

lan

---

**From:** Mcfarlane, Douglas [Douglas.Mcfarlane@rbs.co.uk]  
**Sent:** 21 September 2004 14:29  
**To:** info  
**Subject:** Response to Enquiry [Scanned]

"Cultural rights for the Scottish citizen, and those of its creative community"

As a creative individual, I find it hard to be boxed into your structure for responses. Instead I decided to write what I feel and of my past experience in the hope that this generates thoughts and ideas which you can then reframe into your terms of reference.

Firstly, I'd like to thank you for allowing me to input into your study. It is an honour indeed to be helping to shape the cultural future of the country. My life experiences are what I find best to talk about, as I believe that only when you've experienced something can you be critical of it and offer constructive suggestions on how it can be improved. I therefore have three areas I'd like to discuss and I hope you are able to take this into consideration.

CLAN HERITAGE - A modern day Clan feudal system ?

I was the Commissioner of the Clan MacFarlane a few years ago holding the highest position in the Clan in Scotland.....and the only member in Scotland ! This speaks volumes.

The organisation who held the "coat of arms with Lord Lyon" was based in California and had a membership of tens of thousands in the US, Canada, Australia and many other locations around the world but had no Scottish representative. I volunteered and was accepted.

My first action was to be part of the Clan Heritage Trust which was a group of Loch Lomond clans who got together in order to setup awareness of the Clans within Drumkinnon Bay (Lomond Shores). As my background was working as a Senior Manager for the Royal Bank of Scotland, I was nominated as Treasurer. This group of people representing each of the 8 clans around the Loch, met regularly and were close to developing a shop and cafe with clan products and history of the clans. This was refused at the 11th hour, when the Irish owners of the commercial property chose not to allow any other commercial activity on the site. A severe blow to the aims of the Trust and despite frantically scouring the area for alternative buildings, this effectively killed the cultural aims of the Clans.

Further to this, I embarked on a separate Clan Macfarlane project which was attempting to gain property in Arrochar in order to develop a Long House into an archaeological interest. I encouraged the support of Lord Macfarlane of Bearsden in this and met with him to gain his support, which he was happy with. As you may know, Lord Macfarlane is a well-respected business man in Scotland and his work in building the Macfarlane Group is widely recognised as a major achievement. Unfortunately, when proposing Lord Macfarlane's patronage to the Clan Macfarlane, based in the U.S., their concerns were that he was a Conservative supporter and not affiliated with Scottish National Party. I argued my case and won highlighting that the organisation should be non-political and be for the good of Scotland's heritage, not have a political agenda. However a short while after this, I was ousted from the organisation in favour of an SNP supporter from Dunfermline.

Questions remain....

1. Scotland's heritage is SCOTLAND'S HERITAGE, and should NEVER be owned by those who have left the country. Their support is very welcome however they cannot be core to the decision making as their view of Scotland is jaundiced by Television and International Marketing, not reality and will never be able to keep up with the changes being introduced into the culture with changes you plan to introduce.

How can Scotland regain control of this ?

2. Who is looking after the real and proud history of our Clans around Loch Lomond, and elsewhere for that matter. This system while feudal in its past nature does not need to be, in the future, and MUST be developed. We should not be ashamed of our history, and neither should we allow it to be buried by presenting to the world a glossy version of it.

SCREEN- In at the start, then dropped like a stone

My second career, adopted around 5 years ago, is one of an actor. I was lucky enough to land the role of a policeman in a film called Ticking Man which won a grant from Scottish Screen to develop the movie. The Director, a very able Scotsman from Aberdeen who had spent a lot of time working in California, had gathered some of the best Scots up and coming actors and paid them as best he could. These actors, including myself, have gone on to other successful projects on TV, film and theatre. The problem was however that after the funding had been provided, Scottish Screen did nothing with it. It was a tick in the box. There was no professional development involved, no marketing support and no distribution advice or contacts. When the director managed, through his own contacts, to take the film to the Montreal Film Festival last year he immediately got a distribution agreement with a Spanish organisation. The film is currently showing in Sweden and Holland but has no current plans to come to the UK !!

How could a film, sponsored, supported, created and made in Scotland, not see the light of day in its own country ? Where is the support for our own acting community ? Too much focus is on the filmmaking which is only the beginning of the deal, and often the easiest. The hard part is the last mile, getting it out to the general public and making it a success :

Another case in point here was the George Clooney film (name forgotten), which I had personally submitted my details to as soon as I heard it was casting. I was advised that all casting had been done in London and it was only "extras" that were being cast locally. My letter to Mr McAveety was a dismissive response saying that it was nothing to do with him.

Questions remain...

1. How can Scotland have a supportive film business which can take the output that is being generated by our creative individuals and turning them into successful business ventures.
2. Why do Scottish Screen applaud themselves when they get one or two location deals, but forget about those creative ideas that gain individual success long after they have funded them and ignored them.
3. Why is government powerless to act on misuse or misguided use of their support.

THEATRE - Unimaginative, not supportive, out of touch and not ambitious

A few years ago, I combined my IT background with my new found passion for acting into a web project which has grown dramatically over the last 3 years. UK Theatre Network (uktheatre.net and uktheatrenetwork.com) are FREE promotional services to the acting, producing and casting community, as well as providing a platform to help develop audiences by providing reviews, listings and online ticket purchasing. I have personally sought for support of this service from various Scottish and English bodies to no avail, yet it continues to be sought after and growing. I invest my own personal time and effort every single day for the last 3 years for no financial gain but to boost audiences and help actors find work, yet there is no equivalent service in the UK.

I joined the Federation of Scottish Theatre and suggested ideas of how audiences could be

developed by introducing a UK Theatre week where productions could contribute to their favourite charity and generate goodwill and word of mouth marketing opportunities which would help to sustain a growth in the business. This fell on deaf ears and there were more reasons to not do it, than to do it. This was particularly galling as it left me with a feeling that Scottish theatre does NOT support charity. The Audience Development Committee did not even minute their rejection of my idea and mumbled their way to the end of the meeting when asked if it was to get their support.

Recently, I have been developing a PayPerView Theatre concept which is now operational. A year ago, I offered this on a plate to Scottish Arts Council, but they did not even acknowledge how unique and ground-breaking the idea was. So I embarked on the development work myself and marketing the idea to the general theatre community. Again, generally speaking there were plenty of people who could raise issues (what will real audiences think of their online counterparts getting a better deal ? ..... you would be taking away from the live experience.....) but very few dawning on the reality that this could generate an increase in audience numbers never before seen in Theatre as it can be shown around the world !! Think about it.

Questions remain....

1. How can entrepreneurial ideas be nurtured and acted upon when most people within the business do not have the experience to see beyond their own training ?
2. Why do SAC not encourage and promote concepts by referral to appropriate supportive bodies ?
3. Why is there no collective body looking after UK Theatre and the interests of the country as a whole, and not just Scotland ?
4. Why is Charity so frowned upon in the Theatre community. Complacency seems to have set in.

Douglas McFarlane  
Founder of UK Theatre Network  
Actor and IT Director

The Royal Bank of Scotland plc, Registered in Scotland No. 90312. Registered Office: 36 St Andrew Square, Edinburgh EH2 2YB

The Royal Bank of Scotland plc is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority and represents The Royal Bank of Scotland Marketing Group. The Bank sells life policies, collective investment schemes and pension products and advises only on the Marketing Group's range of these products and on a With-Profit Bond produced by Norwich Union Life (RBS) Limited.

This e-mail message is confidential and for use by the addressee only. If the message is received by anyone other than the addressee, please return the message to the sender by replying to it and then delete the message from your computer. Internet e-mails are not necessarily secure. The Royal Bank of Scotland plc does not accept responsibility for changes made to this message after it was sent.

Whilst all reasonable care has been taken to avoid the transmission of viruses, it is the responsibility of the recipient to ensure that the onward transmission, opening or use of this message and any attachments will not adversely affect its systems or data. No responsibility is accepted by The Royal Bank of Scotland plc in this regard and the recipient should carry out such virus and other checks as it considers appropriate.