

District GALA WATER

Tartan Designer Wilsons of Bannockburn

Date 1819

Gala Water, a south flowing tributary of the Tweed, rises in a series of burns draining the Moorfoot Hills and Dun Law to the south of Edinburgh. The town of Galashiels stands on Gala Water just above its confluence with the Tweed. It capitalizes on its position, in a land suitable for sheep raising, by the establishment of woolen mills powered by water, before electricity was available for this purpose. As a result the town became a major center for Scotland's woolen industry, which has declined in recent years. Galashiels nevertheless, is still the home of one of Scotland's major manufacturers of tartan. The Scottish College of Textiles has also been established in the town and is devoted to research and training for careers in one of Scotland's most famous and important industries, the manufacture of textiles, particularly those made from wool.

The Gala Water district tartan, sometimes referred to as the 'Gallowater' was first recorded in the records of Wilsons of Bannockburn in 1793. It is also in some Wilson manuscript notes (at present in the Royal Museum of Scotland) which date to about 1800 (R20 bJ36 A20 B36 G80 Y 10). A second sett with slightly different proportions and the addition of white lines appears in the Wilson 1819 Key Pattern Book. The tartan is often referred to the 'new' sett. A third sett, commonly known as Gala Water 'old' omits both the red band and the white line. This also appears in Wilsons Key Pattern Book of 1819.

Taken from "District Tartans of Scotland", by Gordon Teall & Philip Smith, Shephard-Walwyn (Publishers) Ltd.

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