



Clan Forsyth

SYDNEY BRANCH

NEWSLETTER

CLAN FORSYTH SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA – SYDNEY BRANCH
PO BOX 396, ROSEVILLE NSW 2069 **October 2010 #2**

CLAN FORSYTH DAY

Sunday 24th October 2010, from 10am to 2pm

Located in the garden area to the rear of
2/24 Forsyth Street, Willoughby
(next to Denise Park's unit)

Come and meet other Forsyths from around Sydney and NSW.

Enjoy a **FREE** sausage sizzle, tea, coffee and snacks

Also, find out more about your family history. Bring your memorabilia and photos.

(Below are photos of the 2009 Clan Forsyth Day)



Online Genealogy

Often people ask what are the best sites on the internet for researching their family history and, as is often the case, the answer is never as simple as the question. It all depends on where you start, how your family came to Australia and where they came from. Let's look at the case of a family who settled in New South Wales and came from England. Always start with what you know: the names of your parents, grandparents and great grandparents.

Your first stop should be the **NSW Births Deaths and Marriages** site (www.bdm.nsw.gov.au) where you can search births up to 1909, deaths to 1979 and marriages to 1959. This should give you names of parents etc and an indication of when they arrived in Australia from the earliest date an event was recorded in the BDMs. If you are looking for death and funeral notices of a death after 1979 go to **The Ryerson Index** (www.rootsweb.com/~nswsdps/) an index to death and funeral notices appearing in major papers in Australia. Don't forget to use your favourite search engine to locate the site for the cemetery where your ancestors are buried. Many have searchable indexes and increasingly photos of headstones in cemeteries are being added to these indexes.

Next stop would be the **NSW State Records** site (<http://www.records.nsw.gov.au/>) and search the online indexes for shipping records, convict musters, tickets of leave, probate, etc., all of which may give you a picture of their early life in Australia, when they arrived and where they came from. A visit to the State Archives as part of your research is a must, although many libraries carry the microfilms of ship/passenger arrivals.

Before making the jump back to England you should visit the **National Archives of Australia** site (www.naa.gov.au) and do a "record search" – if your grandfather or great uncle fought in WW1 his military record will be on line. If the records you want have not been digitised and put online, e.g. a WW2 military record, you can purchase a copy. The other site that will be most helpful in filling in the gaps is the **National Library of Australia (NLA)** site for digital newspapers (www.ndpbeta.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/home). The NLA is gradually digitising all old newspapers for example it has digitised the Sydney Morning Herald up to 1954. This is a great site for filling in family details such as births, deaths and marriage dates, civic life, business advertisements, court reports, sporting results etc. A quick search shows there are 1000's of mentions for Forsyth in NSW newspapers.

The first stop in the UK is the **Genealogy of UK and Ireland** site (www.genuki.org.uk) which will provide you details of research resources in the County your family originated from. Many of the church records have been indexed by volunteers and are available online for free through the **County's Online Parish Clerk's** site or are available on the **Latter Day Saints (LDS)** site (www.familysearch.org). On the LDS site you can also search the **UK 1881 Census** for free, search family trees that have been submitted, and download their free family history software called **Personal Ancestral File (PAF)** - a good basic family history program for those starting out). Some County family history groups also provide the 1841-1891 UK Census for their County online for free or try the **Free UK Census** (www.freecen.org.uk).

The next place to search for your ancestors is the **Free UK Births, Deaths and Marriages** site (www.freebmd.org.uk) which is an index to the BDM records of the Records Office.

Also check out **Cindi's List of Genealogy sites on the Internet** (www.cyndislist.com) for other links or if you are wanting to search for your ancestors in another country.

If you are researching in Scotland check out **Scotland's People** (www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk), a chargeable site for Scotland Births, Deaths and Marriages from the **General Records Office for Scotland**. (WARNING: it can be expensive searching this site and locating the exact person you are looking for unless you are very specific with parents/partner names and knowing where the event took place. My advice would be to try the **LDS Family Search** site first (www.familysearch.org).

Increasingly genealogy information is being put online by companies who offer subscription services to access such information and to post your family tree - sites such as **Genes Reunited** (www.genesreunited.co.uk), **Ancestry** (www.ancestry.com.au), or specific purpose paid sites such as the official **UK 1911 Census** site (www.1911census.co.uk/). I have a subscription to Ancestry (Australia and UK information) and find it most useful to get in contact with other researchers and to save on trips to the State Library to look up old Electoral Rolls. A word of caution with the family trees people have posted online – many contain errors that are perpetuated by others copying this information into their own family tree. Always validate back to original sources and rule out the coincidences of people having the same name and living in the same district so you are absolutely sure you have the correct people for the event in your tree. Just because it appears in many peoples trees does not mean it is correct. For those who can't afford a subscription to **Ancestry** check out if it is offered by your local library or family history group. The **State Library of NSW offers free access to Ancestry's global records** (family trees posted by members are excluded) in their Family History Section.

Another free genealogy site to check is RootsWeb (www.rootsweb.com) the Internet's oldest and largest free genealogical community (it is housed on Ancestry but is free). While you are there, check out the message board to see if anyone else is researching your family.

Lastly don't forget to use your favourite search engine to look directly for your ancestors, details of the towns they lived in, maps of the area, history of the area, social history, or the military campaign your ancestor fought in, etc. A search engine will help you locate information as well as opening up new avenues of research.

Happy searching,

Tim Crossley

Treasurer of Clan Forsyth, Sydney Branch



MEMORIES OF A VICTORIAN CHILDHOOD - PART 4

A continuing series by Denise Park, a Clan Committee Member

There is a strange belief prevalent nowadays that shopping is fun! More choices and self serve are meant to enrich and save time. Yes, if one enjoys walking around a supermarket the size of a football field, only to find you have missed something aisles away; queuing; working like a navvy to transfer goods onto a conveyor belt; being told to 'have a nice day'; carrying heavy bags home; and then being faced with needless packaging. Is this progress?

Shopping was much easier when the grocer came and took our order, then delivered promptly, putting the purchases on the kitchen table. If my mother visited the grocery shop, she sat on a chair while being served by a white-aproned shop keeper. Things were measured out and put into paper bags which the assistants twirled around to create little ears on the corners. Butter was cut from the slab, kept on ice and wrapped in crisp grease-proof paper. Biscuits came in big tins. These were a rare treat as Aunt baked her own but on visiting the zoo we always took the broken biscuits for the monkeys from the bottom of the tin. All our purchases were placed in customers' baskets while pleasantries were exchanged.

At the haberdashery, remember those shops usually run by elderly ladies who knew all the local comings and goings. We could buy by the yard good quality elastic, lace, darning wool, as well as the exact number of buttons needed for home sewing. As winter approached, knitting wool was selected along with knitting pattern books with bland pictures of happy, chubby models. The wool was in skeins and required me to stand with arms extended with wool encircling while Aunt or Mother rolled it into balls.

When Aunt required a new hat, bag or shoes (as a Forsyth, we only bought leather), she would take her apron off, comb her hair and phone the Farmers store in the city. A little grey van would then deliver a selection of goods for Aunt to choose amongst at her leisure. The van would then return to pick up the rejects and Aunt would sign for her purchases on her account.

If we visited these emporiums (as they were called), we would be ushered by a floor-walker to a high seat at the counter where a shop assistant dressed in black would attend to our needs and the parcels, if of any size, would be home-delivered.

Of course, a trip to town necessitated wearing hat, gloves and best clothes. Often a photograph of the wearers was taken in the street near the GPO. I would think most family albums would include at least one of these.

The milkman delivered, putting milk in a jug in our two-way accessible little cupboard in the pantry. He had red hair and was called Blue, with a white horse, surprisingly called Whitey.

The baker also brought our bread to us, carrying his fresh baked procerra loaves in a big wicker basket. His horse was a bad tempered chestnut. The bakery was in the site where Harvey Norman is now at Gordon and the smell of baking bread permeated the area.

The produce store delivered shell grit, wheat and bran for the chook. There were lots of cats at his shop for me to pat as he constantly had problems with mice.

Yes, our needs were simpler: food home-grown where possible and dressmaking, knitting and cooking from scratch were mandatory skills. Besides the cholesterol, I think we were all healthier without the additives used in food nowadays. There was little obesity then although there were no gyms. We walked, gardened and made ourselves useful.

Have we progressed?

Jock Forsyth walks into a bar one day and stammers, 'Does anyone here own that South Doberman Pinschers outside?' 'Yeah, I do,' a tattooed biker says, standing up. 'What about it?' 'Well, I think my little scotty terrier just killed him.' 'What are you talkin' about?' the biker says, disbelievingly. 'How could your little runt kill my Doberman?' 'Well,' mumbled Jock, 'it appears that he got stuck in your dog's throat.'

At an auction in Glasgow a wealthy American announced that he had lost his wallet containing £10,000 [\$20,000USD] and would give a reward of £200 to the person who found it. From the back of the hall a Scottish voice shouted, 'I'll give £250.'

A very popular man dies in Aberdeen and his old widow wishes to tell all his friends at once, so she goes to the Aberdeen Evening Express and says, 'I'd like tae place an obituary fur ma late husband.' The man at the desk says, 'OK, how much money dae ye have?' The old woman replies, '£5' to which the man says, 'Ye won't get many words for that but write something and we'll see if it's ok.' So the old woman writes something and hands it over the counter. The man reads 'Peter Forsyth, fae Kincorth, deid.' He feels sad at the abruptness of the statement and encourages the old woman to write a few more things, saying, 'I think we cud allow 3 or 4 more words fer ye money.' The old woman ponders and then adds a few more words and hands the paper over the counter again. The man then reads - 'Peter Forsyth, fae Kincorth, deid. Ford Escort for sale.'

Every time I pass a church I pay a little visit. So when at last I'm gathered in, The Lord won't say "Who is it?"

It is sad to report that Albert Douglas (Doug) Forsyth, a resident of Coffs Harbour, has passed away recently. He is survived by his wife, Noeline. He is the son of Albert and Florence Forsyth and is of the Robert and Stephana Forsyth family.

On a happier note, Lucas John Forsyth was born on Saturday 4th September 2010. He is the second grandson (the first is Cormac) of clan member, Christopher Forsyth, who is the son of the late Arnold Forsyth.

COMING EVENTS

Clan Forsyth Day on Sunday 24th October 2010.

See Newsletter's front page for details.

141st Highland Gathering at Castle Hill Showground.

Sunday 7th November 2010. Gates open from 10am. Hope to see you there.

St Andrews Day at St Stephens church and Hyde Park in Sydney.

Sunday 28th November 2010. From 9.30am to 4pm.

10am. Kirking of the Tartan and Morning Service at St Stephens church, 197 Macquarie St. Sydney.

11.45am. Clans gather at the top of Martin Place in Sydney. The march starts at noon.

A spectacular event with bands and banners plus entertainment in Hyde Park.

Come and join the march with other Forsyths.

Phone Jim and Judy Forsyth on 9634 2749 to let them know you are coming.

Clan Forsyth Sydney Branch's Annual General Meeting and Church Service.

Sunday 27th March 2011 from 10am. Venues for the church service and the meeting, followed by lunch afterwards, are to be confirmed. Keep a look out in the February 2011 Newsletter or phone Jim and Judy Forsyth on 9634 2749 for full details of the venues and timing. Keep the date free and meet other members of the Clan.

Brigadoon at Bundanoon Highland Gathering.

Saturday 2nd April 2011 at Bundanoon in the Southern Highlands. Meet at the Clan Forsyth Tent.

A fantastic day full of highland dancing, pipe bands, games, stalls etc.

Check the website: www.highlandsnsw.com.au/brigadoon

William Forsyth (1868 - 1930 - My American Grandfather.

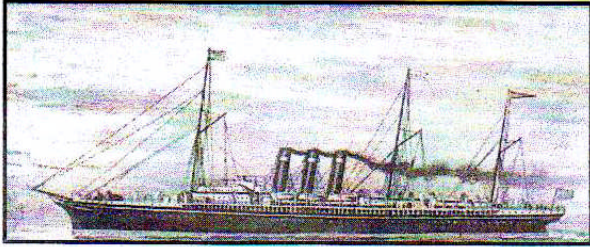
By: Alistair C. W. Forsyth of that Ilk, Chief of Clan Forsyth.

It was the morning after we had heard the news of the dreadful attack on Pearl Harbour by the Japanese. We were sitting down at breakfast when my father casually mentioned that his father had been an American and although I was curious, the conversation flowed on to the recent victory over the Axis at El Alemain and the hope that this could be the turning point of the war which up to that point we had all feared might have been lost.

My American grandparents became of intermittent interest but my father, a man of few words, was hard to warm up on the subject, though he did tell me a few interesting details of his father's life. It was only when Charles, my father, had died in 1982 that I came into possession of his personal papers and was so able to piece together a little family history.

My great grandfather Charles had been manager of a flax mill in Fife with two sons and a daughter when his wife died in childbirth of Helen, the little girl. Realising that he would not be able to raise three children without help, he advertised for a house help/nanny and in due course employed a widow, Annie Kay, who had her own small child. The arrangement worked well enough but, about five years later when Charles had come to rely on Annie, she announced that people were talking and unless they were married she would have to leave. Charles was vulnerable and felt that in the best interests of his children he would have to enter into a loveless marriage. This choice was a complete disaster and rumbled on for a few years. The children came to dislike Annie who enjoyed her husband's position. He had moved to manage another mill and became a partner which gave the family much better prospects. As his two sons grew up the relationship between Annie and the eldest became intolerable resulting in son Charles running off to join the Army. This really upset his father who eventually traced him as a recruit in the Edinburgh Militia. After stern words with his son and Annie, Charles was "bought out" as a means of obtaining his release. A return home did not improve matters and so, with his fathers consent, Charles joined the Royal Highland Regiment (Black Watch) where he was able to pursue his great love of the bagpipes in the Regimental Band.

William, meanwhile, had become interested in engineering through watching the machinery at his father's mill and decided to follow this interest as his career. It was in 1884, at the age of 16, that he entered an apprenticeship with John Barry Ostler & Co. Ltd. Of Kirkcaldy as an engineer. The firm were manufacturers of linoleum. After five years he became a qualified engineer which enabled him to take a position with John Scott & Co, Marine Engineers of Kinghorn. William was now a man with "prospects" and it was



S.S. City of New York

for the fastest Atlantic crossing in September, 1892.

during this period that he met his sweetheart, Jane Westwood whilst skating on the loch in the Raith estate near Kirkcaldy . After a six month course in twin screw marine engines with Alex. Brown & Co, Southampton, in the south of England, William applied for a position with the Inman Line, based in Liverpool. He was spointed 4th Engineer, the most junior officer on the recently commissioned transatlantic liner the "S.S. City of New York" in September 1891. William served on this vessel and was promoted to 3rd Engineer when the ship won "The Blue Ribbon"

It was in 1894 that the Inman Line was acquired by the American Line. Any officer that wished to remain with the company was instructed to take up U.S. Registration. William married his sweetheart in July 1894 and in June 1895. William and Jane formally became U.S. Citizens. The couple based their family in Southampton, England and the "City of New York" sailed monthly as a luxury liner between Southampton and New York.

In 1897, William was promoted 2nd Engineer which was his position when the Spanish American War broke out. The U.S. Government, seeking ships for transporting troops to Cuba, requisitioned the ship as an Auxiliary Cruiser in September 1898 and gave orders that she was to proceed with all haste under her civilian crew to the Norfolk Naval Dockyard, Portsmouth, Virginia. The crossing was not a record but fast enough for one of the engine's main cylinders to be damaged. The U.S. Navy now appointed serving U.S. Navy personnel to take over the ship but, due to a shortage of engineers, the Engineering Officers were retained a civilian crew. Thus William, although not, at that time in the U.S.Navy, became engaged in the exploits of his vessel, now renamed "USS Harvard", in the Spanish American War. The ship's record is well documented on the internet for any interested enquirer.

With the end of the war, William returned to service with the America Line and was appointed Chief Engineer on the "SS St.Louis" on which he served until February 1906. He was then transferred to the "SS St Paul", the largest passenger vessel on the Atlantic run from Europe. In March 1913 he was appointed chief engineer of the "SS Philadelphia" serving until March 1917 when, with the entry of the USA into World War 1, he was commissioned as a Lieutenant into the U.S. Naval Auxiliary Reserve. N this capacity he was posted to the Great Lakes Shipping Company, who were building the "Liberty Ships: for the U.S. Navy, as an adviser on the fitting out of their engines. Then after a few months he was instructed to join one of these vessels the "USS Lake Elisabeth" and travel with her as Chief Engineer to test the performance of the ship under service conditions. The ship carrying munitions for the Army and coal for the Navy sailed, bound for the port of Zebbrugge. The pace of the convoy was slow and was under constant attack from German U-Boats who caused many losses. The orders were that when a ship was torpedoed the others in the convoy were not to halt and rescue the crews for fear of becoming a sitting target themselves. William would later tell his son that it was an awesome sight to see ships on fire and sinking with sailors leaping into the sea to escape the flames and not being able to help. The remnants of his convoy duly arrived at Zegrugtgee where, to Williams delight, he was able, during the short stay in Belgium, to contact his son Charles. Charles was stationed with the Photographic section of No 2 Squadron of the British Royal Naval Air Service, nicknamed the "Navy that Flies".

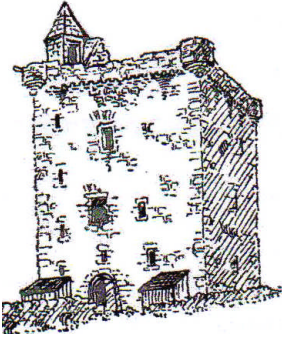
Both father and son had a memorable dinner together sharing the family news. On his return, William was sent to the Norfolk, Virginia Dockyard where he was engaged in the inspection of ship engines to ensure the vessels were seaworthy. With the cessation of hostilities he was released from active service but continued on the Reserve and rejoined the American Line, remaining nevertheless a Reserve Officer until he was honourably discharged in 1921.

William's next posting was as Chief Engineer on the "SS Indianapolis" from July 1919, sailing once again on the passenger crossing from Southampton to New York. In July 1921 he transferred as Chief Engineer onto the "SS Montana". He retired at age 60 in October 1926 and was released in New York. It was unfortunate that whilst waiting for passage back to England the hotel in which he was staying caught fire during the night and William, together with other guests, escaped with his life. All his possessions packed for shipment home including uniforms, decorations, and many personal papers were lost and therefore this account, assembled from the documents he had left in Southampton may not be wholly complete. William enjoyed only a short retirement and died of pneumonia on 12 April 1930. His wife Jane, also a U.S. citizen, died in 1944 as a result of a bomb dropped on her home in Southampton during WW11.

If you have any photos and even ancestral Forsyth photos or paintings to show members, post to: **Clan Forsyth, PO Box 396 Roseville 2069 OR** email to Judy Forsyth at... jaforsyth@ozemail.com.au

Email articles, stories, anecdotes for the next newsletter to the Editor, Chris Lee, on... cwlee@optusnet.com.au

FORSYTH CASTLES



Another edition of past Forsyth castles by: Alistair C.W. Forsyth of that Ilk, Chief of Clan Forsyth.

Continuing the series in which Castles built by Forsyths are highlighted, it is sensible to commence with the earliest though many of these are now only sites. The earliest lands recorded to a member of our family were granted by King Robert the Bruce being 100 solidates in the lands of Salakhill, which we identify today as Sauchie in Shropshire, within ten miles of the castle of Sterling, to Osbertus, then described as "Serviens Regis" and son of Robert de Forsyth. This land capable of supporting forty cows, a significant herd in those days had previously been granted to Michael Begg by King Alexander 111 to support him in the office of

Serjandus of Sterling. Robert de Forsyth was described by the King as "Serventi Nostro" indicating a position within the Royal Household.

We do not know who the wives of either he or his son Osbert were but it was customary within the tight circle of the Court for marriages to take place between sons and daughters of courtiers. Osbert was appointed Serjandus of Sterling in place of Michael Begg who retired and relinquished the lands to the new appointee, for the King did not provide a salary but granted land for the duration of the appointment to support his official. Osbert received his appointment in 1321 and relinquished it in 1342 to Hugo Urry who took over the lands with the appointment of Serjandus from Osbert. The Serjandus was an officer of the Sheriff Court. He executed every kind of summons, carried out arrestments of persons and property, denounced rebels and put them to the horn; he could also give sasines. His insignia were a wand and horn and he often wore a signet ring with which he would seal official documents. Osbert had three sons DAVID de FERSITHE who was appointed "Claviger Regis" (King's Mace) in 1364 and by King Robert 11 a Baillie of the city of Aberdeen in 1390.

William, the second son, was appointed Baillie of Edinburgh in 1364 and Clerk of the Queen's Liverance in 1371. Baillies were judged in the local court of the city to which they had been appointed by the King whilst the Clerk of Queen's Liverance was the financial controller of the Queen's affairs. Robert the third son became a collector of taxes in 1364 and eventually progressed to become Constable of Stirling Castle.

David de Fersithe had two sons JOHN de FORSUITH who was granted the lands of Gylecamstoun, now a suburb of the City of Aberdeen, and William who would settle at Milleague in Banffshire to found the Forsyth cadets in the North East of Scotland. DAVID FORSYTH of GILCOMSTOUN, the only son of John, was one of the King's Esquires at the court of Robert 111 and on being knighted in 1488 he was granted a new Coat of arms being charged with griffins in place of his former Blazon which had been three Cross Crosslet Fitch which he claimed were the ancient arms of his family.... It is this record that was said to strengthen the claim that the family came from France and whilst the cross crosslet was an heraldic symbol used by French knights who had been on the Crusades in the Holy Land, these arms would have to be identified in the ancient armorials of France that probably no longer exist. David had two sons and a daughter Margaret. She married Sir Duncan Forrester of Torwood, Comtroller of the King's household whilst his elder son DAVID FORSYTH of GILCOMSTON (2nd) was appointed Marischal (steward) of the Household based at Falkland Palace. It was this David who married Margaret, daughter of David Blakader of Tullialloun, in Perthshire and niece of Robert Blackadder, Archbishop of Glasgow by whom the married couple were granted the lands of Dykes also known as Halhill, in 1499.

The castle of Halhill in the parish of Lesmahago, Lanarkshire was a large Keep which was demolished in 1828 and was described as having a central arch so large that one hundred men could stand beneath it, shoulder to shoulder. It was from this time that the family decided to use the territorial title of Dykes to become the "Forsyth's of Dykes". Perhaps it was David's younger brother, Thomas. The third son, who became a Canon in Glasgow Cathedral and was a close associate of Bishop Robert who may have helped in arranging the happy and successful marriage. DAVID FORSYTH of DYKES fell at the Battle of Flodden against the English in 1513 when as a member of King James 1V bodyguard and surrounded, they fought with their Sovereign to the death, a fact that was recorded and rewarded with a pension for his son, David, who was a minor.

The sketch shown is a representation, based on the remnants of foundation stones of the castle of Dykes otherwise known as Halhill and the 17th century map by Johnathan Blaeu. It was drawn by Nigel Tranter, the famous Scottish historical writer and acknowledged expert in Scottish domestic architecture of the middle ages who was a close friend of the Chief and his family. What then happened? The young David Forsyth of Dykes (3rd) continued living at Halhill when in 1533, Sir James Hamilton of Finnart, younger brother of the Regent and illegitimate son of King James V, expressed a desire to own Halhill. The King made Sir James Feudal Superior of Dykes and the Forsyths continued in residence. However, feeling uncertain of their future they exchanged their remaining lands of Creveychin with Thomas Erskine, Earl of Mar for the lands of Inchnock and Geyne in the Barony of Monkland, close to Dykes in 1539. Their plan was to build another Castle thus enabling them to relinquish Halhill to Sir James Hamilton. In the event, Sir James fell from the King's favour in 1541 and David Forsyth of Dykes continued in residence until 1585 when following the Reformation, Halhill, being ultimately Church Property reverted to the Crown. However, by this time David had completed the construction of his new Castle in Inchnock, one mile North East from Monkland Kirk, a site which today is covered by a housing estate. Halhill or Dykes was in due course granted to the Earl of Thirlestane, ancestor of the Dukes of Lauder who allowed the Castle to fall into ruin.

Notes: Solidates was an area of land measuring about 1.5 acres. Being "put to the Horn" was a declaration that was pronounced on rebels and Bankrupts and consisted of the Serjandus or other official blowing three blasts of his ceremonial Horn from the local market square before reading the King's proclamation, those named were then pronounced outlaws. A "Sasine" is a document giving title and a description of a land grant.

Source References: Register of the Great Seal of Scotland. Vols 1,11 & 111, Protocol Register of the Archbishop, Diocese of Glasgow 1499-1513. Stoddart's Ordinary of Arms. Sheriff Court Book of Fife 1515-1522. Gylecomston Charters, Archives of the City of Aberdeen.

