



Hazel Elborne developed a keen interest in family history by seeing the oval shaped photos of early family members on her Grand parents' farm house wall. A trip to Scotland in 2014 entitled "Following in your Ancestors Footsteps," created just that, as she and her daughter traced her Grand father's earlier footsteps. Hazel also has had a great interest in the Royal Family, that resulted in an invitation to the Queen's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace as well as a chance meeting with Prince Charles at a Clan Gathering in Ballater, Scotland. As a second generation Canadian and the last member of her immediate family. Hazel continues to research her family history, thus leaving a legacy for present as well as future generations.

First Time Gatherer

by Hazel Elborne

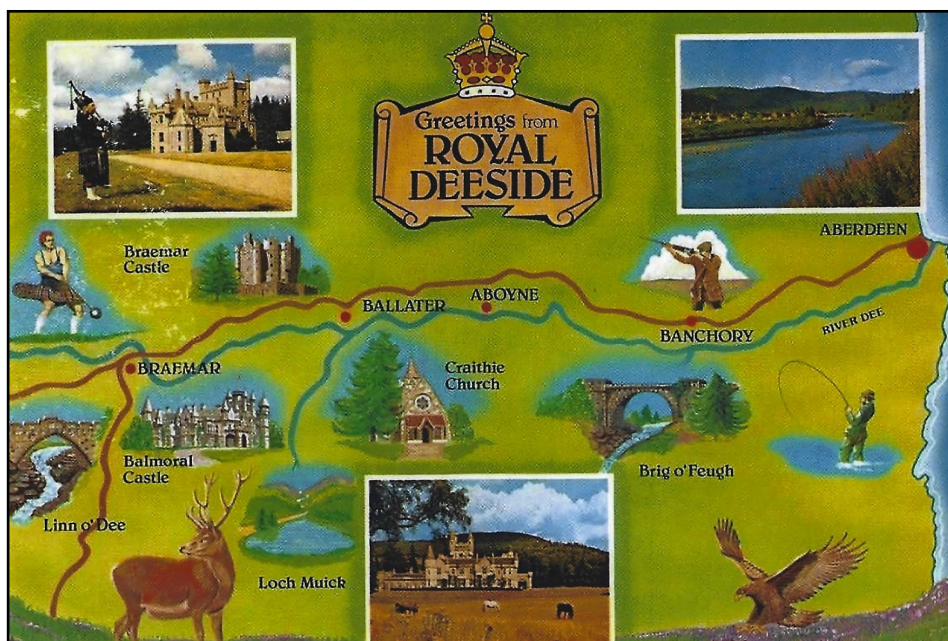
Scotland's proud history is known and shared by descendants of the Scottish Highlands. Clan is the Gaelic word for family and through the hundreds of years since the days of Scottish Highlanders, the kinsmen of those forbears have migrated throughout the world.

For centuries Clan Gatherings, (i.e. Family Reunions) have been a traditional part of Scottish history. Held throughout Scotland, as well as in other parts of the world, Gatherings are often combined with annual local Highland Games featuring bagpipes, dancing, parades, tartans, haggis, memories and laughter. The Gaelic word Clan is unique to Scotland, thus its proud history is shared by locals of the Scottish Highlands or by their descendants.



Clan Crest

Each Clan has a Chief who, similar to Royalty, is appointed for life. 2019 was a particularly historic event for Clan Farquharson. Chief Alwyne Compton Farquharson, 16th Baron of Invercauld House, a seat since 1869, celebrated his 100th birthday and the 70th anniversary of becoming Chief. The event was held in Ballater, Aberdeenshire, Scotland in conjunction with the local Highland Games. His Royal Highness, Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay, attended the Games, in honor of the Chief's major milestones.



Greetings from Royal Deeside map.

As a descendant of Clan Farquharson, I had the opportunity to attend the Gathering in August 2019. My Great Great Grandmother, Ann Farquhar, born 1801, was the first in line of our Clan, with all future descendants as members. When my family and friends heard about my plans to attend the Farquharson Clan Gathering and Ballater Highland Games in Scotland, there were questions such as. *"You are going where? What is a Clan and what is a Clan Gathering? How do you spell Farquharson and where is Ballater?"*



Cairn in trees with two clan members.

Drum Major of the bands who will be marching towards you from the far end of the field (they will stop short!)...When the bannerman and the Invercauld Highlanders reach a point to your left when you are opposite the gate up to the Clan Chief's tent, you will veer left to that gate"; doubts began to dampen my enthusiasm. Would it be possible to learn all this at one rehearsal and what force might they use if I accidentally veered right instead of left?

And damp it was the morning we met at Monaltrie Park for the Opening Ceremonies rehearsal. After reviewing the protocol as we practiced on the field, the unfamiliar commands became clear. But when it was revealed that the Prince of Wales would be visiting the Games earlier in the day, I had to ask, *"Is this the same Prince of Wales as Prince Charles?"* The answer was a curt "yes". My excitement returned.



Clan Chief sitting on the bench.

The Clan Gathering is a week-long celebration that involves events such as Tartan on the Green, Meet and Greet at the Deeside Inn, a Reception for the Clan Chief in the Duke of Rothesay Highland Games Pavillion and a visit to the Cairn na Cuihmne. For several years I had been following the event; now I was not only going to attend but was asked to participate in the Colour Party. Having been a Girl Guide Leader I was familiar with Colour Parties; however with instructions such as *"Keep a line in the middle of the Royal Guards, heading for the*

Following rehearsal, a trip to the Cairn na Cuihmne strengthened connections to the Clan where a special bench honouring the Clan Chief's 100th birthday, donated by the landowners, was unveiled. The Farquharson Cairn is revered in ancient Scottish tradition when, during conflict, a call would go out to bring arms. Men would then meet, place a stone on an existing pile of stones (the Cairn), and remove it on return. The number of stones remaining would indicate the Clan's losses. The Cairn na Cuihmne (Remember the Fallen), remains today a hallowed visual image of Clan connections.



A rock with Ballater Games inscription.

From the Cairn we travelled a short distance away to Braemar, where a reception was held at the Duke of Rothesay Highland Games Pavilion. Here I had the opportunity to learn more of the Clan traditions and, through the words of the Canadian Boat Song, to appreciate the connection between Scotland and Canada. Written in 1860 by David Cobban, lines such as, "*Mountains divide us, and the waste of seas, Yet still the blood is strong*" reflect the bond that exists yet today. In addition, a special fiddle song, written and performed by Paul Anderson honouring the Chief's centenary, reflects the deep respect and affection members of the Clan have for their Chief.



Prince Charles with Clan Farquharson President.

The morning of the Highland Games was graced with glorious sunshine and prior to the Opening, I was fortunate enough to shake hands and speak with Prince Charles. A most unexpected highlight. My excitement continued as Opening Ceremonies went as rehearsed and I was thrilled to be a part of the Colour Party that accompanied Clan Chief Alwyne Farquharson onto the field. For much of the day I enjoyed socializing with members in the Clan tent and watching the various competitive events prior to accompanying the Chief off the field.

Finally, I could not forget the Farewell Dinner at Finzean Estates, nor will I forget how to pronounce the name. Built in the Grampian Hills of Aberdeenshire in 1609, Finzean House (pronounced Fingin), is Gaelic for "*the fair place*". It has been the home of the Farquharson family for over 400 years. Not only was the food, hospitality and entertainment exceptional, I thoroughly enjoyed visiting with the people at our table as well as another chance to visit with the Clan Chief and his family.

It is not often one gets a chance to live a dream but due to the people I met who made me feel completely comfortable in a new environment and I am truly grateful.

RS



Prince Charles with the Marching Band.



Hazel Elborne with colour party.



Finzean House