



Routledge Library Editions: Folklore: A Scottish Ballad Book (RLE Folklore)

David Buchan

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The popular appeal of the ballad is perennial, and few literary genres give so much pleasure to so many kinds of people. This anthology, first published in 1973, is drawn from the richest ballad tradition in Britain, that of the Northeast of Scotland. It provides a fresh and original choice of songs that ranges from the old ballads like 'Gil Brenton' and 'Willie's Lady' to the bothy ballads like 'The Tarves Rant'. The collection illustrates the development of a tradition over the centuries from the oral stage down to the modern, and exemplifies the methods of composition and transmission, the kinds of ballad-story, and the types of ballad-text found in the various stages of a ballad tradition. It illustrates the variety of subject matter, and indicates lines of relationship with other genres of Folklore Studies. A substantial section, containing what are widely acknowledged as the best of all British ballads, the oral ballads of Anna Brown, demonstrates clearly that the ballads are not merely simple or crude poems; in their oral form, they are narrative songs of some complexity and sophistication. This anthology is complementary to Dr Buchan's *The Ballad and the Folk*.

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