

Tartan Design Guide
By Ken and Ewan MacDonald



Table of Contents

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Why You Should Have Your Own Tartan](#)
3. [Principles Of Design](#)
4. [Portfolios Of Work](#)
5. [Case Study](#)
6. [Weaving](#)
7. [Yarn Colours](#)
8. [Prices Of Weaving](#)
9. [The Kilt](#)
10. [Bespoke Items](#)
11. [Registration And Copyright](#)
12. [FAQ](#)
13. [Ken & Ewan \(Owners\)](#)
14. [Picture Gallery](#)
15. [Lets Get Started](#)

Introduction

- Houston Kiltmakers is a 4th generation, family run business, established in 1909 and based in Paisley, Scotland.
- We have been designing and weaving tartans for over 40 years. We always try to make a tartan with a WOW factor and totally unique, so you and your friends are blown away.
- Back in 1988 we were approached by the Glasgow Garden Festival to design, weave and make uniforms and specially design Glasgow Miles Better Tartan.
- Since then we have designed 100s of tartans for companies such as Dominos, Skyrora, Apollo 12 and LNER.
- We also design charity, families and personal tartans. This can range from people wanting to reconnect with their Scottish roots & tartans to honour passed relatives or to have something made for their wedding day.
- Our most successful collection of tartans is our Bute Heather Collection. This has been our most sought after range of tartan.
- Designing a tartan is a very hands-on process with lots of feedback going both ways. We make sure your tartan is well designed with good colour mix & is the right sizes and repeat. We also make sure it is symmetrical and we will weave and make it into kilts for you.
- Your tartan can be used on anything from business cards to branding vehicles
- We hope we can help you design the perfect tartan for you, your family or your company that can be used for many years to come.

To get in touch about having your own special weave design, contact Ewan & Ken MacDonald on:

- Email: shop@kiltmakers.com
- Phone: 0141 889 4879
- WhatsApp: +44 (0) 7401 610485

Why you should have your own tartan

- This is a timeless design – it will be with you/your company/family forever and will stand the test of time.
- It's Totally unique
- It's a talking point. It opens the door to conversation, especially when abroad, at a conference or business networking events
- Prestige and Heritage. It's historic and can be archived with the Scottish Tartan Register for generations to come
- Looks fantastic
- Relates to Scottish Roots



Principles of Designing your Tartan

Research and Planning

- Initial Consultation – Via phone, in the shop, email, zoom call or at your business if its local.
- Background of Tartan, why you want to design it and History and Vision of your company/family tartan
- Name of Tartan
- Date required for
- Corporate Branding/Favourite colours
- Family crest or logo you want to take ideas from
- History of your company/clan/family
- Colour palette and approximate percentages of each colour (Max 8 colours, 4-6 is best)
- Choose 3 or 4 tartans you like to get an idea of the sett

Drafts

- We will produce 10 to 15 first drafts focussing on the sett of the tartan
- Re-drafts – Accurate colour tones

Final drafts

- CAD's and yarn dyes will be sent for your final approval and sign off
- Registration and weave if you wish



Portfolios of Work



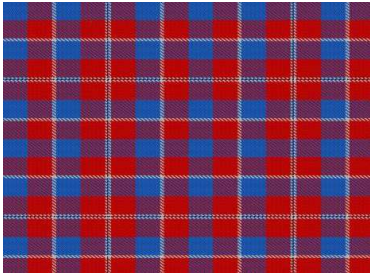
Apollo 12



Allen Associates



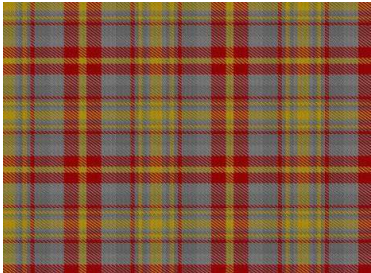
Skrora



Dominos Pizza Group



RAF Kinloss



Glasgow Miles Better



Fraser Property



Wallace Society



Robert Burns World Federation

Portfolios of Work



Bishopton RFC



Accord Hospice



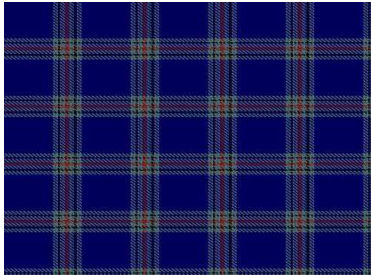
Attack IQ



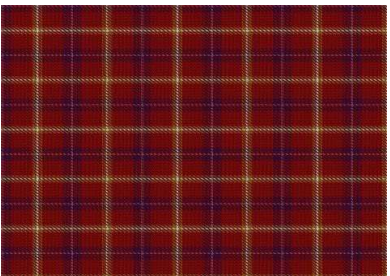
Thomas Bain



Gordon Clark



Waugh



Love



Free



Adams

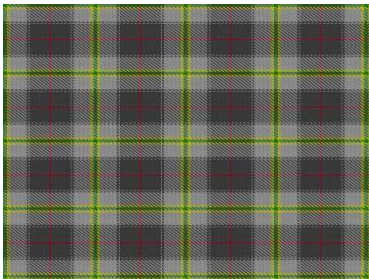
Portfolios of Work



Frank Citrine



George Leslie Civil Engineering



Dennis Conrad



Noble (South Africa)



Henry Hyndman



Al Suwaidi of Abu Dhabi



Cowdenbeath Defenders



Stephen J Chalk



McGarrigle

Portfolios of Work



LNER(London North East Railway)



Dominos Scotland



Team Bow's



Attie



Dowell



Dyet



Friends of Laphroig



Black Thorne



Dennis Conrad

Portfolios of Work



Tough



Consantino



Kennedy Grey



Walsh



Dominos



Clark Gordon



Bonnar



Tannahill



Tomas

Portfolios of Work



Aldi



Celts of Hungary



Crerar, James



Jempson – Macdonald, C & C



Lorimer, A & Smith, M - Wedding



Wilmott, Robert



Osgarby, David John &
Gill, Benjamin Anthony



Christie, Keith & Family



Inskip

Portfolios of Work



Almond, P Arthur & Family



Paisley Rugby Football Club



NMIS



Devlin, David Roddie



Green, J & Agostini, I & Family

Portfolios of Work - Houstons Exclusive Range



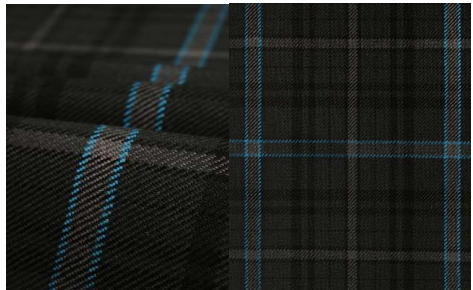
Midnight Bute



Kyles of Bute



St Mirren



Glencallum



Scottish Heather



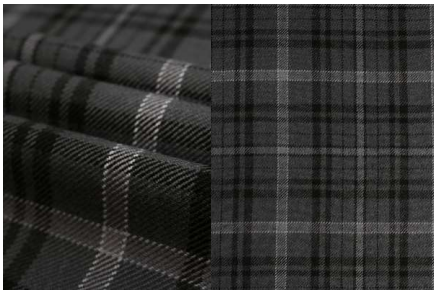
Straad



Autumn Bute



Ancient Bute



Grey Bute



Hunting Bute



Weathered Bute



Modern Bute

Case Study – Robert Burns World Federation

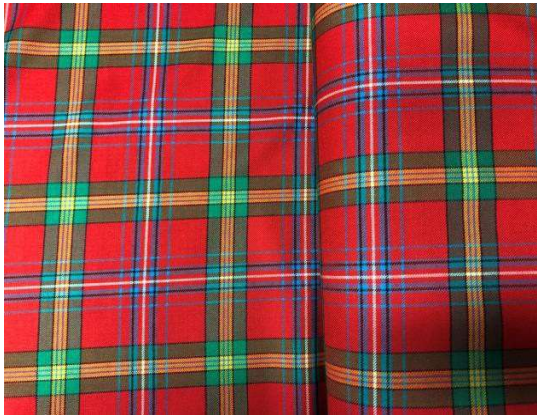
“A tartan for the Robert Burns World Federation (RBWF). The colours are intended to represent items or events of significance to the RBWF: red represents the blood of humankind, to which Burns great song ‘A Man’s A Man’ is dedicated and which was sung to open the Scottish parliament; light blue represents the pale blue skies under which Burns as a farmer toiled, and the lochs and rivers of the Scotland; yellow represents gold for the chain of office and the harvest; green represents the nature which inspired Robert Burns in his poetry and life; black represents the ink he used to write with and white represents the pages he wrote upon”

A snippet from the tartan register:

<https://www.tartanregister.gov.uk/tartanDetails?ref=12970>



- Red – 50%
- Green – 20%
- Yellow – 10%
- Blue – 10%
- White – 5%
- Black – 5%



Finished Tartan



Case Study – Colour Pallet

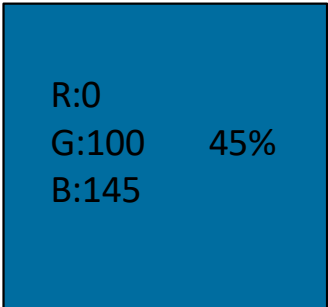
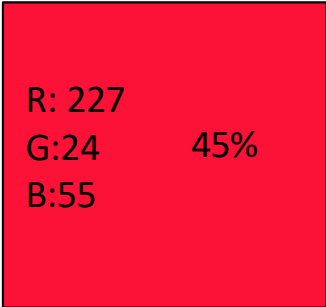
Choosing your colours is one of the most important stages of designing your company tartan.

www.tartanregister.gov.uk/tartanDetails?ref=11756

www.tartanregister.gov.uk/tartanDetails?ref=13039

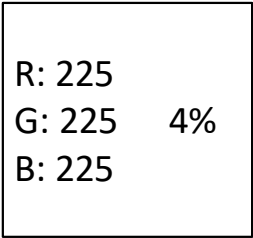
Main Corporate Colours

These colours need to be what represents your brand the most.

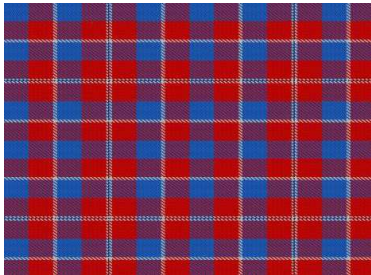


Secondary Colours

Colours that co-ordinate with your brand/logo



Dominos Scotland



Domino's Pizza Group



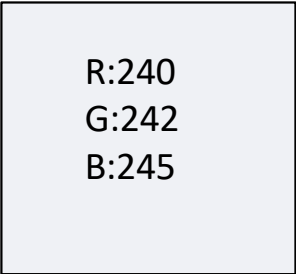
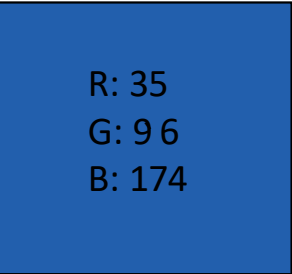
Newest Design

Case Study – Colour Pallet

Choosing your colours is one of the most important stages of designing your company tartan.

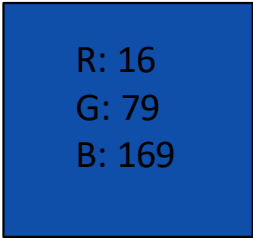
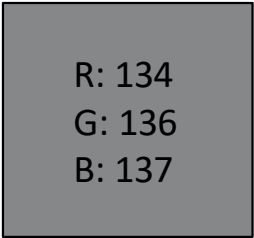
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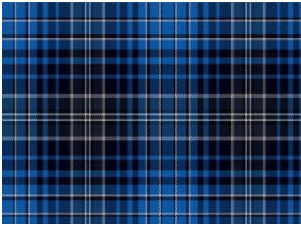


Secondary Colours

Colours that co-ordinate with your brand/logo

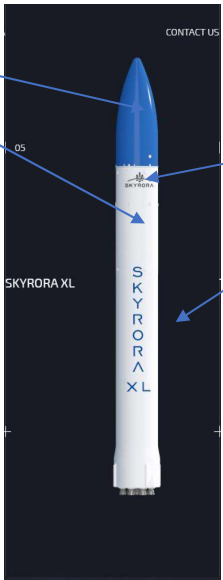


Drafts



Main colour

Secondary colour



Finished Tartan

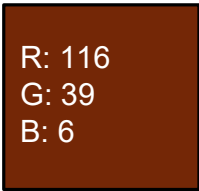
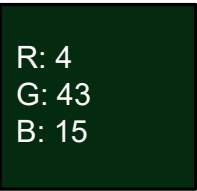




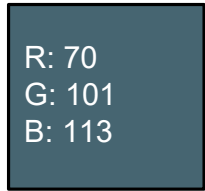
Case Study – Colour Pallet

Choosing your colours is one of the most important stages of designing your company tartan.

Primary Colours



Secondary Colours



Colour inspiration:

Leaf Green
"Glasgow ... a dear green place"

Pale Green
"The pale greens of nature"

Light Pink
Glasgow's 'rose' made famous by Charles Rennie Mackintosh

Turkey Red
A colour championed by the cotton dye works of Glasgow in the 18th & 19th century made using the root of a noble plant.

Locharbriggs Red Sandstone
Locharbriggs is a small town in Scotland where beautiful red sandstone has been quarried since 1850 to build Glasgow's fine townhouses. (The Steps of New York's Statue of Liberty are made from Locharbriggs stone.)

Corporation Yellow / Orange
A colour ...

Oyster White
A colour ...

Ultramarine Blue
A vibrant colour evoking the City's connection to the Sea and the Empire

Soot Black
A remnant from bygone times a Glasgow's buildings blackened by chimney soot and smoking industries.



Final Design



Weaving

We can weave your tartan in:

- 16/17oz (Best for Kilt)
- 13oz (All round best cloth)
- 11oz (Ladies Kilts, Ties etc.)
- Lambswool (Scarfs, Blankets)
- Polyviscose (Uniforms, Budget cloth)
- Tweed
- Cashmere Lambswool mix
- Lurex Twist



Weaving

We can weave a range of weights and qualities. We weave 100% pure, new wool woven and finished in the UK.

We can weave between 13 and 65+ metres. The minimum we weave is 13m (3.5 Kilt Lengths)

The tartan can also have a textile coat to make it stain proof. We can also fireproof if the tartan is being used in the furnishings for hotels or businesses



Cloth Weights

16oz Heavyweight

Pure new wool. This wool is stain proof. It sits and hangs the best and isn't any warmer than the 13oz. We can also make ties and plaids, trews and waistcoats. This is for authentic gents kilts. It's the best cloth for gents kilts and 90% of customer choose this one.

13oz Mediumweight

Pure new wool. This wool is stain proof. Good for kilts up to 44" waist. We can make anything out of 13oz. A good all round cloth that's very popular with overseas customers.

11oz Lightweight

Pure new wool. This wool is stain proof. This is the wool we use for ladies kilts, trews, ties, accessories etc. It has a smaller sett than the 16oz. This cloth isn't good for gents kilts due to the weight.



Yarn Colours

Your tartan can be woven in any shade you want

ANCIENT

Soft lighter colours



MODERN

Strong dark colours



HUNTING

Usually with lots of green



DRESS

Usually with lots of White through it



WEATHERED OR MUTED

A more faded and muted washed out dyed colour. More like browns & Faded Blue and Greens

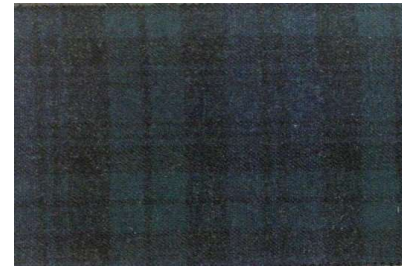


We can also custom dye yarns to match any colour palette



Tweed

Tweed is made of pure new wool and creates an authentic old finish. It's made of a beautiful choice of yarns and creates a more natural and organic finish

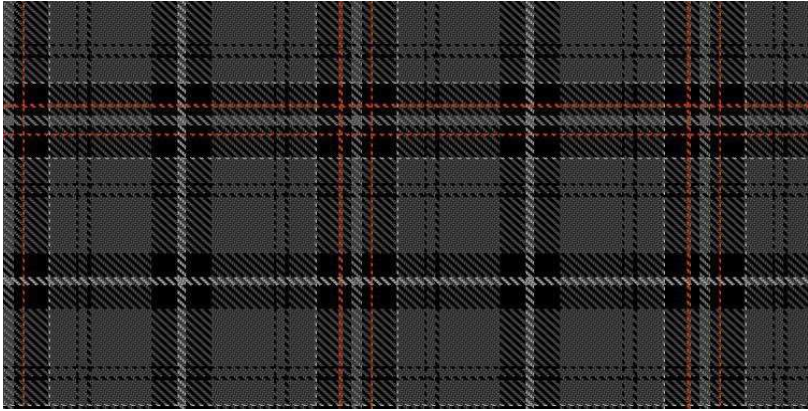


Lurex

If you are looking for something more exclusive we also weave Lurex Yarns. Lurex is best woven through 16oz heavyweight. This is yarn made from a thin strip of aluminium sandwiched between two plastic films giving a shiny metallic look, This can give your tartan a whole new dimension



Lurex Examples



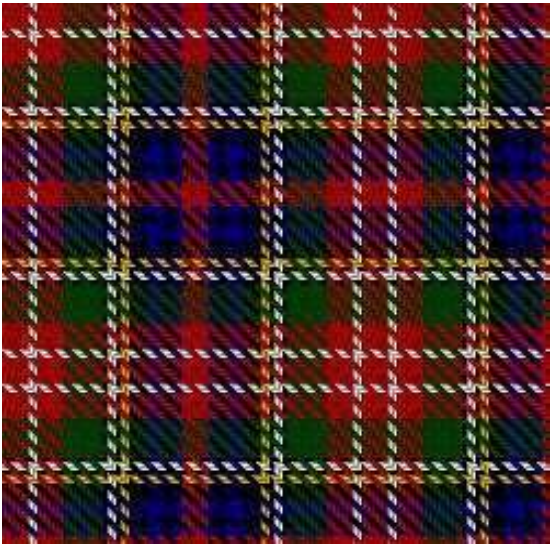


Cashmere Lambswool

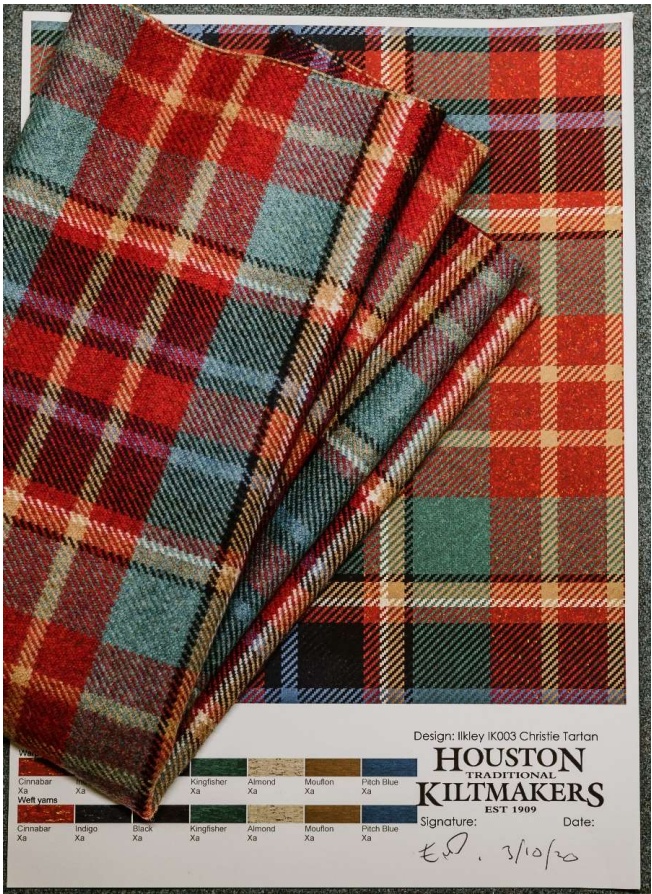
We weave traditional in colours you'll love. We weave in lambswool 1-95% and Cashmere – 5%mix. This gives a luxury finish and makes a beautiful kilt.



Ancient Christie



Traditional Colours



Colours the customer liked
and final design & tartan

Lambswool



We can also make good lambswool scarfs, shawls or other high end corporate gifts

Prices of Weaving From(Prices as of 2023):

Length (m)	8-yard Kilt Length	Price (£)	Tax Free (£)	Deposit (£)
13 x 1.5m	3.5	1,900	1,585	500
20 x 1.5m	5.5	2,400	2,000	750
26 x 1.5m	7	2,600	2,167	800
32 x 1.5m	8.5	2,900	2,417	850
40 x 1.5m	10	3,200	2,670	1000
45 x 1.5m	13	3,400	2,835	1100
53 x 1.5m	14	3,900	3,250	1250
59 x 1.5m	16	4,200	3,500	1400
65 x 1.5m	17	4,400	3,667	1550

All cloth is woven 1.5m wide (Double Width (D W)).
K-Length = Gents 8-yard kilt length

- We weave in:
- 11oz
 - 13oz
 - 16oz
 - Tweed + 40%
 - Poly viscose -20%
 - Cashmere Lambswool +90%
- *Tax Free available for people outside UK/EU*

When weaving, warping and finishing we have a tolerance of +/- 10% which You will have to buy any extra cloth

Note: Tax free prices for people outside the UK and EU

Time: Approximately 10-12 weeks once CAD is signed off for stock colour. 14-16 weeks if yarns need to be specially dyed

Note: We can express weave using stock yarns at an extra price

Note: We can custom dye to any colours

The Kilt

We offer 4 different kilt finishes:

(Note: you will get 20% if out with Europe

- Budget Machined (£184 per Kilt)
- Super Machine Under-Stitched (£275 - £300 per Kilt)
- 100% Super Handmade (£375 - £400 per Kilt)
- Super Handmade Deluxe (£495+ per Kilt)

All prices are CMT (Cut, Make & Trim and Labour cost)

All Kilts are made in Scotland to the highest standard. Kilts come with 3 buckles and straps, so you have a few inches of adjustment. We always cut for growth so if you gain or lose weight (20 - 30 pounds) the kilt can be readjusted

Yards	Waist/ Seat Size
9 Yards (+ 15%)	47" – 50"
10 Yards (+ 20%)	51" – 56"
11 Yards (+ 30%)	57" – 61"
12 Yards (+ 40%)	62" – 66"



Normal Sett



Regimental Sett

Bespoke Items From:

Product	Cloth Quantity (m)	Minimum Quantity	Price per unit (UK + EU)	Tax/Vat Free	Time to make (once cloth woven)
Kilts					
Deluxe hand-made 8 yard kilt	3.7	1	£495 +	£415	12 Weeks
Super Hand-made 8 yard kilt	3.7	1	£375	£313	6 Weeks
Super Machine 8 Yard kilt	3.7	1	£275	£230	6 Weeks
Budget Machine	3.7	1	£184+	£154+	6 Weeks
6 yard casual budget	2.7	1	£184+	£154+	6 Weeks
9 Yard + 15%					
10 Yard + 20%					
Express(2-3 weeks)			£100 - £150		
Factory Made					
Ties	2	12	£15 each	£12.50	6 Weeks
Ties	3.8	24	£14.50 each	£12	6 weeks
Bow ties	1.6	12	£14 each	£12	6 Weeks
Cummerbund	2	6	£25 each	£21	6 Weeks
Hand made					
Ties	0.6	1	£45 each	£37.50	3 Weeks
Ties	0.8	2	£40 each	£34	3 Weeks
Bow ties	0.3	1	£30 each	£30	3 Weeks
Self tie bow	0.3	1	£40 each	£37.50	3 Weeks
Ruche	0.6	1	£60 each	£55	3 Weeks
Plaid	0.8	1	£45 each	£46	3 Weeks

Note: Cloth woven in 1.5m wide D/W (Double Width)

Tax Free available for people outside UK/EU

Bespoke Items From:

Product	Cloth Quantity (m)	Min Quantity	Price (UK+EU)	Tax/VAT Free	Time to make
Sock Flashes	0.3	1	£30	£25	3 Weeks
Tie Flashes (Traditional)	0.1	1	£25	£21	3 Weeks
Sash 11"x90"	0.6	1	£45	£37.50	3 Weeks
Stole 30"x72"	1.25	2	£55	£46	3 Weeks
Stole with join 30"x72"	0.75	1	£55	£46	3 Weeks
Shawl 60"x60"	1	1	£55	£46	3 Weeks
Blanket 3mx3m	6	1	£100	£84	3 Weeks
Scarf 60"x14"	0.35	1	£40	£34	3 Weeks
Christmas Stocking	0.6	2	£50	£30	3 Weeks
Trousers	1.8	1	£225	£187.50	6 Weeks
Trews Argyll	2	1	£250	£210	6 Weeks
Trews Fishtail	2	1	£250	£210	6 Weeks
Shorts	1.5	1	£195	£163	6 Weeks
Waistcoat					
Sizes 42-46 +20%					
Straight cut Waistcoat	1	1	£250	£210	8 Weeks
Bias Cut Waistcoat	1.5	1	£275	£230	8 Weeks
Sports coat/ tartan jackets up to size 46" chest					
Sizes 42-46 +20%					
Straight Cut	3m	1	£595	£496	10 weeks
Straight Cut	4m	1	£650	£542	10 weeks

Fancy Lining + £75 - £100

Note: Cloth woven in 1.5m wide D/W (Double Width)

Bespoke Items From:

Product	Cloth Quantity (m)	Min Quantity	Price (UK+EU)	Tax/VAT Free	Time to make
Cap	0..5	1	£75	£62.50	12 weeks
Tablecloths		1	Email for info		
Garter	0.1	1	£25	£21	3 weeks
Ring Cushion	0.3	1	£30	£25	3 weeks
Hand Tie	0.1	1	£20	£17	3 weeks
Tartan Socks	Bespoke	1	£450	£375	12 Weeks
Kids Kilts					6 weeks
6-yard teen kilts (small adult) 21-33"	2.7	1	£275	£230	6 weeks
4-yard kilt 11-14 (up to 29")	1.8	1	£195	£163	6 weeks
3-yard kilt 3-10 (up to 26")	1.37	1	£175	£146	6 weeks
2-yard baby kilt 0-2	1	1	£150	£125	6 weeks
Ladies Kilts					
6-yard (super machine finish)	2.7	1	£275	£230	6 weeks
4-yard (super machine finish)	1.8	1	£225	£187.50	6 weeks
6-yard hostess kilt	5.5	1	£295	£246	6 weeks
4-yard hostess kilt	3.7	1	£250	£210	6 weeks
Mini Kilt	1.8	1	£225	£187.50	6 weeks
Billy Kilt	1.37	1	£225	£187.50	6 weeks
Skirts					
2-yard	1	1	£195	£163	6 weeks
4-yard	1.8	1	£225	£187.50	6 weeks

Note: Cloth woven in 1.5m wide D/W (Double Width)

Many Styles available. Email for more info

FAQ

Q. Do I need to come into the shop to design the tartan?

A. Most designs are for clients around the world, we can do this just as accurately as if you were in the shop

Q. How long does it take?

A. Design normally takes 4 -8 weeks. It can be done quicker but taking your time is preferred

Weaving takes around 10 – 12 weeks once tartan has been signed off

Making goods takes 4 – 8 weeks once cloth has been woven

Q. Do I need to weave after having the tartan designed?

A. No, we can just design it

Q. Who owns the rights to the tartan

A. It will be your tartan, you will own it and your details will be on the tartan register

Q. How much does it cost?

A. See prices for more info

- Approximately £400 - £500 to design
- £130 to register
- £1900+ (£1585 Tax Free) to weave 13m x 1.5m – Enough for 3.5 adult 8-yard kilts

FAQ

Q. How long does tartan keep?

A. If well looked after, generations.

Q. How long can I keep cloth in the shop for future use?

A. Yes. After the cloth has been paid for, storage for the first 2 years is free. After that, it's £50 per year

https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2373714036221173&id=1521832568075995

Ken and Ewan MacDonald

'I have over 45 years experience designing tartans. I am the past Vice-Chairman and member of the Scottish Tartans Authority (STA) and three time Deacon of The Incorporation of Weavers of Glasgow (Est. 1514).' – Ken MacDonald

'I learnt from the best and am continuing to make beautiful tartans for our clients around the world. More than 50% of our sales are out of Scotland' – Ewan MacDonald

Ken and Ewan are some of the best in the business and have already designed hundreds of tartans for many happy customers, where we always give out a wow tartan with 100% customer satisfaction

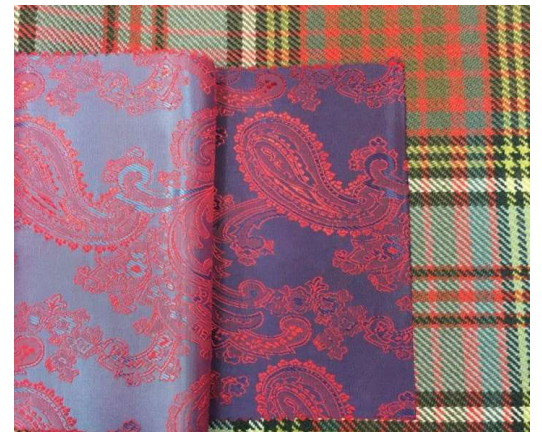
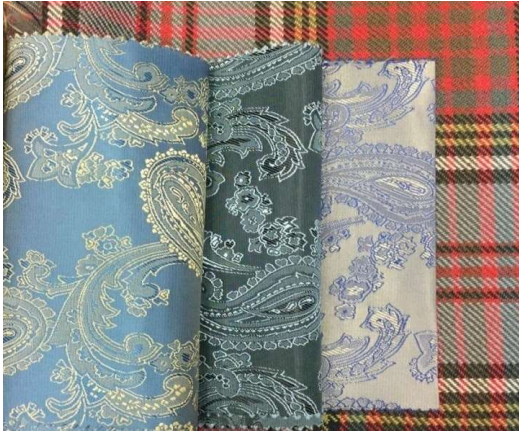


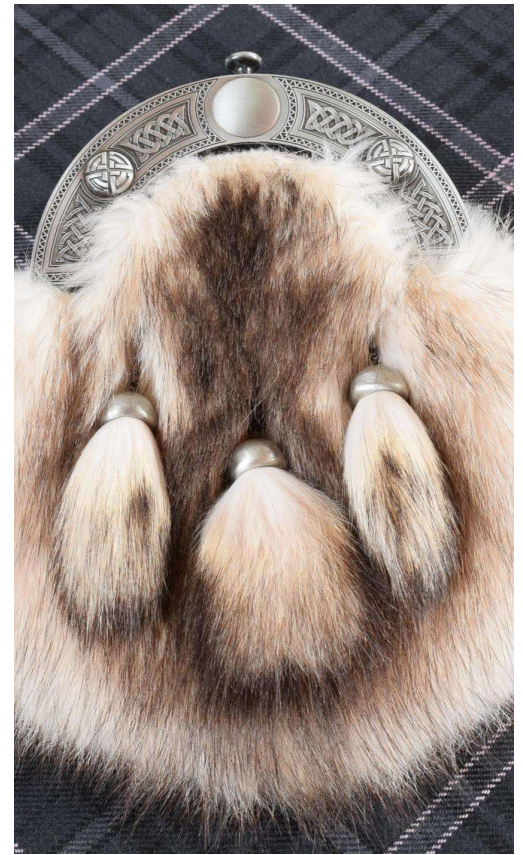
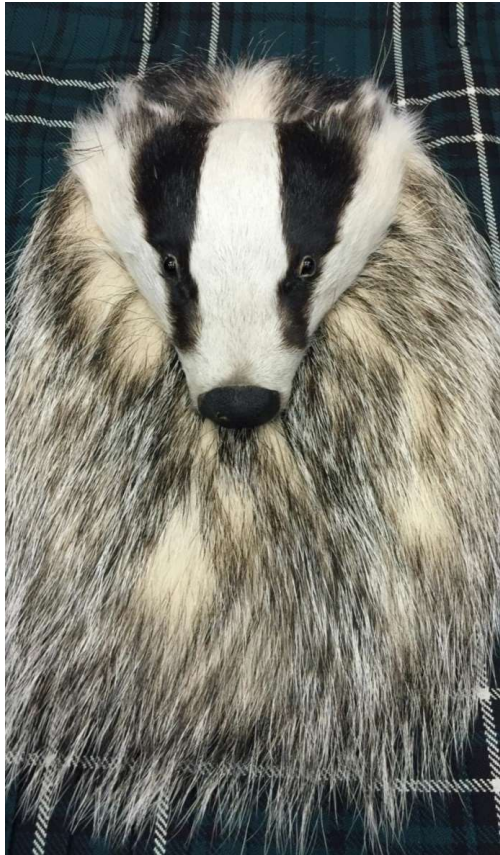


















Let's get Started

To get started all we need from you is:

- Name of Tartan/Company/Family
- Short Brief about why you want a tartan
- Colours (most tartan are 3 – 6 colours) & the approximate percentage of each colour in the tartan
- Sett (all the tartans are made of infinite lines and squares, the set. If you can give us 3 or 4 tartans that you like the look of, we can go from there)
- A lot of thought and time goes into designing a personal tartan, at Houston Kiltmakers, we try to make it as easy and enjoyable process for you.
- We hope the design is unique and exclusively represents your company.
- To get in touch about having your own special weave design, contact Ewan MacDonald on:
 - Email: shop@kiltmakers.com
 - Phone: 0141 889 4879



Useful Guides & PDFs

- [Special Weave Tartan Guide](#)
- [Tartan Design Guide](#)
- [Buy Self-Measurement Guide](#)
- [Sales Brochure](#)
- [Kilt Packs](#)
- [Hire & Buy](#)
- [Hire Brochure](#)
- [Hire Leaflet](#)
- [Hire Self-Measurement Guide](#)
- [Kilt Hire Guide](#)