



# CLAN NEWS



## THE MACBEAN HUNTING TARTAN

A Beautiful New Tartan for our Clan

Submitted by **Philip Beddows**, Seanachaidh to the Chief and Clan Historian

As promised in my article entitled ‘The Tartans of Clan MacBean’, published in the Fall edition of The Register, I am delighted to share news of a beautiful new ‘MacBean Hunting’ tartan that has been designed for our clan. This is the culmination of an important project led over the past couple of years by our Chief, Richard McBain of McBain, and supported by Scotland’s leading authority and historian on tartan, Lt. Colonel Peter E. MacDonald, and myself to ensure that the MacBean tartans were better regularised. This was needed in view of the Scottish Register of Tartans (‘SRT’) having recorded 10 registered tartans for the names MacBean and McBain, which included multiple versions of the standard clan tartan, each with different threadcounts. The article in the previous Register detailed the important first step, confirming and presenting the 4 officially recognised MacBean tartans: **McBain Chief**, **MacBean (Clan)** – the standard clan tartan, **MacBean Dress** and the oldest of all – **MacBean of Tomatin**. These are now the only registered official MacBean tartans listed by the Scottish Register of Tartans.



Now, we have a fifth one to add – the **MacBean Hunting** tartan. Some members of the clan will have known, and even be wearing a tartan that

was called the ‘Hunting’ tartan. It is a lovely looking tartan. However, unknown at the time of its creation because it was the standard clan tartan design using the same threadcount but with colours muted, under the protocols and conventions that govern the creation of new tartans it could not be officially classified and registered as a separate unique tartan. The same applies to the standard MacBean Clan tartan that is produced under the name ‘Ancient’, which is another beautiful colour design on the same standard pattern. Consequently, Richard McBain and his father, our late Chief, initiated the exciting project to have a new and authentic hunting tartan for the clan. This was no easy task! Many hunting tartans take as their template a clan’s standard tartan and if this is mainly a ‘red’ tartan often switch colours around to produce a ‘green’ tartan appropriate for wearing out on the hill and hunting – both literally and metaphorically, in view of brightly coloured tartans being likely to provide little camouflage when hunting deer in the old clan lands. Our fellow Clan Chattan clan the Mackintoshes have a hunting tartan that was created by a reversal and rearrangement of the red, blue, and green colours of their standard clan tartan, which produced a new mainly green tartan, with the addition of a

yellow stripe across the pattern. However, this was not something we could easily do with the standard MacBean Clan tartan because, as we all know, it is a complex design.

Our objective in designing a new hunting tartan for the Clan was to create something that had historical provenance and a resulting authentic, traditional look, with a beauty to its design, something that clansmen and women would be proud to wear, and that it would have broad utility and a character to it for longevity. The overall effect was intended to provide a distinguished 'look', and the point of utility had in mind that it would be worn and be equally at home out walking in the hills ('hunting') and at the most formal of functions.

We believe we have achieved all these objectives and, perhaps remarkably, the final design – after multiple iterations – has managed to produce a tartan that is a fusion of elements from existing MacBean tartans, and thereby honours their heritage and provides us with a unique new tartan with a quintessential 'MacBean' character that will be easily recognisable.

The tartan has been woven by Lochcarron using their yarn colours, and each has a particular significance for the clan.

The Olive green echoes the muted, mossy green that is found on the Ancient MacBean sett, and the natural greens found up in the hills and mountains of the clan's ancient homelands.

The darker blue that is used is of a special shade and is used on the main pattern of the sett echoing the central design of the MacBean of Tomatin tartan. This older MacBean tartan was modelled on the Mackintosh tartan our great hero Major Gillies 'Mor' MacBean the 14th Chief is featured wearing in the famous picture by McIan, showing him fighting gallantly at the Battle of Culloden. Gillies 'Mor' had been second in command of Lady Ann Mackintosh's (Clan Chattan) Regiment and died a heroic death, alongside other MacBeans and his own cousin Alexander MacGillivray of Dunmaglass the Colonel in command of the regiment.

The yellow/gold stripe bounded blue that appears across the main olive green ground of the tartan comprises the colours of Clan Chattan, which appear in our Chief's coat of arms: on the wreath under his crest of a Scottish Wildcat holding a Targe and also in the 4th quarter of his shield which is yellow/gold with a blue lymphad or West Highland Galley – the emblem that also features on the shield of the Chief of Clan Chattan and those of a number of other chiefs of Clan Chattan clans. The stripe also has another meaning for us. It echoes the stripe that appears in the same position in the MacBean Dress tartan, which was designed in 1972 by the late James D. Scarlett (whose wife was Meta MacBean) for Hughston McBain of McBain's wife Kathleen née Keith, a very keen Scottish dancer who competed in competitions. This stripe on the dress tartan has been called 'the Mackintosh stripe' and is in honour of Hughston McBain's grandmother Catherine Mackintosh (wife of William McBain) whose family came from Moy, the home of the Mackintosh chiefs which lies to the north of Tomatin. Our Chief's ancestor William MacBean of Kinchyle, 13th Chief's wife was Jean Mackintosh, a daughter of Donald Mackintosh of Kyllachy, which gives our chief a descent from the older Mackintosh and Clan Chattan chiefs.

The light blue pattern in the new hunting tartan is from the McBain Chief tartan, which was first recorded in the patent of the coat of arms granted to Hughston McBain when he was matriculated as 21st Hereditary Chief of the Clan MacBean. This light blue design is very distinctive, and we have nicknamed this 'Hughston's Blue'. Members with eyes as sharp as a Scottish Wildcat will notice the subtle differences in this element of the tartan between the McBain Chief sett and the standard MacBean (Clan) sett. In the former, the light blue is bounded by thin white stripes and has two thin black stripes either side of another thin white stripe through its centre.

The wider white stripe that appears across the centre of the main design of the tartan sett has a very modern and up-to-date meaning, as well as echoing the stripes that feature in the same position on all the other MacBean tartans. The white cross that it forms in the middle of the dark

blue pattern represents a shining star far away in space, and so honours our famous clansman the NASA astronaut Captain Alan Bean who was the fourth man to walk on the Moon and made history as the first person to take a piece of tartan to the surface of the Moon and back to Earth again – the MacBean Clan tartan thus became not just ‘world’ famous, but a record-breaking tartan across the Universe! In the first weekend of this August, our Chief Richard McBain of McBain will be leading a gathering in Scotland that will include the dedication of the new Alan Bean Memorial that is being completed in the McBain Park above Dores and Loch Ness and a short distance from Kinchyle, the old home of our chiefs. Coincidentally, two Space Ports are soon to come into use in Scotland and this year will mark the first satellite launch into Space from

Britain. This was definitely the year to launch our new tartan.

So it is that with our Chief Richard McBain of McBain’s support and leadership, we have a beautiful new MacBean Hunting tartan that is a distinctive design, full of historical allusions to our long and proud history, our noble line of chiefs and the man who took the name and tartan of clan MacBean to the Moon and back, spreading our renown to the stars!

It has been a privilege to be involved with this exciting project with Richard, Peter and Lochcarron, and we all hope that you will agree we have a beautiful new and very special tartan for the clan, that appropriately marks the start of Richard’s service to us all as our new 23rd Hereditary Chief of the Clan MacBean.

