



# Clan Forsyth

SYDNEY BRANCH

## NEWSLETTER

**CLAN FORSYTH SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA – SYDNEY BRANCH**  
**PO BOX 396, ROSEVILLE NSW 2069**      **March 2016 #1**  
**clanforsythaustralia@hotmail.com**  
**<http://www.clanforsythaustralia.org/>**

## Clan Forsyth

# Annual General Meeting & Lunch

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> March 2016. 12 for 12.30pm start**

## Club Willoughby

*(Willoughby Legion Ex-Services Club. PH 9411 5333)*

**Entrance from Crabbes Avenue. Ample free parking.**

The AGM and Lunch will be held in the Bistro, ground floor.

The booking is in the name of Margaret Snodgrass of  
Forsyth Real Estate.

**RSVP: Judy Forsyth (President) on 9634 2749 by 16th March**



## SCOTTISH SHORTBREAD

*Preparation Time: 25 minutes, Cooking: 25 minutes, Ready in 50 minutes, Serves 24*

**Ingredients:** 500g butter, 250g (1½ cups) brown sugar, 685g (5½ cups) plain flour, or as needed. **Method:** Preheat oven to 160 C. Cream butter and brown sugar together in a bowl. Add 375g (3 cups) to 470g (3¾ cups) flour. Mix well. Sprinkle board with the remaining flour. Knead mixture for 5 minutes, adding enough flour to make a soft dough. Roll to 1cm thickness. Cut into 8cm x 2.5 cm strips. Prick with a fork and place on ungreased baking trays. Bake in preheated oven for 20 to 25 minutes.

## James Forsyth and Emma Eliza Coe known also as 'Queen Emma of New Guinea' or 'Emma Queen of the South Seas'

By Tim Crossley – Clan Treasurer & Webmaster and Judy Forsyth, Clan Genealogist



James Forsyth

Occasionally when you are researching family something catches your eye, pricks your interest and takes you off in a whole different direction. Such is the story of James Forsyth and Queen Emma and their descendants. I was researching Forsyths in Sydney newspapers on the Trove website when the search results threw up an article about Jonas Mynderse Coe Forsyth. An interesting name I thought, that appears to contain hints as to his ancestors, and I was off down that research rabbit burrow. Whilst Jonas's story was interesting his mother Emma's story was remarkable. Jonas Mynderse Coe Forsyth was the son of James Forsyth and Emma Eliza Coe.

Emma Eliza Coe was born on the 26<sup>th</sup> Sept 1850 in Apia, Samoa, the daughter of Jonas Mynderse Coe, and American trader and Consul in Apia, and his wife Joana Talelatale, the daughter of a respected Samoan Chief from the ruling Malietoa tribe. At the age of 11 her father sent her to school in Sydney and 2 years later to school in San Francisco, living with her uncle Edward Coe. Four years later she booked her passage back to Apia on the *Emilie Ann* arriving in 1869. Also on the brigantine was second mate James

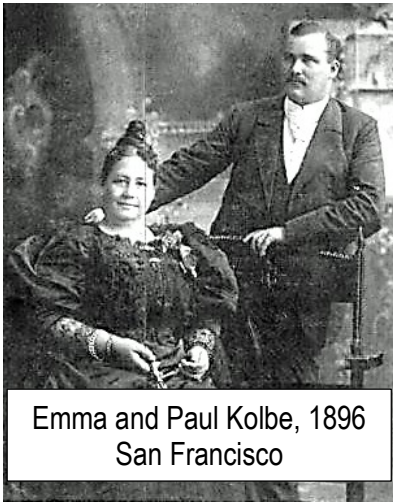
Forsyth (aka Henry James Forsyth) who had fell in love with Emma on the voyage. James was the son of sea captain William Forsyth and Sarah Ely. His birth, c1850, was registered in Mauritius. James and Emma were married in Apia in October 1869. Jonas Coe assisted his new son-in law to acquire a schooner and become a trader calling on many Polynesian Islands and New Zealand. James disappeared in 1873, presumed lost at sea, however there was no confirmation that her husband was dead. By that time, Emma and James had 2 children, Amy Rose born 15 Sep 1870 who died circa 1873, and Jonas Mynderse Coe Forsyth born 14 June 1872. Following the death of James Forsyth she is said to have had numerous affairs including one with US President Grant's special agent to Samoa, Colonel A. B. Steinberger. The Colonel and Emma's father Jonas Coe were deported from Samoa in 1876 for meddling in Samoa's political affairs. In 1878, she left Samoa with her new defacto partner, lover and business partner, an Irish – New Zealander and known "blackbirder" (A slaver of Polynesian people. the 1870s, the blackbirding trade focused on supplying labourers to plantations, particularly the sugar cane plantations of Queensland and Fiji.), Thomas Farrell. They moved to the Marshall Islands and then the Duke of York Islands. There they traded in the New Britain Archipelago, mainly copra with the local population for beads, tobacco, knives and mirrors, as well as "supplying labour" for DHPG Company on New Britain and New Ireland.



Emma Eliza Coe

By 1879 Farrell and Emma Forsyth had acquired large tracts of land from the Tolai people on the Gazelle Peninsular, New Britain and the title over the lands at the American Consulate in Sydney. Emma had her mansion *Gunantambu* built at Ralum in 1886, equipped in part with furnishings of Robert Louis Stevenson which she purchased in Samoa. "Profiteering and overcharging for DHPG for goods traded, and seizing most of the stranded cargo and ships of the Marquis de Rays expedition (to form a new colony at the South Eastern tip of New Ireland), underpinned Emma Coe-Forsyth's spectacular career as a plantation owner and trader in German New Guinea." Farrell continued to trade, but Emma, with the assistance of her brother in law, a Dane, Richard Parkinson, set up a large coconut and cocoa plantations around Kokopo, East New Britain. When Farrell died in 1888 of tuberculosis in Brisbane, Emma Forsyth bought his estate for a fraction of the money owed to his creditors, but this also precipitated Richard Parkinson to leave the business partnership. In 1890 she employed nearly 1200 workers and 50 overseers on the 2 main stations at Ralum and Malapau and grew 235 ha of cotton and 350 acres of copra. The value of exports by Forsyth & Co

from Jan 1892 – June 1893 was 360,550 reichsmarks. In 1894 Emma married a German, Paul Kolbe, but this was an unsuccessful union, Kolbe having an affair with one of Emma's half-sister and Emma with whomever took her fancy. *Gunantambu* was the social hub of the Gazelle Peninsula for many years, with many stories and scandals. In 1890, Kokopo (Herbertshohe) was established and Emma had the first hotel there in 1900 called the Hotel Furst-Bismarck. Emma's claim to 50,000 ha on the Gazelle Peninsular and 14,150 ha on New Ireland, Bouganville and the Admiralty Group were challenged but besides these holdings Forsyth & Co held another 28,484 ha. In 1907/8 Forsyth & Co had assets of 4,905,050 reichsmarks and profits about 200,000 reichsmarks making it the most profitable enterprise in German New Guinea. In 1906 Emma sought to sell Forsyth & Co for



Emma and Paul Kolbe, 1896  
San Francisco

3,200,00 reichsmarks but the deal failed. In 1910 Emma, who was nearly blind and suffering from diabetes, founded another company which issued Forsyth & Co with 2,750,000 reichsmarks in equity, Forsayth-Kolbe receiving 1,750,000 cash, the balance secured by first mortgage over the assets of the company. Emma had transferred her landholdings in the Shortland Islands to her son Jonas Forsyth in 1909.

Emma moved to Australia, living in Prince Albert Street, Mosman, for a while. She visited Monte Carlo in 1913 with husband Paul Kolbe in search of health. Paul Kolbe died on the 15<sup>th</sup> July 1913. from Bright's disease and heart failure, and his sudden death evidently accelerated Mrs. Kobe's death from heart failure on the 21<sup>st</sup> July 1913. They were cremated and buried at Ralun New Guinea. In 1924 Jonas Forsayth reinterred the urns at Old South Head cemetery in Sydney landmarked by two very large, ornate headstones. Emma Forsyth's life story was made into the 1988 television serial *Emma: Queen of the South Seas*, on Network 10.

**Next Newsletter Jonas Mynderse Coe Forsayth and his descendants. Check the Clan website for more details.**

*(Information for this story extracted from Disastrous Ventures: German and British Enterprises in East New Guinea up to 1914 by Hans-Jurgen Ohff; Wikipedia, Trove, and Papua New Guinea Association of Australia website.)*

## Membership

Rising printing and postage costs have led the Committee to make the hard decision to raise Clan membership fees. This is the first increase in well over 10 years. From the 1st January 2016 membership will be **\$15.00** for singles and family and **\$10.00** for pensioners. All memberships that have been paid in advance will be honoured.



## DENISE'S COLUMN *(A member of the Clan Committee)*

### THE CHANGING FACE OF COMMUNICATION

While it is much easier and faster to communicate, I wonder and am constantly frustrated by the process and the vernacular required.

On phoning a Government or utilities company one is told your call has been placed in a queue and that your call is important to them – then we wait and wait listening to recordings of their wonderful services and being reassured that we are progressing up the line by a friendly articulated voice speaking in clear English. Eventually we are told to press more buttons and we will be directed to the appropriate department, more waiting, then with much joy, someone human answers, now the problems arise, I am often unable to understand their accent and quite possibly they are speaking to me from some far off country and very fast, particularly if giving instructions. I always say I am hard of hearing. Which I am not, it sometimes helps, one can only apologise so many times for asking them to repeat. Then there is the change in terminology. 'Ow yer goin' the answer to this is' probably cremation.' – 'basically' which does not mean simply, just let's make it sound very complicated, because you would probably not be able to understand.- 'um'- time to think of an answer'- you know' to encourage camaraderie, this is said with a rising inflection- the use of words like 'cool'- 'wicked' – 'hot'- 'nah'- '- 'have a nice day'. The word 'nice' used to be grouped with 'got' and was discouraged when I was at school as being unimaginative. Listen to politicians talk –'At this time' instead of 'now' Their Speech Writers are to be congratulated ,

I believe little symbols are being used as shorthand instead of words and sentences, we will miss the artful prevaricating and diverting from the subject they are meant to answer. Maybe I should go and feed my Diana sours.

# Welcome to these new Clan Members...

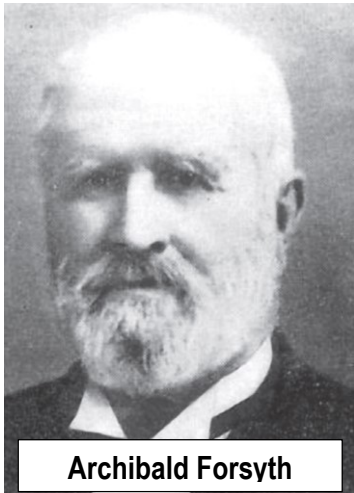
Andrew Horsley of Sydney, Lynnette Anne Kosiak of Bowen Mountain, Jennifer Isabella Saggs of Greysteynes, Vivienne Mead of San Remo (Central Coast), Jeanette McDonald Moss of North Epping and Susan Thorley of Rose Bay.

## FORSYTHS at WATERLOO

*By David Forsyth AM, Australian Clan Commissioner*

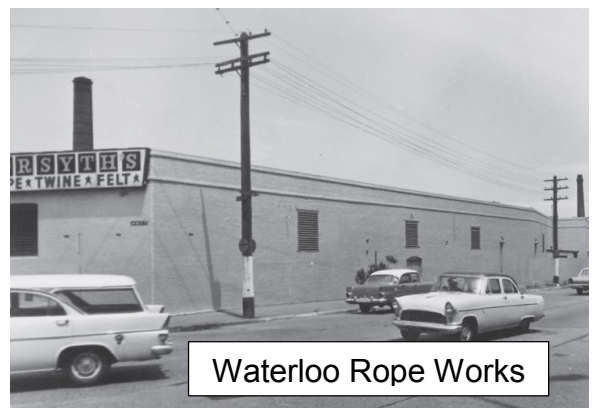
Sorry to disappoint you, but this item is not about Forsyths at the Battle of Waterloo, but Forsyths at the suburb of Waterloo in Sydney in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Back in the mid 1800s, Waterloo was a mainly industrial suburb, on the fringes of the City of Sydney, and adjacent to swampy land at the end of Shea's creek (now the Alexandria Canal). Up until the late 1800s, Waterloo and adjacent Alexandria contained the Shea's Creek Swamp and the Waterloo Swamp which is today's Moore Park. Industries like tanning were forced out of the inner city areas to the fringes because of their smells and noxious effluent.

One of the largest tanneries in Sydney at that time was W M Alderson & Sons, which was just south of Cleveland Street, between Bourke Road and South Dowling Street. Both James Forsyth and his son Thomas Todd Forsyth worked at Aldersons, and lived in Chelsea Street which was close to the Alderson tannery. William Alderson came from Newcastle upon Tyne in England, and had worked some 16 years in the tanning trade there. He was only four years older than James Forsyth, and may have known him in Newcastle. William arrived in Australia in 1842, and established his tannery in 1844. The tannery was moved to Bourke Street Surrey Hills, just north of Waterloo, in the 1850s. We have reason to believe that James Forsyth actually made enough money working at Aldersons (rather than the gold fields of Sofala) to set up his own tannery business at Willoughby. James had been apprenticed in the skilled art of Morocco leather (made from goats skin) and about this time Sydney ladies were seeking finer leathers than those typically made in Sydney. Aldersons were also commissioned in 1862 to make a pair of patent leather shoes for the Prince of Wales, and it is possible that James was one of the few tanners in Sydney at that time who knew how to work the softer leathers.



Just up the road from Aldersons was Sydney's and Australia's largest rope maker, Archibald Forsyth & Co, later known as the Australian Rope Company. Archibald Forsyth was the youngest of nine sons born at Garmouth near Elgin, Morayshire Scotland in 1826. Reportedly he worked in railway construction and the timber trade. He left Scotland in 1848 as many did at that time (including James Forsyth), to look for new opportunities in a new country, and migrated to Sydney. When he arrived in Australia, he first went to the northern rivers of NSW to cut timber, especially red cedar which was in high demand. During this time he and his co-worker were reportedly the only white men in the Richmond river district.

In 1851 Archibald moved to Port Stephens closer to civilization, still in the timber business. This was short lived when gold was discovered near Bathurst, and many including Archibald left for the gold fields. For ten years he moved between the diggings in NSW and Victoria. In 1854 he settled in Melbourne and married Sarah Corbett. Archibald and Sarah had eleven children, the first six of which were born in Melbourne. He was a saw miller at Apollo Bay for a time, until in 1862 he started Forsyth & Anthony, general



merchants. In 1864 he sold out and moved back to Sydney. He established the first rope works in NSW at the corner of Bourke and Lachlan Streets, Waterloo. Archibald Street, Thread Street and The Rope Walk in Waterloo commemorate this today. His nephew John Forsyth arrived from Scotland in 1868 and joined Archibald as a partner in the business. By 1875, the firm had expanded to include a warehouse and office in Kent Street and in 1876 established The Kangaroo Rope works in Brisbane. The Archibald Forsyth & Company business became one of the largest rope makers in Australia. In 1894 A. Forsyth & Co became a public company, of which he was Chairman until 1897. It became known as the Australian Rope Works, still run by Archibald's descendants and operated on its original site until 1974.



Walker. Archibald died in 1908 at 'Elgin' his home in The Avenue in Randwick. Waterloo today is very different. Most of the industrial buildings have gone, replaced by modern apartment buildings, shops and offices. The Green Square rail station and a number of bus routes serve the area and its proximity to the City makes it an attractive place to live. There is little to remind us of the Forsyths, except for Archibald Street and Thread Street on the site of Archibald's Rope works. There is also Rope Walk, a small green space between buildings, and close to where the original rope walk (used to make the long ropes) would have been.

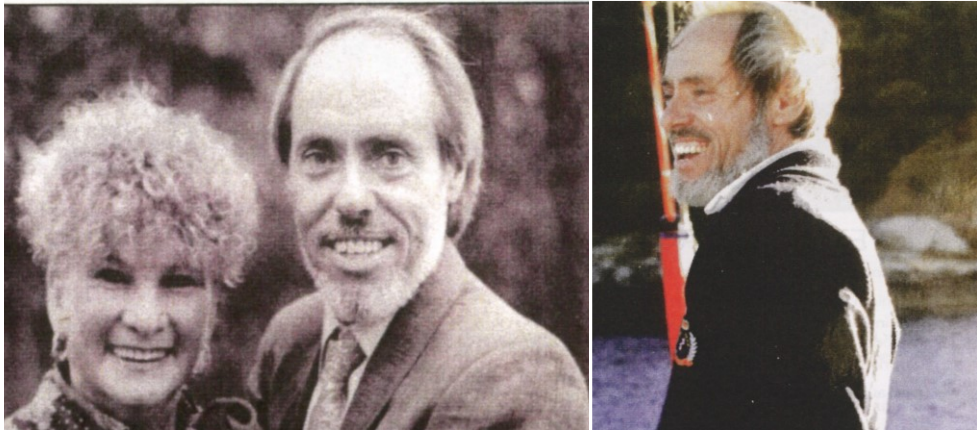
Archibald's wife Sarah died in 1876 but he was married again the following year to Sarah Emmet. In 1873 Archibald helped found the Animal Protection Society a predecessor of the RSPCA. He was a magistrate in 1875, a member of the committee of the Sydney Mechanics School in 1878 and later a governor of Sydney Hospital. He was an ardent bowler, like the tanning Forsyths, and was founding President of the City Bowling Club in 1880-85 and a founder of the Randwick Bowling Club. Archibald became the member for South Sydney in the NSW Legislative Assembly. He was inaugural President of the Chamber of Manufacturers in 1885. He was married for the third time at the age of 80 to Harriet

## President's Report

We are well into other year and I hope 2016 is a good year for you all. The Clan Society A.G.M. will be held in March. It is an informal occasion with lunch and lots of friendly chatter. Come and meet the Committee and join in with any ideas you may have for coming events. New Committee Members are always welcome, but don't let me put you off coming on the day, we don't pressure anyone, I can recommend to you our Forsyth afternoon, held towards the end of the year. We welcome the new members, who joined us last year and hope to see everyone this year. Would you like to write a story about your family and have it displayed? At both of these events you will be able to renew acquaintances with David Forsyth, the Chief's Commissioner in Australia.

It is with great disappointment that The Clan Society has had to increase its membership fees. The increased postage cost has had a big bearing on this decision and then the associated printing costs added as well. Personally I did not receive as many Christmas cards last year as in past year.

Remember, if you need help with your family history, please contact Tim or myself. Don't you ever wonder all sorts of things about your ancestors? Such as: Where they were born, where they lived, occupations, and how many children were born. I just love those advertisements on television for Ancestry.com... "COME AND FIND ME" There are so many more records available now than ever before. The Clan Society has a subscription to Ancestry.com - Australia and Britain, and access to other search sites. We try our best, but there are some families that seem to disappear but, we have found some good ones. Some folk have been put in touch with family living overseas. Ancestry has a section which lists researchers and the names in their family. This can be a bonus if they are researching your family, care should be taken and all entries checked. Hope to see you soon. **Judy Forsyth**



**Peter  
Emile  
Lucas**  
1940 -2016

Peter Lucas passed away on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016 at 76. Born in England to an Australian mother and a Macedonian father, Peter arrived in Australia in 1946. He studied Marine Engineering at Garden Island in Sydney, married Helen in 1964 and joined the Merchant Marine in 1967. Son Peter was born in 1967, Roland in 1970 and Brian in 1979. In 1975 he joined Waratah Tugs to oversee maintenance on their tug boats. He started Lucas Catamarans in 1977 and built 10 Stingray class cats, but then stepped down when he developed allergies to epoxy resin and fibreglass. In 1979 he founded Lucas boilers, building electric boilers. In 1980 he built a Tornado to sail for Australia in the 1980 Moscow Olympics. He married Annie in 1984 to become a doting stepfather to Ken, Donna and Julie. Building a 40-foot Adams cruising yacht he and Annie sailed to the Solomon Island and Papua New Guinea. Returning to Palm Beach he worked for Palmarine and helped in Annie's Café. In 2000 they moved to Giralong and he recertified to become a Chief Engineer. He also built a steam engine boat dedicated to his wife Annie. Peter succumbed to the asbestos related illness, Mesothelioma. At the time he was involved in a new trial, Keytruda.

# Clan Forsyth Day

**Sunday 6th November, 2016 from 2 to 5pm**

**Uniting Church, Clanwilliam Street, Willoughby**

**This is the day to bring along your Forsyth mementos: photos, literature, artworks.... anything related to your clan and your family history. The day gives you a chance to meet other clan members and enjoy a delicious afternoon tea. Write this date in you Diary.**

## **We need NEW Members!**

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

[clanforythaustralia@hotmail.com](mailto:clanforythaustralia@hotmail.com)

**A 2016 Membership Renewal Form is enclosed with this email or printed newsletter.**

**Please pay your membership fee electronically or by cheque.**

Also post or email your articles, photos and anecdotes for inclusion in future Clan Newsletters.

Another option for contributions: the Newsletter Editor's email address:

[cwlee@optusnet.com.au](mailto:cwlee@optusnet.com.au)

**We are also looking for someone to become Clan Secretary.**  
**Please email us if you are interested.**

