Cockburn of Henderland was a notorious reiver and was targeted by James V when he made one of his Justice Ayres into the Borders. Legend has it that Cockburn was hanged from the gates of the tower but judicial records show that he was actually taken to Edinburgh and beheaded.

Ordinance Gazetteer of Scotland, ed. by Francis H. Groome, 6 vols (Edinburgh, 1885), II, 266 states that Henderland is 'a farm in the Megget section of Lyne and Megget parish, 5 Peeblesshire, on the left bank of Megget Water, 5 furlongs W of St Mary’s Loch, and 18 miles WSW of Selkirk. A spot here, called Chapel Knowe, which some years ago was enclosed and planted, contains a grave-slab, sculptured with a sword and other emblems, and bearing inscription ‘Here lyts Perys of Cockburn and his wyfe Mariory.’ This was the famous Border free-booter, Piers Cockburn of Henderland, whose ruined stronghold stands hard by, and whose execution at Edinburgh by James V. in 1529 forms the theme of that exquisite ballad The Border Widow’s Lament'.

NLS, EMS, s. 48A.

NLS, ABS, 3. 38. 37. This is paginated viii, [1], 10–115, [1].

NLS, MS 851, fols 271–72, printed in The Letters of Sir Walter Scott, ed. by H. J. C. Grierson, 12 vols (London, 1932–37), I, 171–73. J. C. Corson in his Notes to Index to Sir Herbert Grierson’s Edition of The Letters of Sir Walter Scott (Oxford, 1979), p. 13 believes that this letter should be dated 6 October 1802 and is cited by Jane Millgate in her Millgate Union Catalogue of Walter Scott Correspondence. It is suggested from the sequence of letters referred to above that the correct date is 15 September 1802.

NLS, MS S874, fols 184–85.

Hogg in the 1890s

Graham Tulloch

It is a commonplace well known to readers of this journal that Hogg’s reputation has undergone some dramatic changes over time. In his own day Hogg had some major critical failures but he also had some spectacular successes, including most notably The Queen’s Wake. Moreover his fame was further boosted through his alter ego, the ‘Etrick Shepherd’ of the ‘Noctes Ambrosienses’, for all that it was a comic, exaggerated and in many ways unfavourable picture of him. Nevertheless over time his audience and reputation declined, to the point where Edith Batho in 1927 could begin her book on Hogg with this claim:

To most of us the Etrick Shepherd is scarcely more than a name: we have all read how “Bonny Kilmeny gaed up the glen,” and wondered at that delicate piece of magic, and we think vaguely of the author as a protégé of Scott and the hero of certain laughable anecdotes told by Lockhart and others. It is not always realised that besides Kilmeny Hogg produced a formidably large quantity of prose and poetry [...].

Yet, even though she writes a whole book on Hogg and asserts that, of his writing, ‘little is worthless, much of good second-class quality, and some amongst the best of its kind’ and furthermore that ‘he himself is a figure of unusual interest’, Batho can still declare, ‘Delightful as Hogg is at his best, both in life and in literature, he hardly deserves to have his life fully written or his works fully edited’. Significantly, since the rehabilitation of Hogg started with a revival of interest in the Justified Sinner, she devotes eight pages to it (mostly in the form of lengthy quotations), leading perhaps to Roderick Watson’s comment in The Literature of Scotland that the novel was not ‘appreciated by literary critics until at least the 1920s’.

This might be seen as a standard view of when the rehabilitation of Hogg began. In this scenario key dates are 1924 when the first reprint of The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner with its original title and (more or less) its original text appeared and 1947 when the Cresset Press published an edition with an enthusiastic introduction by André Gide. In the latter part of the twentieth century the rising reputation of the Justified Sinner began, of course, to extend to his other novels and short stories, his non-fictional prose and his poetry, including some of the long poems which were slighted by the critics in his own time. However it is worth
remembering that the reviving fortunes of his now most famous novel did not immediately affect the reception of his other works. John Carey, writing in 1969, in the introduction to his important Oxford English Novels edition, the first modern edition to follow the text of the first edition with real accuracy, was still happy to claim that ‘Hogg’s fiction is mostly expendable’.4

From what I have presented so far, we might envisage Hogg’s reputation as in slow but steady decline until the 1920s. However, by concentrating on the 1890s, I would like to argue here that the situation was more complex than simply one of uninterrupted decline.5 In doing this I will examine both some evidence about the readership of Hogg in the last decade of the nineteenth century and some of the critical material on his work that appeared about this time. However it would be misleading to consider Hogg’s readership and critical reputation without also considering what texts were available to readers. The critical reception of any writer at any one time must always be affected by the extent and accuracy of the available texts. Unlike Scott whose novels and major poems within his lifetime went through a number of individual editions as well as appearing in various collected editions, Hogg saw relatively few of his works appear in individual new editions while he was alive. The Queen’s Wake, with six separate editions in his lifetime and a number after his death, is an exception, but other major texts like The Three Perils of Man and The Three Perils of Woman were not reprinted. While the first editions of these works would have continued to have some slight circulation, most nineteenth-century readers had to rely on collected editions of the poetry and prose for access to Hogg’s works. Again in contrast to Scott, whose poetry and prose appeared throughout the nineteenth century in numerous different editions which both contained almost all of his work and were based on texts which he had himself revised and annotated, Hogg’s work appeared during the same century in only two collected editions, the companion sets of Tales and Sketches by the Ettrick Shepherd and Poetical Works of the Ettrick Shepherd and its offshoot The Works of the Ettrick Shepherd edited by Thomas Thomson, a two volume set originally published in parts.4 Admittedly these collections were reissued as needed for much of the century but this is nothing like the constant repackaging of Scott in new editions which continued well into the twentieth century. Moreover the Hogg collections were, especially as regards the novels, neither complete nor textually accurate. For instance all Hogg scholars today and many ordinary readers of Hogg will be aware that the Blackie Tales and Sketches offer a truncated, expurgated, and stylistically ‘improved’ version of the Justified Sinner under the title of The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a

Fanatic. Anyone even slightly interested in the textual history of Hogg’s works will be conscious that the Blackie text robbed the novel of many fine passages and subtle ironies, an act bleakly described by John Carey as ‘vandalism’ producing a ‘worthless’ text.6 This is only one example, although the best known, of the injuries done to the text so that the general preface to the Stirling/South Carolina Edition has good reason to describe the nineteenth-century collected editions of Hogg as ‘bland and lifeless’ in comparison with the original editions.9

Nevertheless, I believe it is possible for modern critics, and particularly for those of us who are editors of Hogg, to be overly conscious of the shortcomings of these collected editions in one respect at least, namely in judging what sort of experience of Hogg people could have before the modern editions of his works began to appear. I would like to suggest that even these sanitised editions offered nineteenth-century readers a substantial contact with Hogg which enabled those readers to form some idea of his great strengths. I have argued elsewhere in relation to The Three Perils of Man that Hogg was so radical a writer and pushed the boundaries of accepted literary taste so far that he could actually afford to have quite serious changes made to his text without losing all of its effect.10 For this reason it is worthwhile going back to these Blackie editions to consider exactly what experience of Hogg’s works they offered to his late-nineteenth-century readers. Thus we are presented with three questions which I propose to address. Firstly, what Hogg prose and verse texts were available to late nineteenth-century readers (especially in the widely available collected editions)? Secondly, who, if anybody, was reading them? And thirdly, given what they could read, what sort of opinion did those readers form of him?

Beginning then with my first question, what did the collected editions offer? In the Memorial Volume of 1898 Lord Ettrick and Napier summarised the position, as it appeared to him, when he noted that ‘We possess the sum total of his selected intellectual labour in four volumes of original poetry, in six volumes of prose fiction, in a volume on sheep, in a volume of sermons, and in a compilation of Jacobite song’.11 Leaving aside The Shepherd’s Guide, The Jacobite Relics, and the sermons, the six volumes of prose fiction are Blackie’s Tales and Sketches first published in 1836–37 and reissued at regular intervals, while the four volumes of poetry could either be, as is most likely, an inaccurate reference to the five volume Blackie’s Poetical Works first published in 1838–40 and also reissued later or a reference to the earlier four volume Constable collection of 1822.12 It was the Blackie collected editions which provided access to Hogg’s work for most later nineteenth-century readers, whether in their original format or in the two
volume format published in 1865 and described by George Saintsbury as ‘two great double-columned royal octavos, heavy to the hand and not too grateful to the eye’. One manifestation of the dominance of the Blackie volumes as the means of access to Hogg’s work is the fact that they are the primary source for references in the original Oxford English Dictionary (published between January 1884 and October 1921).

When one considers the many nineteenth-century reprints of Scott’s collected novels with his final notes and revisions, usually appearing in sets of twenty-five volumes, the numerous editions of his poetry, and the regular reprinting of Lockhart’s Life with its extensive excerpts from Scott’s letters and journals, it is obvious that Hogg is comparatively much less well served. All the same the Tales and Sketches include a substantial amount of shorter fiction as well as texts of The Shepherd’s Calendar, The Brounie of Bodsbeck and, as already mentioned, the mutilated version of The Justified Sinner. Leaving aside for the moment the quality of the texts (whose defects have been exposed by various scholars including editors of volumes in the Stirling/South Carolina Edition of the Collected Works), there is clearly quite a considerable quantity of material here. Nevertheless there are some big omissions, two of the most obvious being the whole of The Three Perils of Woman and a good half of The Three Perils of Man. In accordance with Hogg’s own plans for the aborted Altivre Tales, the whole Roxburgh section of The Three Perils of Man has been siphoned off as a separate romance called The Siege of Roxburgh although his plan to publish other parts of the novel as separate stories did not reach fruition in Tales and Sketches. The loss of the whole of The Three Perils of Woman and the Aikwood section of The Three Perils of Man is a serious one and it had an effect on the way Hogg was viewed. Hogg’s careful counterpoising of the events at the two ‘perilous castles’ of Aikwood and Roxburgh has inevitably been destroyed by this omission but at the same time it is important to realise that, even when deprived of its pairing with the Aikwood episodes, The Siege of Roxburgh still offered its readers a forthright critique of chivalry which could be set against Scott’s much more circumcised presentation of the same subject in Ivanhoe and even Quentin Durward. Hogg’s determination to expose the absurdities of the chivalric idea has scarcely suffered at all from the exclusion of the Aikwood sections of the novel. This was an important and serious purpose of the novel and one which was of special significance in a century when Ivanhoe was very widely read. There would have been many readers in the 1890s who were in a position to compare Hogg’s overt mockery of chivalry with Scott’s more muted critique.

In many ways the same applies even to cases where the text has been mutilated in different ways. The already mentioned case of the Justified Sinner is notorious and this in itself ensures that very few people nowadays are likely to read the Blackie version, The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Fanatic. Nevertheless it is an experiment worth trying if only to be able to experience the novel as so many nineteenth-century and even early twentieth-century readers experienced it. When I tried the experiment I was surprised: even with its substantial changes and extremely unsympathetic trimming, the Justified Sinner still emerges as a powerful text when read in the Blackie version. Certainly it is less subtle than the original text and there are obvious and irritating omissions but it is also less anaemic than I had expected and still able to achieve many of the effects which we are accustomed to experiencing through the much better editions now available to us.

If we turn to the poetry, we find there is perhaps a more complete representation of Hogg’s work but there are still some problems with the text. For instance, as Douglas Mack has noted, Hogg himself had asked Constable in preparing his 1822 edition of The Poetical Works to use the fifth or sixth edition of The Queen’s Wake. The fifth was in fact used and became the standard for later nineteenth-century editions. This had the unfortunate effect of denying readers access to some of the special features of the early editions. It meant in particular that the original antique Scots of ‘Kilmeny’ was replaced by a form of modern Scots which possessed very few distinctively Scots features. As Mack points out, ‘The removal of Hogg’s “ancient style” tends to make “Kilmeny” prettier and more easily accessible, but it also tends to make the poem less hard-edged and unsettling.’ In similar fashion, although Queen Hynde is included in the collected poems, it is necessarily based on the printed text and follows its excision of passages in the manuscript that Hogg would probably have liked to retain. For all that, the Blackie editions made available a wide selection of Hogg’s poetry which could supplement whatever individual editions were around and the more limited selections such as that published in 1886 with an introduction by Mary Garden. Even as late as 1962 Louis Simpson, partly out of necessity it must be said, considered that the text of Thomson’s edition of the poetry was ‘satisfactory’ for his purposes in writing James Hogg: A Critical Study.

To fully address my second question—who was reading Hogg in the 1890s?—would be a task larger than the scope of this paper and would, in any case, be very difficult. Some partial evidence is supplied by the critical material I will be examining later, but for this paper I want to approach the question primarily through one very specific focus which happens to be available to me, South Australian readership. If we were to extrapolate from the standard view of Hogg’s reputation with which I began, we
would assume that readers at the extremities of the Empire would have lost interest in a writer whose reputation had been in steady decline for some decades. However, an examination of individual copies of Hogg’s works in South Australia can provide some actual information to balance this assumption. In the latter half of the nineteenth century and even into the latter half of the twentieth century, Institute libraries were the local public libraries in South Australia. On Christmas Eve 1890 a copy of the six-volume Blackie’s Tales and Sketches by the Etrick Shepherd was added to the library of the Port Adelaide Institute. At the time Port Adelaide was a lively port community with a substantial, mostly working-class population. What is more, Hogg’s works were being bought alongside first editions of important contemporary writers like Henry James and Robert Louis Stevenson. The fact that these volumes were added to the library’s holdings does not mean that they were read but it does indicate that someone still considered Hogg to be an important prose writer whose works should be in a well-stocked and up-to-date local library. Of course, this is not what we would expect if interest in Hogg was at the low ebb we might have imagined. However, in other respects it is not surprising. South Australia had a smaller percentage of people of Scottish descent than other states of Australia, most notably Victoria; nevertheless in 1891 eleven per cent of the population had been born in Scotland. There is also plenty of evidence that Scottish literature was popular in Australia in the 1890s. Australian libraries are well stocked with first editions of the works of the Scottish writers of the time, such as Stevenson, Crockett and ‘Ian Maclaren’. Less than a decade later, according to Tim Dolin’s recent study, Crockett was the sixth most popular writer borrowed from the Institute library in the small town of Collie in Western Australia with 180 borrowings between July 1908 and December 1909. Secondhand bookshops in Australia are also full of nineteenth-century editions of Scott’s novels and poems and of the collected works of Burns. What is more, the large amount of Scots dialect in Australian novels of the late nineteenth century bears witness to a readership who were at ease with reading Scots, which can only be because they had been reading a lot of Scottish texts.

However I can only report limited success in finding direct evidence of Australians reading Hogg himself in the 1890s. As yet, I have not found any references to the reading of Hogg and I have unearthed only a few other hints of interest in him. One of these hints lies in another South Australian copy of Tales and Sketches. The Barr Smith Library of the University of Adelaide contains a copy of an early issue of Tales and Sketches published by Blackie in Glasgow in 1837 which once belonged to Sir Archibald Strong (1876–1930), Jury Professor of English Language and Literature at the University of Adelaide from 1922 to 1930. Strong was an influential figure in literary studies in Australia but his Short History of English Literature, published in 1921, provides only a brief comment on Hogg—he finds merit in only a few of Hogg’s poems and does not mention the prose fiction at all: ‘James Hogg [...] lives by a few of the ballads—for instance, Donald McGillivray, and ‘Lock the door, Lariston’ [...] and by The Queen’s Wake (1813).’ It is very possible that Strong came to have a copy of an early issue of Tales and Sketches through his mother, Helen Edmiston, who was born in Glasgow in 1852 and who apparently belonged to an established Glasgow family. Another Australian Professor of English Literature who had rather more substantial family reasons for some interest in Hogg is Sir Walter Murdoch (1874–1970). Murdoch became an extremely popular and widely read essayist between the two world wars but began writing in the late 1890s. His mother, Helen Garden, was the sister of William Garden, the husband of Hogg’s daughter Mary. Walter Murdoch lived in Scotland until the age of ten and, since she lived nearby, he presumably met his aunt, well-known to readers of Hogg as Mrs Garden, the author of Memorials of James Hogg. Unfortunately, despite this family connection, I have found no reference to Hogg in Murdoch’s essays. His Collected Essays in their 1945 edition contain, according to the index, six references to Burns, twelve to Scott, twenty four to Stevenson and thirty six to Carlyle but none to Hogg. Finally Hogg’s most famous poem played its part in the naming of a Lesley Kilmeny Symon who was born in Adelaide in 1885. Her father Josiah Symon, a prominent Adelaide lawyer and politician, was born in Wick in Scotland in 1846 and emigrated to Australia in 1866. Even these few scattered references suggest that the reading of Hogg in Australia is a topic that deserves further research although it is not the primary subject of this article. Nevertheless, the Australian states in the late nineteenth century were still British colonies, their bookshops were stocked from British publishers, and their readers were still inclined to reflect British tastes in reading. Such limited evidence as I have so far found of the reading of Hogg in Australia in the later nineteenth century tends to suggest that Hogg was also being read in Britain, which was indeed the case as this paper will show.

Moving on to my final question of what opinion of Hogg readers were able to form by using the editions available to them, the 1890s provide us with two useful volumes by which to gauge the popular view of Hogg at the time. These are the Memorial Volume which I have already mentioned and Sir George Douglas’s life of Hogg in the ‘Great Scots’ series. What is particularly useful about them is that they offer some indication of the views of the wider population as well as those of literary critics. The
Memorial Volume records the speeches made on the occasion of the unveiling of the Etrickhall memorial by the Rev. Robert Borland (author of *Yarrow: Its Poets and Poetry*), Lord Etrick and Napier (a retired diplomat), William Garden (Hogg’s son-in-law), and the Rev. W. S. Crockett (minister of Tweedsmuir and, later, author of *The Scotch Country*). Naturally the speakers pay attention to Hogg’s local origins but the most striking feature to a modern reader is that the emphasis is overwhelmingly on Hogg as a poet. No less a person than Queen Victoria is brought in to emphasise this: Lord Etrick and Napier, we are told, ‘read an extract from Her Majesty’s “Diary,” [...] in which she related her reading of a volume of poems by Hogg under a thorn tree in the garden at Holyrood. The volume had been presented by John Brown; and there they had Her Majesty as a votary of the Etrick Shepherd.’

Partly as a consequence of this emphasis on the poetry, everyone compares Hogg, not with Scott (as we are perhaps over-inclined to do nowadays) but with Burns. This was not a new phenomenon: Wilson, for example, wrote a major essay on the topic in *Blackwood’s* in 1819. Similarly Scott writing to Byron in 1813 compares Hogg with Burns in terms of their educational opportunities although he suggests that Burns’s talents are much greater than Hogg’s. In the 1890s for W. S. Crockett, ‘Next to Burns, the Etrick Shepherd is unquestionably the most distinguished of Scottish bards springing from the ranks of the people,’ and for Lord Etrick and Napier, ‘The Queen’s Wake’, regarded as a poetical scheme or plan, is a more elaborate and ingenious composition than any single composition of Burns. Some comparisons are, of course, made with Scott but Sir George Douglas, for one, spends much more time comparing Hogg with Robert Louis Stevenson, leading him to the conclusion that ‘their difference might also be chosen as the typical difference between the intuitive and the self-conscious artist.’

The comparison with Burns was seen as so pertinent that it had provided Mrs Garden with her opening sentence for her introduction to the 1886 selected poems: ‘Of no country, perhaps, save of Scotland, can it be related that during the latter half of the same century it produced two great poets, both of them sprung from the working class.’ From this it is not far to the idea of Hogg as ‘heaven-taught’ even though several of the speakers lay strong emphasis on Hogg’s energetic and successful attempts to educate himself (as had Scott in his letter to Byron). For Crockett, then, he is, ‘A child of the Forest, nursed amid the wildest, and tamed in the solitude of Nature and his strong and vigorous imagination had received impressions from the mountains, the cataraft, the torrent, and the wilderness, and was filled with pictures and images of the mysterious which those scenes were calculated to awaken.’

Particular praise is given to his songs and, amongst his other poems, to *Kilmenny*—described by Borland as ‘a work of superlative imaginative genius’—and to ‘The Witch of Fife’. Sir George Douglas devotes two whole pages to ‘The Witch of Fife’ and claims that it is ‘the perfect and spontaneous accomplishment of a literary tour-de-force’ (Douglas, p. 69). Perhaps the most significant word here is ‘spontaneous’. Douglas subscribes to the prevailing view of Hogg as a poet whose work arises from nature rather than art. This is most evident in his description of Hogg’s handling of the ‘grotesquely tragic figure of the old man, the witch’s husband’ as ‘a stroke of true art, none the less to be admired for being purely unconscious’ (pp. 69–70). While we might not accept the idea that Hogg’s art here is ‘purely unconscious’, we might well agree with Douglas’s assessment that the handling of the old man provides ‘the touch of humour, or of human interest, which shall keep the bewitched world in its place, and anchor it from completely drifting away from all relation to human affairs’ (p. 69).

Douglas’s appreciation of the way in which Hogg can so brilliantly unite disparate elements, congenial to our modern ways of viewing Hogg, is all the more striking in that he seems to have known the poem in its original confronting form where the old man is killed at the end since he writes of ‘the one night of rapture and of revelling for which [the husband] pays so dear’ (p. 70). The happier ending, introduced at Scott’s request in the third edition, was the one that appeared in the collected editions and was thus better known to the majority of nineteenth-century readers.

Most critics today, I suggest, would have little quarrel with the high praise given in the 1890s to *Kilmenny*, ‘The Witch of Fife’, and songs like ‘When the Kye Comes Hame’. It is when we come to the longer poems that our views begin to diverge somewhat from those prevalent at that time. Douglas speaks for his contemporaries in saying that ‘Hogg’s epics, or metrical romances, have no structural inspiration, and are failures and forgotten’ (p. 117). These judgements are not based on ignorance of the poems since they were included in the collected *Poetical Works* but Douglas’s comments on *Pilgrims of the Sun* give us some clues as to why he arrived at this unfavourable opinion of the long poems. He describes *Pilgrims* as ‘a poetic chaos, amid which scattered images of beauty—for these are not wanting—lose almost all their value’ (p. 82). The phrase ‘poetic chaos’ strongly suggests that what we see as one of the special and unusual strengths of the poems—their mixing of different styles, moving from the tragic to the comic with startling speed—and was merely disconcerting to readers in the 1890s, although, as we have seen, Douglas was able to appreciate the union of the incongruous in ‘The Witch of Fife’. There is very little
comment on this aspect of the prose fiction but one must assume that readers found this mixing of genres just as ungenial in prose as in poetry.

Coming, then, to the prose, it is here that our view diverges most strongly from that of the 1890s. Although we have come increasingly to appreciate works like The Three Perils of Man and The Three Perils of Woman, I suggest most readers today would still see the Justified Sinner as Hogg's great masterpiece. However the prose work that is most commonly mentioned in the 1890s is what Douglas calls 'the still famous story of the Brownie of Bodock' (p. 47). Neither of the Three Perils receives much attention—not surprisingly, given the total absence of one and the partial absence of the other from Tales and Sketches. Douglas, for instance, merely mentions them in passing when noting that they were written in an attempt to get out of the money difficulties caused by Hogg's tenancy of Mount Benger (p. 105). On the other hand the Justified Sinner receives slightly more attention but this is in part because of the controversy that surrounded it, just as the 1890s began, after George Saintsbury's uncompromising proclamation in November 1889: 'I am absolutely unable to believe that it is Hogg's unadulterated and unassisted work.'49 Saintsbury's opinion was based purely on the belief that it was too good to have been written by Hogg. Having suggested that little of Hogg's work beyond a few of the shorter poems is of any worth and having characterised his prose as written in a fashion which he describes with equal frankness and truth by the phrases, 'dashing on', 'writing as if in desperation', 'mingling pathos and absurdity', and so forth' (p. 25) he goes on to make his claim about the Justified Sinner:

In the midst, however, of all this chaotic work, there is still to be found, though misnamed, one of the most remarkable stories of its kind ever written—a story which, as I have said before, is not only extraordinarily good of itself, but insists peremptorily that the reader shall wonder how the devil it got where it is. This is the book now called 'The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Fanatic', but by its proper and original title, 'The Confessions of a Justified Sinner'. (p. 26)

Saintsbury's solution was to suggest that the work was by Hogg but had been revised by Lockhart:

That editing, and perhaps something more than editing, on Lockhart's part would have been exactly the thing necessary to prune and trim and direct the Shepherd's disorderly luxuriance into the methodical madness of the Justified Sinner—to give Hogg's loose though by no means vulgar style the dress of his own polished manner—to weed and shape and correct and straighten the faults of the Boar of the Forest—nobody who knows the

undoubted writing of the two men will deny. (p. 29)

Strange as this notion may seem to us today, it received some support at the time. Stevenson was inclined to accept Saintsbury's suggestion although his opinion was expressed privately in a letter to Saintsbury of 17 May 1891 rather than in print like Saintsbury's own:

the book, since I read it in black pouring weather on Tweedside, has always haunted and puzzled me. One felt it could not be Hogg. I had heard Lockhart mentioned, and much as I admire Adam Blair, it seemed beyond the reach of Lockhart. But with the two together, it is possible.49

For those who admire both Hogg and Stevenson it is disappointing to see the latter accepting Saintsbury's notion (especially as Eric Massie has argued that the Justified Sinner was a likely source of elements of The Master of Ballantrae). Clearly perturbed by Stevenson's agreement with Saintsbury, Douglas Mack, for one, has tried to understand, though not to defend, Stevenson's entertainment of this idea.44 Next Stevenson was joined in November 1894 by Andrew Lang but Lang's opinion was offered in print.45 Lang's publicly expressed opinion was especially upsetting since it came from someone who was not just a Scotsman but a Borderer to boot. Reaction this time was strong with Mrs Garden writing to the Athenaeum on 16 November 1895 claiming that Lang's view was 'mistaken' and 'the MS. of the work is in my possession, clearly and neatly written in my father's hand.46 Leaving aside the mystery of the now missing manuscript, it is interesting that Mary Garden does not even mention the original title and refers to it as 'the Ettrick Shepherd's tale 'The Suicide's Grave' while also noting that it appeared in the Blackie collection as 'Confessions of a Fanatic'. Two weeks later Lang himself re-entered the fray replying that 'I am unable to recover the impression that Lockhart's hand shows in Hogg's Justified Sinner' or Suicide's Grave' and that 'As far as internal or external evidence goes, I am now quite of Mrs. Garden's opinion.47 A few years later Douglas was to agree with Lang's revised opinion, claiming that 'Lockhart was certainly a more accomplished man-of-letters than Hogg; but of Hogg's genius he had nothing'.48

However, although Saintsbury upset Hogg's Scottish supporters with his belief that Hogg could not have written the novel alone, he did draw attention to it, praised it highly as 'one of the most remarkable stories of its kind ever written', and offered a long and approving summary of its plot.49 What is more he wrote in Macmillan's Magazine and Lang in the Illustrated London News, thus bringing the novel through these London journals to the attention of a wider British audience and indeed to an even wider overseas audience, including Stevenson who was in the South
Pacific when Saintsbury’s article appeared. Perhaps it was this attention which encouraged the London publisher J. Shields and Co. to reissue a text based on the first edition the following year—but with the title *The Suicide’s Grave* and using the original title only as a subtitle and (in modified form) on the spine. Although this version appears under Hogg’s name, a ‘Publisher’s Note’ following the title page tells us that ‘Mr Andrew Lang and some others incline to the opinion that the book was not wholly written by Hogg, but that J. G. Lockhart had some part in its production; for this opinion, however, there is no documentary support.’ We might expect that a reasonably accurate reprint of the first edition would change things but, despite the appearance of the new edition and despite the fact that both Saintsbury and Lang refer to the ‘Justified Sinner’, the more familiar Blackie title continues to be used and no less a person than William Garden is still referring to the novel as ‘The Confessions of a Fanatic’ in his speech at the 1898 celebrations. He does, however, reject Saintsbury’s suggestion that Lockhart must have had had a hand in the novel: ‘Had the Professor known Hogg as well as we do down here, he would have changed his opinion ere now. Hogg neither wished for nor required assistance.’ Sir George Douglas, on the other hand, does refer to the book by its original full title. 62 Even as late as 1927 when two reasonably accurate editions of the *Justified Sinner* (those of 1895 and 1924) had appeared, Batho assumes that her readers are more likely to have read the novel in its truncated form and occupies three pages in quoting at length some of the deleted passages. 63

Douglas, in fact, provides the fullest description of the prose. He offers a helpful categorisation of Hogg’s prose fiction as falling into three main groups: ‘stories dealing with the occult or supernatural’; ‘historical tales in the manner introduced by Scott’; and ‘tales and sketches illustrative of local and contemporary pastoral life’. He also mentions the ‘less noticeable’ categories of ‘novelettes of country life’ and ‘adventure tales’. He particularly praises Hogg as a writer on the supernatural, citing the *Justified Sinner* as the best, but not the only, example: ‘By its success the Gil-Martin of the *Justified Sinner* ranks as an unique attempt in our literature to incarnate the Fiend amid realistic surroundings; but in Hogg’s work Gil-Martin does not stand alone’ (pp. 99–100). Clearly the absence of the Aikwood scenes of *The Three Perils of Man* from the Hogg reading list of the 1890s is no barrier to recognising his brilliance as a writer of the supernatural. This is partly because there were plenty of other works to demonstrate this, many of which Douglas names, and partly because their admiration of ‘Kilmenny’ and ‘The Witch of Fife’ amongst his poems had already predisposed readers of the 1890s to appreciate Hogg’s skill in this field in his prose works.

Douglas is inclined to ascribe this skill to Hogg’s background, claiming that ‘what Hogg has done […] is to endow with a permanent literary form the singularly rich and varied creations of the Scottish peasant’s fancy’ (p. 100). For Douglas the historical tales are ‘less distinctive of the man’ but he offers the interesting comment in passing that they are ‘especially noticeable for the success with which the author’s courage carries him over difficulties’ which I take to be a reference to that daring pushing of boundaries which we also admire in his work (pp. 100–01). On the other hand, in the course of his comparison of Hogg and Stevenson, Douglas offers one judgement with which I suspect we do not concur. He claims that both writers evince ‘an almost pagan distaste for anything bordering on the problems of life’ (p. 102). Here again it seems that the limited reading list of the 1890s may provide an explanation. Douglas mentions but does not describe *The Three Perils of Woman*: it seems probable he had not read it and, indeed, how could anyone read the last part of that novel and believe that Hogg was unwilling to face the harsher realities of life?

How then might we summarise the position of Hogg in the 1890s? As I have said, we are very conscious of the defects of the then available editions and of how several important texts were not available at all. We can see the effects of this in the judgements of Hogg at the time. Nevertheless, it seems to me that readers of the 1890s were able to form many opinions about Hogg’s work that we would find congenial as well as some others with which we would not agree. As regards the wider British literary canon it is clear that in the 1890s Hogg’s position is much stronger within the Scottish literary canon than in the British one. However it was precisely at this time that an *English* critic claimed a firm place for a very limited selection of Hogg’s work in the British canon. Saintsbury ends his essay by asserting that ‘a volume composed of [the *Justified Sinner*], of “Kilmenny”, and of the best of the songs, would be a very remarkable volume indeed.’

Saintsbury stands at a turning point in Hogg’s wider British reputation. *The Queen’s Wake*, including ‘Kilmenny’, was the one text that gained Hogg a wider British audience in his own time and it continued popular through the century and into the next—it is one of the texts quoted by Jean Brodie in Muriel Spark’s novel, a detail likely to be based on Spark’s own experiences from her schooldays. However, it is now largely unknown, I suspect, outside of those who read Scottish literature although it is to be hoped that this will be changed by Douglas Mack’s superb new edition of the poem which offers the reader the texts of both the first and fifth editions. On the other hand the *Justified Sinner*, so long neglected, was only
just beginning its ascent to its current position as the one Hogg text that holds a secure place today in the British literary canon. It is ironic that one of the first steps on this upward path should have been in an article which called Hogg's authorship into question, but Saintsbury's provocative suggestion and the reaction that followed ensured that some real attention was given to the novel. And, even if Hogg's British readers in the 1890s were only just beginning to see the greatness of the *Justified Sinner*, they had been able, despite the limited and defective texts available to them, to develop some interesting and often well informed views on the strengths of their much loved and much admired Etrick Shepherd. Moreover, as books and journals published in Britain circulated in the colonies, readers as far away as Australia could participate in this process of evaluation and revaluation.

**NOTES**


5. An earlier version of this article was delivered as a paper at the 11th James Hogg Society Conference in July 2005. I am grateful to Gill Hughes for reading the paper in my absence.

6. There was also another more selective collection, *The Tales of James Hogg, the Etrick Shepherd*, 2 vols (London, 1880); reissued several times.


9. These words occur in the prefatory comments on the Stirling/South Carolina Research Edition of the Collected Works of James Hogg, which are to be found at the start of each volume of that edition.


11. *James Hogg, the Etrick Shepherd: Memorial Volume* (Selkirk, [1898?]), pp. 34-35. No editor's name is given.

12. For a detailed discussion of the history of the publication of *Tales and Sketches* see Peter Garside and Gillian Hughes, *James Hogg's "Tales and Sketches" and the Glasgow Number Trade*, *Cardiff Corvey*, 14 (Summer 2005), 31-49, at http://www.cf.ac.uk/encap/corvey/articles/cc14_n02.html.

13. George Saintsbury, 'James Hogg', *Macmillan's Magazine*, 61 (1890), 18-29 (p. 23). While this edition was bound as two volumes it was originally, as already noted, issued in parts; for a discussion of issue in parts see Garside and Hughes, *James Hogg's "Tales and Sketches"* and the Glasgow Number Trade', pp. 43-44.

14. The works used, as given in 'The List of Books Quoted in the Oxford English Dictionary' are: *Poetical Works* a 1835 (1838-40); *Tales and Sketches* 1816-1835 (1830-37); *The Drumlin of Bodock and other tales* 1819; *Dreamtale* 1817; *The Jacobite relics of Scotland* [1818-19]; *The mountain bard* 1807; *Poems on different subjects* 1806; *Queen Hynde. A poem* 1825; *The queen's wake: a legendary poem* 1813; *Scottish pastoral, poems, and songs* 1801; *The shepherd's calendar* 1829; *The three perils of man; or, war, women, and witchcraft* 1822; *Winter evening Tales* 1826.


17. However, among the many separate editions of the poem which kept it alive through the century, the Chambers 'People's Edition' of 1841 did go back for its text to the second edition. The last separate nineteenth-century edition of the whole poem was in 1872 but a substantial selection appeared in 1880.


22. This copy is now in my possession.

23. Although these books carried a tide-page indicating that they were in the so-called 'colonial' editions produced by publishers like Macmillan, they were otherwise identical with the British first editions.


26. Interesting evidence of earlier and differently motivated reading of Hogg in Australia is provided by a copy of Hogg's *The Shepherd's Guide* in the National Library of Australia. In it was a short manuscript note reading 'This volume was the first text book used by the founders of the Australian wool industry, and belonged to and bears the signature of William Cox, died 1837'. I wish to thank my colleague Judy King for drawing my attention to this copy and the note in it.

27. As Garside and Hughes demonstrate, it is not always easy to identify early issues of *Tales and Sketches*. However, Strong's copy shares features with a copy in the Bodleian Library which is demonstrably the first issue because it includes original advertisements: some volumes (volumes
1–4 in the case of Strong’s copy) were printed by George Brookman and the first volume gives the publisher’s address as ‘8 East Clyde Street’ with a publication date of 1836. These features reflect the fact that about this time Brookman was displaced as printer by ‘W. G. Blackie & Son’ working from their printing-house at Villafield and the publishing house moved from East Clyde Street to Queen Street. See Garside and Hughes, ‘James Hogg’s “Tales and Sketches” and the Glasgow Number Trade’, pp. 37–38 for information about the location of the publishing and printing businesses, and note 36 on p. 47 for details of the Bodleian copy.


29 Helen Campbell Edmiston (later married to Herbert Augustus Strong, Archibald Strong’s father) was born in the parish of the Gorbals in 1852, the daughter of Robert Edmiston. A Robert Edmiston, evidently the one born in the Gorbals in 1821, formed the firm Edmiston and Mitchell (ship owners and later timber agents) in 1845. Given the unusualness of the name, this Robert Edmiston could well have been Helen Strong’s father.

30 Walter Murdoch, Collected Essays (Sydney, 1945).

31 Beyond this it may be significant that it was from an Australian bookshop that I recently bought my copy of the Memorial Volume produced to commemorate the erection of the monument to Hogg in Etrickhall in 1898.

32 Memorial Volume, p. 58. Victoria recorded that she ‘sat for half an hour under the only tree which afforded shade and was not overlooked by the street, a thorn, with very overhanging long branches, on a small grassy mound or “hillock.”’ Here I read out of a volume of Poems by the ‘Etrick Shepherd,” full of beautiful things (which Brown had given me some years ago). See More Leaves from the Journal of Life in the Highlands (London, 1884), p. 172; this book is preceded by epigrams from Beattie and Hogg and is dedicated to the memory of John Brown.


35 Memorial Volume, p. 55.

36 Memorial Volume, p. 57.


38 Introduction to The Poems of James Hogg, the Etrick Shepherd, ed. Garden, p. 7.

39 Memorial Volume, p. 65.

40 Memorial Volume, p. 17.

41 Douglas, James Hogg, p. 69.