

December 2011

Dear Members and Friends of Clan Farquharson,

December has brought the very sad news of the deaths of two much respected members of our clan.

On December 9th Paul Farquharson of Glasgow died. Those who were at Ballater this year will remember Paul as a delightful man, witty, a great sense of fun and a most loyal clansman who thoroughly enjoyed the gathering and entered fully into the activities. Paul endeared himself to us all with his lovely personality and ready smile and there are various photos taken at Ballater which show his enjoyment of events.

To his brother Ian, sister-in-law Jane and their children, we send our very sincere condolences as we share their grief at the passing of a good friend. Paul will be most sadly missed and we shall each treasure our cameos of him at various times. Ian has said how much the clan meant to Paul and created a new dimension in his life helping him through some of his more difficult times when feeling unwell.

Just one week later, on 16th December, came the awful news of Valerie's sudden death. Perhaps not all clansmen will be aware that Val had a stroke earlier in the year and won everyone's admiration for her positive attitude as she learned to walk again. It wasn't long before she was taking steps on her own without her walking aid. The Worthing lunch in early May was Val's first 'public' outing and she was so thrilled to be there, amongst her clan friends. President Alistair presented her with a bouquet as a token of pleasure at her steady recovery. Thanks to the exceptional kindness of Ansgar Bohemer, who drove from Germany to Worthing and then transported Val and John to Ballater, they were able to enjoy our annual highland gathering. Again, there are many photos of Val and John really enjoying themselves and catching up with all their friends. She was so happy to be there and to see her long-standing friend in Aboyne.

Sadly, in October, Val was admitted to hospital for an operation. As this coincided with the Worthing lunch it was unanimously decided to postpone it as it wouldn't have been the same without Val and John. She was in hospital for nearly 3 weeks but again, she was so positive, relating little anecdotes of life on the 10th floor of Brighton Hospital and making new friends. John and her family have been a tower of strength to Val and even a couple of days before her death, she was chatting on the phone and sounding bright. However, she was taken into Worthing Hospital, on Friday 16th December, where we understand from her family, she passed away very peacefully with John beside her.

To John, their sons David and Martin, daughters-in-law Catherine and Helen and all their grandchildren, we send deepest sympathy on the loss of such a much-loved Wife, Mum and Grandmother. Val would have been celebrating a special birthday this January which makes her loss even more poignant for her family.

Val has been clan membership secretary since its re-convening in 2001, giving 10 years of loyal service. As the first point of contact, her friendly voice on the telephone welcomed prospective members, she knew everyone by name and became everybody's friend. She was a remarkable lady with excellent communication skills, who gave unstinting loyalty and service to Clan Farquharson, doing a job she loved and she certainly helped in promoting the spirit of kinship. Val also worked very hard in the background, dealing with membership subscriptions and banking, organising the printing and mailing of The Lion's Face, dealing with various letters and enquiries and many other tasks including the organisation of bi-annual lunches in Worthing, open to any clan members and friends who were able to participate.

Val's funeral will take place on Friday 13th January at 12.30pm at Randalls Park Crematorium in Leatherhead , Surrey, KT22 0AG and afterwards at Martin and Helen's home at 38, Orchard Drive, Chessington, Surrey, KT91 1AN. John would welcome floral tributes, so in consultation with Alistair, a tribute from the clan is to be arranged – hopefully with some ribbon in clan tartan. If you are able to go, perhaps you would be kind enough to let me know, so that I can give Helen an idea of numbers.

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