

District NITHSDALE

Gaelic Name

Srath Nid

Tartan Designer Arthur Galt

Date 1930

Nithsdale, the valley of the River Nith, stretches over fifty miles, north to south through the length of Dumfriesshire to the sea. It takes its name from a mixture of Brythonic and Scottish words, meaning 'valley of the new river'. Perhaps no immortalized the small tributary of Afton Water and Maxwelltown's Braes were home to 'Annie Laurie'.

The River Nith, which abounds in salmon, was early harnessed to bring industry to Dumfries, the only major town in the area. Nithsdale is rich in history. It was the territory of the Maxwells who controlled the region from their stronghold at Caerlaverock on the eastern side of the Nith estuary. This castle now in ruins, was Sir Walter Scott's 'Ellangowan'. On the other side of the estuary, formerly crossed by the old thirteenth century town bridge in Dumfries, now reserved for foot traffic, lies New Abbey. Perhaps better known as 'Sweetheart Abbey', it was founded in 1273 by Devorguilla, in memory of her husband John Balliol, founder along with her, of Balliol College, Oxford. Their son, John Balliol (1249-1313), was King of Scots.

The Nithsdale tartan is appropriate for both residents and the many visitors to the area and, with the 'Galloway' tartans, could well serve as a tartan representative of Dumfries and the surrounding region. It uses only three colors, blue, red and green, to form a very pleasing sett. It was designed by Arthur Galt of Messrs. Hugh Galt and Sons Ltd., Barrhill, Ayrshire in cooperation with Councilor John Hannay.

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

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