

**SCOUTS-L**

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**SCOUTING IN  
SCOTLAND**

**Date:** Thu, 5 Sep 1996 23:57:17 GMT  
**From:** Roger Phillips <roger@PHILLIPS.IDISCOVER.CO.UK>  
**Subject:** Scottish Scout Uniform

**Mark**

**The only thing different about the Scottish Scout Uniform is that he will wear a kilt.=20**

**Quote from Policy Organisation and Rules:**

**"In Scotland, male members who are entitled to wear uniform, except for those who wear Sea or Air Scout uniforms, may wear the kilt of any tartan. Elsewhere, male Cubs, Scouts and Venture Scouts who are entitled by descent to wear a tartan may wear the kilt and, in Groups in which Male Subs, Scouts and Venture Scouts are so entitled, the holders of appointments may wear the kilt of their own or the Scout Tartan.**

**Rule 53 (a).**

**Females may wear a tartan skirt subject to similar rules above. However it should be a pleated skirt in which the tartan is not cut on the cross.**

**For the Irish: In Northern Ireland members of the Scout Association may wear the Saffron Kilt. But again not Sea or Air Scouts.**

**The saffron kilt may not be worn by ladies.**

**So in effect all you have to do is buy a kilt and a British Scout Shirt or Blouse.**

**Hope that answers your query.**

**Problem is kilts are about the most expensive menswear you can buy. I priced one in Glasgow about 6 years ago - between =A380.00 - =A3300.00 +=20**

**Perhaps one of our Scottish brothers can enlarge on my info.**

**Roger Phillips**

**ADC (L/T) Sidcup  
Kent UK**

**I don't get lost in the Hills ..... em, just mislaid**

**Date: Fri, 13 Sep 1996 01:16:13 -0700  
From: Rodger Morris <rodger@FISHNET.NET>  
Subject: Re: Scottish Scout Uniform (Long)**

**At 05:31 PM 9/12/96 +0100, you wrote:**

**>Technically the tartan should only be worn by those entitled by descent  
>to wear it. In Scotland wearing a tartan that is not yours is considered  
>bad manners. Not so long ago you would have had your throat cut and be  
>dumped in a ditch ...  
>**

**The association of tartans with the various clans is actually an artifact of the Scottish Romantic Revival of the 1830s. Before then, one could not tell what clan a person belonged to by looking at the tartan he was wearing. Instead, one had to look and see what plant he was wearing affixed to his cap (called a "bonnet"). My clan, Clan Gordon, wore ivy.**

**Here is one short anecdote to illustrate this:**

**A fallen Scots highlander who had lost his bonnet was approached by Campbells (English allies at the battle of Culloden in 1746, the Scots' Waterloo) who were bayoneting all of the wounded rebels. He held out his hand and cried, "Hold, lads! I'm one of ye!!" They refrained from killing him and replied, "Sorry, laddie! Without your bonnet, we couldnae tell which side you were on!!"**

**>The Scout Tartan is registered and may be worn by any Member of The Scout Association in Scotland who is not entitled by descent to wear a clan tartan.**

**Correct.**

**>To qualify one must have a grandparent who is of the relevant clan.  
>**

As I posted before, all Scouts and Scouters may wear McLaren tartan, pursuant to permission granted by their former clan chief which has never been rescinded. When William F. Dubois McLaren, then a commissioner in the Scouting movement, heard that clanless Scouts in Scotland were being harassed and told that they could not wear a tartan, he is reported to have replied:

**"Rubbish!! Scouting is a brotherhood. Since they are my brothers, they are members of my clan and may wear the McLaren tartan!"**

Or words to that effect. Since he was then Clan Chief of the McLaren's, he was well within his historical rights and prerogatives to allow persons not related by blood to his clan to affiliate with them and to wear the McLaren tartan and clan insignia. This often happened centuries ago in the Scottish highlands. The families not related to the clansmen by blood but oathbound to them were part of an allied "sept" of the clan.

In my case, for example, one speaks of belonging to "Sept Morris of Clan Gordon".

>Any of the subjects of HM Queen Elizabeth may wear the " hunting Stuart  
>  
>tartan.  
>  
>Ian Ford  
>  
>

Even if one cannot directly trace Scottish clan descent, the Scots clan associations recognize anybody who has a surname that is connected with a Scottish clan as being eligible to join that clan society. For example, the surname "Morris" is considered to be a sept of both Clan Buchanan and Clan Gordon (aka "The House of Gordon"). My nieces and nephew may join the Clan Buchanan Society and/or the Clan Gordon Society because they are Morris's on their mothers' sides.

There is a Boy Scout troop in Occonneechee Council in North Carolina that is a pipe and drum corps, called "The Occonneechee Highlanders". They wear kilts in the modern McLaren tartan together with BSA uniform shirts and BSA long stockings. They have competed in Grade V piping competitions in various highland games. The Clan McLaren Society has raised no objection to the Scouts wearing the tartan of that clan.

**When I was piping with the Los Angeles & District Pipe Band, I wore Hunting Thompson, which was and is the band tartan. I have no Thompson ancestry. I doubt that anybody in the band does either. Nobody has ever objected to our wearing that tartan.**

**The preceding discussion has been somewhat off topic, but it is peripherally related to Scouting.**

**Bottom line:**

- 1) If you want to buy a kilt and**
- 2) You're not of Scottish descent and**
- 3) You don't want to offend some ignorant person who believes that tartans have identified clans since time immemorial and**
- 4) You are a Scout or Scouter**

**go ahead and buy a kilt in McLaren tartan.**

**Otherwise, buy a kilt in whatever tartan you like.**

**Yours in Scouting,**

**Rodger**

**Rodger Morris**

**Scoutmaster, Troop 852**

**Ventura County Council**

**Camarillo, California, USA**

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**Woodbadge 416-18**

**Philmont, 1973**

**"I used to be a Beaver..."**