

Heritage Sites Around Galashiels

Until the late 18th century Galashiels was little more than a village. However, the Industrial Revolution and the coming of the railway transformed it into a thriving town. From 1771, factories were built and gradually houses were built on each bank of the Gala Water. In 1844, the North British Railway company began work on a line from Edinburgh and this was completed in 1849. Today, Galashiels is the second largest town in the Borders with a population of approximately 12,000.

Abbotsford (NT 5081 3426)

Sir Walter Scott, pioneer of the historical novel, purchased a farmhouse with “the unharmonious designation of Clarty Hole” on the banks of the River Tweed in 1812. Together with his family and servants, he moved into the farm which he renamed Abbotsford. In 1822, the old house was entirely demolished and replaced by the main block of



Abbotsford as it is today. Scott was a passionate collector of historic relics, including an impressive collection of armour and weapons and over 9,000 rare volumes in his library. There are also extensive gardens and a private chapel, which was added after Scott's death. Open seasonally. Admission charge.

Buckholm Tower (NT 4828 3790)

The monks of Melrose Abbey were given permission around 1180 to build a house for 60 cows at “Buchelm”. It is recorded that James Hoppringle (Pringle) and Agnes Forrester held a tower here in 1547, perhaps on the site used by the monks. The tower was destroyed sometime between 1547 and 1570 and the present building was built in 1582, by John Pringle. It only fell into ruin around 1900.



There is no public access to Buckholm Tower.

Englishmen's Sike (NT 5062 3508)

According to local tradition, a body of English soldiers was surprised near here whilst foraging for wild plums. The soldiers were



defeated by local men and their bodies dumped into a nearby ditch, which is still known as “Englishmen's Sike”. A commemorative stone, known locally as the “Raid Stane” is located adjacent to the Heriot Watt University Campus.

Gala Aisle (NT 4945 3570)

The burial vault of the Scotts of Gala stands in the old parish churchyard. It is a small stone rectangular building built in 1636 by Captain Hugh Scott of Gala and would originally have abutted the parish church. The Aisle was repaired and enlarged in the 19th century. Located within the Aisle is a memorial to Mark Duncan, a former Parish Minister who was killed at the Battle of Dunbar in 1651. Amongst the gravestones in the burial ground is the family tomb of Mungo Park, an 18th century explorer.



Gala Policies (NT 4859 3565)

Gala Policies were laid out in the 19th century as a designed landscape garden for New Gala House.

This house was built by Hugh Scott, laird of Galashiels, who was determined to live in a house that was more impressive than those of local mill owners whom he considered 'upstarts' and 'mere manufacturers'. New Gala House was demolished in 1987 and the policies were reserved for recreational use.



Langshaw (NT 5157 3965)

Situated in a minor valley to the north of Galashiels is Langshaw, a rural settlement made



remarkable by the presence of three 16th century stone towers. Hillslap and Colmslie were built by members of the Cairncross family, while Langshaw was erected by the Pringles. Although it is now unusual to find three towers so close together, many medieval settlements had such groupings which have disappeared. **There is no public access to these towers.**

Market Cross (NT 4927 3577)

The present cross was restored in 1887 and incorporates a 17th century sundial with a wrought iron weather vane dated 1695. The original cross was erected here as the focus of the market of Galashiels when the Pringles of Gala elevated it to a Burgh of Barony in 1599.



Old Gala House (NT 4915 3588)

Old Gala House was originally a tower house of the Pringles built in 1457.

This tower was incorporated into a larger building in 1583 and further expanded in 1611. The house and lairdship of Galashiels was acquired by the Scott family in the 17th century and was their home until 1876 when the family moved into New Gala House. The house now serves as the local museum.



Southern Upland Way (NT 1715 0637 to NT 7742 7110)

This 340 kilometre (212 mile) long distance coast to coast footpath, from Portpatrick on the west to Cockburnspath on the east, passes many heritage sites *en route*, including Old Gala House and Yair Bridge.



Yair Bridge (NT 4581 3255)

This part of the Tweed valley was traditionally the gathering place of Scottish armies before setting out to invade England. At

such a gathering, in 1349, the Black Death claimed its first victims in Scotland.

Yair Bridge was built in 1760 to carry a new Selkirk to Edinburgh road across the rocks and rapids of this stretch of river. In 1832, this route was effectively bypassed by the completion of a new road through Galashiels, which had developed from a village into an industrial town.

