

PAUL COLLINS: Biographical notes.

INTRODUCTION

I have known the Chief of Clan Farquharson, Philip Farquharson, for ten years. I have been up to Invercauld and stayed with him on the estate on two occasions. A few years ago, he presented me with a Farquharson tie which I have worn proudly at the Ballater Highland Games. We both live in the same small town of Olney near the city of Milton Keynes. However my association with Ballater and the surrounding area pre-dates my friendship with Philip as will be seen below.

Recently he approached me to ask if I would be prepared to put myself forward for the position of President of Clan Farquharson UK. He felt that my background and longstanding connection with Ballater would make me a suitable candidate for the role. I was surprised and honoured to be offered this opportunity and after some deliberation accepted his offer and subsequently joined Clan Farquharson UK. I attended a committee meeting at which I was co-opted onto the committee.

Committee members are up for re-election at the forthcoming AGM in August and it is therefore proper that I should share with you some details about me so that you are able to make an informed decision.

BACKGROUND and CAREER

I was born and grew up in Croydon in South London. My father was English and my mother Irish so I do have some Celtic blood in my veins. I am married with two grown up children and two grandchildren.

After finishing school, I went onto university at the University of Kent at Canterbury from where I graduated with a degree in Economic and Social History.

Following graduation, it was now time to earn a living and I joined what is now known as HMRC as a graduate entrant Inspector. I did my tax technical training with the department and served in Croydon, Doncaster, and Milton Keynes which is how I came to live in Olney in 1975.

I left the Revenue in 1979 and moved into the private sector ultimately becoming Group Taxation Manager for Ladbroke PLC. That company became known as Hilton Group when Hilton International Hotels was acquired by it in the 1980's. In 1999 the company acquired the Reo Stakis Group and that was how I discovered Ballater.

In the same year I purchased a timeshare week at Craigendarroch and have visited Ballater every year on at least one occasion for 26 years and for the last few years have been a Patron of Ballater Highland Games.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

My start in life was a very humble one but getting into a state grammar school and then university opened up opportunities which I took full advantage of. I considered that life had been good to me and therefore I always felt the need to give something back both during my working life and since retiring.

Since coming to live in Olney, I have held a number of voluntary roles in the community namely:

- Part time youth worker,
- Special Constable – Thames Valley Police,
- Mini Rugby coach,
- Social Secretary Olney rugby Club,
- Treasurer of Olney & District Historical Society,
- 25+ years as a school governor of Ousedale School, a 2200 pupil comprehensive school with campuses in Newport Pagnell and Olney. This time included 11 years as Chairman of Governors,

- Town Councillor on Olney Town Council for three years where I chaired the Finance committee and restored the reserves position,
- Treasurer Cowper & Newton Masonic Lodge,
- Member of Cowper & Newton Museum Georgian dance group,
- Chairman of Trustees of the Cowper & Newton Museum for 10 years. This is a registered charity and fully accredited museum. I led the museum through two Re Accreditation processes (Ofsted for Museums) and managed the museum through the Covid years. I also lead the museum through an evaluation process culminating in the museum volunteers being awarded the Queens Award for Voluntary Service in June 2020. I continue to volunteer at the museum.

IN CONCLUSION

During my life I have dealt with a wide range of organisations and people from all walks of life and I believe that I can use that experience to benefit the Clan society here in the UK so that we can go forward as a group united in a common aim of ensuring its long term success.

I am looking forward to August when I hope to meet face to face with as many Clan members as possible,

Paul Collins
22nd May 2025.