

## What are the badges of Clan MacLeod?

Short answer: A symbolic method of distinguishing clansmen.



*An Cìrean Ceann Cinnidh*



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### Crest Badges of the MacLeods of Harris, Lewis and Raasay<sup>1</sup>

It is customary for a clansman to wear a badge on his bonnet identifying himself as a member of the clan, or more accurately as a follower of a specific chief. The badge is the depiction of the chief's crest encircled by a strap and buckle bearing the chief's motto. The chief himself wears the crest by itself or surrounded by a plain circlet bearing his motto.

Note that although one may purchase a badge at any Scottish outfitter, the crest displayed on the badge remains the property of the individual chief from whose arms the crest is taken. Because it is the chief's personal property, whenever it is used on stationery, signage or other similar applications, such ownership is noted by the addition of the words *An Cìrean Ceann Cinnidh*, meaning "The Crest of the Chief of the Clan."

When worn on bonnet, it is pinned to a cockade with, if available, a sprig of the clan's plant badge tucked behind it. Modern bonnets generally have cockade matching the color of the bonnet, but back when such things mattered, Jacobites wore white cockades, and Hannoverians wore black. If you don't want to take a stand on eighteenth century Scots politics, it can be in the livery colors of your chief (blue and white for Harris, blue and yellow for Lewis or red and yellow for Raasay)<sup>2</sup>—or just stick with whatever came with the bonnet.

Note that for those identifying themselves as MacLeods of Raasay, their badge is essentially the same that of the MacLeods of Lewis, but with the motto *Luceo non Uro*. As a cadet of the MacLeods of Lewis, use of that badge by MacLeods of Raasay would be acceptable.

<sup>1</sup> Original artwork by Ian C. Good

<sup>2</sup> J. Charles Thompson, *So You're Going to Wear the Kilt*, 1979