

District GLEN LYON

Gaelic Name

Gleann Liobhunn

Tartan Designer Willsons of Bannochburn

Date 1819

Glen Lyon, one of the longer glens of the Perthshire Highlands, opens onto the Tay Valley between Kenomre and Aberfeldy. The roman camp at Fortingall near the foot of Glen Lyon attest to its long importance as an entrance to the Highlands.

The archives of the Scottish Tartans Society indicate that in the past there have been several versions of the Glen Lyon district tartan. These were investigated by some of the leading researchers of the Society, namely the late J. MacGregor Hastie, the late D.C. Stewart and James Scarlett, who prepared a report on the subject in 1965.

The first recorded reference to Glen Lyon district tartan is in a letter, written in 1815, in the records of Wilsons of Bannockburn. No thread count is given but the firm's Key Pattern Book of 1819 (No. 53, p.143) gives the sett as A4 G8 bK10. Other references, without thread counts, occurred in 1826 and 1828. The late James McKinley noted a further sett (A8 bK8 G7) in an old Pattern Book believed to be from the firm of Gary and Dees of Perth. A slightly different count (B8 bK8 G8) is to be found in the Provist MacBean collection in Inverness.

A tartan sample pinned to a letter dated 26 September 1820 from Gloag Cochrane & Co. of Edinburgh to Wilsons is referred to in the order as Glen Lyon. It bears a strong resemblance to Wilsons Pattern No. 94 in which scarlet has been substituted for the Azure of No. 53. Other variations occur.

The Glen Lyon districts tartan is that which is accepted today. It was first noted by MacGregor Hastie but it is not certain how he obtained his sample. It has the same colors, azure, green and black as Wilsons Pattern No. 53 but in different proportions with black instead of green for one of the pivots. It is of interest that Wilsons Pattern No. 53 is now known by its alternative name, Mull and has become the accepted district tartan for that island.

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

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