

Old & Rare Scottish Tartans by D. W. Stewart

An examination of the tartans included in Stewart's 1893 publication.

Introduction

D. W. Stewart's (DWS) *Old & Rare Scottish Tartans*ⁱ (Plate 1) has long been regarded as a seminal work in the history of tartan research. It has been cited as authoritative by a number of tartan scholars, not least; D. C. Stewart and J. D. Scarlett, but to date there has been no serious review of Stewart's Old & Rare tartans, their accuracy and associated provenances.

Little is known about the author. Donald William Stewart was the son of the Factor to an estate in Northern Ireland; he was a member of the Edinburgh literati and moved in circles which included the likes of the sculptor, Pittendrigh McGillivray and artist, William Skeoch Cumming, both significant in the early history of tartan research. It's said that Stewart became a partner in the firm of Romanes and Paterson, the Royal Tartan Warehouse, in Edinburgh, and he certainly rose high enough to acquire the knowledge and to be allowed the facilities to compile and produce his book, *Old & Rare Scottish Tartans* (O&R). Around 1900 he gave financial backing to a hosiery business which failed and ruined him. He sought solace in the bottle and after sometime left his wife and son and moved, or was packed off, to Australia where he died in oblivion.

In his Preface to O&R Stewart says:

*Hitherto the modes adopted in works of this description have been admittedly unsatisfactory, it being impossible, by the highest exercise of skill in colour printing, to render the shades correctly, particularly in those portions of the setts where the colours are crossed. Solid colours are generally rendered adequately by lithography, but when the most important and intricate portion of the design -viz., the representation of the interweaving of different shades - is in question, none of the processes of colour printing yet invented does justice to the great beauty of the actual fabric. **The method adopted in the present work has been to weave the tartan to be represented in its proper colours in fine silk. The shades required for each specimen having been dyed, the weaving was executed by the hand-loom in exact proportion to the original** (this author's emphasis).*

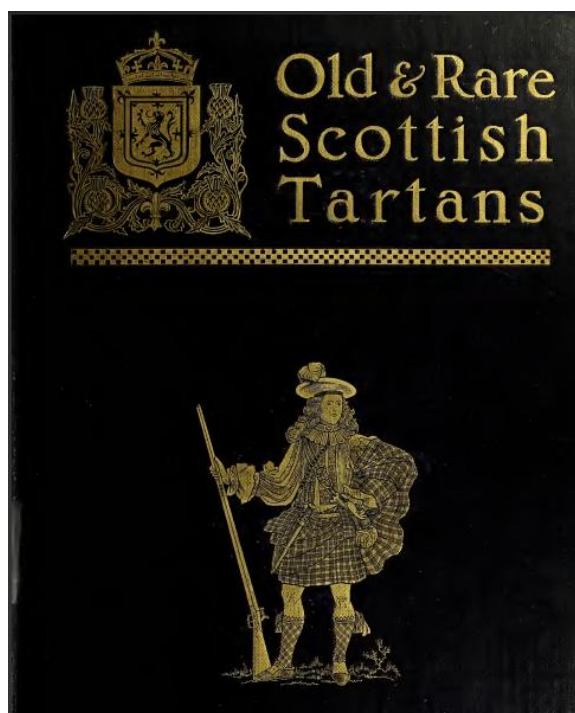


Plate 1. Old & Rare Scottish Tartans

The claim then, is that the specimens in DWS's work are accurate in both shade and proportions. Stewart also attempted to arrange the patterns in order of historical appearance. This approach was innovative and the resulting two limited editions¹ were beautiful works of art, especially when compared with tartan reference books published in the fifty or so years before and after *Old & Rare*.

¹ Production was limited to 300 copies: 250 on Dutch hand-made paper and 50 on Whatman's hand-made paper.

In preparing his book, Stewart referred to having had access to: ‘...a collection of tartans made by the Highland Society of London and the late Dr W. F. Skene’; ‘...collections of tartans preserved by several families’; and to ‘...trustworthy collections, including those of The Mackintosh of Mackintosh, the Campbells of Craignish, and Messrs Romanes & Paterson, Edinburgh.’ Some of these collections can be readily identified and examined, for example; those of the Highland Society of London² (Plate 2) and that by MacKintosh of MacKintosh (Plate 3). Unfortunately, Stewart was less clear about his other sources. No details of Dr Skene’s collection survive, nor which families’ collections DWS examined. Stewart worked for Romanes & Paterson and reference to their collection was probably to a 19th century sample book such as the one now in the Clan Macpherson Museum which is a bound collection of specimens, mostly by Wilsons of Bannockburn c.1830-40 (Plate 4).



Plate 2. Ledger of tartans collected by the Highland Society of London 1816-22.

Photo courtesy of the National Museum of Scotland (NMS)

Stewart’s many references to specimens in the Campbell of Craignish collection is a mystery as no such collection has been identified.³ Under his entry about the Fraser tartans, he said it was included in collections following one another at brief intervals from 1790 to 1850, comprising those of the Highland Society of London, the Campbells of Craignish, the late Dr W. F. Skene, and The Mackintosh of Mackintosh.

Finally, he makes mention of ‘*Specimens gathered about 1790, now in the author’s possession*’ and of which he asserts about their ‘*manufacture indicates great age.*’ Once again, the lack of detail is noteworthy but it is a fact that many of the tartans he includes in this

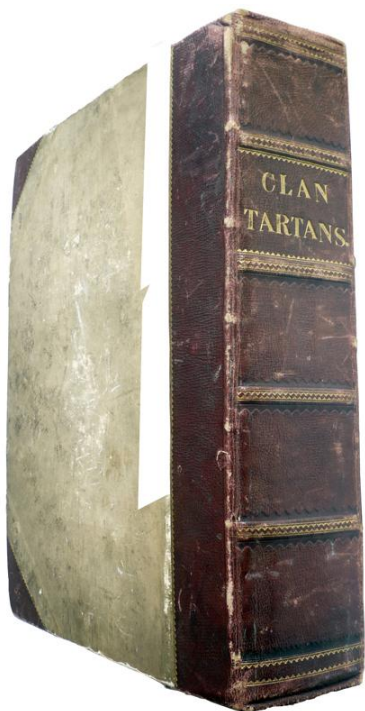
² Currently on loan to the National Museum of Scotland.

³ In 2015 the author of this paper discussed the subject with the Clan Campbell historian, Alasdair Campbell of Airds, who confirmed that they have no record of any such collection.

group are known to have been designed by Wilsons. Whether these specimens were loose or bound and what happened to them is not known but based on the patterns named it is likely that most, if not all, were Wilsons' specimens and so likely to be first quarter 19th rather than late 18th century.



Plate 3. The MacKintosh of MacKintosh collection c.1830-40. Photo: James D. Scarlett



Whilst dismissing various early references to tartan as inaccurate, Stewart appears to have been completely taken in by John Sobieski Stuart whom he regarded as authoritative despite the manifest inaccuracies and falsehoods in both the *Vestiarium Scoticum*ⁱⁱ and the *Costume of the Clans*ⁱⁱⁱ. He also cited David Stewart of Garth^{iv} whom he also considered authoritative. From these and other sources Stewart developed a belief that clan tartans were an historical fact.

This critique examines the original specimens or other sources copied or cited by Stewart and compares them with those in his publication. In each case Stewart's plate is juxtaposed, where possible, with the source specimen, portrait etc., he cited and comment offered on his narrative in the context of the source.

Plate 4. Romanes & Peterson collection of tartans (mostly Wilsons). Photo: © The Author

The Tartans

Plate I – The Lord of the Isles

This tartan (Plate 5) is taken from a portrait of the MacDonald Boys⁴ painted c.1750 (Plate 6). The pattern is one of four (not including the diced hose) shown in this portrait and is taken from the coat of Alexander, the younger boy.



Plate 5. O&R Lord of the Isles.



Plate 6. The MacDonald Boys c1750.
Photo: National Galleries of Scotland

Extracting the details of a tartan from a portrait can be difficult, especially when the design is complex or painted for effect rather than as an accurate representation. In this case, Stewart's representation appears to be reasonably accurate in proportional terms although the original appears to show slightly less red and more green.

Stewart mentions that the black line is a correction to the commonly seen version in which it was omitted. The non-black line version referred to is what is now known as MacDonald of Sleat⁵ and appears to have started life as a Wilsons of Bannockburn tartan which they called *Lord Macdonald*.⁶ The name was an odd choice as the Lord Macdonald of 1815 was not particularly well known or influential. The design may have been one of their late 18th century *fancy setts* and the name a reference to the first Lord Macdonald who died in 1795.⁷

It is reasonable to conclude that Wilsons' source for their design was the portrait of the MacDonald Boys, whether the omission of the black line was deliberate or an error is unknown. Today the black line is obvious and it is difficult to understand how it could have been missed. The portrait is said to have been cleaned at some point which might have revealed the black line, or it was possibly examined in better light.

⁴ The original, now attributed to [William Mosman](#) can be viewed in the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh.

⁵ Also spelt *Slate*, the name comes via the Gaelic *Sléibhte* from the Old Norse word *slétr* meaning smooth or even.

⁶ There is a specimen in the Cockburn Collection (1815-20) housed in the Mitchell Library Glasgow.

⁷ Created 1st Baron Macdonald of Slate in 1776 and was Deputy Lieutenant of Inverness-shire. In 1778 he raised the Macdonald Highlanders and in 1793 raised another regiment from the Highlands and the Islands. He was also a Brigadier-General of the Royal Company of Archers.

Plate II – Lord of the Isles Hunting

This tartan is unusual amongst surviving examples of non-military 18th century tartans in having a blue and green ground, no red and a preponderance of white lines forming the overcheck (Plate 7). In the portrait of Sir Alexander Macdonald, 9th Baronet of Sleat and 1st Baron Macdonald of Slate by Sir George Chalmers c.1772 the sitter wears a full Highland suit of kilt, waistcoat and coat of this tartan (Plate 8). Sir Alexander was the younger of the MacDonald Boys in the previous portrait.



Plate 7. O&R Lord of the Isles.



Plate 8. Sir Alexander Macdonald c1772
Photo: National Galleries of Scotland

There has been considerable debate over the years about whether the darker colour should be blue or green. Both DCS' work and that of his son, D. C. Stewart^v, showed it as blue which is supported by close examination of the portrait; however, today it is generally woven commercially with two shades of green. This two-green version was used for a tartan evening suit made evening suit made for the Duke of Windsor⁸ in c.1950, was worn by HM The King when he was HRH The Prince of Wales⁹ and also the High Chief of Clan Donald¹⁰ (Plate 9). Quite when this change to two greens occurred and whether it was by design or misinterpretation of the original is unclear.



Plate 9. The Lord of the Isles tartan as worn by the Duke of Windsor, HRH The Prince of Wales and Sir Godfrey Macdonald, High Chief of Clan Donald. Source: Wiki Search accessed 26 Aug 2018.

⁸ A title created for King Edward VIII following his abdication in 1936.

⁹ Whose Scottish titles include *Lord of the Isles*, the title having been seized by the Scottish Crown in 1493.

¹⁰ Sir Godfrey James Macdonald, 8th Baron Macdonald of Slate.

Plate III – Brodie

Stewart says of this tartan (Plate 10) that *'It is not known when this design was originally adopted; but, though the pattern cannot be traced in early paintings, it nevertheless possesses internal evidence of some antiquity, since many of the oldest tartans are variations of the red and black check, popularly styled the Rob Roy, with the addition of narrower lines of various hues, as in the present instance. The beginning of the century witnessed its use, as it is included in several collections of the hard tartans produced at the time; and since then it has always figured in the pattern-books and the lists both of connoisseurs and of manufacturers.'*

The argument is both weak and simplistic. It is not a reason to include this design amongst a selection of truly Old and Rare tartans, and certainly not in the earlier section of the chronology. That it is basically a red and black check is true of many tartans not included by Stewart and the assertion that it was used at the beginning of the 19th century is not supported by any specimens or written evidence from the likes of Wilsons. In reality, this tartan is one of the spurious designs invented by the Sobieski Stuart brothers and published in their *Vestiarium Scoticum* of 1842 (Plate 11).

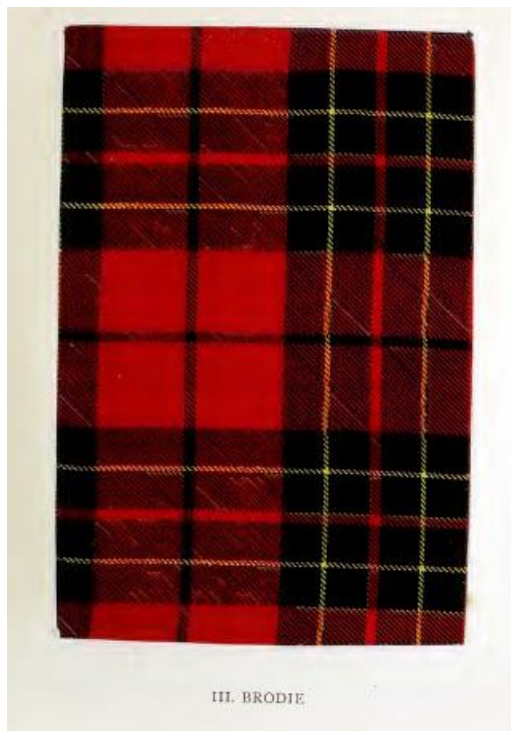


Plate 10. O&R Brodie.

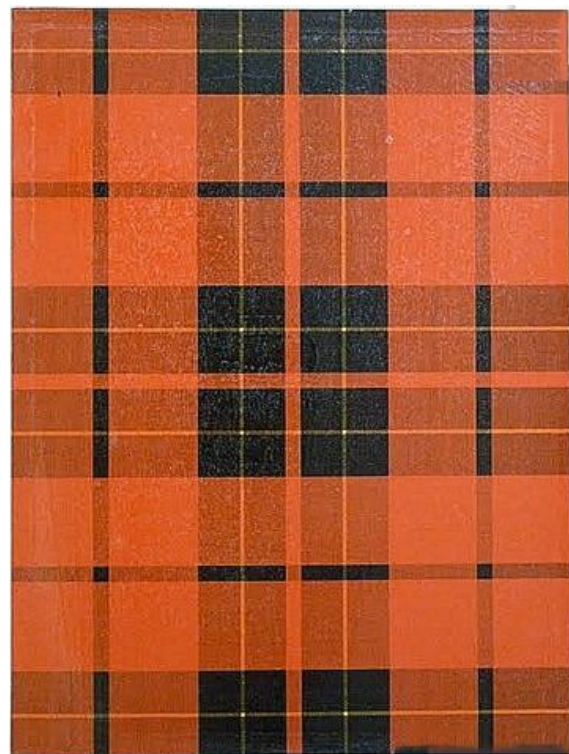


Plate 11. Vestiarium Scoticum

Stewart's count is broadly correct although he does double the size of the yellow stripes compared with the rest of the design given in the *Vestiarium*.

Plate IV – Campbell of Breadalbane

Originally a military tartan, the design is based on the Government or Black Watch tartan with the addition of yellow lines bordering the green square (Plate 12). It was designed for the Breadalbane Fencibles (1793-1802) and original woven by Messrs Wm. Wilson and Son, Bannockburn. Stewart said of this design that it was *the only Campbell tartan included in the collection made by the Highland Society of London in 1816-17*. Technically that was correct in respect of the date but the collection was actually collated between 1816-22 and there is another specimen, now called Campbell of Argyll, that was submitted by the chief in 1821.

A specimen of Wilsons' Breadalbane was included in the HSL's original collection (Vol I) but rebound in Vol II in 1934 as *the correct tartan for the Campbells of Balcardine and Campbells of Dunstaffnage* (Plate 13). Another Wilsons' design, which they called *No60 or Abercrombie with Yellow* was later adopted as the Campbell of Breadalbane tartan and is the version most frequently seen today under that name.

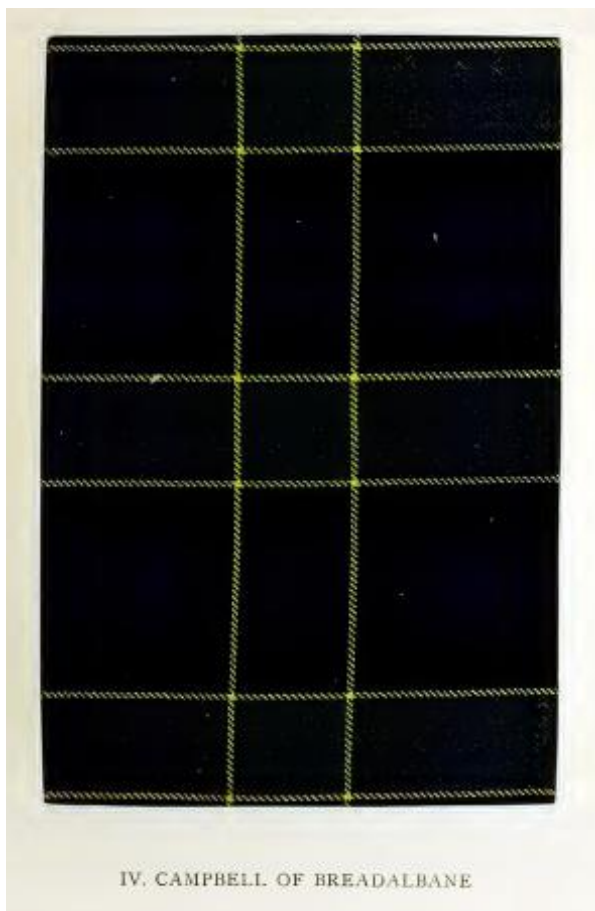


Plate 12. O&R Campbell of Breadalbane.



Plate 13. Wilsons's Campbell of Breadalbane.
© The Author.

Plate V – Davidson

Stewart says of this tartan (Plate 14) that *'The evidence of the early date of this design rests entirely upon specimens in collections of old hard tartans.'* and that *'It is preserved in a collection of examples of tartans made by the Highland Society of London in 1822'*. Stewart's reference is curious as, whilst the tartan is included in the Highland Society's collection, it is in Vol II which dates to 1906-34, rather than in Vol I (1816-20). As *Old & Rare* was written before Vol II was collated, he must have been mistaken and seen a specimen elsewhere.

Whilst the design has a simple, traditional feel about it there is no evidence for it before the early 1800s. It probably started life as one of Wilsons of Bannockburn's *fancy patterns* but by c.1820 they were selling it under the name *Davidson* and it is included in a number of surviving sample books dating to c.1830-40. It was woven in a variety of sizes and often with the white woven in silk, as in the example below (Plate 15).

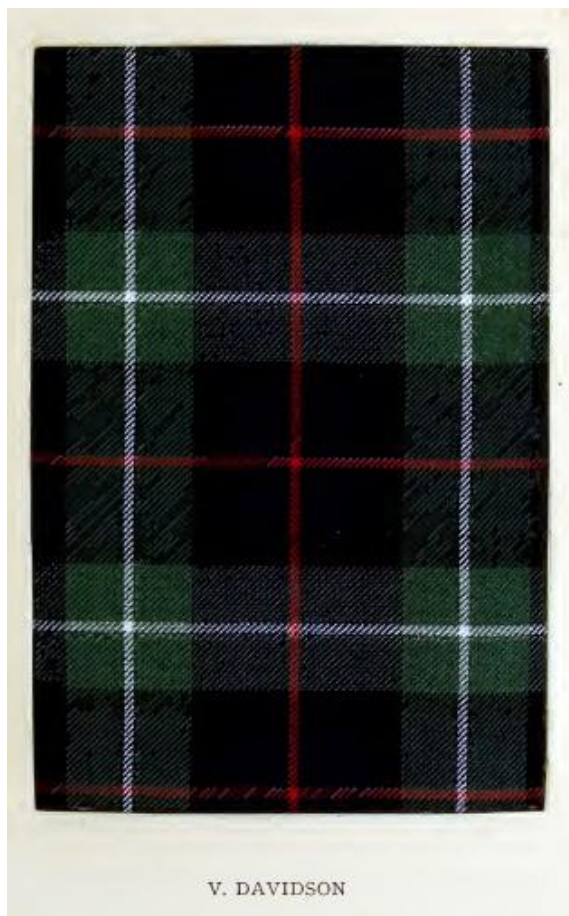


Plate 14. O&R Davidson.



Plate 15. Wilsons of Bannockburn specimen of Davidson with white silk c1830. © The Author.

Plate VI – Drummond of Perth

Stewart appears to have gone on a complete flight of fancy regarding this tartan (Plate 16) of which he said '*Tradition associates this tartan with the amiable, ill-fated James Drummond, Duke of Perth, who was conspicuous in the '45....*' and '*The early collections nearly all contain this pattern, which is variously styled Drummond of Perth, Drummond, and Perth.*' What the traditional association with James Drummond was is unclear, nor does Stewart name the early collections. Elsewhere he refers to '*...trustworthy collections, including those of The Mackintosh of Mackintosh, the Campbells of Craignish, and Messrs Romanes & Paterson, Edinburgh.*', so he may have meant those. Leaving aside the Campbell of Craignish collection, which has never been identified, the other two are collections of specimens c.1830-40 woven by Wilsons of Bannockburn. It is noteworthy that it is not included in either of the two earlier collections; that of General Cockburn (1816-25), or the Highland Society of London (1816-22). However, the Drummond/Grant tartan is included in the latter as both *Drummond* and also *Perth*. Stewart conflates that tartan and this one in his narrative.

The pattern is amongst those included in Wilsons' 1819 Key Pattern Book (KPB) where the records indicate that they had been producing it since the late 18th century as one of the tartans named after towns and districts. It is likely that it was one of their designs and is possibly the same pattern referred to in their 1775 Account Book as *New Perth sett*. A note accompanying the entry in the 1819 KPB says that '*This is the Clan Drummond Tartan*', one that they refer to under three different names in various records: *Perth*; *Perth or Drummond*; and *Drummond or Perth*. These differences mark the change of use from being a Wilsons' *Fancy Pattern* to one associated with a clan (Plate 17). There is no evidence to link the tartan with the Jacobite James Drummond and it was Stewart who first appears to have called this sett Drummond **of** Perth as opposed to Wilsons' Drummond **or** Perth. Stewart notes the similarity of the pattern to that of the Fingask Coat before heading off on another flight of fancy – see the notes on that sett (O&R Plate XL).

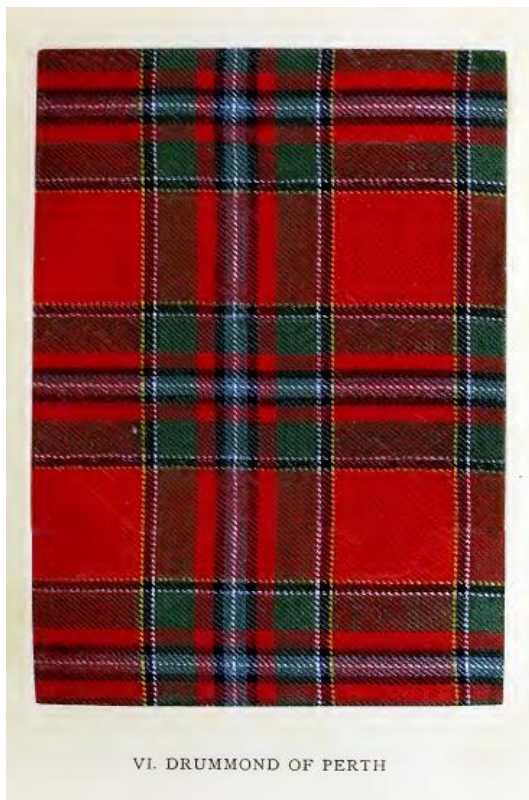


Plate 16. O&R Drummond of Perth.



Plate 17. Coat in Wilsons' Drummond or Perth tartan c1820.

Plate VII – Drummond of Strathallan

Writing of this design Stewart says that *'There is every reason to esteem this tartan of early date. Possessing many characteristics of old design'*. He does not explain what reason, nor what characteristics but continues; *'it figures as Strathallan Drummond in most of the trustworthy collections, including those of The Mackintosh of Mackintosh, the Campbells of Craignish, and Messrs Romanes & Paterson, Edinburgh.'* These collections were discussed in reference to the previous design, however, unlike it, this one is included in the Cockburn Collection (1816-25) where it is simply labelled 'Drummond' (Plate 19).

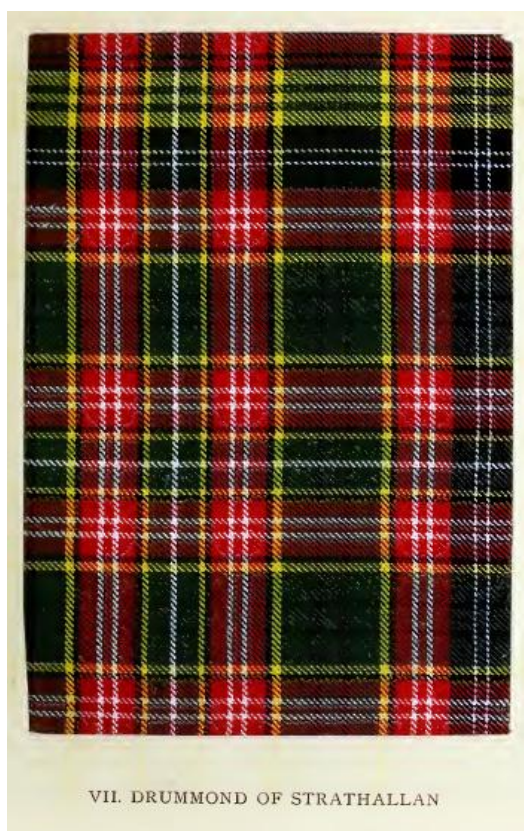


Plate 18. O&R Drummond of Strathallan



Plate 19. Drummond, Cockburn Coll c.1816-25
Photo © The Author.

This is a large and complex design; Stewart's specimen does not show the full sett but what is visible appears to agree with the relevant section of the Wilsons' specimen in Cockburn, albeit that Stewart's shades are far too dark. The similarity of this tartan and that designed in 1713 for the Royal Company of Archers' uniform is striking.¹¹ As David Drummond (Advocate) was President of the Archers at that time, and several Drummonds were later members, it is entirely possible that they had a variation produced as their own tartan in the late 18th or early 19th century. It is also possible that Wilsons incorrectly copied the Archers' tartan for a Drummond which gave rise to the version now known as Drummond of Strathallan. The similarity to, and possible confusion with, the Archers' original tartan might have been the basis for Stewart's statement that this tartan is *'of early date'*.

¹¹ See here for a discussion of the [Tartans of the Royal Company of Archers](#).

Plate VIII – Fraser

This is another tartan (Plate 20) said by Stewart to have been taken from the unidentified 'collection formed about 1790', where he says the pattern is first recorded. As discussed in the introduction, the identification of this 1790 collection has proved troubling but it is possible that it was a collection of specimens that he acquired whilst working at Romanes & Paterson. That specimen was almost certainly produced by Wilsons of Bannockburn and examples of their weaving of this tartan are included in a number of other early collections including: the Cockburn Collection; 1816-55 (Plate 21) and that of the Highland Society of London, 1816-22.

Stewart goes on to say that 'Different Fraser families appear originally to have had each their special designs, but for a long time every important section (save that of Lovat, whose tartan forms the next plate) has recognised this as the Breacan Friosalach.' He gives no details of these 'special designs' but the claim that, other than the Frasers of Lovat, every important branch recognises this sett as the Fraser tartan is not borne out by the 19th century books that include a Fraser tartan.

Despite Stewart's suggestion that this had long been a Fraser tartan, all evidence suggests that it was designed by Wilsons of Bannockburn and was based on the 42nd tartan. This sett is worn by the 78th Fraser Highlanders Reenactors¹² in the belief that it was worn by the original regiment during the Seven Years War. Research by the author has shown this was not the case and that the regiment almost certainly wore the standard Government tartan.¹³

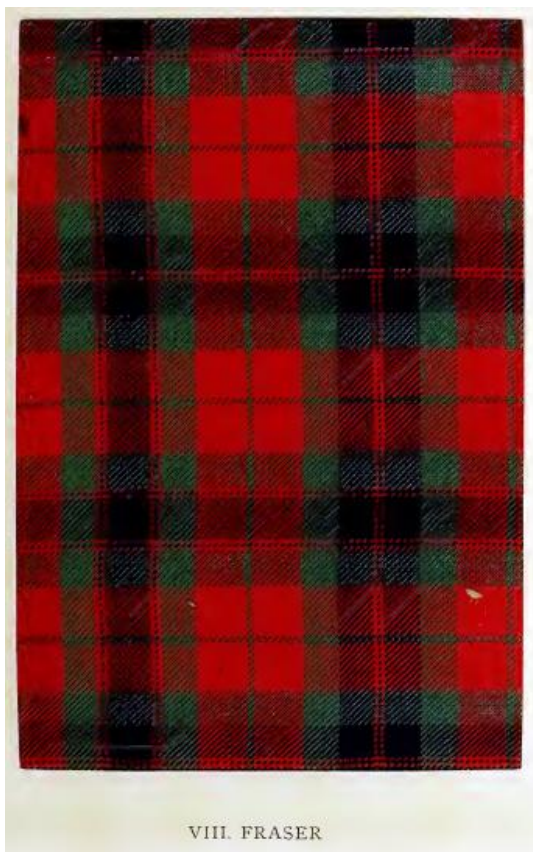


Plate 20. Fraser, O&R



Plate 21. Fraser, Cockburn Collection 1810-15
Photo ©The Author.

¹² <https://www.78thfrasers.org/>

¹³ http://www.scottishtartans.co.uk/78th_Regt_-_Fraser's_Highlanders_Tartan.pdf

Plate IX – Fraser of Lovat

The similarity between this setting (Plate 22) and the previous design is obvious, they differ only by the replacement of the green stripe crossing the red with white. Stewart says that it depicts the earliest authenticated Lovat pattern, which is accepted by the leading collectors. It was included in the Highland Society of London's collection and can be found amongst early Wilsons' specimens in which the white stripe is often woven in silk. Two magnificent Highland Revival outfits in this tartan survive, one in private hands, the other is in the collection of the Highland Folk Museum (Plate 23).



Plate 22. Fraser of Lovat, O&R



Plate 23. Fraser of Lovat outfit c.1830
Photo courtesy of the Highland Folk Museum

Stewart states that the then Lord Lovat¹⁴ told the Messrs Hay¹⁵ that, although the tartan he then wore was that which was always worn by the Clan Fraser as their clan tartan, yet some old people of the name maintained that there should be a white sprainge through it. The Fraser tartan that the brothers included in their *Vestiarium Scoticum*, pub. 1842 is what is now commonly called *Fraser* but c.1830-40 specimens of it woven by Wilsons were labelled *Fraser of Lovat*. Once again, Stewart appears to have conflated different patterns.

¹⁴ Simon Fraser, 13th Lord Lovat, 2nd Baron Lovat (1828–1887).

¹⁵ John Carter Allen and Charles Manning Allen styled themselves Hay Allan for a time before adopting Sobieski-Stuart after claiming to be the illegitimate grandsons of Prince Charles Edward Stewart. The Sobieski-Stuart brothers were celebrities in Victorian Highland circles.

Plate X – Grant

This tartan is today known as *Fraser* and is generally regarded as one of the Sobieski Stuarts' inventions that was included in their 1842 *Vestiarium Scoticum*. In writing about this tartan (Plate 24) Stewart appears to have gone off on another flight of fancy, making deductions that are unsupported by the evidence. He says that the authority for this being a Grant tartan is that it was reproduced from a portrait of Robert Grant of Lurg (1678-1777), that was at Troup House c.1893. He goes on to mention that it '*...is identical with that now commonly styled the Fraser. It was accepted by some only of the Fraser families in 1842, because it was illustrated under their name in the Vestiarium Scoticum*'. Unfortunately, the Troup House portrait disappeared around the time Stewart's *Old & Rare* was published but there are at least five other versions known to exist. The oldest of these is thought to be that from Old Cullen in which Lurg is shown wearing what is assumed to be the Black Watch tartan – he served in one of the precursor Highland Independent Companies before 1739. Two of the subsequent versions show the same design as a red based tartan; the one at Inverary (Plate 25) shows striking similarities with the Fraser tartan given by the Sobieski Stuarts and then the pattern given by Stewart as Grant. There are inconsistencies in the execution of the tartan in the various portraits of Robert Grant, and presumably in the Troup version too, and it is possible that Stewart made an erroneous identification based on the similarity of the two designs. If the Troup version were to be traced it would help confirm the supposition that Stewart's translation was incorrect. As matters stand, the identification of what is now known as the Fraser tartan with the Grants at a much earlier date must be treated with a degree of suspicion.



Plate 24. Fraser of Lovat, O&R



Plate 25. Grant of Lurg, Inverary version
Photo credit: James Grant

Plate XI – Huntly

Writing of this tartan (Plate 26) Stewart states, correctly, that it *is designated 'Huntly and Brodie in certain early collections.'* However, his interpretation of the shades is suspect, particularly the red, blue and green which are much darker than those used in surviving early Wilsons' specimens. One such is a specimen named 'Huntly & Brodie' in a sample book dating to 1830-40 (Plate 27).

Without any corroboration, he goes on to say of the tartan that '*...it appears to belong to a district rather than to a family.*' And that '*Tradition shows it to have been in use during a considerable portion of last century by such families as Gordon, Brodie, and Forbes, or at least by members of these touched with Jacobitism, who appear to have assumed this tartan in common.*' There is absolutely no evidence to support the use of this, or any other single tartan, by these or any other families during a considerable portion of the 18th century. Once again, Stewart's narrative appears to have been influenced by Garth and the assumption that tartans named after districts had a proven historical use in those areas. The Huntly is in fact one of a number of patterns produced by Wilsons around the turn of 19th century and named after places as a form of marketing to help their sales.

Wilson's *Huntly* has a structure similar to a several of their designs, including those now called: *Ross*; *MacRae* and notably, *The Prince's Own*, see No.42 on p46.



XI. HUNTLY
Plate 26. Huntly, O&R

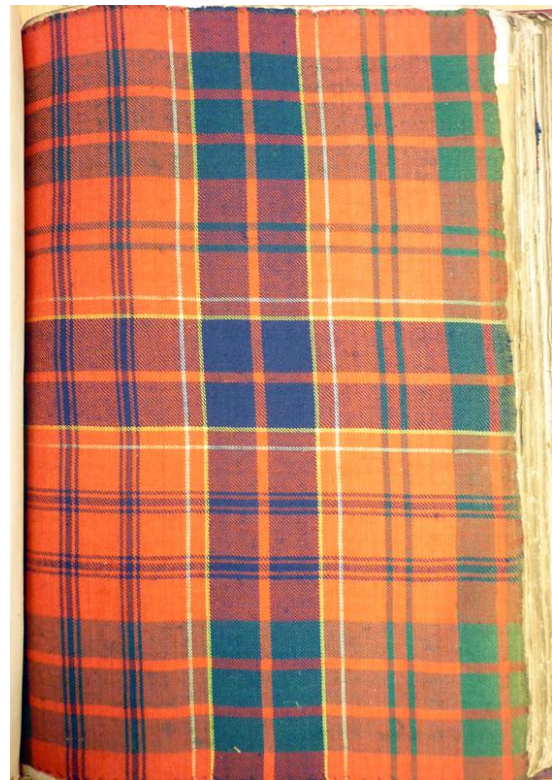


Plate 27. Huntly & Brodie, Wilsons' Sample Book
Photo ©The Author

Plate XII – Keith and Austin

Stewart says this design (Plate 28) that *‘Despite the uncertainty concerning the origin of this design, it is included in every complete early collection, like that of the Highland Society of London, of the late Dr Skene, of Messrs Ogilvie & Co., and of Messrs Romanes & Paterson. The last-mentioned firm has supplied it from the early years of the present century to various families of Keiths and Austins, including the house of Keith-Falconer, Earls of Kintore.’*

In fact, there is no uncertainty concerning the origin of this design, and it was not included in either the first or second volume of the Highland Society of London’s collection. This was one of Wilsons of Bannockburn’s ‘Fancy Patterns’ that were popular at the beginning of the 19th century. It was included in their 1819 Key Pattern Book as *No.075 or Austin*; they also wove *No.137 or Austin with Red* and *No.173 or Austin with Yellow*. Why Wilsons chose to add the name Austin is unclear but it may have been a populist reference to the novelist Jane Austen.

When the name Keith became associated with the tartan is uncertain. It was certainly in use by 1880 as there is a sample so named in the Clans Originaux, a pattern book produced in Paris that year by J. Claude Fres Et Cie. This sett is also known as Marshall and Falconer after the office of Marischal of Scotland, an hereditary title held by the senior member and Chief of Clan Keith. In 1778, it was decided that the Earldom, Lordship and Chieftaincy of *Clan Keith* should pass to Anthony Adrian Falconer, Lord Falconer of Halkerton, who changed his surname to Keith-Falconer.



Plate 28. Keith and Austin, O&R



Plate 29. Austin, Wilsons’ Sample Book
Photo ©The Author

Plate XIII – Kennedy

Once again, Stewart makes unsubstantiated claims when he says of this design that *‘The tartan seems to have been first worn by Kennedy families in the Lochaber district’* (Plate 30). And that *‘The design has been accepted by the Kennedys in Carrick, many of whom adopted it last century as an emblem of their Jacobite sympathies.’*

Stewart claimed that *‘Several early examples of the pattern are in existence, and one of these is here reproduced in the exact tints of the original. As will be seen in the plate, the single red stripe is scarlet and the two fine red lines are crimson; but manufacturers, to save themselves trouble, have been accustomed to vitiate the design by failing to mark this distinction. It is noteworthy that the tartan bears little resemblance to any other Lochaber design of ancient date.’*

Once more, Stewart gives no details of the alleged ‘early examples’ and none are known. The fact that *‘...the tartan bears little resemblance to any other Lochaber design of ancient date’* is unsurprising; there is no known connection between this design and any Lochaber pattern. In fact, the tartan was first recorded by Mclan in his book *‘The Clans of the Scottish Highlands’*, 1845, which he co-authored with James Logan^{vi} (Plate 31). Interestingly, this is not one of the tartans that Logan included in his *‘The Scottish Gael’*, 1831^{vii}. Mclan gave the source for his tartan that it was *‘taken from a plaid in possession of Dr. Kennedy, Fort William’*. This may have been the source of Stewart’s claim but the fact remains, the existence of the plaid has never been verified and like several of Mclan’s depictions, its veracity remains open to question.



Plate 30. Kennedy, O&R



Plate 31. Kennedy, Mclan 1845

Plate XIV – Logan

The account that ‘*The pattern here given is included in the collection formed by the Highland Society of London,...*’ (Plate 32) is curious but perhaps not surprising coming from Stewart. It is not amongst the specimens included in the collection formed 1816-22. He continues ‘*...and it occurs in numerous others, including that at Moy Hall, while it has borne this name for many years*’.

In their 1819 Key Pattern Book, Wilsons listed this design as *No 119 or Logan*, they also included variations of the design as *Logan – Dark & Light*, and a variation with a yellow stripe as *No 213 or LOGAN with Yellow*. These entries, and the fact that there are no pre-Wilsons’ examples, leave little doubt that the Logan was their design, one of series of variations on a theme. The fact that this was not an early Logan tartan is supported by it having been known as ‘Rose’ during the 1830s (Plate 33) before becoming the Skene tartan in the Smiths’ 1850 publication,^{viii} the name by which is usually known today.

Like the majority of the other Wilsons’ tartans that Stewart included, this one does not really qualify as either ‘Old’ or ‘Rare’. Logan may have been a reference to Thomas Logan, one of Wilsons’ important customers at the time.



XIV. LOGAN
Plate 32. Logan, O&R



Plate 33. Wilsons’ *Rose* (No 119 or Logan) c 1830
Photo ©The Author

Plate XV – MacCallum

Mystery surrounds Stewart's inclusion of this tartan of which he wrote that it was '*Well-nigh forgotten and rarely encountered, save in the old pattern-book, or the tartan collector's museum, this design is early, though its origins cannot be fixed with any certainty*'. He claimed that it was included in the collection of the Highland Society of London, the Moy Hall collection, and in every other important repository. Except that it was not! There is no specimen in either the Cockburn (1816-25) or HSL (1816-22) collections, nor amongst any of the known collections of Wilsons' specimens.

As there are no known old specimens of this tartan, including in the collections cited by Stewart, it is questionable whether he ever saw it and that his inclusion was based on some unsupported family tradition. The similarity of this design to Wilsons' *No 158 or Cobourg*, now called *Graham of Menteith* (Plate 35), must give cause to wonder whether Stewart erroneously copied a specimen of that, perhaps one used by some MacCallum family or other.

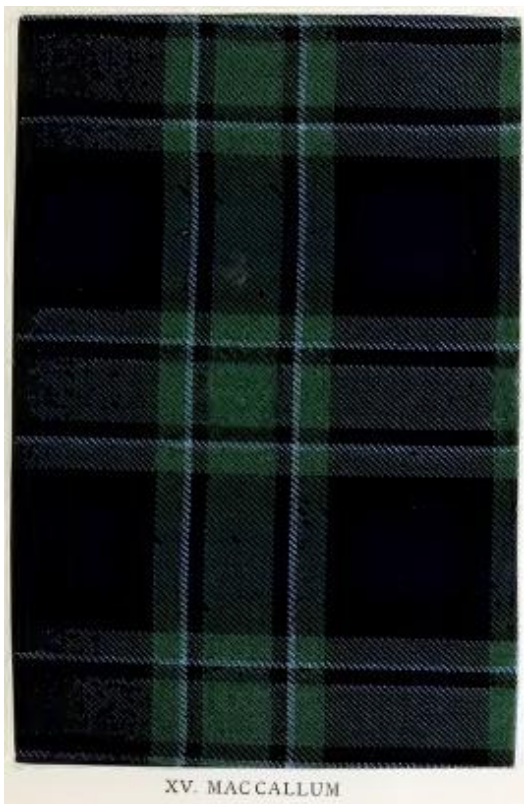


Plate 34. MacCallum, O&R



Graham.
Plate 35. Graham (of Menteith), 1906
Photo: © The Author

Plate XVI – MacDonald

Simply called *MacDonald* by Stewart, this tartan (Plate 36) is now universally known as *MacDonald of Kingsburgh* and is one of the few truly old tartans included in *Old & Rare*. It is inextricably linked with Prince Charles Edward Stuart and the Jacobite cause having been given to the Prince by Alan MacDonald of Kingsburgh, the future husband of Flora MacDonald.

A small fragment of the original survives in the collection of Jacobite memorabilia known as the Lyon in Mourning which includes the following description of the piece's origins (Plate 37).

The above are pieces of the outside and inside of that identical waistcoat which Macdonald of Kingsburgh gave to the Prince when he laid aside the woman's clothes. The said waistcoat being too fine for a servant the Prince exchanged it with Malcolm Macleod. Malcolm, after parting with the Prince, and finding himself in danger of being seized, did hide the waistcoat in a cleft of a rock, where, upon his returning home in the beginning of September 1747, he found it all rotten to bits, except only as much as would serve to cover little more than one's foot, and two buttons, all of which he was pleased to send to me. The waistcoat had lain more than a full year in the cleft of the rock, for Malcolm Macleod was made prisoner sometime in July 1746.

Comparison of Stewart's supposedly accurate reproduction clearly shows that his colouring and proportions were woefully inaccurate and that it in no way matched the 'exact proportion to the original' as he claimed for all the entries.

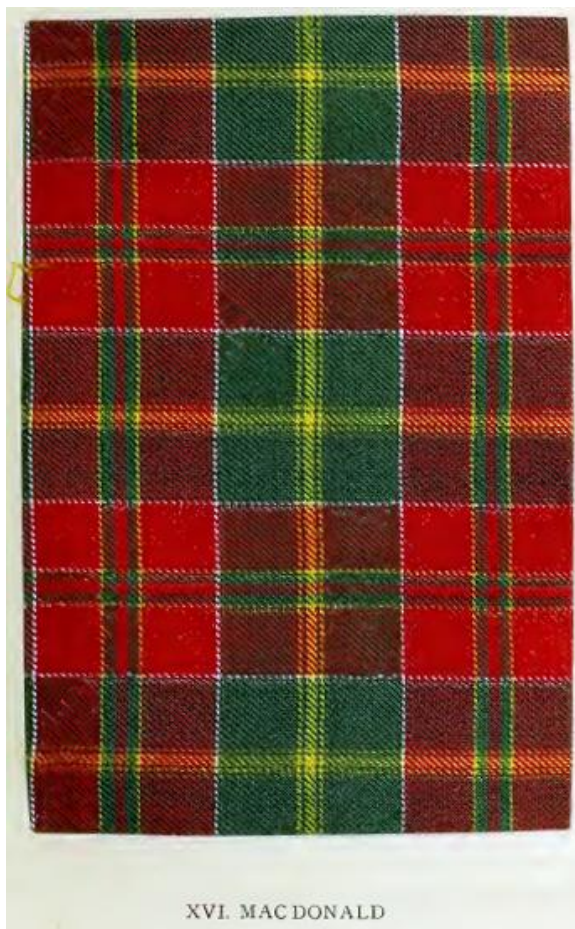


Plate 36. MacDonald, O&R



Plate 37. Original specimen and narrative.
Photo credit: National Library of Scotland

Plate XVII – MacDonald of Keppoch

This *MacDonald of Keppoch*, plus the *MacIntosh* (No 18) and the tartan *From A Plaid Found On Culloden Battlefield* (No 44) are three versions of the same tartan included by Stewart in *Old & Rare*. For some reason he failed to link the three despite similar stories surrounding the origin of two of them and pattern similarities in all three. There is also a piece of the same pattern and bearing a similar story about its origin that belongs to the Robertsons.

Stewart said of this specimen (Plate 38) that *'The illustration represents a portion of the plaid the Keppoch of '45 gave Prince Charles Edward, long preserved at Moy Hall, but many years back divided among various families'*. He goes on *'Recently the pattern has fallen into desuetude, many entitled to wear it preferring the quieter colours of the pattern now commonly known as Clan Macdonald. Several variations of the Keppoch scheme exist, and old specimens differing from the illustration are held by some to be authentic setts; but this has always been admitted by leading authorities to be the Keppoch, since the plaid presented to the Prince was presumably in the chief's pattern'*.

This writer has examined the remaining section of the so-called Moy Hall Plaid (Plate 39) which was allegedly given by Prince Charles Edward to Lady MacKintosh.¹⁶ There are similarities between the two but Stewart's plate is defective in both setting and the number of colours with his having no blue. He does not identify the 'leading authorities' said to recognise this as the MacDonald of Keppoch tartan but the usual Keppoch sett, whilst being structurally quite different, has a similar story attached to it.¹⁷ It is said to be from a *'the plaid, left at Moy Hall by Prince Charles Edward, during his wanderings after Culloden. The suit to which it belonged, was made from a tartan, spun for the last of the Stuarts by Mrs MacDonnell of Keppoch.'* It is possible that Stewart confused or conflated the two stories and he does not include the usual Keppoch tartan despite there being a specimen of it said to be or the period.



Plate 38. MacDonald of Keppoch, O&R



Plate 39. Fragment of the Moy Hall Plaid
Photo ©The Author

¹⁶ http://www.scottishtartans.co.uk/Moy_Hall_Plaid.pdf

¹⁷ http://www.scottishtartans.co.uk/MacDonnell_of_Keppoch.pdf

Plate XVIII – MacKintosh

'To the example here illustrated peculiar interest attaches, since it is the sett worn by Prince Charles Edward in the Mackintosh country. The illustration reproduces the colours and the dimensions in the original, which, though a small, is yet a fine specimen of old hard tartan.' (Plate 40). This is the second of the three versions of the same pattern given by Stewart but which he failed to connect. He obtained his specimen from The Rev. A. Thomson Grant, of the Rectory, Leven (Fife) who said of it:

'The piece of tartan I sent you was given me in September 1860 by Mrs Christina Mackintosh or Grant, widow of the Rev. James Grant, minister of Cromdale. I was at the time on a visit to Coulmakyle House, some miles above Grantown, where Mrs Grant and her family then resided. Mrs Grant produced a piece of tartan, which she confidently assured me was a piece of the kilt worn by Prince Charlie while in the Mackintosh country. The kilt, she added, was religiously divided among the then members of the chief's family and near relations, and the piece she possessed had come down to her by regular descent from her ancestors of that time. When I was bidding good-bye, Mrs Grant halved the piece of tartan, and gave me that which is now in your possession.'

We therefore know that the piece Stewart copied had been divided (halved) in 1860, and that the family tradition was that it had been handed down through several generations. It is not known what happened to the specimen but it is further evidence of the problems that dividing historical pieces can cause. In the case of a complex pattern such as this it partially explains Stewart's incorrect reproduction. A section of the original plaid in this reviewer's collection (Plate 41) represents a similar section of the plaid sent to Stewart. Comparison with the surviving piece at Moy Hall (Plate 39) clearly shows Stewart's interpretation of this small section as that of the complete design to be wholly incorrect.

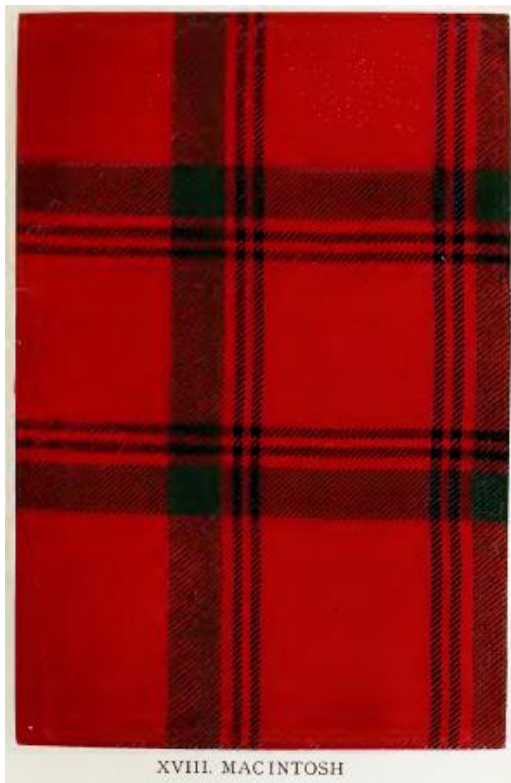


Plate 40. MacKintosh, O&R



Plate 41. A section of the Moy Hall Plaid, Author's collection. Photo ©The Author

Plate XIX – MacIntyre and Glenorchy

David Stewart of Garth thought that the Glenorchy was a district, rather than a clan tartan.¹⁸ Stewart cites Garth saying that *'Wherever authentic records of tartans are preserved this design appears, generally as Mac Intyre and Glenorchy, though occasionally as Glenorchy alone. It seems to have partaken of the nature of a district tartan, for the locality whence the title is taken was only partly occupied by the Mac Intyres...'* He concluded that Garth was referring to this tartan although that is not clear and elsewhere Garth referred a different, unidentified tartan, from Glenorchy.¹⁹ Stewart goes on to state that *'The pattern in the illustration (Plate 42) occurs in the collection of the Highland Society of London (1822)',* which it does not, and that *'In a collection formed in 1790 there is a scheme differing very slightly from the present illustration.'* The latter reference is thought to be to the Cockburn Collection which dates to 1816-25, not 1790. Dating aside, Stewart is correct that the Cockburn setting differs from his setting but fails to mention that the specimen is named *Cumming*. This omission was perhaps because it would have undermined his statement about the uniform early naming of the design as MacIntyre or Glenorchy. Specimens in other early collections are also named *Cumming*.

Once again, Stewart's claim that his example was matched to original examples is not supported by evidence. In this case, the shades are close to what are termed 'Modern Colours' which generally reflect post 1860 aniline dyes rather than older natural dye shades. There are numerous examples of this tartan, labelled variously; MacIntyre, Glenorchy, and Cumming dating to the early 19th century and in every case, the shades are lighter. It was a popular tartan and at least four different settings exist; this one is known to date to at least 1822 when the tartan was used to make a waistcoat (Plate 43).



XIX. MAC INTYRE AND GLENORCHY
Plate 42. MacIntyre and Glenorchy, O&R



Plate 43. Glenorchy 1822
Photo Credit: NMS

¹⁸ 'Thus a Macdonald, a Campbell, a Mackenzie, &c. was known by his plaid; and in like manner the Athole, Glen-orchy, and other colours of different districts, were easily distinguishable.' Sketches: Part 1, Section 5.

¹⁹ 'Tell our excellent friend Hamilton that I am preparing some red tartan for him, this is from the District of Glenorchy, the property of Lord Breadalbane where very beautiful Plaids are made.' DG letter to A. Robertson (miniaturist) dated 22 Jan 1815.

Plate XX – MacLachlan

In discussing the MacLachlan, once again we have an example of Stewart at his most effusive, describing this as ‘one of the finest of the old clan setts.’ Not only does he default to the idea of ‘clan tartans’, he does so without offering any evidence beyond the claim that it appears in early collections. He states that the illustration ‘...is the only example occurring under that name in the collections of the Highland Society, the Campbells of Craignish, The Mackintosh of Mackintosh, and many others.’

Stewart’s specimen (Plate 44) is much closer to historical specimens than some of his patterns, for example; this one produced by Wilsons of Bannockburn (Plate 45). Despite his claim to the contrary, there is no specimen of this or any other MacLachlan tartan in the Highland Society’s collection. Mention has already been made regarding the unidentified Campbell of Craignish collection and whether this was in fact a reference to the Cockburn Collection. If it was the Cockburn then Stewart is again wrong as there is no MacLachlan in it either.

The sett is typical of some of Wilsons’ *Fancy Patterns* and, given the earliest known specimens are all theirs, it seems likely that it was one of their designs from the early 1800s.



Plate 44. MacLachlan, O&R

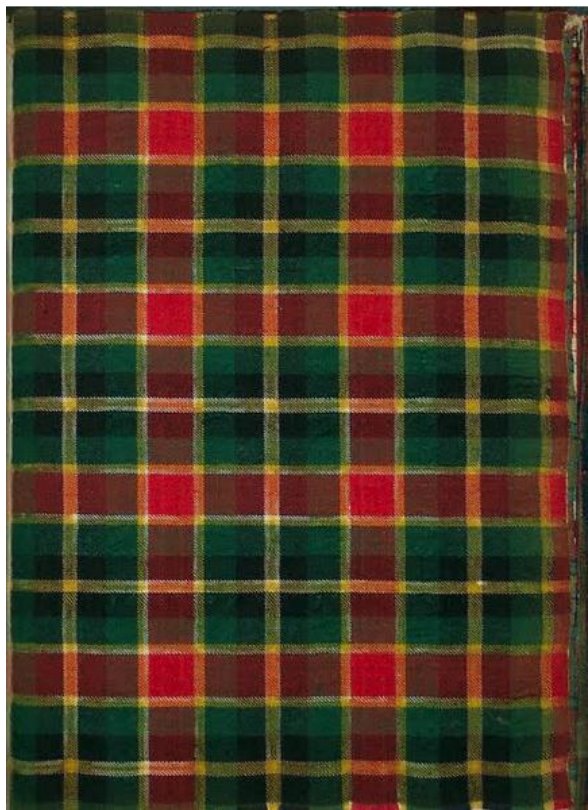


Plate 45. MacLachlan c.1830-40
Photo ©The Author

Plate XXI – MacLaine of Lochbuie

In common with several of his other plates, Stewart makes statements about the antiquity of this tartan (Plate 46) without providing any evidence to support it. In his view this was ‘*One of the few tartans concerning whose antiquity no doubt appears ever to have been suggested, the Mac Laine of Lochbuie ranks in every extensive collection of old patterns,...*’ A specimen of this tartan is included in Cockburn’s collection (1816-25), but it is labelled Sinclair, not MacLaine. Whether this was an error at the time it was collated or whether, like other examples with non-standard names, is evidence of the contemporary naming practice at a time when clan tartans were in their infancy is unclear.

There is no MacLean or MacLaine specimen amongst the ‘clan tartans’ in the Highland Society of London’s collection (1816-22), a fact that reinforces this not being regarded as a clan tartan at the time. This omission argues against Stewart’s statement that ‘*The date of its introduction is unknown, but its use in the Western Isles last century is authenticated, and tradition points to its early origin.*’ The obvious question is; authenticated by whom, and what tradition? If the early, pre-1800, date implied by Stewart is questionable then his observation of the design that ‘*It is unique among old patterns, by reason of the quantity of pale blue in its composition....*’ is immaterial. There are a number of early 19th century tartans, most if not all designed by Wilsons of Bannockburn, that include a similar proportion of light blue and this is likely to be another example. There is absolutely no evidence to support the assertion that this was the old tartan of the MacLaines of Lochbuie and it does not seem to have been adopted by, or attributed to, them until the first half of the 19th century.



Plate 46. MacLaine of Lochbuie, O&R

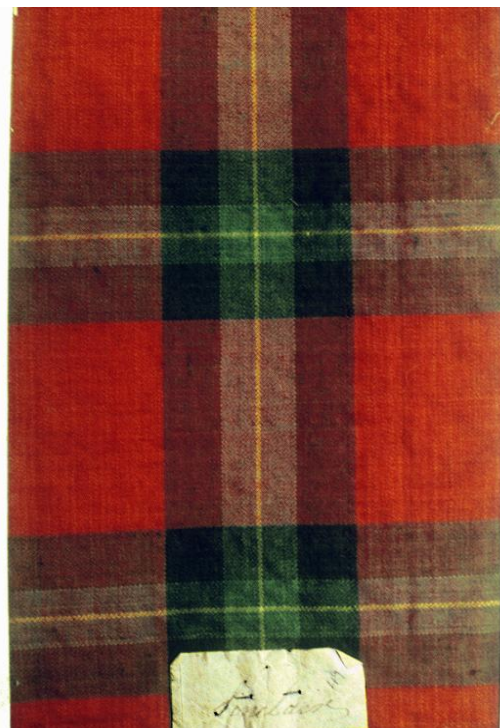


Plate 47. MacLaine (labelled Sinclair), Cockburn Collection c.1816-25 Photo ©The Author

Plate XXII – MacKeane

Viewed from today's perspective, it's not entirely clear why Stewart included the MacKeane/Maclain (Plate 48) amongst his *Old & Rare* tartans as it is neither. His rationale appears to have been that a description of the design was included in the 1828 unpublished version of the *Vestiarium Scoticum*, the Cromarty Manuscript (CM): '*Mackeane hethe four stryppes of Blak upon ain scarlett feilde, and upon the scarlett sett ain spraig (spraing) of yellowe of saxteen threidis, havand thereto ain bordure of Blak of twa threidis.*' Stewart overlooked another of the CM tartans, *Makquene* (spelt MacQueen today), which is the same design but with the red and black reversed: '*Makquene hath fover stryppes of redd vpon ain blak fylde & throuchovt the myduard of the blak sette ain yellowe spraing.*' The claims of antiquity detailed in the *Vestiarium* and earlier manuscript versions have been thoroughly debunked and shown to be the invention of the Allen Brothers (Sobieski Stuarts). The similarity in the names and designs should have caused Stewart to question the authenticity of this tartan and to have opted for a truly old or rare design in preference.

In attempting to justify the antiquity of the tartan Stewart goes on to state '*That the use of the design was not confined to this branch is evidenced by a contemporary portrait of Alastair Ruadh of Glengarry (who was prominent in the '45), in which he is depicted in this tartan.*' (Plate 49). Whilst there are certainly similarities in the two designs, an examination of the Glengarry portrait by this author confirmed that there is no yellow overstripe. In addition, the darker blocks appear to be blue and green, similar to the structure of many traditional patterns of the period, such as; the MacDonald of Keppoch.²⁰

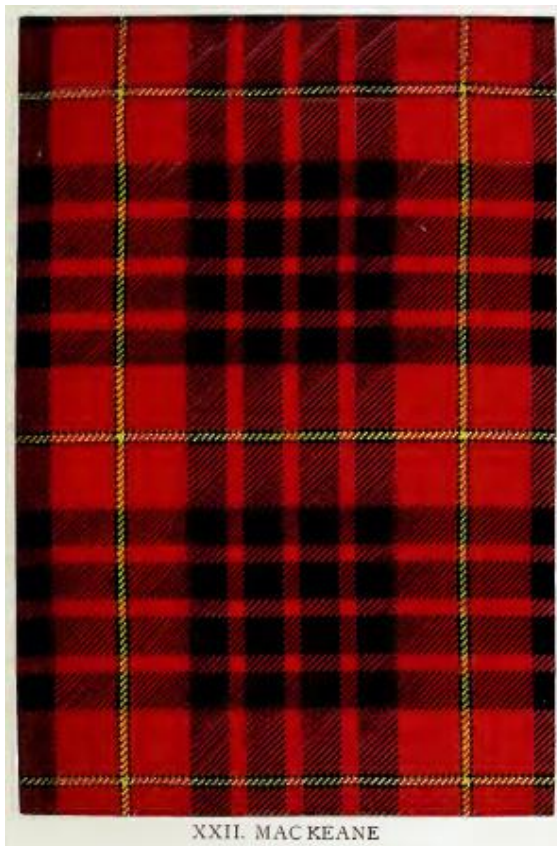


Plate 48. MacKeane, O&R



Plate 49. Alastair Ruadh of Glengarry c.1746-50

²⁰ http://www.scottishtartans.co.uk/MacDonnell_of_Keppoch.pdf

XXIII MacLean Hunting

The MacLean Hunting (Plate 50) is claimed to be the oldest recorded tartan in Scotland.²¹ Stewart develops this assertion saying '*The traditions, songs, and records of the Mac Leans contain references of a much earlier date to this tartan than do any authenticated collection of, or published work on, particular designs*'. The claim is based on an interpretation of a charter of 1587 granting Hector MacLean, heir of Duart, Nerrabolsadh in Islay, the feu-duty (rent) made payable in the form of sixty ells of cloth of white, black, and green colours. Written in Latin, the relevant section is: '*Pro Nerrabollsadh 60 ulnas panni, albi, nigri, et grosei coloris respective,.....*'²² White and black are readily identifiable but the phrase '*et grosei coloris*' is more problematical. Literally it means 'and gross colour' but Stewart argues that a signature section in Scots that includes, '*...claith qhite blak and grene cullouris...*' confirms that *grosei* meant green. The Latin for green is *viridi* and whilst *grosei* means gross, the word for grey is *grisei* and it seems more likely that the original text was mis-transcribed and should be '*et grisei coloris*' meaning 'and a greyish colour'. The discrepancy is strengthened by the subsequent charter 30 years later when the lands were granted to Rory MacKenzie of Coigeach. Then the cloth was described as white, black and grey, but when the lands were restored to MacLean of Duart in 1630, the colours of the cloth were again described as white, black and grass colour. In every case, the descriptions give white as the first colour which, if describing this tartan, seems illogical as it is a green and black design with white overstripes. Notwithstanding the charter descriptions, the first representation of it is in the 1842 Vestiarium Scoticum where it is described as the Clan MacLane tartan (Plate 51). The 'hunting' suffix is not known to have been used before Stewart's work. As if to justify his inclusion of the design, he also cites a verse from the old Gaelic song, 'Moladh rann do Shir Eachainn Mac Gillian Trath Dhubhairt' as evidence for this tartan.

*Bu mhian learn am breacan tlath,
Breacan uain' 'us dubh 'us geal
Datha sar Mhich-Ghillian am flath
Sud an laoch a fhuair mo ghaol.*

*Dear to me the tartan plaid,
The plaid of green and black and white
The colours of the brave Mac Lean
The hero of my love.*

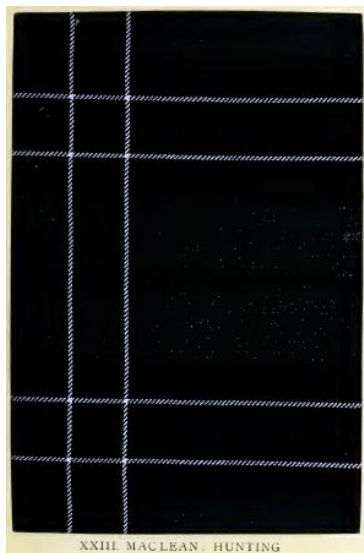


Plate 50. MacLean Hunting, O&R

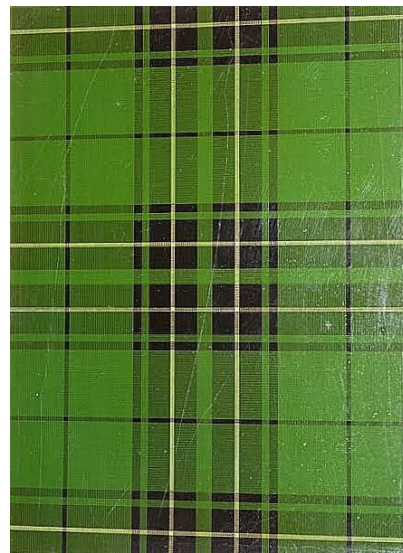


Plate 51. Clan MacLean, VS 1842

In fact, the song does not appear to be old, and Stewart's translation of '*am breacan tlath*' (correctly, *tlàth*) is incorrect; in this case it means a fine, rather than tartan, plaid.

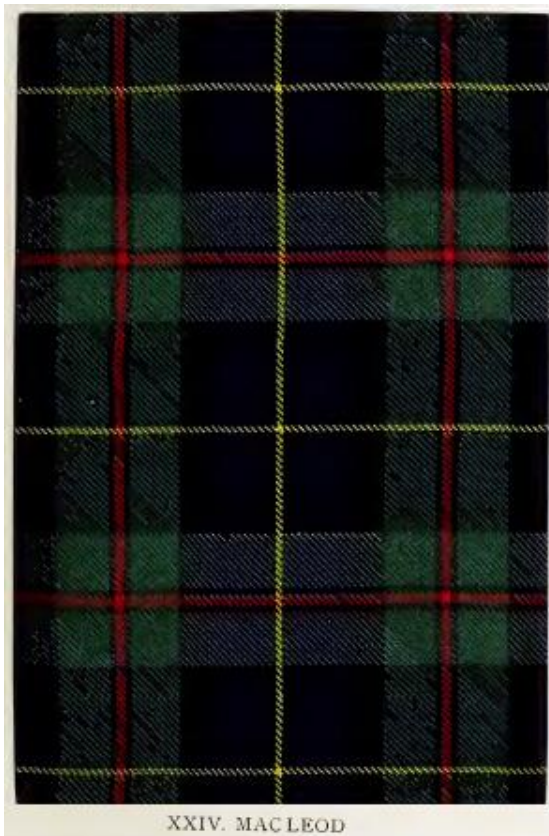
²¹ <http://macleanhistory.org/heraldry/tartans-of-the-clan-maclean/> accessed 1 May 2021.

²² The Great Seal Register, 1580-1593, edited by John Maitland Thomson, M.A., Advocate, No. 1491, in Stewart O&R p13.

Plate XXIV – MacLeod

Discussing the MacLeod tartan (Plate 52), Stewart once again makes statements that are wholly unsupported by evidence. *‘The inspection of important collections from 1785, the date of the repeal of the statute against tartans, till the present day, proves that the design here given invariably occurs under the family designation.’*

Stewart’s dating of the Repeal of the Dress Act is wrong, it was 1782. So too, his reference to a collection of 1785. There was no such collection, nor does the MacLeod appear in either the Highland Society of London collection (1816-22) or the contemporary Cockburn collection (1816-25). Logan included it in his Scottish Gael (1831). Most, possibly all, of the specimens he used were obtained from Wilsons of Bannockburn and this one has the appearance of one of their fancy patterns. Logan’s scale is defective; it gives a full repeat, yellow to yellow, but one pivot is given as a half count, the other as a full count. (Plate 53). Irrespective of this anomaly, the count indicates that the red and yellow stripes were the same size, a fact supported by a Wilsons’ specimen c.1830-40 (Plate 54). These proportions were followed by Smibert (1850) but Stewart’s plate gives the yellow as half the size of the red and is much darker than the older specimens he referenced. Both settings are woven today, as is an incorrect version that omits the black guards to the yellow.



XXIV. MAC LEOD
Plate 44. MacLeod, O&R

MAC LEOD.	
1	yellow
$\frac{1}{2}$	black
6	blue
6	black
6	green
$\frac{1}{2}$	black
2	red
$\frac{1}{2}$	black
6	green
6	black
6	blue
$\frac{1}{2}$	black
2	yellow

Plate 45. Logan’s 1831 scale for MacLeod

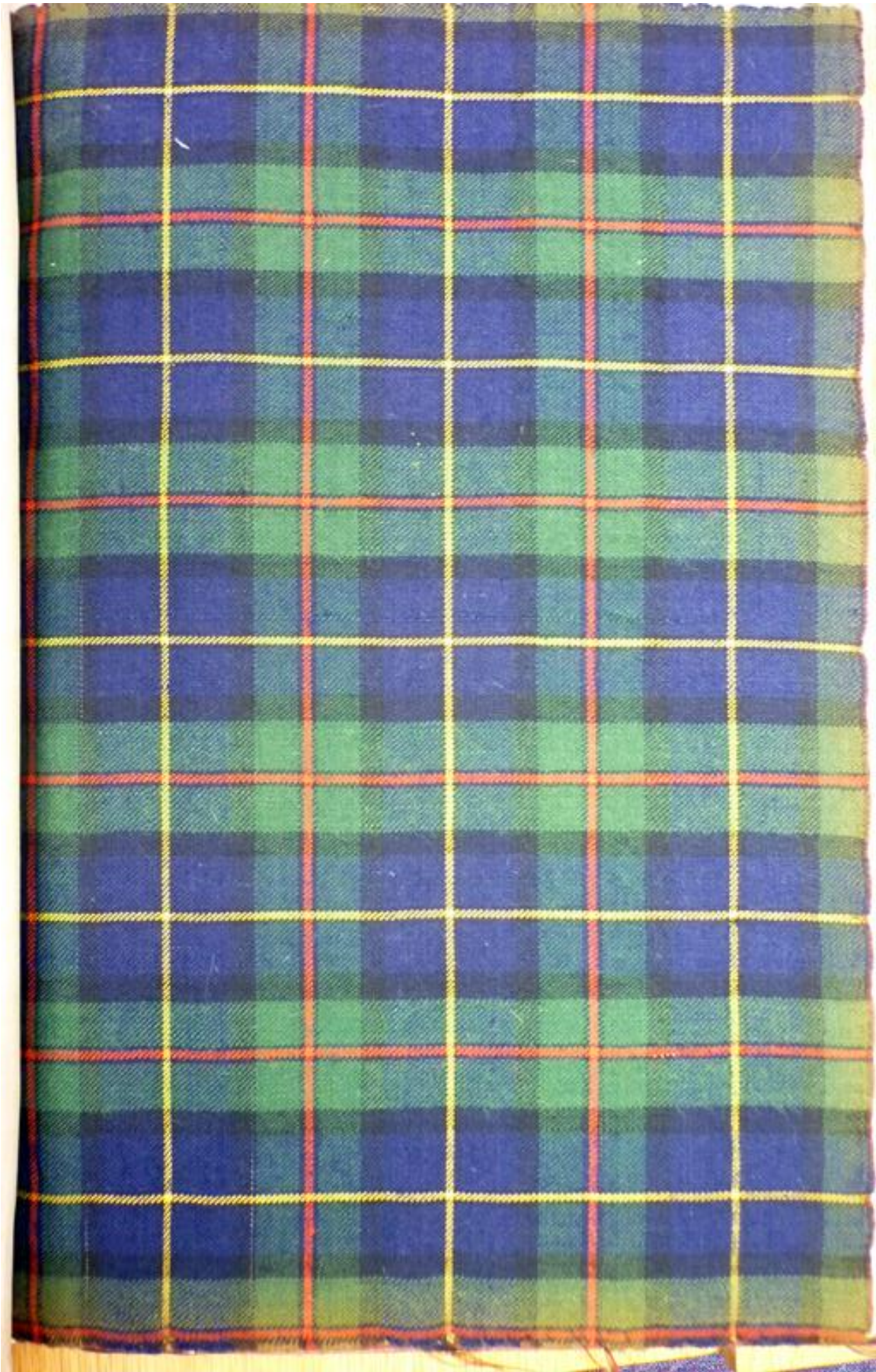


Plate 54. Wilsons' MacLeod tartan c.1830-40. Photo ©The Author

Plate XXV - MacNeill

Stewart's statement that *'To establish the antiquity of this pattern of the Mac Neill it is but necessary only to mention that it occurs in many old collections, including those of Craignish, Moy Hall, the Highland Society of London, and Messrs Romanes and Paterson.'* is once again inaccurate. Leaving aside the unidentified Craignish collection, there is no MacNeill specimen in the Highland Society's collection. Both the Moy Hall and Romanes and Paterson collections were c.1830-40 assemblages of Wilsons' specimens. The Scottish Tartans Authority has a similar collection of bound specimens that includes the MacNeill in which the yellow and white are silk, a common Wilsons' practice at the time (Plate 56). In their Pattern Book No.4 (c.1847) Wilsons called this sett 'New MacNeil' which supports this being a later variation of the older MacNeill tartan included in their 1819 Key Pattern.

In the 1930s Robert Lister Macneil of Barra adopted this tartan for himself and his family leading to it being called 'the Chief's sett'. In 1997 the then Chief wrote: 'I have now been told that, without consulting me, a number of members of the Clan MacNeil have decided to wear the red-strip tartan, after discovering that the Chief had never taken formal steps to restrict its use to his immediate family. I feel strongly that the Clan should have only a single tartan for each branch - Barra and Colonsay - and therefore have no intention of recognising the red-stripe as a Clan MacNeil tartan, except for use by the Chief and his immediate family. (I do not intend myself to wear the red-stripe tartan, because I believe the Chief should wear the same tartan as the Clan.)'

Once again, Stewart's claim that his example was an accurate representation of extant specimens is not borne out by examination of surviving pieces as the comparison with a Wilsons' specimen shows.

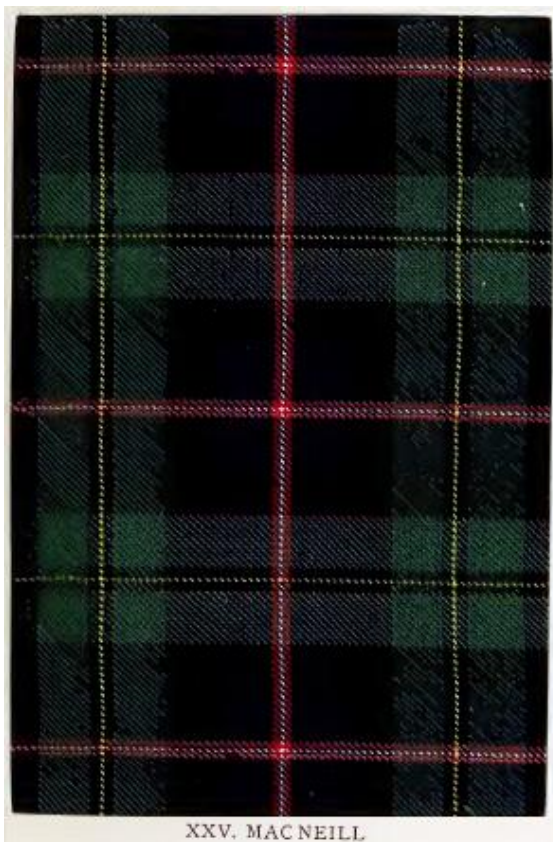


Plate 55. MacNeill, O&R



Plate 56. Wilsons' MacNeil

Photo credit: The Scottish Tartans Authority

Plate XXVI – MacPherson

There is considerable confusion over the origins of this tartan. Writing of the Hunting tartan mentioned in his text, Stewart says that the *'design is identical with that illustrated here, except that the ground is grey instead of white.'* He goes on, that the version shown here (Plate 57) is *'...found in the earliest collections is that here given, and there is even reason to believe it the pattern worn by the clan from the repeal of the prohibitory statute to the middle of the present century, when the white ground was exchanged for grey. It is not known why the alteration was made.'*

Wilson's do not appear to have woven the version with grey but called this version 'MacPherson Hunting' (Plate 58). At around the same time they wove another white based pattern which they called the 'MacPherson Undress'. Writing of the latter in 1850, the Smith Brothers quoted the Macpherson chief *'The design was known as the Breacan Glas' long before John [Sobieski] Stuart was heard of in this country, although I rather think the addition of the yellow stripe was introduced by him, or rather taken from his MS., but, at all events, the tartan is an old Macpherson.'* Breacan glas literally means grey tartan. The existence of two white based MacPherson tartans may have caused confusion and resulted in the two being conflated. The two patterns used unbleached white (ecru) which can have a grey appearance that may have led to them being associated with the term Breacan glas despite there being no evidence for either's existence before the early 1800s. The grey version was unknown before the Smiths' 1850 work and the error is therefore assumed to be theirs.



XXVI. MACPHERSON
Plate 57. MacPherson, O&R



Plate 58. Wilson's Macpherson Hunting
Photo credit: The Scottish Tartans Authority

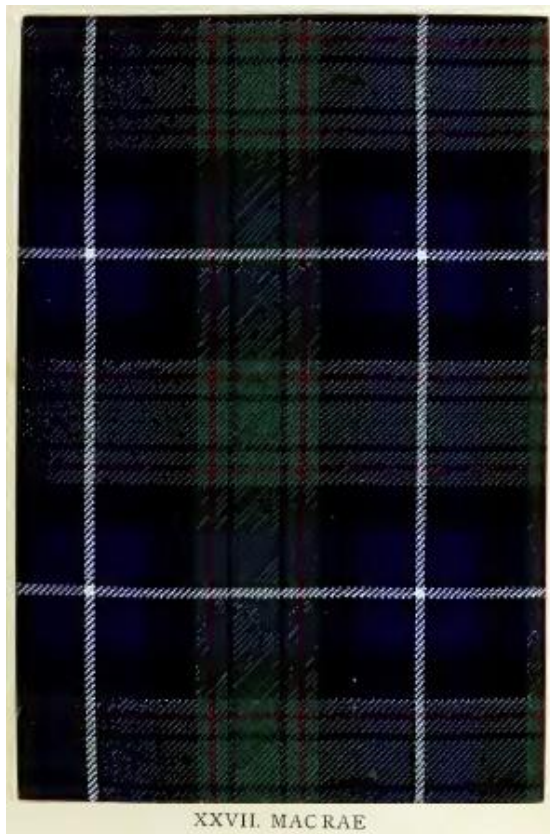
Plate XXVII – MacRae

DWS discusses three MacRae tartans under this heading and spends the least amount of time discussing the tartan he chose to include, which is strange given its potential significance.

‘The present illustration reproduces the pattern of a piece of old hard tartan from a kilt believed to have been worn by a member of Clan Mac Rae at the battle of Sheriffmuir in 1715. The fragment, now in the author’s possession, bears internal evidence of great age, the style of manufacture attesting its connection with the period to which it has been assigned.’ (Plate 59)

Stewart does not explain how he determined that the original specimen was ‘from a kilt’, nor the authority for it having been worn at ‘the battle of Sheriffmuir in 1715’. Presumably it was the tradition associated with it by the previous owner of his specimen. Nor does DWS explain what ‘internal evidence’ and ‘style of manufacture’ led him to conclude that the specimen dated to the early 18th century.

There is an extant c.1820 Wilsons’ specimen of this tartan and the design was used by Mclan (1845) for his MacRae character (Plate 60). His rendition is defective and may have been the source of Stewart’s plate. The pattern is similar to the MacKenzie tartan, itself a c.1770 variation of the Government or Black Watch tartan. The MacRae tartan differs from the MacKenzie by the blue and green being transposed and the thin lines nearest the edge of the green ground are changed from black to red. The traditional relationship between the two clans might explain the similarity of the two designs. As none of DWS’s records survive, his statement about the age of the specimen must be treated with caution, especially given the various Wilsons’ designs known to have been included in Old & Rare. Notwithstanding the claimed antiquity of DWS’s specimen, the fact remains that the oldest known specimen is a piece of Wilsons’ material dating to the early 19th century. It seems likely that this is another of their designs rather than being one that is at least a hundred years older as Stewart claimed.



XXVII. MACRAE
Plate 59. MacRae, O&R



MACRAE.
Plate 60. MacRae by R. R. Mclan 1845

Plate XXVIII – Menzies Hunting

The Menzies Hunting tartan is another of those tartans that Stewart chose to include because he considered it rare, it certainly was not old. In fact, it cannot be dated much before 1880. The green in his plate is so dark that it is difficult to differentiate from black (Plate 61).

Discussing the Hunting sett Stewart says that *'In the hunting pattern here reproduced the only change is the substitution of green for red in the ground, and red for white in the stripes.'* The red and green Menzies can be dated to the beginning of the 19th century at which time it was called MacFarlane (Plate 62) and a completely different design named Menzies (Plate 63).

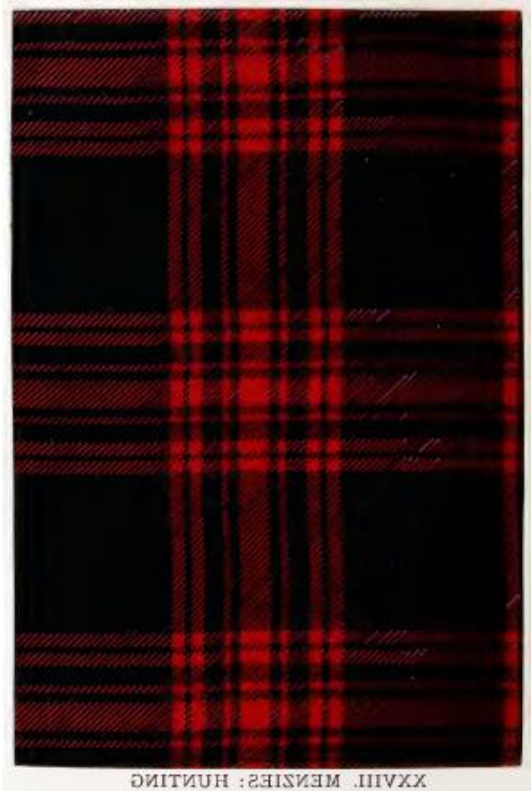


Plate 61. Menzies, O&R

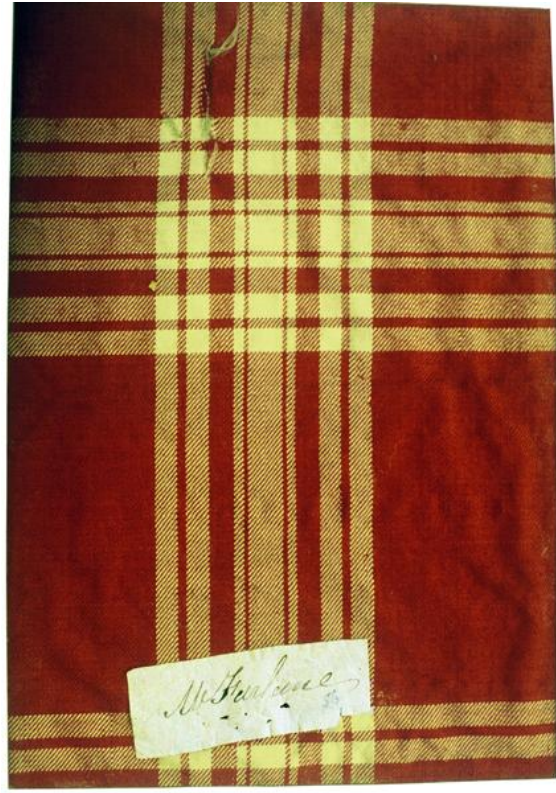


Plate 62. MacFarlane (Menzies), c.1816-25
© The Author

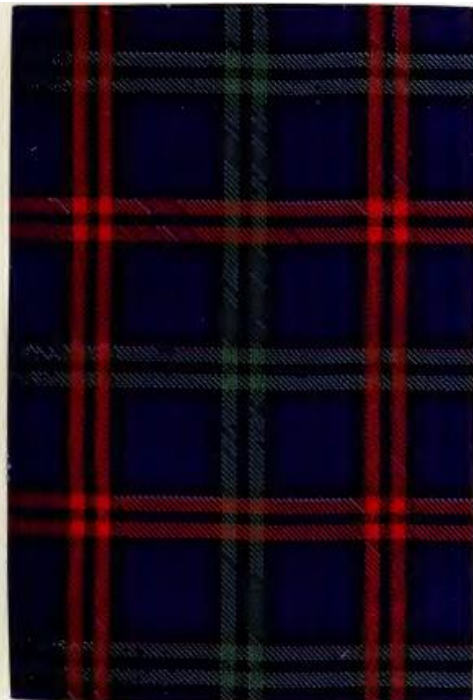


Plate 63. Certified example of the Menzies tartan in the Highland Society of London's collection c.1816
© The Author

Plate XXIX – Montgomerie

Noting that the use of tartans was popular as an anti-Union symbol at the time of the Union of the Kingdoms (1707), DWS says *'About this period, probably, the design here illustrated came to be adopted by the Montgomeries of Ayrshire.'* The use of 'probably' demonstrates that Stewart did not know and was simply assuming that having been the case, presumably to support his presumption of early clan tartans. He goes on to say that *'A fine example in old hard tartan, from Dr Skene's collection, has been employed as a guide in the reproduction of the sett'* (Plate 64). Stewart provided additional justification but once again, gave no details. *'An examination of the historical relics in the possession of the Earl of Eglinton, the head of the Montgomerie family, at Eglinton Castle has furnished ample evidence of the early use of the tartan as here illustrated.'* What historical relics and how they furnish evidence of the (undefined) early use of the tartan is a mystery.

In terms of hard evidence, Wilsons of Bannockburn's recorded this design as *No.7 or Eglinton* and it is reasonable to conclude that it was originally one of their c.1800 numbers patterns that was later named. When and after whom or what it was named is unknown. It is possible, indeed probable, that Dr Skene's²³ specimen was a piece of Wilsons' material like that formerly on display in the Tolbooth, Edinburgh (Plate 65).



XXIX. MONTGOMERIE

Plate 64. Montgomerie, O&R

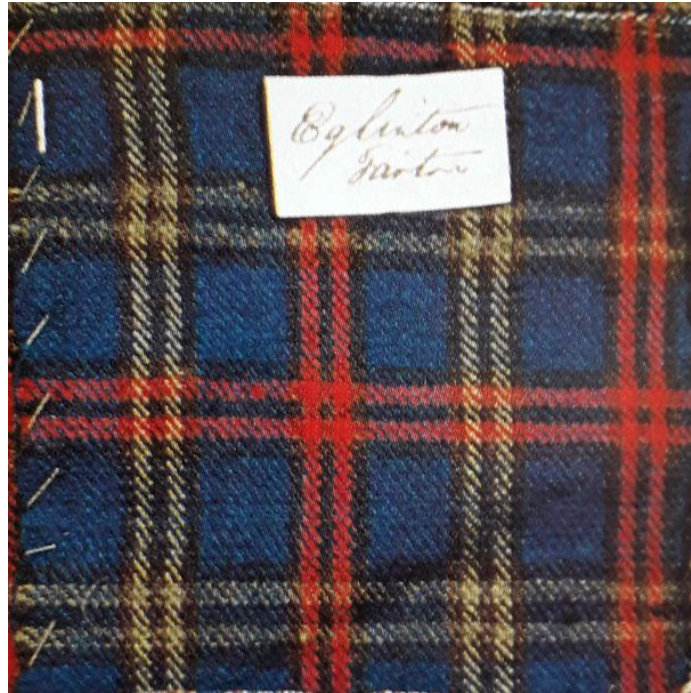


Plate 65. Eglinton tartan c.1830-40

© The Author

²³ Dr W. F. Skene (1809-92), a Scottish lawyer, historian and antiquary.

Plate XXX – Ogilvie

The connection between the Ogilvie and Drummond of Strathallan was discussed earlier (see notes under Plate VII). Stewart said of this illustration (Plate 66) that it *'shows what was known as the Ogilvy before 1812, though it has gradually sunk into abeyance.'* And that *'Of its origin nothing is known. It was revived as late as 1850 in The Clans of Scotland, by Thomas Smibert, but it was then imperfectly represented.'* The comment about Smibert's plate is curious because the setting is exactly the same as that Stewart himself gave.

The Ogilvie was amongst the earliest tartans submitted to the Highland Society of London for their collection collated between 1816-22. In 1816 the chief, Ogilvy of Airly, certified a variation of the Drummond of Strathallan tartan as his own (Plate 67). The principal difference between the two is the use in the Ogilvie of blue in place green in the Drummond of Strathallan. Both tartans are extremely complex and attempting to replicate either from a section can result in a woefully inaccurate outcome. That appears to have been the case with Stewart's representation which can be broadly mapped to the Highland Society's specimen. One of DWS's correspondent's, the owner of the '45 era portrait of David, Lord Ogilvy, suggested that the plaid could have been the source of the tartan. A study of the portrait by the author of this critique showed the two to be quite different (Plate 68). Considering the lack of historical specimens that match DWS's plate it is reasonable to conclude that his design was defective and the result of copying a partial section of the Ogilvie tartan sealed by the chief in 1816 but is a pattern which cannot be dated much before that date.



Plate 66. Ogilvie, O&R

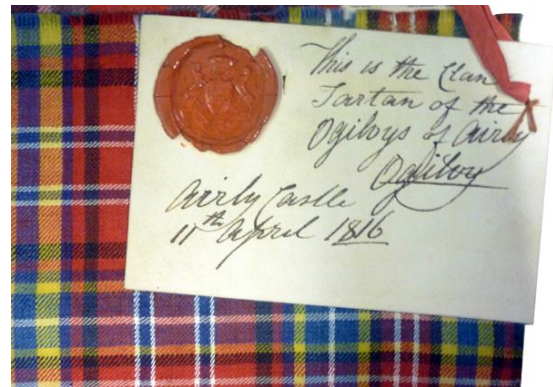


Plate 67. Ogilvie, 1816 © The Author



Plate 68. David, Lord Ogilvie 1745
Photo: Courtesy of Winton Estate

Plate XXXI – Ogilvie Hunting

Once more in error Stewart, when writing of this design (Plate 69), said that the Highland Society of London (1822) contains an especially fine example. Perhaps he confused it with the Ogilvie specimen discussed under Plate XXX. If that was the case, then it strongly suggests that he never actually examined the collection and perhaps only worked from a list of the contents.

His statement that *'Nothing authentic has been ascertained as to its first introduction, but traditions of its long use are plentiful among the families entitled to wear it.'* is typically vague. His quoting a myth about the fairies being displeased that their favourite colour, green, had been used as supporting the antiquity of this design is particularly bizarre.

Stewart noted that there was a specimen in the Moy Hall collection of Wilsons' specimens. labelled Ogilvie of Inverquharitie. It has not been possible to confirm this as the collection has been mislaid but the design was included in Wilsons' Pattern Book No.4 (c.1840) and so it is not unreasonable to accept the Moy Hall reference. What DWS omitted to mention was that this was amongst the designs included in the Cromarty Manuscript, the 1828 unpublished version of the Vestiarium Scoticum, but which was later reworked for the published version with only one black line (Plate 70).

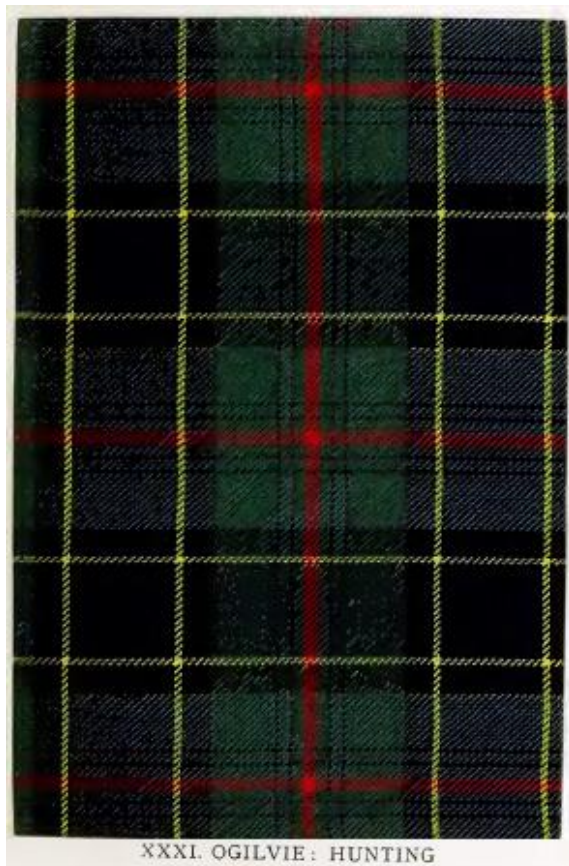


Plate 69. Ogilvie Hunting, O&R



Plate 70. Comparison of the CM and VS Ogilvie

Plate XXXII – Robertson

This tartan is the standard Robertson tartan with the addition of a white stripe. Stewart wrote that *'Careful and extended examination of the various authorities establishes that the example here represented illustrates the earliest tartan worn by members of the Clan Donnachie.'*

The various authorities presumably included the chief who he quotes; *'The late Strowan told me the red was made in Atholl, and presented to his father, who never used it. In those days it had a white line, which is never seen now.'* (Plate 71). The chief²⁴ may have been influenced by 19th century specimens such as that in the suit made for a gentleman from Nairn (Plate 72), and the portrait of Ewen William Robertson c.1850. Notwithstanding the chief's comment, the oldest record of a Robertson tartan is the standard clan sett (i.e. that discussed here minus the white line) which was being woven by Wilsons of Bannockburn c.1800. Their 1819 Key Pattern Book includes the following comment *'Note: This is the real Clan Donnachy or Robertson of Strouans Tartan.'*

There are a number of older, 18th century, tartans, most unnamed, that have a similar structure to the Robertson which can be described as having red grounds enclosed by alternating blue and green bands. This is one of three traditional red-based design forms but whether one or other of the Robertson tartans is older or simply a c.1800 variation of cannot be determined from the extant specimens. It is noteworthy that the chief was apparently unaware of this pattern at the time the Highland Society's collection was formed in 1816.



Plate 71. Robertson, O&R



Plate 72. Highland Revival Outfit c.1825-30
Photo credit: Highland Folk Museum

²⁴ Alasdair Stewart Robertson (1863- 1910), 24th of Struan, 10th of Drumachuine and 20th Chief of Clan Donnachaidh. He held the position of 20th Chief of the Clan Donnachaidh from in 1884.

Plate XXXIII - Stewart

Perhaps because they bear his surname, DWS includes several Stewart/Stuart tartans and is particularly vociferous about this one (Plate 73). *'The use of this design as Stewart tartan for a period extending back to 1745, at least, is vouched by the records of manufacturers and collectors alike. Specimens gathered about 1790, now in the author's possession, include an undated example, whose manufacture indicates great age. It is titled Clan Stewart, and in many collections the design appears as Old Stewart, so that it was obviously recognised as the clan pattern. Probably it was employed, for the most part, as a hunting tartan, by way of relief from the brilliancy of other designs of the same name. The strong resemblance between this scheme and that of the Atholl district tartan (popularly styled the Atholl- Murray), suggests that at one time they were identical. It is known that the pattern was much worn by the Stewarts of the Western Highlands, and as these, with the Stewarts of Atholl, formed the clan, there is, at any rate, a presumption in favour of a community of tartan at an early date. A remarkable example of the old belted plaid, of a design differing from the above in certain particulars but having the same dominant features, has been shown to the Editor by Mrs Stuart of Dalness. It is reported to be two centuries old, and to represent the original sett of the tartan.'*



Plate 73. Stewart, O&R



Plate 74. Early C19th made from older cloth
Photo: West Highland Museum

Taking Stewart's various statements in turn:

1. **The use of this design as Stewart tartan for a period extending back to 1745, at least, is vouched by the records of manufacturers and collectors alike.** This is possibly based on a note in Wilsons' 1819 Key Pattern Book that *'This is either the real Tartan of the great Clan Stewart or one of its branches.'* Wilsons provide no evidence for their comment, there are no old records of any other manufacturer and no collectors' specimens of this tartan before 1800.

2. **Specimens gathered about 1790, now in the author's possession, include an undated example, whose manufacture indicates great age. It is titled Clan Stewart....** Stewart often cites the Craignish collection of 1790. It is noteworthy that the former Clan Campbell archivist, Alasdair Campbell of Airds, had never heard of it. There is no record of what happened to the specimen Stewart claims to have had but if it was named and of 'great age' then it is likely that it was a sample of Wilsons' cloth.

3. **It is titled Clan Stewart, and in many collections the design appears as Old Stewart, so that it was obviously recognised as the clan pattern.** Stewart does not say which collections but as the concept of clan tartans is post 1800 this statement is historically incorrect.

4. **Probably it was employed, for the most part, as a hunting tartan, by way of relief from the brilliancy of other designs of the same name.** A typically ridiculous statement by Stewart and a further example of his belief in the historical existence of clan tartans. Additionally, the idea of hunting tartans was a 19th century construct.

5. **The strong resemblance between this scheme and that of the Atholl district tartan (popularly styled the Atholl-Murray), suggests that at one time they were identical.** There is not a strong resemblance between the two and the idea that this and the Murray of Atholl were at one time the same is complete nonsense. The Atholl tartan, the Government sett with red overstripes, was originally a late 18th century military tartan.

6. **It is known that the pattern was much worn by the Stewarts of the Western Highlands, and as these, with the Stewarts of Atholl, formed the clan, there is, at any rate, a presumption in favour of a community of tartan at an early date.** Known by whom? Stewart offers absolutely no proof for this flight of fancy and any presumption appears to have been solely his.

7. **A remarkable example of the old belted plaid, of a design differing from the above in certain particulars but having the same dominant features, has been shown to the Editor by Mrs Stuart of Dalness. It is reported to be two centuries old, and to represent the original sett of the tartan.** Stewart was writing in the early 1890s and so if the plaid was 'two centuries old', that would make it late 17th century which would be a remarkable and unique piece if that were true but one which this commentator doubts was the case. The fact that, in the late 19th century, a family had a length of old tartan that they believe to be old does not mean that was by implication, late 17th century. It is unclear what DWS meant by the plaid's design '*...having the same dominant features,*' as the Stewart and how that is relevant to the origins of this design. DWS's assumption that this apparently similar design was the original setting is at odds with his earlier statement that the (Old) Stewart design goes back to 1745, at least.

Predominately blue, green and black tartans are rare amongst older surviving specimens. There is a coat, said to have been worn at Culloden but which is stylistically early C19th, which is of a broadly similar design (Plate 74). It may well have been made from an older piece of tartan, possibly from the '45 era, but on closer inspection the design is asymmetric and any similarity to the Old Stewart is coincidental.

XXXIX - Stewart of Appin

In discussing the Stewart of Appin tartan (Plate 75) Stewart offers little by way of authority beyond stating that *'For the source of the present illustration reference must be made to the notes on the Stewart of Atholl tartan (Plate XXXIV²⁵). The pattern is identical with the Royal Stewart as now worn, except that the present sett has four narrow green lines running through the large red squares.'*

He correctly identifies that this is a variation of the Royal Stewart which has four overstripes on the red ground. In the Stewart of Atholl narrative (see XXXV) he gives the source as the description in the unpublished manuscript of the Vestiarium, the so-called Cromarty Ms. There is little to commend the Allen Brothers' design which perhaps explains why it was omitted from their 1842 publication. It was never adopted by the clan who prefer the standard Stewart of Appin tartan (Plate 76).



XXXIV. STEWART OF APPIN
Plate 75. Stewart of Appin, O&R



Plate 76. Stewart of Appin Clan Tartan

²⁵ This is a transcription error. The O&R Stewart of Atholl example is Plate XXV.

XXXV - Stewart of Atholl

Like the previous entry, the Stewart of Atholl was one of 'Five tartans described in the MS. whence the Vestiarium Scoticum was derived are omitted from that work'. DWS included them because 'It is believed that the reproduction of these patterns will prove of interest and, accordingly, they are illustrated in the present volume.' At the time of writing, Stewart obviously included these in the 'rare' rather than 'old' category.

Of the Atholl tartan (Plate 77) he wrote 'The scheme here represented bears considerable resemblance to certain early setts of Royal Stewart, but no record yet discovered indicates the period of its general use in Atholl.' Other than being a predominantly red and green tartan, it is unclear what 'considerable resemblance' Stewart was referring to. Equally, there is no support for his comment that 'There is reason to believe, however, that it constituted the basis of the red tartan of Clan Donnachie or the Robertsons.' Structurally, the Robertson and Stewart of Atholl tartans are completely different.

Finally, DWS tells his reader that 'The well-nigh universal adoption of the Atholl district pattern (commonly styled the Atholl- Murray) by the various septs in this part of Perthshire precluded the extensive wear of any other. Hence this design has remained almost unknown to the present generation.' In fact, the design was amongst the patterns produced by Wilsons of Bannockburn c.1830-40, a specimen is included in collection of George Harrison & Co, Edinburgh under the name *Lindsay & Crawford* (Plate 78). That collection was bound about the same time that Stewart was writing and it is unclear whether that was Wilsons' later or alternative name for the pattern, or a subsequent error.



Plate 77. Stewart of Atholl, O&R

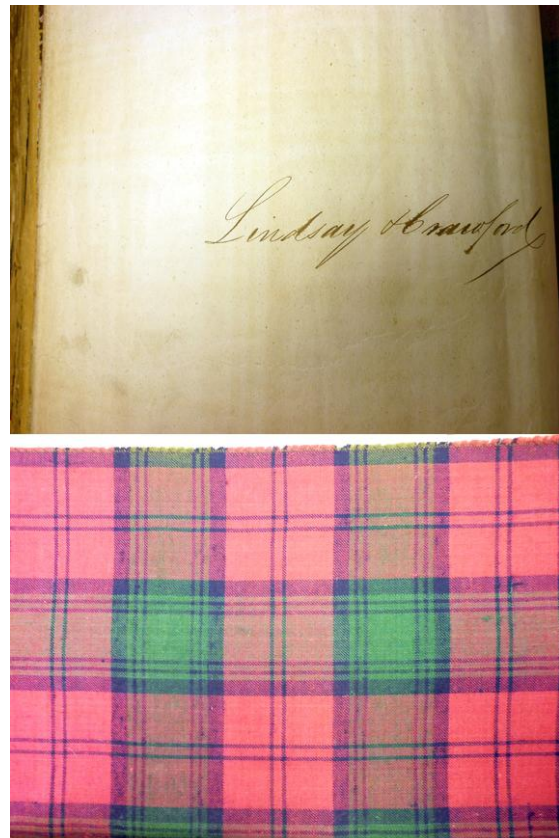


Plate 78. Lindsay & Crawford, c1830-40

Photo: © The Author

XXXVI – Stewart of Galloway

This is another of the Allen Brothers' unpublished designs of which Stewart says *'It differs from the Stewart of Appin merely in the number and the tint of the lines intersecting the red squares.'* (Plate 79). He notes that it's a variation of the Royal Stewart and then goes into an erroneous and fanciful evolution of that tartan as part of his justification for the age of the Galloway design.

'The Stewart of Galloway is a family tartan, restricted in use to the house whose name it bears, and its more immediate connections. It was in considerable favour in the early years of the present century among families allied to the Galloway Stewarts ; but of its earlier use available records afford no trace, though there is reason to regard its wear soon after the Union of the Kingdoms as highly probable.'

There is no evidence to support this having been restricted to family of the Earl of Galloway, nor is it clear what the justification was for Stewart's claim that it was favoured by the family in the early 1800s.

The Allen Brothers' claims about the authenticity of the tartans in the Vestiarium is nicely undermined by a comparison of their Clan Stewart and Stewart of Galloway, the difference being the change of the overstripe from green to black (Plate 80).



Plate 79. Stewart of Galloway, O&R

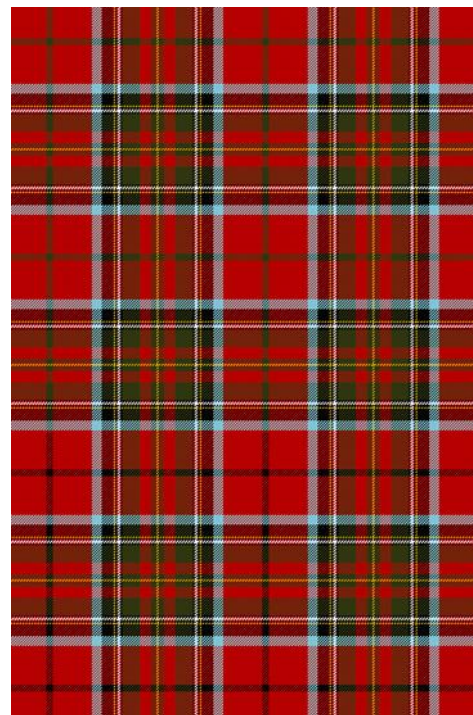


Plate 80. Comparison of the Clan Stewart and Stewart of Galloway tartan in the VS, 1842

XXXVII – Stuart of Bute

This is the fourth of the Sobieski Brothers' Stewart designs included by DWS (Plate 81) and yet another of their variations based on the Royal Stewart. Following the family tradition, this version is usually spelt 'Stuart'.

Of this tartan DWS says '*The pattern now submitted of the Stuart of Bute is a reproduction of another of the drawings omitted from the published Vestiarium Scoticum. The records of this, as of the previous design, point to its use having been confined almost entirely to the family from whom it derives its title.*' This is not borne out by the contemporary portrait of John Crichton Stuart, 2nd Marquess of Bute, in which he is wearing the ubiquitous Royal Stewart (Plate 82). The cloak is still owned by the Bute Trust and examination by the author confirmed that the tartan is Royal Stewart.

This tartan has been revived in recent years although it's often woven with maroon in place of the original red and designated 'hunting' by the weaving trade.



XXXVII. STUART OF BUTE
Plate 81. Stuart of Bute, O&R



Plate 82. The 2nd Marquess of Bute by Sir Henry Raeburn c.1840 wearing Royal Stewart tartan

XXXVIII – Wallace

In describing this tartan (Plate 83) DWS seems to have allowed his imagination full reign. Once again, he makes claims for the design's antiquity without providing any evidence.

'For this design there are records extending over a hundred years; and it is credibly asserted that the tartan is of much greater antiquity. The accumulation of evidence as to early use by the Wallaces of the example here illustrated has now led to its adoption by all bearing that name. It is a family tartan, for the Wallaces were in no sense a clan ; but its antiquity, and its authenticity, entitle it to a place in this work. Be this as it may, the pattern is placed under its proper name in many collections formed early in the century..'

Despite his claim to the contrary, this tartan is not included in any of the early collections, it was first recorded in the Vestiarium Scoticum (pub. 1842). It was presumably that authors' claimed 16th century source document that underpinned Stewart's justification for including it. His statement that records for the tartan extended *'over a hundred years; and it is credibly asserted that the tartan is of much greater antiquity'*. Credibly asserted by whom, the Allen Brothers? The fact remains, there is no evidence for this tartan before the 1828 unpublished version of the Vestiarium.

Stewart's goes on to say that *'Somewhat inexplicable is the fact that the tartan usually styled Mac Lean of Duart was greatly worn by certain Wallaces down to about twenty years ago. It is, indeed, frequently designated in old books of tartan relics as Mac Lean and Wallace.'* The 'old books' is likely to have been a reference to a bound collection of c.1830-40 Wilsons of Bannockburn's specimens belonging to the firm Romanes & Paterson (Plate 84). DWS was employed by Romanes & Paterson and had access to their records.

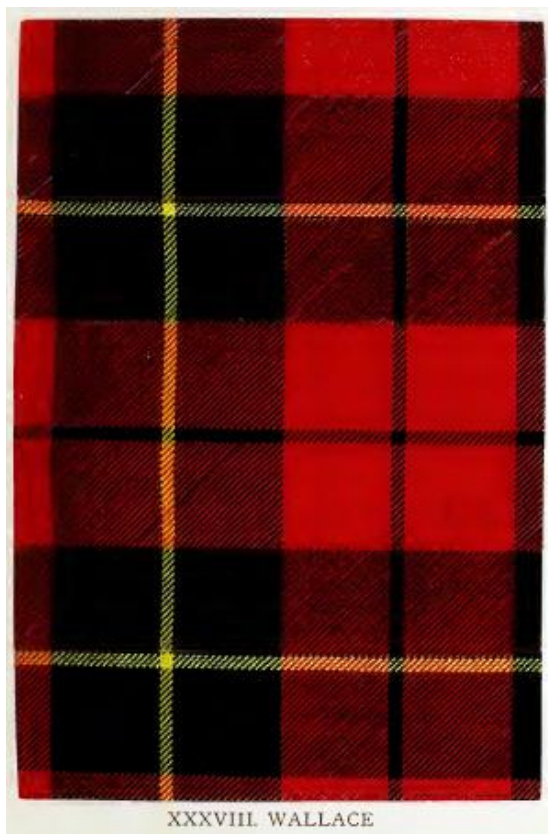


Plate 83. Wallace, O&R

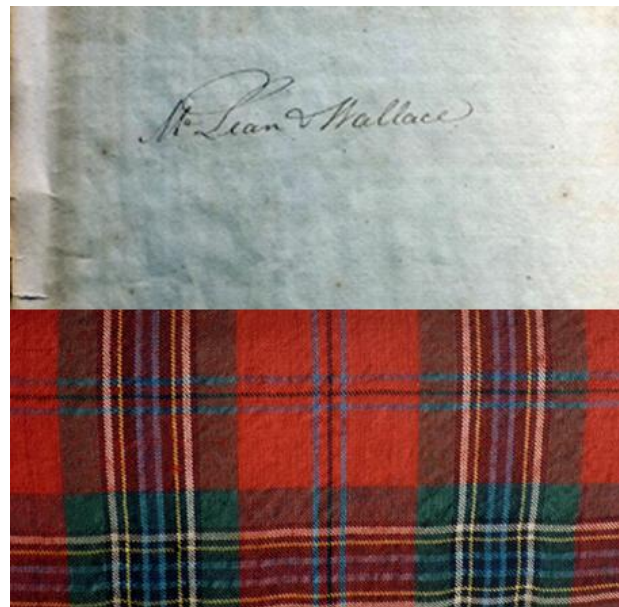


Plate 84. McLean & Wallace tartan c1830-40

© The Author

XXXIX - From a Portrait of the Countess of Lennox

This tartan was an unknown until the publication of *Old & Rare* in 1893 (Plate 85). Stewart said that it was *'depicted in a sixteenth century painting which existed in Paris between forty and fifty years ago, and was known as a portrait of the Countess of Lennox, mother of Lord Darnley.'*

DWS continued *'Two copies of the work are extant. One owned by the family of the late Mr Charles Elphinstone Dalrymple has been kindly lent for the purposes of this volume. The other is in the collection of Mr Henry Burnley Heath, Italian Consul General, London. Mr Heath writes that he searched in vain for the original in Paris some years back; and subsequent inquiries have also failed to trace it. It is suggested by him that the painting may be a portrait of Queen Mary in the tartan of the Lennox district, to which Darnley belonged. Mr Elphinstone Dalrymple, an authority on portraiture careful as eminent, believed in the authenticity and age of the work; but, unfortunately, his papers contain few notes concerning it or its history. It is to be hoped the whereabouts of this interesting portrait may still be ascertained, especially as it is deemed the earliest coloured representation of tartan dress.'*

Margaret Douglas, Countess of Lennox was the granddaughter of Henry VII, and daughter of the Scottish queen dowager Margaret Tudor. There are a number of pictures of featuring Margaret Douglas, Countess of Lennox but in every one she is dressed in the typical clothes of period (Plate 86). None show her wearing tartan.

This author has searched in vain for several years to try and find a photograph or identify the location of any of the three portraits, the original and two copies, mentioned by Stewart. His propensity for woefully inaccurate reconstructions of historical specimens must call into question the reliability of his interpretation of a design that no-one else appears to have seen.



XXXIX. FROM A PORTRAIT OF THE COUNTESS OF LENNOX
OF 16TH CENTURY DATE

Plate 85. Lennox, O & R



Plate 86. Margaret Douglas Countess of Lennox
c1540

XL - From the cloak of Prince Charles Edward at Fingask

This tartan needs to be considered in connection with the Drummond of Perth (see p.9) which, but for the addition of a fine line, is identical to the pattern considered here (Plate 87). Stewart says of the tartan:

'Of the many valuable relics of the '45 treasured by the Murray-Threipland family at Fingask, few possess greater interest than the cloak of Prince Charles Edward, whence the present representation is taken. It escaped the vandalism of the soldiery engaged in suppressing the rising, and it has since been jealously guarded, so that it is an unusually well-preserved example of the tartan manufactured in the early and middle portions of last century.'

Given its historical significance, it might be thought that something as large as a cloak might have survived into the 20th century and beyond but no trace can be found of it. Unlike a number of other pieces of tartan, the cloak was not amongst the items offered at the sale of Fingask's contents in 1993, nor do the Murray-Threiplands know anything about the cloak. According to the present head of the family *'.....no cloak was left at Fingask by Prince Charles Edward. For a start he never came to Fingask'*. What then, should be made of Stewart's unequivocal statement that the cloak was amongst relics *'treasured by the Murray-Threipland family at Fingask'*. DWS does not say if he actually saw the cloak or was working from a secondary source but the family's comment and the lack of supporting evidence points to an error on his part.

Writing of the Drummond of Perth Stewart says: *'Tradition associates this tartan with the amiable, ill-fated James Drummond, Duke of Perth, who was conspicuous in the '45.'* The tartan in the portrait is painted in detail and it is clear that it is neither the Drummond of Perth or (Stewart of) Fingask (Plate 88).



Plate 87. From Prince Charles Edward's Cloak Preserved at Fingask, O&R

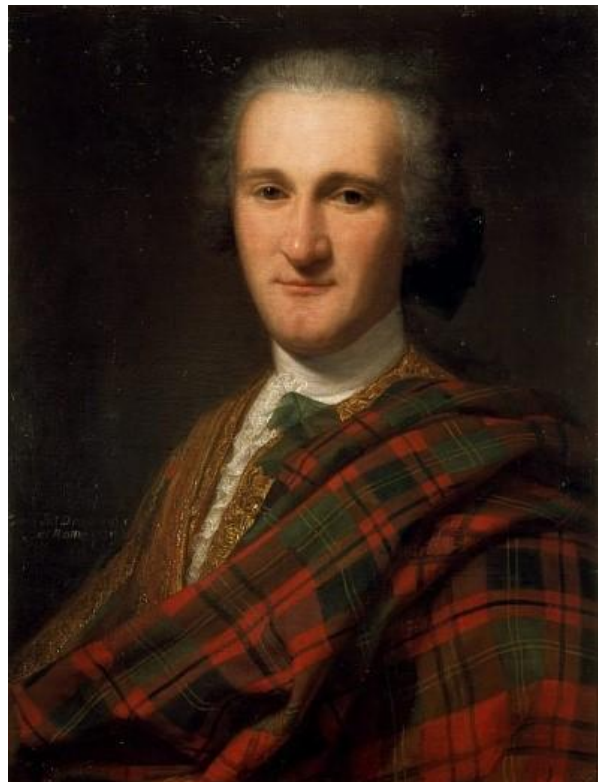


Plate 88. James Drummond, Duke of Perth c.1745

XLI – From a Plaid worn by Prince Charles Edward at Holyrood, given by him to the Countess of Eglinton

Surviving examples of Jacobite era tartans are rare, however, the origins of this one has a long family tradition that supports its origins. Stewart said of it (Plate 89):

'The fragments employed in the preparation of this illustration are portions of a plaid worn by Prince Charles Edward during his brief sojourn in Edinburgh in 1745. On his departure he presented the garment to Susanna, Countess of Eglinton, a belle of the day, at whose house in the Canongate he was a frequent visitor. Divided by her among her seven daughters.....'

Susanna, Countess of Eglinton had ten, not seven, daughters, nine of which survived to have families of their own. It is not known which, if not all, of them were given pieces of the plaid but at least two collections survive as mounted fragments (Plate 90). This author's reconstruction of the tartan from the fragments suggests a slightly different sett to DWS's interpretation. It is discussed in this paper.²⁶



Plate 89. A Plaid worn by Prince Charles Edward at Holyrood, O&R



Plate 90. Fragments of the plaid given to the Countess of Eglinton. © The Author

²⁶ [http://www.scottishtartans.co.uk/Plaid given by Prince Charles Edward to the Countess of Eglinton.pdf](http://www.scottishtartans.co.uk/Plaid%20given%20by%20Prince%20Charles%20Edward%20to%20the%20Countess%20of%20Eglinton.pdf)

XLII – The Prince’s Own, as worn in 1745-45

In another example of Stewart’s inconsistency and poor scholarship, he failed to make the connection between this (Plate 91) and the Huntly tartan (p.14). *‘Various circumstances tend to enhance the interest of this design, which is especially associated by Jacobite enthusiasts with the memory of Prince Charles Edward, and which was named during the campaign of 1745-46 from his personal use of it. Authenticated by specimens of contemporary and immediately subsequent dates—invariably bearing the legend of royal adoption — the tartan may be ranked amongst the earliest clan patterns extant in fabric. It is undoubtedly an old pattern of the Mac Raes; and it was certainly worn by the Prince in their territory. But whether it was previously used by members of the clan, or whether it was adopted by them as a compliment to the wearer, cannot be determined. Tradition indicates, however, that the Prince was wont to don the local colours of the various clans in his sojournments in their respective districts. It is now generally known as Mac Rae; but in all representations hitherto published the omission of the yellow lines has produced confusion as to the true sett.’*

As it the case with so much of Stewart’s work, he did not offer any evidence to support his claims for this pattern’s antiquity which leaves a number of questions:

- What circumstances?
- Where is the evidence to confirm the sett was used by Prince Charles Edward and/or named during the '45 campaign?
- Where are/were these supposedly contemporary specimens?

The fact that the variation without the yellow stripe was called Ross in the early 19th century and only adopted by the MacRaes later seems to have escaped DWS.²⁷ It is also the case that the oldest surviving specimens of this pattern date to the early 19th century (Plate 92).



Plate 91. The Prince’s Own, O&R



Plate 92. The Prince’s Own specimen c1800-20.
Photo: West Highland Museum

XLIII – From A Coat Worn At Culloden

²⁷ http://www.scottishtartans.co.uk/The_Prince's_Own_-_Lumsden.pdf

Of all the surviving Jacobite era tartans, the so-called Culloden tartan (Plate 93) is probably the most well-known of those not subsequently adopted as a clan tartan. It became popular as a fashion tartan in the 1970s and is amongst a small number of traditional designs classified as a 'universal tartan' offered for those with no particular clan or tartan connection.

Unusually for Jacobite era tartans, in this case the complete artefact survives (Plate 94). Stewart tells us that it was displayed '*In the Naval and Military Exhibition, Edinburgh, 1889, where it was last shown, it was described as 'Highland Tartan Coat, worn by one of Prince Charles Edward's attendants at Culloden.'* Despite an uncommon and daring colour scheme, the general result is pleasing and effective. The greater part of the tartan is much faded; but as in certain portions the tints are brilliantly displayed a faithful copy has been obtained. Fabric and fashion alike testify to the antiquity of the garment.'

Whilst there has undoubtedly been some fading, the colours of the unaffected areas in the seams and inside are nothing like those in Stewart's plate. Purple and dull yellow simply do not fade to blue and green as DWS suggests and really call into question both his colour perception and claims of faithful reproductions. It is also the case that his 'accurate' representation of the sett is wanting and that the proportions are demonstrably wrong as discussed here.²⁸



Plate 93. From a Coat worn at Culloden, O&R



Plate 94. The Culloden Coat
Photo: Glasgow Museum

²⁸ http://www.scottishtartans.co.uk/Culloden_Tartan.pdf

XLIV - A Plaid Found On Culloden Battlefield

In another hopelessly inaccurate rendition of an important historical artefact, Stewart's '*Plaid found on Culloden Battlefield*' is not only a flawed recreation (Plate 95) of surviving specimens but is accompanied by a romanticised and erroneous history.

Noting that this tartan has a similar history to the previous entry, DWS says that '*...the fabric contains evidence of earlier manufacture than the date of Culloden.*' and that '*..the writer knows of no example so large in size, and possessing so much internal evidence of great age.*' He describes the plaid as showing '*...an intricate and unusual sett; and the single check, as here displayed, represents half of the plaid, and is merely repeated in the other half. When shown in exhibitions it has been catalogued 'Highland Plaid, found on the field of Culloden the day after the battle.'*' That title is incorrect and the original specimen was part of what is more often referred to as the Moy Hall Plaid which is discussed in detail in this paper.²⁹

Stewart's opinion that the original plaid dated to the early 18th century, if not older, is not borne out by the evidence. His view appears to have been based on the fact that the plaid has a large sett and includes a herringbone selvedge mark. These were tartan weaving techniques common throughout the 18th century, but in misidentifying them, he demonstrated his fundamental misunderstanding of traditional tartan patterns and associated weaving techniques. His reconstruction of the pattern is completely at odds with the surviving piece at Moy Hall (Plate 96). Not only are his colours wrong, particularly the green which he gives as yellow, but the pattern itself was clearly extrapolated from an incomplete specimen and is hopelessly overcomplicated.



XLIV. FROM A PLAID FOUND ON CULLODEN BATTLEFIELD

Plate 95. A Plaid Found on Culloden Battlefield



Plate 96. Moy Hall Plaid detail showing herringbone selvedge. © The Author

²⁹ http://www.scottishtartans.co.uk/Moy_Hall_Plaid.pdf

XLV – The Balmoral Tartan
Designed by H. R. H. The Prince Consort.

DWS' final specimen is included because it was rare, rather than old. It was rare because it was restricted to members of the Royal Family and workers on the Balmoral Estate and so Stewart had to seek Queen Victoria's permission to include it. He notes that *'Her Majesty the Queen has not only granted permission for its publication here, but has also graciously afforded information concerning its inception in the early years of the reign, when the sett was designed by the Prince Consort.'* Notwithstanding this claim, this author has demonstrated that the Balmoral tartan existed several years before Prince Albert is said to have designed it. He may have been the source of the idea for a grey based design, a novel idea at the time, and even suggested the foundation, but the actual design work was almost certainly done by a weaver or weaving firm.³⁰

Stewart was hampered in his interpretation of the design (Plate 97) by the unique three-ply nature of the original cloth (Plate 98). Harrison (*Our District Checks*^{ix}) noted that *'The illustrations were all woven in fine silk which did not allow of (sic) the reproduction of the pure black and white twist effect of the original. Mr Stewart compromised by using shades of dull mauve as the nearest that his materials allowed. Thus, for generations the Balmoral was looked upon not as a pure grey scheme but as a scheme of very quiet mauves.'* This compromise is another example that undermines DWS' claim that each of his plates allowed the *'...tartan to be represented in its proper colours in fine silk..'*

James Scarlett commented *'I find it difficult to accept that the lighter-weight cloth for ladies' wear would have used lavender instead of grey and think it more likely that it was DWS's attempt to match the mixed grey of worsted yarn by a single colour of silk. Several examples shown in DWS's Old & rare Scottish Tartans, cast doubt on his accuracy in matters of colour.'*



Plate 97. Balmoral, O&R



Plate 98. Balmoral tartan c.1860 © The Author

³⁰ http://www.scottishtartans.co.uk/Balmoral_Tartan.pdf

Conclusion

For the tartan historian, *Old & Rare* is a seminal work. It was the first attempt to record tartan accurately and to avoid the printing errors that litter many of the earlier books about clans and tartans. At a time before colour photographic printing, Stewart's concept of using woven specimens was innovative and potentially ground changing in terms of a resource for academic study. Unfortunately, the concept was undermined by the execution. As has been amply demonstrated, Stewart's claim that *'The shades required for each specimen having been dyed, the weaving was executed by the hand-loom in exact proportion to the original'* was far from the case. Examination of many of the specimens cited by him reveals the shades and proportions are often quite different to those he gave. It calls into question whether he actually saw many of the specimens himself, or when he was relying on details from others.

From comments in *Old & Rare* and other writings by Stewart it's clear that he believed in the idea of historical clan tartans. He was not alone, it was a popular concept at the time, and he seems to have been encouraged by the writings of David Stewart of Garth and John Sobieski Stuart in whom he appears to have placed unquestioning trust. Throughout the text, when discussing the various tartans, he regularly quotes tradition and unsubstantiated claims as fact. It is also evident that whilst he may have worked for Romanes and Paterson, and so have been familiar with contemporary tartan, Stewart quite obviously had no appreciation of older pieces. Nor did he understand traditional design and manufacturing techniques, omissions that led him to regard anything earlier than his commercial experience as 'old' and dating back to the period of the clan system that disintegrated following the '45.

The attempt to place the tartans in rough chronological order was logical; however, the inclusion of some patterns is curious. There is no distinction between those he regarded as 'Old' and those which were 'Rare' but the difference between many can be readily determined. For example, the Plaid from Culloden fits the former; the Balmoral the latter category. Several are included despite there being far better candidates associated with a particular clan and it was perhaps that his belief in the Stuart Brothers claims coloured his judgement. Similarly, the dating is often nothing more than guesswork and a number of the claimed dates are woefully and demonstrably inaccurate. It is also noteworthy that several well-established clan tartans with a pedigree going back to at least the mid-18th century are omitted, for example; MacDougall and Murray or Tullibardine.

Old & Rare was a fantastic concept and the quality of the book makes it much sought after today, a fact supported by the price a volume can achieve at auction. Notwithstanding the errors in the underlying narrative, the work set a standard for reproduction that was unsurpassed until almost a century later when high quality photography and computer graphics made academic study more practical.

This critique has been the first attempt to examine Stewart's tartans in detail and has only been possible following years of work to identifying and study many of the original specimen and records he cited. Whilst it would be possible to produce a high quality and academically better version today using photography, nothing can surpass the pure beauty of the silk specimens and the feel of quality they impart to the original volumes of the *Old & Rare Scottish Tartans*.

© Peter Eslea MacDonald (July 2022).

-
- i **STEWART D.W.** 1893 *Old & Rare Scottish Tartans*. Geo. P. Johnston., Edinburgh
- ii **SOBIESKI-STUART J.S.S. and C. E.** 1842 *Vestiarium Scoticum*. William Tait, Edinburgh
- iii **SOBIESKI-STUART J.S.S. and C. E.** 1845 *Costume of the Clans*. John Menzies, Edinburgh
- iv **STEWART OF GARTH, D** 1825 *Sketches of The Character, Manners, and Present State of the Highlanders of Scotland; with details of The Military Service of The Highland Regiments*, Edinburgh
- v **STEWART D.C.** 1950 *The Setts of the Scottish Tartans*. Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh. Revised Edition Shepheard Walwyn, London 1977
- vi **LOGAN J. and MCIAN R. R.** 1845 *The Clans of the Scottish Highlands*. Ackermann & Co, London
- vii **LOGAN J.** 1831 *The Scottish Gael*. Smith, Elder & Co., London
- viii **SMITH W. & SMITH A.** 1850 *Authenticated Tartans of the Clans and Families of Scotland*. W & A Smith, Mauchline
- ix **HARRISON, E.S.** 1968 *Our Scottish District Checks*. The National Association of Woollen Manufacturers. Edinburgh