

The Irish Kilt Club



The members of the Irish Kilt Club come from 3 main groups of people:

- People who live in places or move in circles where the kilt is normal or expected dress but are of Irish origin.
- People who work in multicultural settings where "national dress" is expected on formal occasions.
- People who want to wear the kilt for health reasons or just because it is comfortable (today in Ireland it is expected that you can live your life in the Irish language if that is your wish - The Irish Kilt club wants to extend this to the national dress)

What is an "Irish" kilt?



1. An Irish kilt is a kilt in a tartan of Irish family name
2. a tartan of place - an Irish County, National, Irish Diaspora or St Patrick's tartan - available from House of Edgar

or

3. the distinctively single coloured kilt (mainly saffron or green but red and blue are sometimes used)

Most modern kilts are come from Scottish Kilt makers.

A few single coloured kilts in washable materials come by mail order (internet sales) from the USA and the Dublin Woollen Mills manufacture a small range of kilts in Ireland.

Pictured is a green AmeriKilt at the seaside in the UK.





The history of the "Irish" kilt 1.

Traditional garb

Almost all Kilts worn today are a modern expression of older forms of dress common in the "highlands" which at one time extended in a crescent from Donegal across the top of Ulster to the Mull of Kintyre and the Highlands and Islands of Scotland.

The "Big Kilt" was a type of cloth armour, the pleats of which were very resistant to sword cuts and the piercing of spears. As this garb included the tradition of soaking the shirt in goose grease to make it waterproof, fully "traditional" garments are best left to historical societies! The modern "small" kilt looks traditional and reflects older traditions while being practical and more fitting for polite society than the battlefield or cattle raid.

Historians tell us that the "kilt" is a misreading of old engravings. It is probable that originally the outfit was an all-in-one long belted shirt rather than two separate garments. Some argue that the modern kilt is a dreadful historical error.

All we will venture to say is that the modern Irish Kilt is as "traditional" as any other modern kilt - no more and no less.

The history of the "Irish" kilt 2.

National Dress

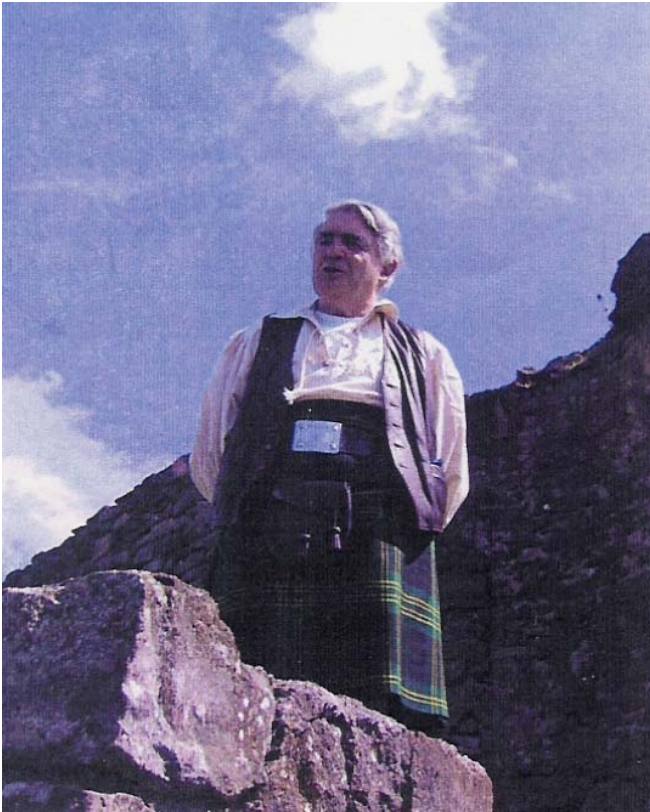


"National" dress is a dress not in common use but chosen to reflect a nation's image of itself. In 1947 India chose not to adopt the loin cloth of Gandhi but wanting to have a formal national garb invented the collar-less "Nehru" suit. In 1900 Padraig Pearse (who in 1916 read the declaration of Irish

Independence and was shot a few days later) was asked to suggest a "National" dress. In his reply he said "Frankly, I would much prefer to see you arrayed in a kilt . . . (rather than traditional types of Irish trousers)" Kilts had been worn since the mid 1800's by Celtic revivalists of all sorts and as a result the kilt was a natural choice. Many of the leading kilt wearers were shot in the 1916 rising and although the first President of Ireland wore the Saffron kilt, as a form of dress today it is mainly worn inside Ireland for dance wear and by pipe bands in both the South and North of Ireland.



Modern male attire



The kilt is however something else - a great garment for formal wear - particularly if representing a Celtic background, to replace the "best suit" or for informal wear.

Some argue that trousers have become now unisex and that there is a case to revive "male" clothing.

The wearing of Irish kilts outside Ireland is growing and many Irish descendants will have a kilt for formal wear. It is also becoming fashionable to wear the kilt for weddings.

What does the club do?

We plan to:

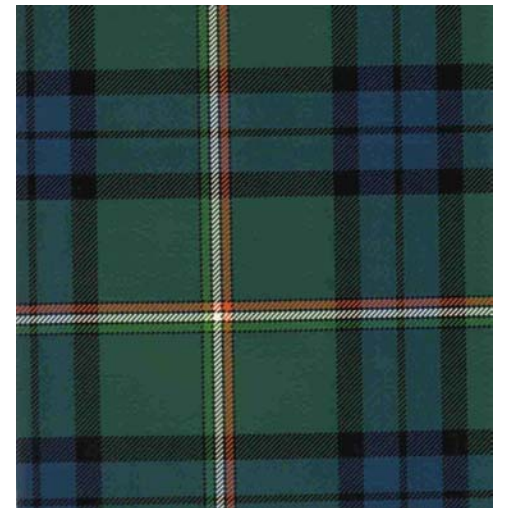
- Provide a forum for discussing "Irish kilts" and furthering the traditional v national dress study and debate
- Promote the wearing of the kilt as "Irish" (or Ulster Scots) within Ireland North and South and the wider diaspora
- Identify suppliers and negotiate member discounts on kilts/accessories/tartans for those wishing to wear an Irish kilt for formal or informal wear
- Build a website and suppliers directory



The Tartans of Ireland

Long ago Irish families had tartans and many common Irish names today may claim a tartan of their own. Each County too had a tartan and these were recorded in a registry.

As the interest in tartans revived the House of Edgar revisited the tradition and recreated county tartans for each of the Irish Counties north and south. They also refreshed the Irish National Tartan and recently introduced (partly at the urging of club members) an Irish Diaspora or Irish Blood Tartan for those of Irish blood living outside Ireland. This is based on a green square surrounded by blue to stand for the land across the sea and striped by a tricolour stripe in green, white and red which distance (about 10 ft) turns to gold. A black stripe represents the famine and sorrow of parting.



Irish

COUNTY
TARTANS



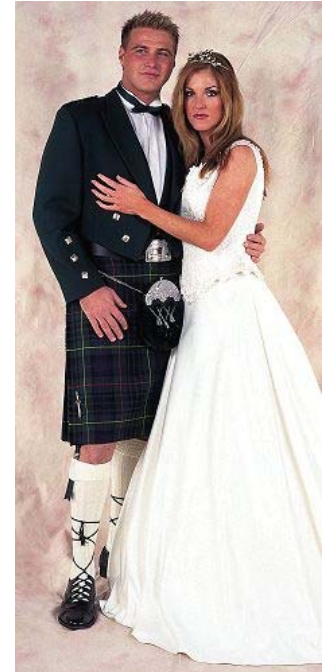
The Wedding Kilt

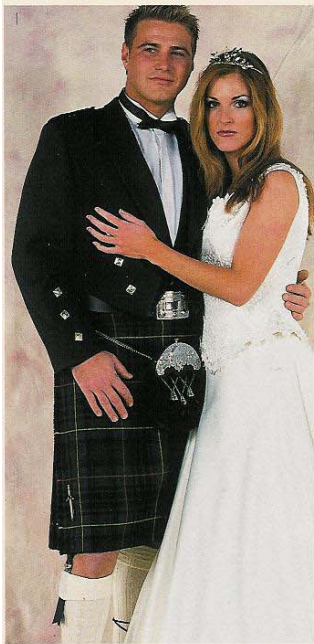
Today a wedding is a major event and great care is taken to mark the event. For those with a Celtic heritage the kilt is the chosen garment for the groom and his supporters.

Wedding supply companies have realized this and hire full kilt outfits for special occasions.

This page is typical of many worldwide and is included by permission of Formal affair, Tame Park, off Ninian Way, Wilnecote, Tamworth Staffordshire B77 5DY England, www.formalaffair.co.uk.

In addition to a selection of Scottish tartans they offer not only Irish National Tartan but also Welsh National Tartan.





1 GREEN PRINCE CHARLIE with hunting stewart kilt

2 NAVY PRINCE CHARLIE with modern douglas kilt & plaid

3 ROYAL STEWART with ghillie shirt

4 BLACK PRINCE CHARLIE with black watch kilt & plaid

Available in the following tartans and plaids:

1. Modern Gunn Tartan
2. Hunting Stewart Tartan
3. Spirit of Bannockburn Tartan
4. Black Watch Tartan
5. Royal Stewart Tartan
6. Flower of Scotland Tartan
7. Modern Hunting Robertson Tartan
8. Dress Gordon Tartan
9. Scotland's National Tartan
10. Welsh Tartan
11. Modern Douglas Tartan
12. Irish National Tartan



“But what will people think?”

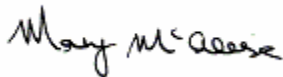
The kilt is a garment chosen because the wearer wants to wear it. They know that not only is it comfortable, it reflects values and tradition. The commonest reason for not wearing a kilt is “what will other people think of me?” In fact most of the time the onlooker is wishing they had the self-confidence and assurance to wear one. Deep down in every real man is a hidden ambition to try a kilt at least once in their lives. Frank Mehan has worn the kilt around Ireland for over 20 years and never had a bad word said to him. This year the President wrote to him.

Dear Mr. Meehan

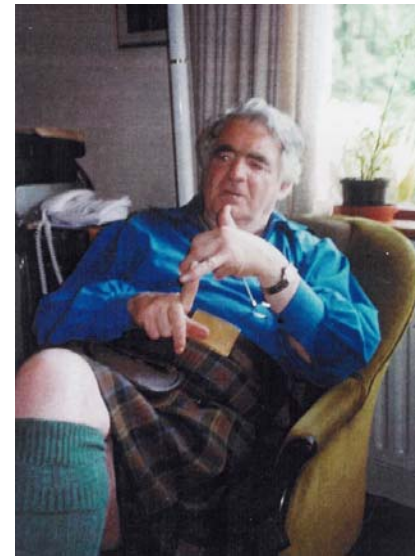
I am delighted to send my best wishes and congratulations to you for the many years of dedicated service you have given in relation to the historical and economic value of the Irish Kilt.

Your commitment has ensured continued interest in the Irish Kilt and I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely



Mary McAleese
President of Ireland”



The Outfit

The kilt is part of an outfit which the wearer builds up and changes to suit the season.

It can be informal or formal and be worn on every occasion.

It is said that the tradition of many Scottish families is to buy a boy his kilt outfit on his 21st birthday and that it will serve him for every formal occasion for the rest of his life - when he will be buried in it!

Here are examples of some typical traditional kilt outfits supplied by Tartanweb.com

1.



TartanWeb®

Irish Kilt Outfits

Here is a brief overview of the kilt.

We illustrate here a variety of outfits suitable for different occasions from casual to fully formal evening wear - 'black-tie' outfits.

There is a belief that a kilt in Ireland should be worn without a sporran, because this is a Scottish accessory. However the sporran is a carry-over from the belt pouch that was worn throughout Europe until pockets took over. It is a functional item and unless you wear trousers without pockets you will find it essential, even if only to carry loose change.



- Shirt - cotton duck
- Embossed 3" belt
- Period belt pouch
- Celtic pattern kilt pin
- Toning hose
- Flashes to match kilt
- Day wear sgian dubh
- Brogue shoes.

This kilt is pleated to the sett - the pattern of the tartan is maintained through the pleats as illustrated below



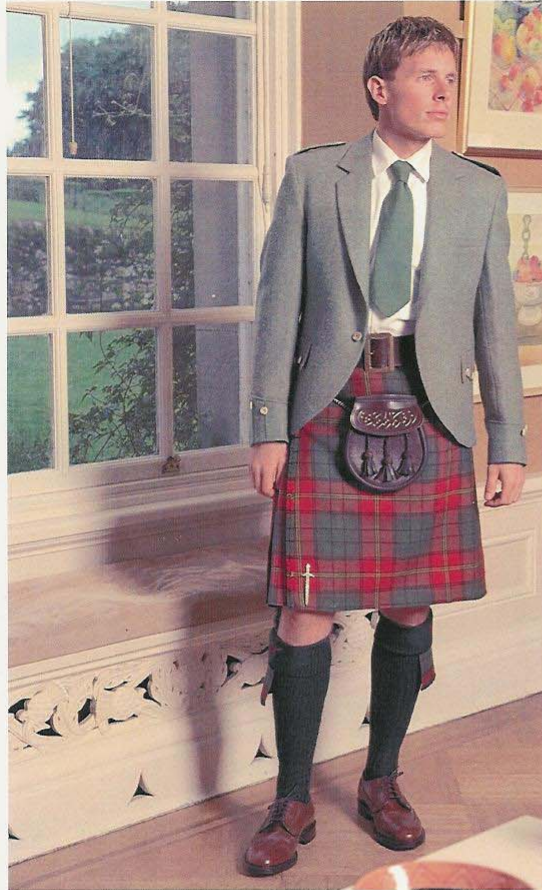
Another option is to pleat to the line; to select a prominent line and centre that line on every pleat.



A Little More Formal

The period cravat - popular right up to the end of the eighteenth century - can transform a casual look into a more formal one

The jacket illustrated is for informal daywear.



- Tweed jacket with staghorn buttons
- Self-coloured tie
- Belt with pronged buckle
- Daywear sporran
- Celtic pattern kilt pin
- Hose with flashes matching kilt
- Daywear sgian dubh
- Standard brogues



- Irish Linen shirt
- Period Cravat
- Belt with kilt buckle
- Dress sporran just out of view

Belt buckle and kilt pin with Irish badge inset



Two Irish Jackets with distinctive features.

The Kilkenny is a daywear jacket, but can also be worn with a black tie for evening functions. It is available off-the-peg in green.

The Brian Boru is a formal evening jacket with satin facings on the lapels and the tails. It is available off-the-peg in black.

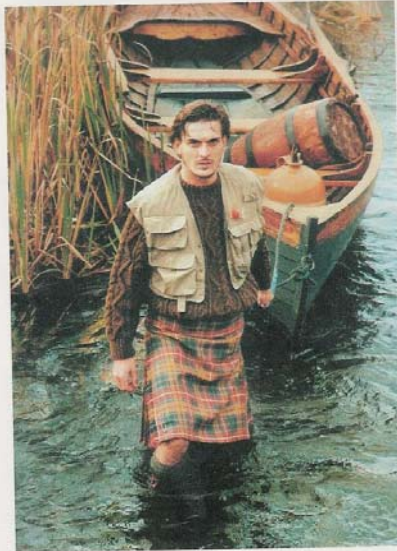
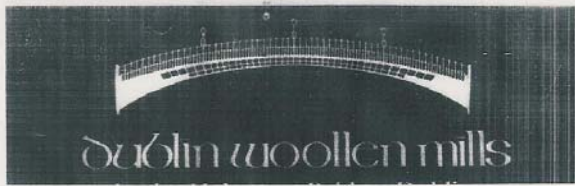


- Kilkenny jacket with vest
- Black tie (actually it is green, to match the jacket)
- Dress sporrán
- Book of Kells kilt pin
- Off-white hose
- Ghillie brogues
- Close-up of button
- Close up of cuff



- Brian Boru with vest
- Black tie
- Dress sporrán with harp medallion
- Irish crest kilt pin
- Close up of button
- Detail of back of jacket





Irish manufactured kilts form the Dublin Woollen Mills

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Kilture

The traditional kilt is not alone in the world.

For the young man wanting to turn heads "kilture" is the fashion statement to make.

Kilts are made today to catch the eye in materials from leather to silver spandex.

Here are some modest examples from the catalogue of utilitkilts USA

Wearing these takes real B****s!

