**Walk Leader Charlie Colliar**

Having retired from the Fire Service after 33 years I felt I was now in a position and had the time to take on new opportunities. Up to this time I had not heard of Braveheart but I found out about it through an article in the Falkirk Herald in 2007 where they were looking for new walk leaders. Having always enjoyed walking I contacted the then Walking Co-ordinator. After she had explained the role of a walk leader I felt I possessed   the necessary skills to become a walk leader and so I volunteered to attend the upcoming training day. Shortly after my initial training I helped set up the first evening walk  in Middlefield Falkirk starting at the Falkirk Football stadium and going  to the sea lock on the Forth and Clyde Canal(being an evening walk it only runs from March to October). This walk is still going although it now is called the Helix park walk and although the route has changed slightly from the early walk it now has the benefit of passing the iconic Kelpies which had 1 million visitors in their first year. As well as this walk I also help out on other Braveheart walks throughout the Falkirk District.

 I found the initial training day very interesting and equipped me with the necessary skills to become a walk leader. The training included background to the Braveheart organisation, risk assessment, first aid and CPR. Over the  years I have attended various other training courses including First aid training and CPR refresher training which is essential for walk leaders as well as outdoor safety training, all of which I have found interesting and useful in my role as a walk leader.

Having always enjoyed walking I find the Braveheart walks enjoyable. On the walks I have the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life many of whom have had health issues and are walking to maintain or improve their health. Additionally it gives many of the walkers a chance to meet other people and afford them the opportunity for social engagement, which for some is limited in their normal day to day life. During many of the walks the world has been put to rights and overall I have found that there has always been a lot of laughter.

As regards to myself I have got a lot of satisfaction from the walks over the years and as well benefiting from the walking for my own health I enjoy the outdoors and meeting people and would recommend it to people, who like me enjoy walking and meeting people.