

John Buchan

John Buchan was born in Perth, in 1875, the son of a minister of the Free Church of Scotland. In 1876 his family moved to Fife, where as a small boy he walked six miles a day in order to attend the local school, and then later to the Gorbals in Glasgow. Buchan was later educated at Hutchesons' Grammar School, Glasgow University (by which time he was already publishing articles in periodicals) and Brasenose College, Oxford. During his years at Oxford he published five books and many articles, winning several awards (including the Newdigate Prize for poetry) and securing a First. His post-university career was equally diverse and successful and, despite ill health, he played a prominent part in public life as a barrister, member of parliament, writer, soldier and publisher. In 1907 he married Susan Grosvenor; the marriage was very happy and produced a daughter and three sons. He was created Baron Tweedsmuir of Elsfield in 1935 and became the fifteenth Governor-General of Canada, a position he held until his death in 1940. John Buchan's first success as an author came with PRESTER JOHN in 1910, and was followed by a series of adventure thrillers, or 'shockers' as he called them, characterized by their authentically rendered backgrounds, romantic characters, their atmosphere of expectancy and their world-wide conspiracies, and the author's own enthusiasm. He is perhaps best known for THE THIRTY NINE STEPS (1915), GREENMANTLE (1916) and JOHN MACNAB (1925). Buchan also established a reputation as a historical biographer with such works as MONTROSE, OLIVER CROMWELL and AUGUSTUS.

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