



TARTAN Herald

The Newsletter of the Scottish Tartans Authority

August 2007

Russian Adventure



STA Director Brian Wilton's exciting trip to Moscow and St. Petersburg has come to an end and hopefully heralds a new tartan era in the Russian Federation.

For very many decades, we in the west were fed a media diet on Russia which established in our minds a very stereotyped image of that country and its people. Black and white grainy photographs of dumpy, be-shawled peasant women at the bakers only to find two loaves of bread on the shelves and a hundred more people queuing behind them.

What a treat to have that image instantly dispelled by the glory that is Moscow and the stunning beauty that is St. Petersburg. Readers of our last issue will know that our Director Brian



*Left: Elena & Mikhail Lermontov.
Below: Head of the Russian family Mikhail shows off his new Lermontov kilt.*

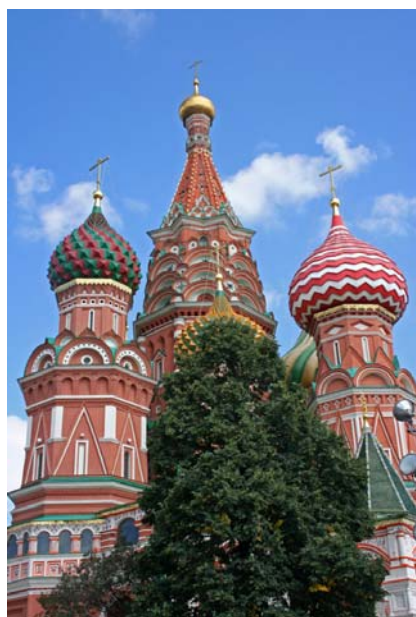
Bottom left: One of so many of Moscow's magnificent onion-dome churches.

Wilton had been invited to Russia to present the first Russian tartan ever produced for a family of Scottish descent. He was also asked to take part in the family's 950th Anniversary of the first documentation of the name in Scotland.

Brian joined Lermontovs from Russia and Learmonth from Australia, USA and England in a week long feast of Russian culture, food, drink and family life - far away from the distorting world of tourism.

Brian said that his first appearance in Highland dress was greeted with a media frenzy with four or five TV crews and still photographers

The financing of the Russian trip was only possible by the generosity of the Lermontov family in Russia and the Economic Development Department of Perth & Kinross Council - the local government body for Perthshire, the county in which the Scottish Tartans Authority is based.



scrambling for coverage and scores of Russians asking to have their photographs taken with him. "For about 15 minutes," Brian said, "I knew what it was like to be David Beckham!"

The actual presentation of the tartan took place at a large social function attended by the Russian Deputy Minister of Culture where, accompanied by bagpipe music, Mikhail Lermontov, in all his tartan glory, burst onto the stage to huge applause.

Mikhail then presented all the Lermontov males with a tartan tie and the Lermontova women with a matching scarf and they all marched around the dance floor in time to the pipes. "It was a moment to savor," added Brian. "and it was quite emotional to see just how proud they all were of some thing that we take so much for granted - Scottish ancestry!"

The TV coverage of that event went out on Russian national news and appeared as the second item - after a news flash about President Putin!

"It was a huge success," continued Brian. "Strathmore Woollens did us proud with the tartan and I took a belt and sporran outfit from Margaret Morrisons of Perth so the whole event was a family affair in more ways than one. We'll be creating a Lermontov section on our website for the expected sales from all parts of the globe and this will act as a very good prototype for other such projects."

"The Russians at all levels couldn't have been friendlier. They were outgoing, fun-loving and generous — especially so with their vodka! To me, the visit just confirmed that it's governments and not people that create international tensions and wage wars."

Brian expects to build on this first visit with the Russian-Scottish tartan and the production and translation into Russian, of articles highlighting the widespread clan and tartan connections that so many modern Russians have inherited.

Above right: Some of the international Lermontov family at the Lermontov Museum in Moscow.

Right: Part of the Lermontov 'hunting lodge' at Serednikovo, about 20 miles from Moscow.

Tartan Order from China

The Strathmore Woollen Company has received its first order from China for the specially developed Chinese- Scottish tartan.

The Forfar company has established a business relationship with a company in Shanghai, with the help of Angus Council, and received an order for 200 metres of the fabric which is to be used on golf clothing. The tartan has also been sold in Scotland to be used as corporate gifts.

It was created to symbolise the co-operation that exists between Chinese and Scottish people and incorporates the colours of the Scottish Saltire with the red and yellow of the Chinese flag. Green bands interweave to symbolise the co-operation between

Scottish and Chinese botanists in the Botanic Gardens of Edinburgh — home to the biggest collection of Chinese plants outside China. The yellow crosses the red in five places, which signifies the five stars of the Chinese flag.

Strathmore's Marketing Manager Heather Yellowley said, "We are in discussions with other companies to use the design but produce it in a sport-weight fabric."

The Scottish Tartans Authority, Strathmore Woollens and Tartan Spirit of Glasgow were recently guests of the Chinese Consul General at a social event to discuss the future marketing of the tartan. "We are very enthusiastic," said STA Director Brian Wilton, "about the potential of the Chinese market. There is certainly a niche there for genuine Scottish tartan woven in Scotland and we hope to expand these vital cultural links."



Cornish Sporran?

Staying in foreign parts, Tartan Herald investigates the 'Cornish Sporran'

When we were asked recently for information on the Cornish sporran we thought our legs were being pulled, but . . . no . . . there *is* such an animal even if it's just a conventional sporran with a uniquely Cornish symbol incorporated!

The coat of arms of the Duke of Cornwall is a Crusader shield on which are displayed 15 golden bezants in the shape of a triangle with the motto "One and All"

The story of the 15 bezants occurs during the Crusades when the Duke of Cornwall was captured by the Saracens and a ransom of 15 bezants (gold coins named after Byzantium) was demanded. The people of Cornwall apparently raised the money and the Duke was set free and so was 'coined' the motto of *One*

and *All* to mark the fact that everyone had contributed to the ransom payment.

Although historians find this tale difficult to verify, it's a colourful explanation and the shield of bezants is part of the Cornish county crest and, we're told, still can't be used without permission from . . . you've guessed it . . . The Duke of Cornwall, HRH Prince Charles.

We are indebted to Cornovi, the Cornish company in Redruth for the sporran image. See them at www.cornish-tartans.co.uk



Drive to establish new tartan research centre in Highlands

No sooner had the ink dried on the initial press reports about the new Tartan Register than the opposite ends of Scotland were preparing their bids to host 'the new register.' This article by *John Ross* is reprinted by kind permission of the Scotsman.

An attempt is being made to establish a centre in the Highlands to study the origins and development of tartan.

It is hoped the project will include academic research, possibly via the proposed Highlands and Islands university, and act as a tourism magnet for people interested in Scottish history and genealogy.

It is also thought the centre could link up with a planned national tartan

register that was announced by the Scottish Executive last month.

The idea for the research centre has been put forward by Highland Councillor Ken MacLeod and is supported by James Scarlett, a world authority on tartans who lives near Inverness.

Last month, Jim Mather, the enterprise minister, gave his official backing to a register of the thousands of tartans in existence to "protect,

New Tartans

7270 ~ London Fog Safari
7269 ~ London Fog Black
7268 ~ Burberry grey variation
7267 ~ Whisky
7266 ~ Fitzsimmons Hunting
7265 ~ Bréifne
7264 ~ Mulcahy
7263 ~ Glens of Corbie
7262 ~ Edmonton
7261 ~ Dove
7260 ~ MacDowall
7259 ~ Shrek
7258 ~ Heriot
7257 ~ PSN
7256 ~ Spirit of West Lothian
7255 ~ Tartan Army II

promote and preserve one of Scotland's most iconic and valuable assets".

Sandy Park, the convener of Highland Council, has asked Alex Salmond, the First Minister, to consider linking the register to a centre in the Highlands.

He said: "The Highlands is a natural place to consider locating this new venture, which will prove a significant tourist attraction and create jobs. Not only is the Highlands the geographical centre of the historic legacy of tartan, but we boast a wealth of experience and knowledge of tartan.

"I recognise that a lot of the manufacturing of tartan is conducted outwith the Highlands, but the clan system and roots from which tartan has come is within the Highlands and Islands. We have a good claim to have the register established here."

Mr Scarlett, 87, is the last surviving member of the former Scottish Tartan Society (STS), set up to research the subject. He has written several books on tartans and has donated an index of more than 2,000 tartans drawn up for the STS. He said: "I have been working on the academic study of tartan for over 40 years, and if someone doesn't do anything about it, what I have learned is just going to be lost.

"The Highlands is the proper place for a tartan research centre with an academic approach, and it's maybe something the university could do as part of its cultural studies.

"I'm interested in where [tartan] came from and how it works. It's an extraordinarily interesting subject

when you get into it and it's part of the Highland culture."

Mr Scarlett said a centre could be set up in conjunction with the Crieff-based Scottish Tartans Authority, which has an international index of more than 4,500 listed tartans and is seen as the "register in waiting". Last month, a report commissioned by the Executive said tartan generates more than £350 million every year for the Scottish economy and supports more than 4,000 jobs.

COMMENT

It's very pleasing that at long last such interest is being taken in tartan although the nature of the new Tartan Register, seems not to have been understood. i.e. it is an electronic register and not a leather-bound dusty tome!

Regardless of the form it takes, the STA is optimistic that the new Register will herald a first step towards a national tartan centre being established. When and if that happens, there will doubtless be an official feasibility study into the ideal location for it.

Tartan on the Runways

A recent article from the Yomiuri Shimbun - said to be the most widely read newspaper in Japan.

Those in the know are checking out checks, stocking their wardrobes with the look that's set to be big this autumn. The autumn/winter shows were dominated by check patterns, with designers sending their models down the Paris and Milan runways in criss-cross designs, in a move that has seen the return of classic patchwork patterns - tartan, gingham and argyle (albeit with a modern twist). Black - also set to be prevail this autumn, was featured in almost every piece.

Chanel showed skirts, dresses and coats in bright tartan, checkerboard and hounds tooth, with designer Karl Lagerfeld extending the patterning to long fabric-covered boots.

Jean-Paul Gaultier also brought check to the fore. The designer opted for a Scottish theme, a homage to the

birthplace of tartan. His pieces were both striking and bold: argyle patterns were created by cutting and altering traditional tartan, and co-ordinated accessories, such as scarves, stockings and bags, sported complementary checks.

Junya Watanabe used gingham to deconstruct the rugged image of the biker jacket, while new Kenzo designer Antonio Marras was not constrained by his theme, Argentine Tango, creating elegant yet passionate pieces with checks formed by deep reds on black. Perhaps the most playful plaids were featured in the cat suits by Viktor & Rolf and Gucci - both adding dynamism to the classic look.

Check's simple grid has rarely been expressed in so many ways, and the pattern has already started appearing in shop window-displays, so there's never been a better time to indulge your taste for tartan.

THE FUNKY FISTIE

We don't know how they make



them but they've certainly proved very popular since Joyce Young's *Tartan Spirit* introduced them a short while ago. Ideal for corporate presents, wedding buttonholes or for any occasion when you need a fun and

funky tartan gift for either gender. They're 10cms (4 inches) from top to bottom and you can find out about them at info@tartanspirit.co.uk or on 0141 946 0660.



Safeguard your heritage!

Remember that if you see this label . . . the kilt *isn't* Scottish. It *isn't* from the Highlands. It *isn't* authentic - it's just a cheap acrylic kilt from Pakistan. Don't let anyone get away with pretending otherwise!

First Minister's Tartan Enthusiasm

We're very pleased to note that our new First Minister has introduced the word 'tartan' into a few of his speeches in the metaphoric sense.

In a recent presentation to Muslim leaders he talked of the concept of 'One Scotland' which "celebrated the fact that there were many strands and shades to the Scottish tartan".

It's very refreshing - and heartening - to see at long last, that tartan has been re-assimilated into polite society and the considerable benefits of such a tool in establishing and strengthening cultural links with other countries has been appreciated.



The Weaver's Cottage Kilbarchan

We recently paid a return visit to the National Trust's little gem of a property in the village of Kilbarchan - not far from Glasgow Airport. This is a typical handloom weaver's cottage built in 1723 and walking through the door, is to step into a fascinating time-warped. The staff are always dressed in period costume and are friendliness itself. Curator Chris MacLeod - that's her above, spinning some flax - is also the resident weaver, ably assisted by Anne Sangster (left).

The shot below of the 'press' (a bed built into a recess) is included purely because our Director slept in one of these as a youngster! In the 1830s

there were over 800 looms working in the village and now - in the words of a tourist guide: "the clack, clack of a weaver at work brings this cottage to life again. Locally woven shawls cover the box beds. There is an important

display of looms, weaving equipment, domestic utensils, local historical and weaving items. Portraits of former spinners and weavers look at home in the midst of their tools of trade.



The National Trust for Scotland.
Weaver's Cottage, The Cross,
Kilbarchan. PA10 2JG.
Tel: 01505 705588. Phone before
visiting between 1st Oct. & 31st March.

The Incorporation of Weavers

The Weavers of Glasgow date back to the middle ages when members of the craft were those entitled to make and sell woven clothes within the ancient burgh. The craft became incorporated by a charter from the famous Archbishop Gavin Dunbar as feudal lord of Glasgow in 1528, but is known to have been in existence at least as far back as 1514. Even in those days, when their main function was to control standards in the weaving trade, the Weavers also had a charitable role "to help and comfort of their decayit brethereine ... and other godlie shows." This work has continued right up to the present day.

To maintain its links with the modern textile industry, the Incorporation takes a keen interest in the support of promising young people likely to make a contribution to this, still important Scottish industry. To this end it funds a number of grants, scholarships and prizes for textile students at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow School of Art and Langside and Cardonald Colleges, Glasgow, and also sponsors the

Below: The Incorporation of Weavers (Glasgow) tartan by Maria Mackellar, the very first Lady Deacon of the Incorporation in its 500 year history.



weaver at the Weaver's Cottage, Kilbarchan, run by the National Trust for Scotland. It is also funding in the years 2002-2005 part of the cost of weaving tapestries for Stirling Castle. The Craft also makes substantial grants and donations to charities as well as maintaining its pensioners. Apart from its educational and charitable works, the Craft maintains a long term fellowship of members (male and female) by participation in a number of social and sporting functions and sends four representatives yearly to sit in the Trades House in Glasgow.

Tartan Register and Industry News

Discussions continue on the early establishment of the official Tartan Register - Spring 2008 is the government target date.

The principle organisations involved will meet again on September 2nd when the STA, Office of the Lord Lyon, National Archives of Scotland and the Scottish Executive will get down to the nitty gritty details of how the new system will operate.

The Scottish Textiles Group met recently at Dalmahoy near Edinburgh and had a busy day - and evening.

Scottish Textiles - The Brand

Brand positioning in global markets is a key success factor for the textiles industry in Scotland and Scottish Enterprise is currently researching the benefit of an industry brand on behalf of Scottish textiles companies. As part of the process they have established an 'Industry Brand Panel' to advise on the process and its second meeting took place at the Dalmahoy day.

Scottish Textiles Group

The parent body held its meeting in the early evening and bade a fond farewell to its long-standing Chairman Jim Reid and welcomed his replacement Blair Macnaughton of the Macnaughton Group. The evening ended with a very well attended dinner in Jim Reid's honour.



Aren't they Gorgeous!??

Further to our piece on Shrek in June's Tartan Herald we've received this photo of three of Lochcarron's lovely ladies from the production department. (Those *are* masks that they're wearing aren't they? — Ed.)

You'll remember that Lochcarron, at the request of Visit Scotland, pulled out all the stops to produce a 10 metre length of tartan created by Leslie Baird, for the premier of Shrek 3.

This length was required to produce a kilt and plaid for their biggest

customer yet! The resultant publicity resulted in Border TV's second visit to Lochcarron's Selkirk premises, with worldwide media coverage, even involved our Chairman Alistair Buchan's taking part in a live show on Talk 106 from Dublin.

Visit Scotland were also surprised to discover that they had inadvertently incurred the wrath of Sir Sean Connery,

who had similar plans to promote his forthcoming animated movie featuring Sir Billie the Vet, Lochcarron having also produced a Sir Billie tartan worn by Sir Sean at New York Tartan Week in April. Sir Sean's Film is due for release in 2008.

Although the publicity was extremely gratifying, Lochcarron have so far

been unable to benefit from the ensuing demand for the tartan, due to copyright restrictions on the Shrek name. However they haven't given up entirely on the possibility and are working away in the background.

STOP PRESS

Just in as we go to press is this photograph of Erwin Ureel-Vanhaverbeke and his family in the Paschendale tartan that was specially woven and gifted by the STA for the unveiling in Belgium of the new monument to all Scots who lost their lives in Flanders.

More news in next issue.

