

# District MAR

Gaelic Name

**A 'Mharr**

Tartan Designer Unknown

Date early twentieth century by possibly older

The traditional pipe march 'The Standard on the Braes of Mar' celebrates the opening of the Jacobite Rising in 1715. Mar is the high ground between the upper reaches of the Rivers Dee and Don. Here, on the gentle slopes or 'braes' man has long found fertile ground and natural highways from the coast to the eastern Highlands. Queen Victoria and Prince Albert built their Scottish home at Balmoral, still a favorite residence of the Royal Family. Today 'Braigh Mharr' is a major attraction for visitors and center for the preservation of Scottish culture through the Highland Games at Aboyne, Ballater and Braemar.

There is uncertainty with regard to the origin of the simple but striking 'Mar District' tartan. In the seventh edition of Frank Adams *Clan Septs and Regiments*, it is stated that the sett was obtained under the name Skene 'from the Duke of Fife' (whose ancestors owned Mar Lodge). A more complex sett is given for the family of Skene. Because the Skenes lived in the Mar district and were known as Clan Donnachadh Mhairr (the Robertsons of Mar) the connection between the two names is apparent. Indeed, the Mar district tartan could have evolved either by a misreading or by intent from the Skene sett depicted on the apron of the Skene kilt illustrated by R. R. McIan in the *Clans of the Scottish Highlands* (1845 & 47). The Skene sett is stated to have been taken from an old kilt preserved in the Castle of Skene. On the other hand, the Mar District sett may have been a simple design extant before 1845 upon which the more elaborate Clan Skene tartan was based.

A variant of the sett of Mar district tartan was recorded in 1978 in the Books of the Court of the Lord Lyon (Writs section) pursuant to a petition by the Rt. Hon. Margaret of Mar, Countess of Mar so that it might be 'known and recognized as the proper tartan of the Tribe of Mar'.

*Taken from "District Tartans of Scotland", by Gordon Teall & Philip Smith, Shephard-Walwyn (Publishers) Ltd.*

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