

# District ROXBURGH

Tartan Designer Unknown

Date pre 1850

The name Roxburgh comes from the Old English word "Hroc" meaning rook and the word "Burgh" from both sides of the border meaning a fortified place. The original District of Roxburgh was relatively small (less than 50 miles East to West and even less North to South) and was squeezed between the English counties of Northumberland and Cumberland and the Scottish counties of Dumfries, Selkirk and Berwick with a small corridor reaching through to Mid Lothian. It was constituted by David I in 1018 but by the 12th century it was described as being "the fourth in Scotland in population and importance". The town of Roxburgh was a Royal Burgh and had a castle of some importance. Alexander II was married there in 1239 and his son, later to become Alexander III, was born there two years later. Being a "Border County" of such importance it was fought over for centuries by the Scots and English, first being captured by one side then retaken by the other. It was at one time taken by the English and remained in their possession for 100 years until it was finally recaptured in 1460 by which time town and castle had been reduced to rubble and was no longer worth fighting over. All that remains today are a few grassy mounds and the village of Roxburgh two or three miles from Kelso. The area was known earlier as Teviotdale; the Teviot being the main river flowing into the Tweed at Roxburgh. . When looking at the history of The District of Roxburgh mention must be made of The Border Reivers. They were horsemen, from Scotland and England, who raided the whole of the border, from the Solway Firth to the North Sea, and created an area of such lawlessness and terror that none was safe from robbery, pillage, rustling, arson and even murder. Much of this was done in the name of revenge between one family or clan and another and some of these feuds went on for 300 years. In an effort to restore peace one local noble or another would be appointed by the King to try to keep order and "Marches" (boundaries) were created. This is the origin of the still present habit in border towns, and elsewhere, of Riding the Marches. There were East and West Marches north and south of the border but the whole of Roxburgh was in the Middle March or The Debatable Land where lawlessness persisted for many more years. There are numerous famous border names but many tend to be families rather than clans as in the Highlands. Those mostly associated with Roxburgh are Armstrong, Douglas, Elliot, Glendinning, Haig, Kerr, Riddell, Rutherford, Scott and Turnbull to name only some. The district's early prosperity came from the land i.e. agriculture and sheep providing wool for textiles. Before the reorganizations of local government in 1975 re-drew some boundaries the main towns included Hawick, Jedburgh, Melrose and Kelso although the county town was Newton St. Boswells.

## **ROXBURGH TARTAN**

Although many local names have their own tartan there is a Roxburgh Tartan available to any other name from the district - in fact there are two i.e. Red and the Green or Hunting. They were first recorded in 1850, which meant they were in use before that. The designer and origin are uncertain. Yardage is currently featured in the ranges of several Scottish Tartan manufacturers in the Red version but the Green is much more difficult to obtain.

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