

Davidson Tartan

Tartan... och weel... a subject that's surely as alive and well (and as controversial as Nessie) as any issue you'll find on the front page of today's newspaper. Nothing will raise up a brawl at a Scottish Gathering faster than the subject of Tartan, particularly late in the day when several libations of Uisghe Beatha have been downed. There is no other touchier subject in the lexicon of Scotophiles, and everyone considers himself an expert! We're going to try to make some sense of the subject for you.

There are 6 Davidson Tartan setts (i.e. patterns) as registered with the [Scottish Tartans Society](#) and 6 Davidson setts registered with the [Scottish Tartans Authority](#), but the 6 patterns as registered with each body are slightly different from each other! There is also an "Ancient" (also called "O.C." - Old Color) version of the Davidson Modern, although it is not registered with either "authority" as such.



The fact that there are two Tartan "authorities" in and of itself reflects the lack of a "final word" when it comes to Tartan. The simple fact is that virtually all Tartan setts that exist today were invented after circa 1830 by Scottish weavers looking to take advantage of the rise of Scottish romanticism as a way of selling more of their product. Tartans setts are being invented every day somewhere in the world. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of Tartan setts in existence today.

And... to put a rumor to bed, there is NO official **Clan Davidson Society (USA)** Tartan. Wear the Tartan sett of your choice. You will find, however, that only the Davidson Modern and Old Colors can be found easily (or economically, although there is little about quality Tartan that is economical!). To learn a lot more about this quintessential Scottish fabric, read the article which originally appeared in the January 1997 Sporrán by clicking the link below. It will answer some questions you may have about the subject.

[Link to Tartan Article](#)

Actually, no one has a "right" to wear any particular Tartan, unless he/she was the person who invented the pattern for his/her personal use and has it copyrighted. So... if you happen to be particularly fond of, say, Loud MacLeod, have at it! While you'd certainly be odd-man-out at a gathering of your fellow Davidsons, you certainly have the "right" to wear the MacLeod Tartan, regardless of what anyone else says.

Shown below are the 6 Davidson Tartans as registered with the Scottish Tartan Society, plus the Davidson OC or Ancient.



Davidson Modern

D.C.Stewart calls this sett, 'the more recent Davidson', and the basis for the Henderson tartan. It was published by his father D. W. Stewart in 1893, in a beautifully illustrated book, 'Old and Rare Scottish Tartans', in which each sample was woven in silk. This version omits the white stripe of earlier setts recorded in the Highland Society of London collection and the Moy Hall collection. Uniquely among tartans, there is a 'Half Davidson' and a 'Double' Davidson. The former being simply a reduced pattern.



Davidson O.C. (Old Color) or Ancient

This Tartan is the Davidson Modern sett (thread progression) woven with thread colors which simulate what the Tartan would look like today if it had been woven 500 years ago (presuming the moths or the English hadn't carried it away).



Davidson of Tulloch

D.W.Stewart, writing in his book, 'Old and Rare...', calls this the oldest of the Davidson tartans. Smibert records this version as does McIan, but with the red and white transposed. There is also a 'Double Davidson' and a 'Half Davidson', the latter omitting the white stripe.

This is also known as Davidson of Tulloch / T Simbert. The Clans of the Scottish Highlands, 1850.



Davidson of Tulloch Blue

The Davidsons or Clan Dhail maintained a constant battle for precedence within Clan Chattan. The Davidsons of Tulloch in Ross-shire are one of the main branches of the Davidson family. Sometimes called 'Davidson of Tulloch blue'.



Davidson Half

Designed by Romanes and Paterson . Edinburgh 1952-53. The sett being reduced by half, hence the name, see S.T.W.R no1332,



Davidson Double

Wilson's of Bannockburn produced this sett in 1847, calling it 'Double Davidson'. / Wilsons of Bannockburn a weaving firm founded c1770 near Stirling./The Pattern books are in the National Museum of Antiquities, Edinburgh./ Copys of the Pattern books and letters in the Scottish Tartans Society archive



Davidson - Bride

Designed for a wedding dress by Donald and Fionna Fraser