

Samuel Crockett John Buchan

The Otter Pool



Writers' Walks



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Mossdale to the Otter Pool

In Samuel Crockett's book *The Raiders* his hero tracks a band of reivers and cattle rustlers who have made off not only with stolen cattle but also one of the local girls. His adventure takes him from Rathan Island (Heston Island) into the lawless Galloway Hills, where "never an exciseman put his nose, except with a force of red soldiers at his tail, which did not happen once in twenty years."

John Buchan *From the 39 Steps*. Hannay, having arrived at Mossdale "on a gorgeous spring evening, with every hill showing as clear as a cut amethyst" turned into a pine forest to follow the trail up the Raiders Road, a rough track beside the swollen and foaming Black Water of Dee - the headwaters of the Dee - which does look black, possibly coloured by peat.

Hannay lodged overnight with a shepherd and turned south the next morning, "skirting the side of a high hill in the same, jolly clear spring weather" to pick up a train doubling back towards Dumfries.