



Clan Forsyth

SYDNEY BRANCH

NEWSLETTER

CLAN FORSYTH SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA – SYDNEY BRANCH

PO BOX 396, ROSEVILLE NSW 2069

March 2014 #1

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<http://www.clanforythaustralia.org/>

Photos from the Clan Forsyth Open Day held on Sunday 10th November, 2013 held at the Uniting Church Hall in Willoughby.

The Open Day included the inauguration by Judy Forsyth, Sydney Branch President, of David Forsyth AM as the new Australian Commissioner.



More photos from the Clan Forsyth Open Day



NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Sunday 9th March 2014

At Robino's café from 12.30pm

Corner of Penshurst and Oakville Streets, Willoughby.

A car park is next to the café in Oakville Street.

The AGM will be held during lunch.

ALL MEMBERS ARE WELCOME!

RSVP by 5th March to:
Judy Forsyth (President)
Phone 02 9634 2749

James Forsyth – The Missing Years

Compiled by Commissioner David Forsyth AM

James Forsyth, the pioneer tanner of Willoughby was born in Bermondsey London in 1818. His family moved to Newcastle upon Tyne when he was young, and he was educated and married there. Around 1841, James and his wife Margaret moved back to Bermondsey in London where James, his father Thomas, and later his sons, worked in the leather industry as tanners.

James's wife Margaret, sons Thomas Todd, John Rosewall and Robert, plus Margaret's daughters Margaret Dorling and Sarah Jane arrived in Sydney in February 1863, not having seen James for 15 years. So what had he been doing? There is scant information, some family stories and a few records to provide some clues.

We know from a letter written by James's son John Rosewall Forsyth that James departed after Christmas in 1848, and they did not see him again until 1863.

Australian Men of Mark Vol 2 provides a short biography of James, and notes: *'Mr Forsyth, being of a restless disposition, was determined to see the world, and in 1849, he left England, and arrived at New Orleans, where he began business for himself at his own trade. Here he met with fair success, but not enough to prevent him seeking his fortune on the goldfields of California. There he remained for two years, and at the end of that time, he came to Sydney, drawn to Australia by the prominence into which that country had been placed by the discovery there of gold.'*

So it seems that he spent time in the leather trade in New Orleans. Ancestry.com records show two James Forsyths arrived in New Orleans in 1849, and none in any of 1848, 1850, 1851 or 1852, so it is a reasonable assumption that he was one of the two who arrived in 1849. The New Orleans Daily Picayune newspaper from 1849 records a shipping list showing a Forsyth arriving there. The USA 1850 Census contains over 60 James Forsyths, none of which exactly match our James, albeit with intriguing partial matches in the gold mining town of El Dorado in California and another in New Orleans.

Les Forsyth booklet 'Forsyth Adventures' notes James travelled to Australia on his first visit in 1852. James and his brothers John and Thomas (both of whom remained in Newcastle on Tyne), were known to work as mariners, probably on ships carrying leather goods and coal between London and Newcastle. Thus it is possible that James sometimes worked his passages across the oceans rather than travelling as a passenger.

In the SMH of 27/12/1851 and NSW unassisted passenger lists, a John Forsyth is noted as arriving in Sydney from San Francisco. However James does not appear in the NSW Electoral Rolls for 1853/54, possibly because he had moved to Victoria. There is a J Forsyth in the Victorian unassisted shipping index for December 1853 on the SS Lady Franklin. Around 1854, a lot of disaffected miners left the Sofala diggings to go to the Victorian gold fields. Perhaps James was one of them. His obituary noted that he *'made his way to the Turon (Sofala) and afterwards to Ballarat, and was at these places during many of the stirring event of their history'*. Is it possible that James was in Ballarat during the lead up to the Eureka Rebellion? Between November 1854 and March 1855, James is listed as a coal trimmer on the SS City of Sydney, which plied the sea passage between Sydney and Melbourne. The Australian Men of Mark biography says he was *'for four months engaged as a coal trimmer on one of the inter colonial steamers'*. Family stories say he scraped the bottom of a ship after he first arrived in Australia.

Perhaps James worked his passage back to the USA or elsewhere, but we know he did not go back to London. The gold rushes progressed through California from 1849, to Bathurst/Sofala from 1851 to 1853, Ballarat from 1852 to 1860s. Les' booklet and Esther Leslie's Willoughby history all say James spent time at Sofala in the late 1850s, and that this was his second visit to Australia. Both probably sourced this information from the same place. It is more likely that he in fact spent the intervening time at the Victorian goldfields followed by a stint on the ships. A number of articles in Willoughby historical publications refer to a *'fruitless attempt to strike gold at Sofala'* by James. It seems these refer to his first attempt there around 1852, for later in the 1850s, other records and family tales say he *'struck it rich'* at Sofala. This was probably between 1857 and 1859, when Sofala had a prosperous period, many Chinese miners arrived and employed more thorough and methodical mining practices.

James made some money, but probably not from mining gold. Discussions with historians in Bathurst about *'striking it rich'* at the Sofala diggings revealed no records of a find by James Forsyth. They advised that very few people struck it rich by finding gold, and that most people who made money at the diggings were suppliers of goods, in James's case, by supplying leather goods to the miners. He probably had to transport them from Sydney, which would have been laborious and hard work. That he may not have made a *'fortune'* accords with the evidence of what he did when he went to Sydney to live, which was to work for a large tannery business called Aldersons. This indicates he did not suddenly become very rich, but perhaps had accumulated a modest nest egg.

The Australian Men of Mark biography also mentions James in Sydney working for the large tanning firm of Alderson & Sons at Surry Hills for 18 months, *'after which time he was enabled to establish a tannery'*. It then says *'for want of capital, he was compelled to begin in a very small way, his first works being in Surry Hills, but before long he moved to North Willoughby, where he by degrees developed his business to its present extensive proportions.'* This seems to fit with him leaving Sofala around 1859, working for Aldersons until 1861, and then starting his own small business. By May 1862 he had accumulated enough funds to write to his wife Margaret and pay for their passage as noted in the Immigration Deposit Journals.

James's obituary states that *'he opened a business at Surry Hills as a boot manufacturer, and also started a small tannery at Parramatta'*. We know Thomas Todd and Robert operated a tannery at Parramatta for a while around 1870. The 1864 Sands Directory shows James being at Chelsea Street Redfern, near Surry Hills. Son Thomas Todd and his new bride Ann Lile Lewis also lived here in 1864. James moved to Carlton St Chippendale, now the old brewery site, not far from the Forsyth's Broadway shop site. Les' notes say James had this residence ready when Margaret and the family arrived. Willoughby Centenary History says James purchased the North Willoughby land in 1865 to establish his "Rosewall" tannery, but Esther Leslie's later 1988 Willoughby history says it was in 1869. Given that the Sands Directory for 1868 first shows James Forsyth Leather Store at 92 Parramatta Street (now Broadway) where they had stores into the turn of the century, it is likely that they had started at Willoughby before 1869, or else the Surry Hills store did well and enabled expansion, which is unlikely. Other information suggests that James did purchase the land in 1865 and commenced building the tannery in 1866. The rest, as they say, is history.

So what can we learn from the information assembled so far. Firstly we need to do more research, especially as more records become available, and hopefully fill in more of the missing years. Secondly James was undoubtedly a wanderer, and determined to improve life for himself and his family by rising out of the Bermondsey slums to start a new and successful life in another country. His first attempt was in the USA, but like others he started to follow the gold rushes, finishing up in Australia. Thirdly, it was not an easy transition, and James had to work as a seaman, a coal trimmer, clean the bottom of ships and work at the gold diggings in California, Sofala, Victoria and again at Sofala. He probably did not find

much gold, but did make some money, probably as a supplier. Fourthly James did not see his family for 15 years, but when he finally accumulated enough money to start a new life for them all, he arranged for them to travel to Australia. That loyalty to his wife and family paints a good picture of the man, in spite of his hard and uncompromising nature, and leaving them in the slums of Bermondsey for 15 years.

Neither Margaret nor James were saints. They both did what they needed to do to survive, James though his wanderlust and Margaret through her relationship with her lodger while James was away, with whom she had four children, two of whom survived and travelled with her to Australia. It was a credit to James that he welcomed them both as his own. Times were tough and needs must. **DF**

GLASWEGIAN WEDDING

Two Glaswegians, Archie Forsyth and Jimmy McNab, are sitting in the pub discussing Jimmy's forthcoming wedding.

"Och, it's all goin' pure brilliant," says Jimmy. "Ar've got everythin' organised awready: the fluers, the churrch, the caurs, the reception, therings, the minister, even ma stag night"

Archie nods approvingly. "I've even bought a kilt to be married in!" continues Jimmy.

"A kilt?" exclaims Archie, "That's magic, you'll look pure smart in that. What's the tartan?.."

"Och," says Jimmy, "A'd imagine she'll be in white."



Past childhoods remembered

By Denise Park, Clan Secretary

How much childhood has changed! This was brought home to me recently when my grandchildren were discussing their 'play dates', not a term with which I was familiar.

When I arrived home from school and on weekends I changed into old clothes. No Designer clothes then and usually handmade or hand me downs. The 'gang' congregated on the street or at each other's homes – yes we raced our tricycles and built tree houses, redirected water courses, swung through the Wisteria vines, constructed billy carts and built rafts to float on unfenced swimming pools.

At dusk my mother would ring the bell to summon me home for a bath and tea (dinner) and later home work.

9 Edward Street Gordon was and is a 'dead end' street comprising approximately twenty substantial bungalows set on half acre garden blocks. We had the added bonus of a Hollywood style mansion set in acres of landscaped gardens used then as a Red Cross Nursing Home and rehabilitation home for injured War Veterans from The Boar War and the 2 world wars of which, at that time there were plenty. The street ended in the 'bush' which is now famous for its Flying Foxes (bats). This bush became part of the Ku-Ring-Gai National Park extending from the Hawkesbury River in the north to Middle Harbour in the south and east to the Northern Beachers, hundreds of miles of rugged bushland.

The opportunities for creative play are obvious and we were encouraged to 'go out in the sun and play.' Children then were quite feral. How we survived and thrived arriving at successful adulthood although with skin cancers and arthritis from broken bones is a wonder.

We built cubby houses out of broken asbestos sheeting over funnel web spider's holes. Used DDT to help rid these structures of Red back spiders. We were careful of the poisonous snakes which sometimes invaded.

My children lived in Wahroonga also in the 'bush' and similarly thrived. Then the mothers would often accompany them to sit in my family room drinking hideous cups of instant coffee and discussing their problems. The children ran wild outside our house which was built on cliff face on 5 levels so a good place for falls not to mention their ability to cliff climb and abseil. A cave was further down the block which was the home of a rock Python called Mr Wiggly.

Now my darling Grand Children, although very active in structured sports and activities do not have this freedom. Modern Technology and Occupational Health and Safety issues along with paedophilia publicity have certainly curtailed a great deal of our previous pleasures.

Hence the emergence of the 'Play Date.'

SAD PASSINGS

Joan Forsyth died on 16th December 2013, age 89. Joan was the wife of former Sydney Branch President, the late Ray Forsyth, mother of the new Clan Commissioner David and former Sydney Branch Secretary Margaret. Joan and Ray lived in the Willoughby North Shore area most of their married lives, except for 11 years in Melbourne and 2 years in London. Joan was born in Brisbane but did most of her schooling in Sydney and worked in the Commonwealth Bank where she met Ray.

Dorothea Mary Grant, a foundation member of the clan, on the Thomas Todd side and late of Castle Hill and West Ryde, died on 20th November 2013, age 95.



CONGRATULATIONS MARGARET !

Margaret Snodgrass, a member of the Clan Committee, was awarded an **OAM** (Medal for the Order of Australia) in the 2014 Australia Day honours. Margaret was recognised for her services to the community of Willoughby. For over 30 years she has been involved with fund raising for charities and also has for 6 years been the representative for Willoughby Council on the Royal North Shore Hospital community participation committee.



Forsyths from NSW and Victoria who served in WW1

Compiled by Tim Crossley, Clan Treasurer

August 2014 will mark the 100th Anniversary of the start of WW1, the so called "war to end all wars". No doubt over the next 4 years there will be various ceremonies to mark the centenary significant battles of WW1 including the Gallipoli invasion centenary in 2015. It has often been said that Australia only really came of age as a nation during WW1 despite Federation having taken place some dozen or so years before. "For Australia, as for many nations, the First World War remains the most costly conflict in terms of deaths and casualties. From a population of fewer than five million, 416,809 men enlisted, of which over 60,000 were

killed and 156,000 wounded, gassed, or taken prisoner" (Source: Australian War Memorial). There wasn't a street in any town in Australia or family that wasn't touched by the war or knew someone who was, including Forsyth families. To mark the occasion we would like to include stories of Forsyth family members who served in WW1 in forthcoming newsletters during 2014 and 2015 and even into 2016. Please email the Editor with any articles, photos and stories about Forsyth family members who went to that war and what may have become of them. We look forward to receiving your stories

Below is a list of Forsyth Family members from NSW and Victoria that are detailed on the Clan Website (www.clanforythaustralia.org) that we have identified so far as having served in WW1. Those underlined appear on the Roll of Honour having been killed in action or died of their wounds. This list may not be complete, so if you do have additions please contact the Newsletter Editor cwlee@optusnet.com.au

Forsyth – Tanners of Willoughby Forsyth, Archibold James Forsyth, Harold John Henderson Forsyth, Leonard Edgar <u>Forsyth, Reginald James Thomas</u> <u>Hillcoat, William George Vincent</u> Horsley, Henry Howard Peterson, George Lindsay Richardson, Thomas George Forsyth, Harry Raymond	Forsyths of Bright Victoria <u>Bettles, Albert John</u> Fisher, William Roy Flinn, Robert McMillan Forsythe <u>Flinn, William James</u> Forsyth, James McMillan Forsyth William McMillan <u>Hawkins, Edwin</u> <u>Honeychurch, Hector George</u> <u>Honeychurch, Henry</u> Honeychurch, William	Forsyths of Hamilton Victoria Forsyth, James Thomas Forsyth, Jack Joseph Forsyth, Keith Hamilton Forsyth, Nigel Roy Forsyth, Samuel Charles
Inverell Forsyths Forsyth, Sylvester Carl Gainey, Lloyd Arthur Holder, Hector Holder, John Ruben	Ropemaker Dymock Forsyths Evans, Alec Forsyth Evans, Arthur Wilson Evans, Keith Forsyth <u>Forsyth, Archibald Alexander</u> Forsyth, Archibald Arthur Forsyth, Norman Dymock <u>Forsyth, Robert (Roy) Archibald</u> Robertson, Duncan Gordon Thorpe, Colin Forsyth Thorpe, Leyton Forsyth	Forsyths of Horsham Victoria Evans, James Percy Forsythe, Archibald Murdock Forsythe, George
Family of Thomas Forsyth Blacksmith Parramatta Forsyth, Bruce Allan Holbert Forsyth, Collin Bathurst <u>Forsyth, Kenneth Macquarie</u> <u>Forsyth, William Henry</u>	Riverina Forsyths Berry, Michael <u>Forsyth, Allan James</u> Forsyth, Roy Alton <u>Fryer, John Frederick</u>	Family of John & Jamesina Forsyth Forsyth, John Lyle McLaren Forsyth, John Stuart Alston
Enos Forsyth & Jean Nairn Family Forsyth, Sydney James <u>Forsyth, William George Miller</u>	Robert Forsyth and Isabella Chisholm Forsyth, Gilbert John Forsyth, James Davidson	

Researching ANZACS Online – A Quick Guide by Tim

There are a number of key websites for researching your ancestors who served in the Australian armed forces in WW1.

The first place to go is the National Archives of Australia where you can obtain a digital copy of your ancestor's WW1 service record. All service records for WW1 have been digitised. Go to www.aa.gov.au then click on "Search the Collection, then click on "Use RecordSearch". This will give you a search page where you input your ancestors who served and the date range from 1914 to 1918. This will give a summary of records relating to your ancestor and if the record has been digitised there will be a page symbol. This will take you to your ancestor's service record. This will include details of enlistment, a description, a statement of service and details of any medals awarded.

The next stop should be the Australian War Memorial's "Search for a Person" page www.awm.gov.au/research/people/all/ which will allow you to search the WW1 Nominal Roll and WW1 Embarkation Rolls. If your ancestor was killed in action or died as a result of wounds search the Rollo of Honour and Commemorative Roll and the WW1 Red Cross files. All links to these records are on the Australian War Memorial's "Search for a Person" page. Details of medals awarded are generally given on the last page of a persons digital Service Record, but also check the Honours and Awards on the Australian War Memorial's "Search for a Person" page.

To locate an overseas grave of an Australian serviceman go to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Search Page www.cwgc.org/find-war-dead.aspx. You may find a photo of their tombstone at The War Graves Photographic Project <http://www.twgpp.org/>.

To find where your serviceman ancestor is recorded on a war memorial in NSW go to www.warmemorialsregister.nsw.gov.au/. In Victoria go to the Victorian War Heritage Inventory <http://vhd.heritage.vic.gov.au/vhd/veterans>. Also look at Monument Australia <http://monumentaustralia.org.au/> which gives details of nearly 22,000 monuments.

Lastly, don't forget to search local newspapers online at TROVE trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/home. These often contained details of enlistments, embarkations, news from the front, letters from servicemen and details casualties and missing servicemen.

Other sites that may be of interest are:

Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918: http://www.awm.gov.au/histories/first_world_war/

The Great War 1914-1918: <http://www.greatwar.co.uk/index.htm>

Mapping our ANZACS: <http://mappingouranzacs.naa.gov.au/>

Gallipoli and the ANZACs: <http://www.anzacsite.gov.au/>

Lost Leaders of Anzacs - Officers of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps who died at Gallipoli, 1915: <http://www.anzacs.org/>


ANZACs: <http://www.anzacs.net/>

100 Years of ANZAC: <http://www.anzacentenary.gov.au/index.htm>

Animated Map of The Western Front, 1914 – 1918 : http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/worldwars/wwone/launch_ani_western_front.shtml

Membership Changes

We have made two small changes to membership to make it more convenient for you. The first change you will see, if you receive the Newsletter by mail, is that your mailing label contains a year or "0" at the start of the first address line. The year details when you membership is paid up to or "0" signifying your Newsletter is a free complimentary copy. The second change is you can now pay your membership by direct bank deposit or through BPAY online, depositing your membership directly into the Clan Bank account. Please return the membership form (email clanforsythaustralia@hotmail.com) or snail mail (P.O. Box 396 Roseville NSW 2069) so we can match bank statements and membership.

Direct Bank Deposit – Macquarie Bank – Account: Clan Forsyth Australia Sydney Branch	BSB: 182 222	Account No. 123114795
 BPay	Biller Code: 20206	Ref: 123114795



‘BRIGADOON’ AT BUNDANOON

**Reminder: Saturday, 5th April
in the Southern Highlands.**

The largest Scottish Gathering in the Southern Hemisphere. Massed pipe bands, highland dancing, parades, tossing of the cabers, highland games, stalls, souvenirs, highland foods and 'The Stones of Manhood. We might see you there!

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

First of all on behalf of myself and the Committee, I would like to wish all a Happy & Healthy New Year. Our AGM for 2013 was a very enjoyable luncheon with good company and good food. The voting of office bearers was expedited in its usual speedy way, with many thanks for those who served in the previous year.

It was my pleasure to invest David Forsyth AM, on our Forsyth Afternoon, as our Chief's 6th Commissioner for Australia and it was great to have some of his family, Sue, James & Margaret with us as well.

The past year has been mainly focused on increasing our membership, culminating with the Forsyth afternoon in November. We welcome those who have joined for the first time and those who have returned to membership.

A special thank you to Tim, our web master, who put such a lot into the membership drive and who was overseas on business on the day. Thank you to Robyn who filled in for Tim.

The day would not have been possible without all the help of the Committee – many thanks.

So, we look forward to this year with the goal of continuing our drive for new members, hoping to replace those who have passed on over the years, but who we have not forgotten. Share your Forsyth pride with your children and your grandchildren. They are our future.

Our first event for this year will be our AGM in March, which will be detailed in this newsletter. The same informal luncheon as last year. Please join us and get to know the Committee and other members. We would be grateful for any ideas you can bring to your Clan.

We will have another Forsyth afternoon this November, remembering the 100th anniversary of the beginning of W.W.1 and those who fought for our freedom. WW1 photographs, records and stories from you would be most welcome. We want to honour these men.

Hoping to see you soon.

Judy Forsyth

NEW AND RE-NEWING MEMBERS

Welcome to our new members and welcome back to those re-newing.

Sue Burk	Catriona Lambert
Judith & Peter Williams	Roger & Cathryn Forsyth
Stuart Donald Esler	Michael Marc Forsyth
David Lindsay Peterson	Shirley Elizabeth Wilson
William Stewart Graham	Penny & Alun Black
Helen Stewart Maguire	Margaret Sophia Veenstra
Kenneth Whitmore	Carolyn Goodland
Ian Douglas Forsyth	David Howard Forsyth
Leslie Thomas Springett	Margaret Ann Simons
Elizabeth Ann Bowen	

We need NEW Members!

If you know of any Forsyths that are not members, please ask them to make contact by email with us so we can welcome them into the Sydney Branch:

clanforythaustralia@hotmail.com

Reminder: your membership fee is due, if you haven't paid already. See how above!

Email your articles, photos and anecdotes for inclusion in future Clan Newsletters & Website. Another option for contributions: directly email the Newsletter Editor:

cwlee@optusnet.com.au

