



Clan Forsyth

SYDNEY BRANCH

NEWSLETTER

CLAN FORSYTH SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA – SYDNEY BRANCH
PO BOX 396, ROSEVILLE NSW 2069 **September 2012 #2**

Clan Forsyth Day is Sunday 4th November 2012

Willoughby Uniting Church, Clanwilliam Street, Willoughby, off Penshurst Street
Upstairs in the Forsyth Room from 2pm to 5pm (lift available)

Come and meet other members of your Clan Forsyth.

Bring your Forsyth memorabilia (photos, paintings, correspondence,
your family tree, antiques, collectables etc.) to show everyone.

Afternoon tea will be served (*bring some cakes, biscuits or scones if you wish*).

2012-2013 EVENTS

(please write in your diary)

September 8-16: History Week, NSW

November 4: Clan Forsyth Day from 2-5pm, upstairs in the Forsyth Room, Willoughby Uniting Church, Clanwilliam Street, Willoughby. All welcome! (*see the above notice*)

March 10, 2013: Annual General Meeting & Lunch. Chiquita Café, next to the car park in Oakville Street, Willoughby (off Penshurst Street). From 12.30pm to about 2.30pm. All are welcome!

2014: Second Homecoming Event being planned for Scotland.

Sad Passings



AILSAL BEDE FORSYTH (pictured) passed away on 24 February 2012 aged 94. She lived in Darling Point and was a foundation member of the Sydney branch. Ailsa was the wife of the Late Bruce Forsyth who was a manufacturer of office furniture and mother of Malcolm and Ken Forsyth.

IAN DAVID FAIR-JONES passed away on 23 February 2012. He lived in Cherrybrook and was the husband of Eleanor and the son of Suzette Fair-Jones who is Sydney Clan Committee Member. Ian was a past president of Dural Rotary Club and in 2011 he was awarded the Paul Harris Fellowship Sapphire Award, the highest honour in Rotary.

LAUREL FORSYTH, wife of the Late Paul Forsyth who was a founding member of the Sydney Branch, passed away aged 82 in July 2012. Laurel resided in West Pennant Hills. Her sons are Michael and Adrian. Her husband Paul was the first president of the Sydney Branch when it was inaugurated in 1979.

DOUGLAS BRISTOW SWAN of Lane Cove died on 23 November 2011. He was the husband of Margaret Forsyth Mitchell Swan.

VALDA JUNE FORSYTH of Inverell died in October 2011. She was the wife on Maurice Lloyd (Andy) Forsyth who was the piper for various Forsyth functions in the 1980's.

ADRIENNE MADGE CROSSLEY of Taree died on 23 March 2012, aged 80 years. She was the wife of Peter Graham Crossley, and the mother of Susan, Graham, Philip and Timothy, who is the current Treasurer of the Sydney Branch.

We extend our sympathy to the families of these Forsyth people.

Memories of Childhood

By Denise Park (Clan Committee Member)

We have come full circle, from profligate consumerism to conserving and recycling. While not completely parsimonious certainly more financially savvy. Back in the post war years we took recycling and saving as a virtue.

One small metal garbage tin was emptied once a week. The garbage man would run to the kitchen door, take the bin to the truck and return it empty with lid replaced to its usual place.

Kitchen scraps were either used in bubble and squeak, composted or placed in the large saucepan we kept on the stove which was cooked up each morning, then mixed with bran and fed to the chooks for their breakfast. Glass jars and bottles were washed and used for home cooked jam, chutney, pickles, cordials or kept for food storage. Paper bags and wrapping paper were kept for years, ironed flat and stacked in a special drawer.

I still carefully unwrap gifts, iron the Sellotape off and reuse; some I have had for years, a source of amusement to my children. String and rubber bands were either carefully wound or stored on door knobs where they would slowly perish.

Behind the laundry door were kept the large hessian charity bags for waste paper and rags. Rags were **really** rags as any useable scraps were recycled as dusters or made up into aprons, coat hangers etc. for fetes. Many a small boy wore cut down mens suiting made into pants. Before plastic paper was used to wrap the garbage, and also used as toilet paper!

Aunt told of how the people on the goldfields treasured two blankets sewn together and filled with shredded newspaper or grasses to keep the cold out at night.

Magazines were shared between many households and once a week. Cousin Alice would bring us the Australian Woman's Weekly, usually with the Royal family on the cover and the Saturday Evening Post with Norman Rockwell covers.

Shoes would be cleaned daily and to have heels worn down the mark of poverty. Boot makers were used regularly and shoes worn for years. There was black rubber glued to the sole when new which was meant to extend the life of the shoe, likewise little metal half circles were nailed to the heels and toes. These were fun and I could tap dance in my lace up school shoes pretending I was Ginger Rodgers or my favourite Jane Powell, particularly if I had a feather duster.

Twice a year I would have a new dress, one for summer and one for winter; the old ones passed on to whomsoever would fit them. Apart from dressmaking the treadle sewing machine was in constant use for mending, turning collars and sheets to prolong their life. Jumpers were pure wool and hand knitted. Some people unravelled old knitteds, steamed the wool and re-knitted up something else. Mending the hand knitted socks with a wooden 'mushroom' was a constant occupation. Sitting with arms extended at right angles with a skein of wool round them while my mother or aunt wound the skein into balls, was a regular childhood pastime. At night when we relaxed after dinner we would cut out stamps from donated envelopes which would be donated to charities.

The vegetable garden, orchard, chooks, ducks and bee hive kept us well fed and excess was bottled, made into preserves and pickles or given to the family, neighbours or donated to charity.

We certainly never went without and with an early to bed early, to rise and neither a borrower or a lender be philosophy (give, don't lend) we had a pretty contented existence.

Denise

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1. Two peanuts walk into a bar. One was a salted.
 2. A jumper cable walks into a bar. The barman says "I'll serve you, but don't start anything."
 3. A sandwich walks into a bar. The barman says, "Sorry, we don't serve food in here."
 4. A dyslexic man walks into a bra.
 5. A man walks into a bar with a slab of asphalt under his arm and says: "A beer please, and one for the road."
 6. Two aerials meet on a roof, fall in love and get married. The ceremony wasn't much but the reception was brilliant.
 7. Two cows standing next to each other in a field, Daisy says to Dolly, "I was artificially inseminated this morning." "I don't believe you," said Dolly. "It's true, no bull!" exclaims Daisy.
 8. Two cannibals are eating a clown. One says to the other: "Does this taste funny to you?"
 9. A man takes his Rottweiler to the vet and says, "My dog's cross-eyed, is there anything you can do for him?" "Well," says the vet, "let's have a look at him" So he picks the dog up and examines his eyes, then checks his teeth. Finally, he says "I'm going to have to put him down." "What? Because he's cross-eyed?" "No, because he's really heavy."
 10. Two hydrogen atoms walk into a bar. One says, "I've lost my electron." The other says, "Are you sure?" The first replies, "Yes, I'm positive..."
 11. Apparently, 1 in 5 people in the world are Chinese. And there are 5 people in my family, so it must be one of them. It's either my mum or my dad... or maybe my older brother Colin or my younger brother Ho-Cha Chu. But I'm pretty sure it's Colin.
 12. I went to buy some camouflage trousers the other day but I couldn't find any.



National Trust Founder: Annie Forsyth Wyatt OBE

Mrs Wyatt (nee Evans) lived in Gordon with her husband, Ivor Bertie Wyatt. As a young mother of two in 1927, she was concerned that the bushland near her home was used to dump rubbish. With some lady friends she formed the Ku-ring-gai Tree Lovers Civic League. They protested to government authorities against the rubbish dumping and the extensive clearing of land for development. When Burdekin House, an historic home in Macquarie Street Sydney, was demolished Mrs Wyatt in 1945 founded the National Trust of Australia, based on her learning about The National Trust of the UK.

The newly- formed trust faced its first battle with the threatened demolition of The Mint, Hyde Park Barracks and removal of St James Church in Macquarie Street. Until her death in 1961 Mrs Wyatt and her colleagues worked tirelessly for the conservation of heritage buildings and the natural environment. Today the National Trust of Australia is the nation's largest community-based conservation charity.

Mrs Wyatt is remembered by a number of plaques in parks and in buildings around Sydney. They include the A. F. Wyatt Room at the National Trust Headquarters on Observatory Hill, a park name after her at Gordon Station, a plaque at the entrance to Balls Head Reserve in Wollstonecraft (which she directly helped preserve) and a small reserve overlooking Whale Beach. In the Museum of Sydney there is an exhibition about famous Sydney people and Mrs Wyatt is included, with a display which has some of her paintings on ceramic china, for which she won a prize at the Sydney Technical College as a teenager.

Her son, the Late Ivor Forsyth Wyatt OBE became Honorary Secretary of the Trust and then President for a number of years. He was instrumental in securing some of the Trust's major properties, including Everglades at Leura, Norman Lindsay's home at Springwood and Old Government House at Parramatta. As President he hosted the opening of Old Government House in April 1970 by Her Majesty, The Queen. He was also very involved with the Nature Conservation Council, the NSW Clean Water Committee, the Warrimbirra Sanctuary near Bargo and even the local St Ives Progress Association, to name just a few. He was also a committee member of the Clan's Sydney Branch until his passing on 1st August 2004.

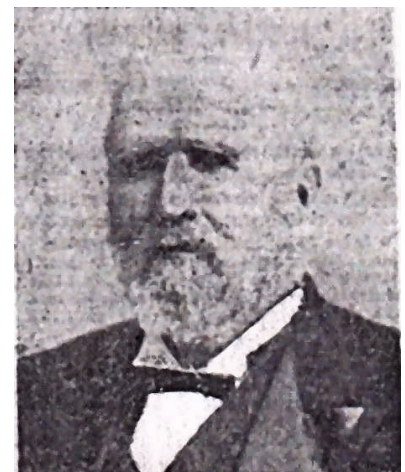
Ivor's wife, Mabel, is 96 and resides at Wesley Gardens in Belrose. Ivor's sister, Lynette Lee (nee Wyatt) is 93 and lives in West Pymble.

Archibald Forsyth was Annie Forsyth Wyatt's grandfather.

He was a pioneer, business man and philanthropist. Born in 1826 in Garmouth, Morayshire in Scotland, Archibald was the ninth and youngest son of John Forsyth, a carpenter, and his wife Helen (nee Young). At 17 he worked in railway construction and the timber trade. In 1848 had sailed to Sydney from Scotland.

At first he was cedar cutter around the Richmond and Tweed River districts. His fine stature impressed his fellow axemen. In 1851 he moved to the gold diggings around Ophir in NSW, then to the Victorian diggings where he had fair success. Later he went to Apollo Bay in Victoria as a saw miller. In 1854 he married Sarah Corbett and then moved to Melbourne in 1862 where he started the well-known general merchants of Forsyth & Anthony. Having sold his interest in that successful business in 1864 he came to Sydney to open the rope-making firm, A. Forsyth & Co, with John Miller, a boyhood friend. Sarah, his first wife, died in 1877. Subsequently he married Sarah Emmett. The successful rope works expanded into Queensland and the company went public in 1894. Many of the shareholders were from the Forsyth family.

In retirement he became a philanthropist. One of his many acts of charity was to donate a new horse-drawn ambulance for the Civil Ambulance Brigade. In 1886 he was elected to represent South Sydney in the NSW Legislative Assembly for a short time. He was a founding member of the Animal Protection Society and being an ardent bowler he became the first president of the City Bowling Club and founder of the Randwick Bowling Club. In 1897 he published a book "Rapara" or the "Rights of the Individual in the State." He died on March 15, 1908, survived by his third wife Harriet Grace, four sons and five daughters. One daughter, Isabella, was the mother of Annie Forsyth Wyatt (nee Evans).



Clan Forsyth Queensland Branch

The Clan has a very active branch in Queensland. If you have Forsyth relatives residing in that state, then suggest they contact Heather Forsyth, Secretary of the Clan Forsyth, Queensland Branch. Phone: **07 3281 7553**. Email: **heatherandianfor@hotmail.com**

TRADITIONAL BREAD SAUCE

In the not too distant past, English people served roast poultry with a bread sauce. There are many recipes available on the internet but one friend of the Forsyth family in England swore by Delia Smith's recipe below. Delia is an English cook and TV presenter and this is her favourite sauce for serving with roast turkey, chicken or pheasant. She says, "don't be put off by some of the restaurant or packet varieties because home made is deliciously light and creamy." This recipe serves 5 to 6 people.

75g (3 oz) freshly-made white breadcrumbs – *a two-day old white loaf with crusts removed will be stale enough to grate, but the best way to do this is in a liquidiser/blender if you have one.*
 425ml ($\frac{3}{4}$ pint) milk
 1 medium onion
 1 bay leaf
 15 whole cloves
 6 black peppercorns
 50g (2 oz) butter
 2 tablespoons double cream
 Salt and freshly-milled black pepper

A couple of hours before you need the sauce, cut the onion in half and stick the cloves in it. How many cloves you actually use depends on you, but I personally like a pronounced flavour. If you really don't like cloves, you can use some freshly grated nutmeg instead.

Place the onion, bay leaf and the 6 black peppercorns in a saucepan with the milk and put this to infuse in a warm place for about 2 hours. Then over a very low heat bring the milk slowly to the boil, which should take about 15 minutes. Next remove the onion, bay leaf and peppercorns and keep on one side.

Stir the breadcrumbs into the milk and add the butter and some salt. Leave the saucepan on a very low heat (stirring now and then) until the crumbs have swollen and thickened the sauce. Now replace the clove studded onion and again leave the saucepan in a warm place until the sauce is needed.

Just before serving, remove the onion and spices, beat in the remaining butter and the cream, and taste to check the seasoning.

(Email your favourite recipes – Editor)

Clan Forsyth, Sydney Branch, website

Tim Crossley, Branch Treasurer, has set up a wonderful website with many details and photographic information about the Clan, genealogy and its history.

Please look at the website: <http://clanforythaustralia.org/>

Tim suggests that if you want to find over 304,750,349 Australian and online resources, such as books, images, historic newspapers, maps, music, archives and more, then visit this website:

<http://trove.nla.gov.au/>

An invitation to supply members' news, articles, stories and photos!

Email the Newsletter Editor, Chris Lee, on: cwlee@optusnet.com.au

Bermondsey, London – home of the Forsyths

(as compiled by David Forsyth, a Past President of the Sydney Branch)

Historical Background of Bermondsey

Bermondsey is an old part of central London on the south side of the River Thames near Tower Bridge and across the river from the Tower of London. It was home for a number of Forsyths from the tannery business from the late 1700s to the mid 1800s, including Thomas and Martha Forsyth, plus James and Margaret Forsyth before they came to Australia.

Bermondsey and neighbouring Southwark date from prehistoric times when the River Thames was much wider than today and the area formed a wide marshy flood plain with a series of gravel islands. It was these islands which attracted the Romans to build the first bridge across the Thames, somewhere between today's famous London and Tower bridges.

The leather industry for which Bermondsey became famous, was first established in the 14th century. By the late 1790s, one third of the leather in England was made there. The population in the area grew markedly between 1500 and 1800. Theatres like Shakespeare's Globe were established in the 1600s. Churches like St John Horsleydown and St Mary Magdalene, both associated with Forsyth family events, were established in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Industrialisation in the 1800s brought more people to Bermondsey. The steam railway established in 1836 brought people and pollution. Severe overcrowding developed as industry and the population grew. Many jobs were poorly paid, and often several families shared rooms in crowded rental premises. Bermondsey became one of the poorest, dirtiest, smelliest areas of Victorian London. Open sewers and poor quality housing were common. It was also an area with one of the highest death rates.

Bermondsey was noted for two industries, food and leather. Seventy five percent of the butter, cheese, bacon and canned meat consumed by Londoners landed at Bermondsey docks, which attracted food processing factories to the area as well. The Bermondsey river front was sometimes called London's larder. The first canned food in England was made in Bermondsey in 1811. English household name products were made here such as Courage beer, Hartleys jams, Jacobs and Peek Freans biscuits, and Sarsons vinegar.

But it was the leather industry which most impacted on the area, especially the environment and atmosphere. The railway already produced pollution, but the leather tanneries raised things to a whole new level. Tanning was a smelly business, and produced very unpleasant stench. Skins from animals including cattle, sheep, goats and pigs were cured in the many tanneries. Skins were treated using chemicals from oak bark, sumach (a shrub) and alum (a potassium compound) depending on the skin type. Early in the tanning process skins were dehaired by soaking in lime pits for a month or more. Then 'the pure' was used to remove the lime before the next stage. 'The pure' was made from dog droppings, collected by the local poor, mostly kids. Piles of dog turds were often kept in the archways under the railway viaducts. Needless to say they would have added to local aromas.

Liza Picard's excellent book 'Victorian London' titles its first chapter 'Smells.' She says '*Think of the worst smell you have ever met. Now imagine what it was like to have that in your nostrils all day and all night all over London.*' Picard also notes '*The Thames stank. The main ingredient was human waste.*' By 1841 there were over 200,000 cesspits for night soil. One medical theory at the time was that 'miasma' or bad air was the cause of disease. While not strictly true, the cause of the smells often did cause disease.

At the time, many diseases lead to death, including measles, scarlet fever, diphtheria, whooping cough, mumps, infantile diarrhoea, convulsions, tuberculosis, venereal diseases and consumption. But the main culprit was cholera. Bermondsey and Southwark endured major cholera outbreaks between the 1830s and 1860s until Bazalgettes sewer system removed the human effluent away from the drinking water.

So what were the Forsyths doing in Bermondsey?

We do not know exactly when this Forsyth family arrived in Bermondsey, but we do know that John and Mary Forsyth lived there and had three children in the 1790s, Elizabeth, John and Thomas. We think Elizabeth and John died as children, but their son Thomas Forsyth married Martha Rosewall at St John Horsleydown in Bermondsey in 1817. We know Thomas was a skilled leather tradesman in the specialty of Morocco leather which was a shiny, smooth and light leather made from goat skin. He and Martha had three sons, James (born 1818), John and Thomas. They moved to Newcastle upon Tyne in the north of England in the early 1820s. Newcastle was also a major leather centre. James Forsyth married a Newcastle girl Margaret Todd in 1837. Over the next 2 years, they had two sons who both died in infancy. Around 1841 they moved to Bermondsey, probably chasing work. At some point they travelled through or worked in Leeds, where their first surviving son Thomas Todd Forsyth was born in 1839. James had been apprenticed to his father Thomas in making Morocco leather, and he possibly wanted to make his own way after finishing his apprenticeship, and Bermondsey had a large Morocco leather industry. They had three more sons, John, James jnr and Robert born in Bermondsey in 1842, 1845 and 1848.

By the mid 1840s James's father Thomas had moved back from Newcastle, was in the workhouse, probably too old to work in the tanneries. The family was living with other families in rented rooms in the tanneries area, and probably could not afford to keep Thomas with them. Also around this time, James got the travel bug, probably to seek out a better life than the one they faced in the squalid disease ridden poverty trap of Bermondsey. He was also a mariner and it was easy for him to work his passage overseas on any of the ships which docked on the nearby Thames. According to family records, James left just after Christmas in 1848, and the family did not see him again until they arrived in Sydney in February 1863. We know he worked at his leather trade in both the USA and Australia, and also worked the gold fields in California, Victoria and NSW. He clearly made some money because in 1862 he sent for Margaret and the family and paid for their passage, plus he had enough funds to establish his own tanneries in Sydney. We may never know everything he got up to in those 14 years, but we do know quite a bit about how Margaret and the children survived in Bermondsey.

Soon after James left, his father Thomas died in the local workhouse. The 1851 census shows Margaret and her four sons living in a dwelling with two other families and a total of 15 people. Sons Thomas and John were listed as scholars, but we know they were probably working from the age of 8. James jnr and Robert were still young (5 and 2 respectively). Some of this we know from a letter that John wrote to his grandson in 1926, setting out what life was like in Bermondsey. He earned 8 pence a week working 13 hours a day at age 8. He said he had no childhood. When he was 10 years old he went to work in a tannery nailing coloured skins on wooden frames for 2 shillings and 6 pence per week (25 cents in today's money). He notes that his mother Margaret struggled to earn enough money to keep her children with her.

Surprisingly given James was overseas, Margaret gave birth to a daughter Jane Todd Forsyth in 1852. Such situations were not uncommon in those days, as the various changes to the Poor Law Act meant it could be advantageous to have the father disappear. John's letter mentioned that James was often away from home (probably working on ships). At this time they were living in a slightly better part of Bermondsey a little removed from the main tannery area. Nonetheless, sadly Jane died aged 2 in January 1854, of marasmus (severe malnutrition) and diarrhoea. The steady slide into poverty and disease had started. Three months later James jnr aged 8, died of scarlatina, dropsy and convulsions.

In January 1855, Margaret gave birth to a second daughter, Margaret Dorling Forsyth, her middle name an interesting break from the tradition of naming children after relatives and maiden names, or was it? They were now living much closer to the tanneries, at one stage just across the street. On 24th May 1857, Margaret had another boy, Edward Dorling Forsyth. Again the Dorling middle name. He died age 2 on 29th August 1859, of scarlatina and marasmus. At the time of Edward's death, Margaret was pregnant again, because she gave birth to Sarah Jane Forsyth on 29th October 1859.

Over a 22 year period Margaret had ten children, five of whom had died as infants or young children. Margaret's surviving children were Thomas, John, Robert, Margaret Dorling and Sarah Jane, all of whom arrived in Sydney with Margaret in 1863. The two girls had been born well after James had left England. In 1862, James must have known about the extra children as he had listed the two girls and their age on his payment for their passage from England in the deposit journal, although he did not list their names.

So who was the father? The 1861 census provides the answer. Margaret is listed as head of the family, and occupation as mangler (a washer woman). Thomas and John are listed as leather dressers, the same profession as their father James. Margaret is known to have signed their apprenticeship papers. Robert is listed as a scholar but probably also worked like his brothers before him while still at school. Daughters Margaret age 5 and Sarah Jane age 1 were still young. Four other people were listed as living with them in 1861, a 20 year old leather dresser (who probably worked with the 20 year old Thomas and 19 year old John), a 9 year old female servant, and a 3 year old girl (probably an orphan). The fourth boarder is the interesting one, a baker age 48 by the name of Edward Dorling. Clearly he was the father of Margaret and Sarah. Interestingly James is shown as their father on their birth records, but that was not unusual at the time. Absent fathers like James were still acknowledged on the birth certificates. If they had returned to the area, and the family had been in a workhouse, he could have been asked to pay for the care that the family had received during his absence. Thus many never returned.

Having made money in Australia, in 1862 James sent for Margaret and the children and paid their passage to Sydney. In February 1863, James welcomed his family plus the two girls to their new country. The family prospered but never lost sight of the tough conditions they had left behind in Bermondsey. James died in 1907, aged 89, having lived over 50 years in NSW. Margaret died in 1891, aged 72, of which 28 years were in NSW. There is little doubt that they and their surviving children became significantly better off by James having wandered the new world and finding the opportunity for a better life. The 14 years absence must have weighed heavily on Margaret's mind and that of her older children. In his letter, son John seemed critical of his father's wanderings and the pressure it put on Margaret and the children. Margaret did it tough and managed to bring up her children through poverty and illness, despite losing five of them as infants. They all escaped life in Bermondsey, which did not improve until well over a century later.



Smith's Rents building in Bermondsey where Margaret and her children lived.



James and Margaret Forsyth not long after Margaret arrived in Australia.



The Old Morocco leather store in Bermondsey.

