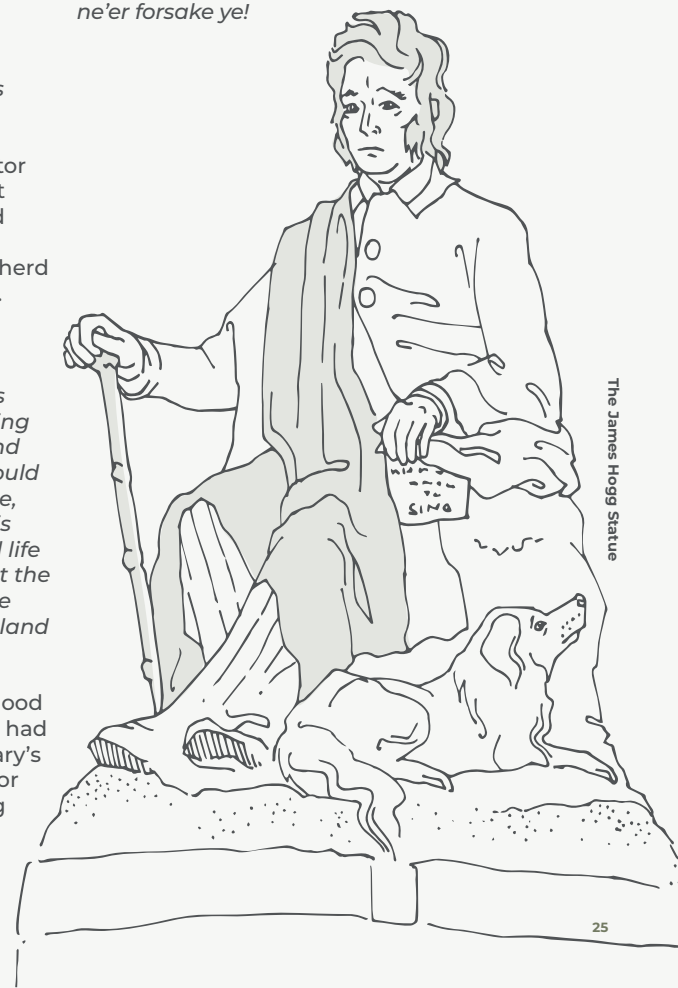
*"A single shepherd and his dogs
will accomplish more in gathering
a stock of sheep from a Highland
farm, than twenty shepherds could
do without dogs. So that you see,
and it is a fact, that, without this
docile little animal, the pastoral life
would be a mere blank. Without the
shepherd's dog, the whole of the
open mountainous land in Scotland
would not be worth sixpence."*

Once, when the Yarrow was in flood and could not be crossed, Hogg had to come home by boat via St Mary's Loch. He got home to find Hector had made the trip by swimming across. He was waiting at home 'like a drookit hen'.

“ Poetry Point

From 'The Author's Address to his Auld Dog Hector'

*Whatever wayward course ye steer;
Whatever sad mischance o'ertake ye;
... here is ane will hald ye dear!
... here's a friend will
ne'er forsake ye!*



The James Hogg Statue

The Grey Mare's Tail

Beyond the Trails: 11.5 miles

Beyond the Trails

The Grey Mare's Tail,
Moffat, Innerleithen &
St Ronan's Wells

24 Worth a visit

The Grey Mare's Tail
(11.5 miles)

The Grey Mare's Tail is a spectacular waterfall, just visible from the road. You can also continue with a longer, steep climb up to Loch Skene, a lonely and beautiful hill loch. Look out for the wild mountain goats clinging to the sides of the hills as you go up!

Hogg Link

It was believed that Loch Skene was haunted by spirits and Hogg conjures up the sense of lonely supernatural beings, waiting and watching, in his work.

Poetry Point

From 'Mess John'

*Mong wild Polmood's mountains green,
Full many a wight their vigils keep;
Where roars the torrent from Loch Skene,
A troop is lodged in trenches deep.*

Worth a visit

Hogg's Well
(11.5 miles)

Hogg's Well is a tiny lochan that sits above Loch Skene. After just reaching the loch, clamber up to the right, about 30 metres, to find it. The small body of water, which is formed by a spring, is named after the Ettrick Shepherd. It is said that he lost a pound note here when taking his lunch on one occasion and that he found it again when visiting the same spot a year later.

25 I Spy

Bodesbeck
(15.5 miles)

Hogg Link

Bodesbeck farm is where Hogg places the benevolent spirit in 'The Brownie of Bodesbeck'. This spirit came to the aid of the persecuted Borders community in a time of religious and political turmoil. It protected the 'Covenanters', the Presbyterians persecuted during the 'Killing Times' of the 1680s. But even to those it was protecting, the Brownie could be frightening too. One character steps out of her farmhouse and meets this sight:

"Her mind endeavoured to grasp an imaginary form, but the dimensions were too ample for its reasoning powers; they were soon dilated, burst, and were blown about, as it were, in a world of vision and terror."

Literally "mind-blowing" for the poor woman!

Until the 1950's there was a road between the head of the Ettrick Valley and Bodesbeck so it is likely that Hogg walked that route as it was the quickest way to get from the Ettrick Valley to Moffat.



All 'Beyond the Trails' mileage is from the Gordon Arms Inn.

Moffat

Beyond the Trails: 21 miles

[View map here >](#)

26 Worth a visit

Moffat
(21 miles)

Hogg was known to visit Moffat although there are no specific links to the poet. During his lifetime, Moffat was a famous spa town thronged with people visiting to bathe in or drink the local water. Its sulphurous and saline properties were said to have healing powers and Robert Burns visited often to 'take the waters' as well as frequent local bars. A large Bath House was specially built in the town centre in 1827 and is now the town hall.

Moffat was an important wool trading town and this is commemorated with the statue of a ram in the town's marketplace. It was originally a drinking fountain and has always

had 'nae lugs'. The tapping sounds, often heard coming from the statue, are said to be made by the ghost of William Colvin, the businessman who donated it.

The Moffat Museum tells the fascinating story of the town which also claims several records. The Star Hotel is said to be the narrowest in the world, Syme Street is reported to be the narrowest street in Scotland and Chapel Street the shortest.

Moffat is Europe's first 'Dark Sky Town' having special street lighting to minimise light pollution. You can stand in Moffat's town centre and see the arc of the galaxy overhead along with thousands of stars.

The town is also famous for 'Moffat Toffee' - a boiled sweet. It has a park and boating lake, cafes, restaurants, vintage shops and a regular farmers' market.



Moffat was a key wool trading town

On the Way to Innerleithen

Beyond the Trails: 0-9 miles

27 I Spy

Mountbenger Farm
(0.5 miles)

These days, Mountbenger is a working farm, privately owned.

Hogg link

Hogg leased Mountbenger for 9 years from 1821, a farming enterprise that failed disastrously. However, he did write *'Three Perils of Man'*, *'Three Perils of Woman'*, *'Justified Sinner'* and many other works here. Also here, from 1828 until his death seven years later, Hogg founded and held the Border (Yarrow) Games on St Patrick's Day (17 March). These complemented his successful St Ronan's Games held later in the year in Innerleithen. The Yarrow Games must have been a success - a report in 1833 mentions them attracting 96 wrestlers!

Hogg writes about the Mountbenger area, its beauty and its role as the final resting place of the many killed in battles over the years.

Poetry Point

From *'By a Bush'*

By a bush on yonder brae,
Where the airy Benger rises,
Sandy tun'd his artless lay;
Thus he sung the lee-lang day:
Thou shalt ever be my theme, Yarrow,
Winding down the hollow,
With thy bonny sister stream
Sweeping through the broom so yellow.
On these banks thy waters lave,
Oft the warrior found a grave.



From *'By a Bush'*

28 Worth a visit

Traquair House
(7.5 miles)

The house at Traquair is believed to be the oldest continually inhabited house in Scotland. It dates back to 1107 and the Stuart family have lived here since 1491. Originally a royal hunting lodge, Traquair played host to Mary Queen of Scots and has welcomed around 27 Kings and Queens in its time.

[\(Click here for details of events and opening hours\)](#)

Hogg link

Hogg's pastoral drama, *'The Bush aboon Traquair'*, is set locally.

Innerleithen and St Ronan's Wells

Beyond the Trails: 9 miles

[View map here >](#)

A newspaper report in 1829 refers to the *"far-famed village of St Ronan's, in former days vulgarly called Innerleithen..."*. Nowadays, signs to this attractive, small town display both names. Innerleithen is set in prime mountain-biking country and has some interesting antique or second-hand shops and cafés.

29 Worth a visit

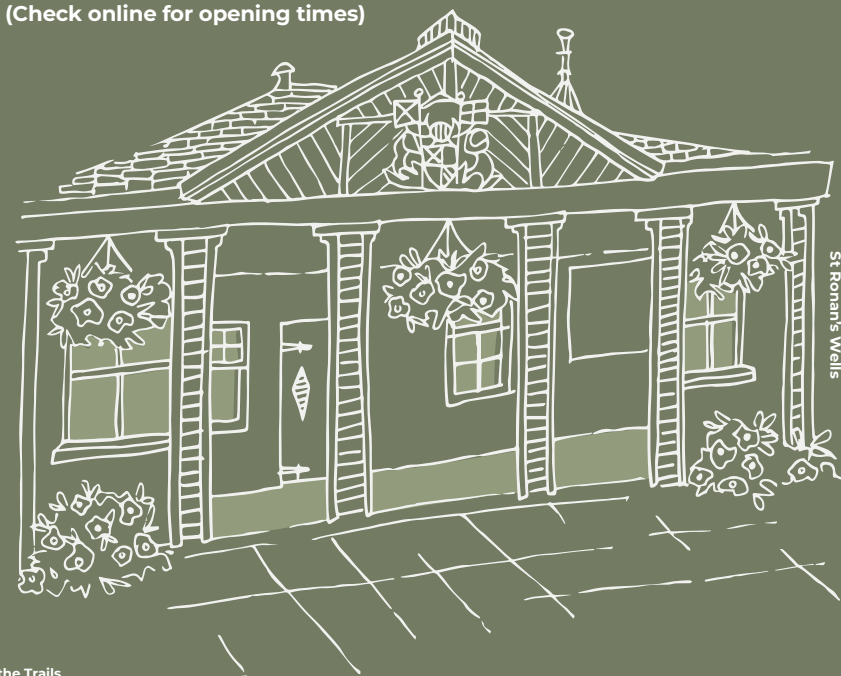
St Ronan's Wells Visitor Centre
(9 miles)

Housed in an historic spa pavillion on the edge of the village overlooking the Leithen Valley, the exhibition here tells the story of St Ronan's Wells, describing their connections to James Hogg and Walter Scott. [\(Check online for opening times\)](#)

Hogg link

James Hogg established the St Ronan's Games in Innerleithen because he wanted to encourage 'cheerfulness' and to revive 'the old Border spirit'. These games are still going strong today - recognised as the oldest organised sport event in Scotland.

The St Ronan's Border Games, or 'Games Week' as they are also known, is in July each year and takes place along with the traditional 'Cleikum Ceremonies'. These ceremonies and parades are a celebration of an itinerant monk who chased the devil out of town - an effigy of the "deil" is ceremoniously burnt every year.



St Ronan's Wells

Acknowledgements

Thank you to all those who have made these poetry trails possible. Bruce Gilkison and his cousins suggested the original idea and developed the initial material for the trail.

Sue Briggs shaped this into the two trails and link trail presented in this booklet with input from Hogg scholars **Adrian Hunter** and **Dave Stewart**. **Scott Muirhead** created the design with illustrations by **Ailsa Cullens**, editing by **Barbara Harrison** and photography by **Ian Linton**.

“ Poetry Point

As a shepherd, Hogg would have often heard the joyous song of the skylark in the valleys. Their sweet, high-pitched sound is still common today, especially in the skies above open moorlands.

From 'The Skylark'

*Bird of the wilderness,
Blithesome and cumberless,
Sweet be thy matin o'er moorland and lea!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place -
O to abide in the desert with thee!*

*Wild is thy lay and loud,
Far in the downy cloud,
Love gives it energy, love gave it birth.
Where, on thy dewy wing,
Where art thou journeying?*

*Thy lay is in heaven, thy love is on earth.
O'er fell and fountain sheen,
O'er moor and mountain green,
O'er the red streamer that heralds the day,
Over the cloudlet dim,
Over the rainbow's rim,
Musical cherub, soar, singing, away!*

*Then, when the gloaming comes,
Low in the heather blooms
Sweet will thy welcome and bed of love be!
Emblem of happiness,
Blest is thy dwelling-place -
O to abide in the desert with thee!*



Guide to Fold Out Map

View
map
here >

The fold out map has been designed to help you follow the poetry trail routes and find the places of interest along the way.

The Ettrick Trail follows a 19 mile route from Selkirk, and can be extended to 25.5 miles. This makes a 38 or 51 mile return trip from Selkirk, depending on whether you choose to extend.

The Yarrow Trail starts from the Gordon Arms Inn (13 miles from Selkirk) and is a leisurely 6 miles long. This makes a 38 mile return trip if you start from Selkirk.

If you choose to do both trails in one day and include the Trails Link Road, the total route from, and returning to, Selkirk is 54 miles. If you extend the Ettrick Trail, your total mileage would be 67 miles.

It is possible to do this trail in a day, but you may want to take your time and do it over 2 days - especially if you want to stop or add any of the 'beyond the trail' options.

There are fewer stopping points on the Yarrow Trail, but several nice walks can be added (to Dryhope Tower, Blackhouse Farm or St Mary's Kirkyard) and St Mary's Loch is a lovely place to rest, relax and while away some time.

If you choose to explore **Beyond the Trails**, Grey Mare's Tail is 11.5 miles from the Gordon Arms, Moffat is 22 miles and Innerleithen is 9 miles. They are all worth a visit.

The map is marked with numbers along the trail routes which correspond to the numbered places of interest in the text. The map key lists the names of these places and gives the page number in the text where you can find more information.

Places to eat, cafes and public toilets are also marked on the map.

We hope you enjoy the trails!



When you are finished please keep your map here for your next visit.

THE JAMES HOGG POETRY TRAILS GUIDE



Known as 'The Ettrick Shepherd', James Hogg, was born into humble beginnings and became a famous Scottish poet, novelist and writer. Discover more about James Hogg by following these poetry trails which guide you through the places and landscapes that influenced him.

The Ettrick Trail

Begins in Selkirk and takes you to the place of Hogg's birth and burial. There's an optional extension to the wild and beautiful upper Ettrick Valley from where his family hailed.

The Yarrow Trail

Begins at the Gordon Arms Inn and ends at the Hogg Statue overlooking St Mary's Loch, said to be one of the most beautiful lochs in Scotland.

Follow the Trails...

We suggest that you enjoy each trail at a leisurely pace, but it is possible to do both trails, including the Trail Link Road, in one day. The length of each Trail is shown below:

Ettrick Trail

- Selkirk to Ettrick Kirk
- 19 Miles

Ettrick Trail Extension

- Ettrick Kirk to Over Phawhope
- 6.5 Miles

Trails Link Road

- Tushielaw Farm to The Gordon Arms Inn
- 6 Miles

Yarrow Trail

- The Gordon Arms Inn to St Mary's Loch and Loch of the Lowes
- 6 Miles

Beyond the Trails

- Grey Mares Tail
- Moffat
- Innerleithen





JAMES HOGG

POETRY TRAILS

Trails Map

Ettrick & Yarrow valleys

Follow the Trails...

We suggest that you enjoy each trail at a leisurely pace, but it is possible to do both trails, including the Trail Link Road, in one day. The length of each Trail is shown below:

View Ettrick Trail

- Selkirk to Ettrick Kirk
- 19 Miles

View Ettrick Trail Extension

- Ettrick Kirk to Over Phawhope
- 6.5 Miles

View Trails Link Road

- Tushielaw Farm to the Gordon Arms Inn
- 6 Miles

View Yarrow Trail

- The Gordon Arms Inn to St Mary's Loch and Loch of the Lowes
- 6 Miles

View Beyond the Trails

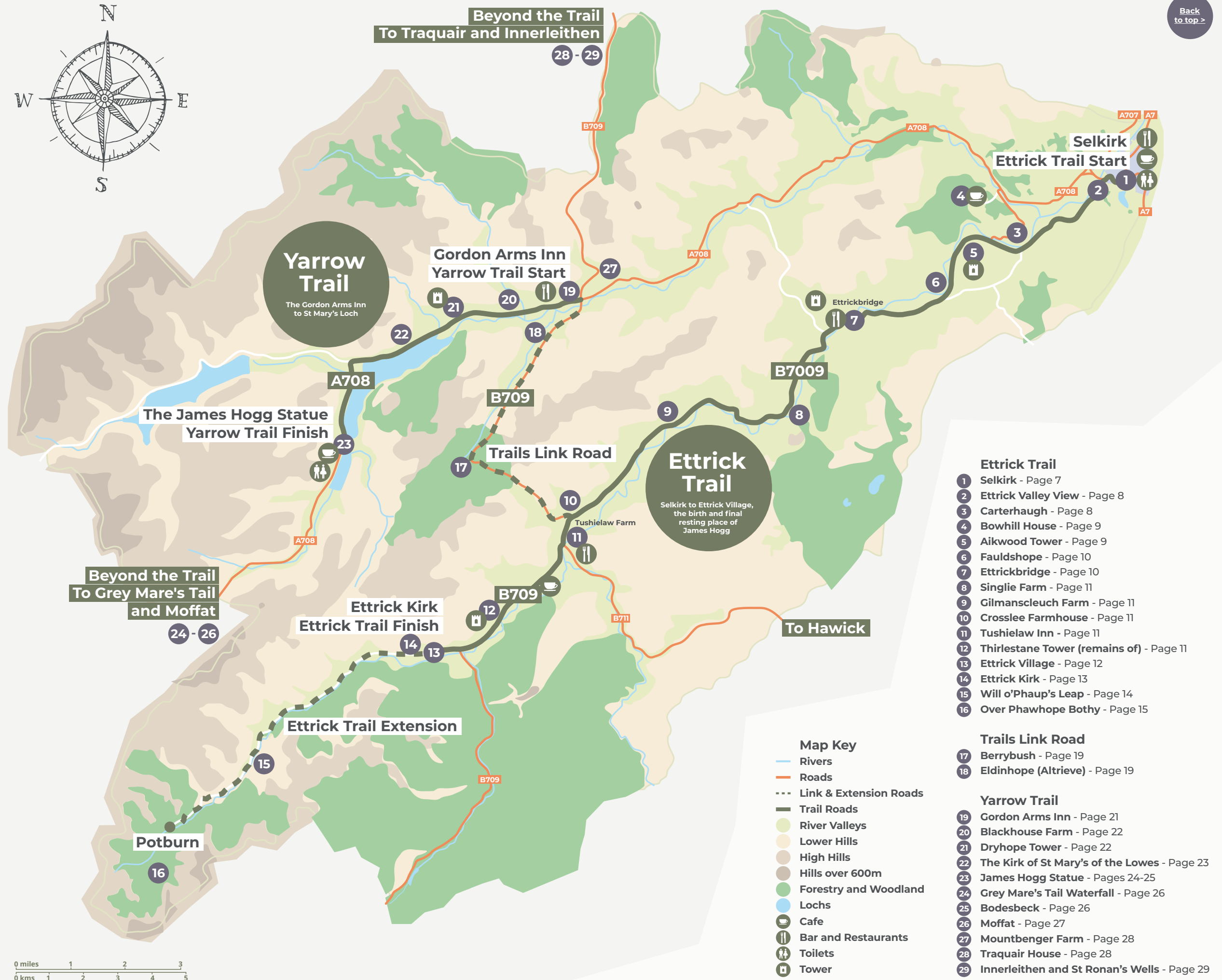
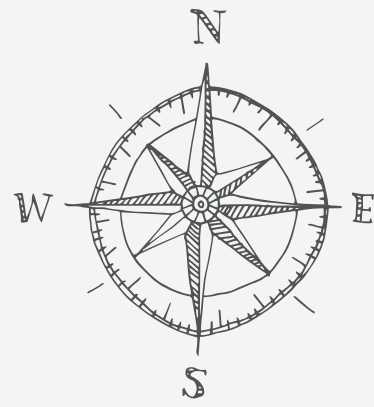
- Grey Mare's Tail
- Moffat
- Innerleithen

Trails total - 54 Miles

(Selkirk to Ettrick Kirk, returning to Tushielaw Farm then over to the Gordon Arms Inn and St Mary's Loch, returning to Selkirk)

- 🗨️ Poetry Points
- 🚶 Worth a Visit
- 👁️ I Spy
- 🔗 Hogg Link
- 🔍 Hogg Highlight
- 🚗 Driver Instructions

Share your journey with us.
#jameshoggtail



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