



Clan Forsyth

SYDNEY BRANCH

NEWSLETTER

CLAN FORSYTH SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA – SYDNEY BRANCH
PO BOX 396, ROSEVILLE NSW 2069 **NOVEMBER 2006**

Visit “The Towers”

**Sunday 3rd December,
from 6pm to 7.30pm**

(part of All Saints Greek Orthodox Grammar School)

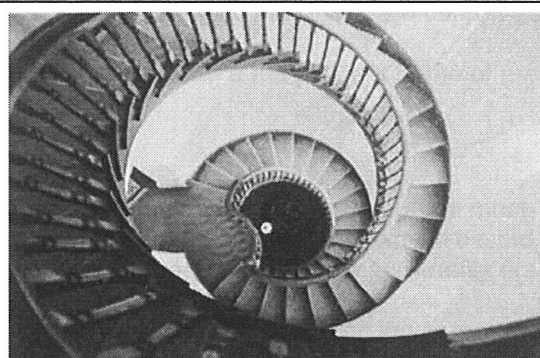
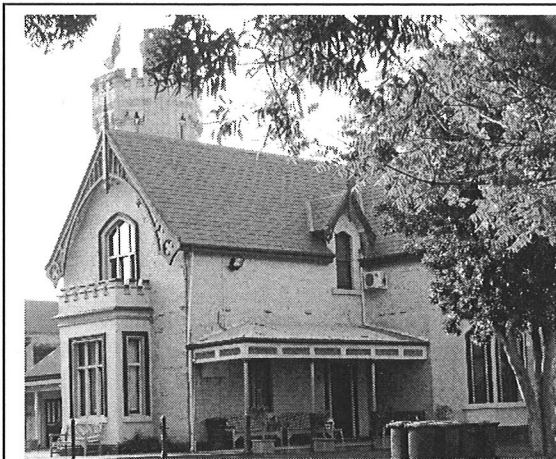
**31 Forsyth Street,
South Belmore**

Join in the clan visit to the historic home
of Robert James Forsyth and his son
Robert Archibald (known as Roy) Forsyth.

The tour of The Towers will be conducted by the
School Principal.

At 7.30pm there will be Christmas Carols at
the school. All clan members, family and friends
are welcome to attend.

For details about the Forsyths and
The Towers see the article on page 3



The Spiral Staircase

Upcoming Dates

Silver Jubilee Scottish Heritage Week: 25th November to 3rd December 2006

Scotland the Brave, Sydney Opera House 17th March 2007 (2pm & 8pm)

Brigadoon at Bundanoon: Saturday 28th April, 2007

Judith and I extend our greetings to all our Clan Folk in Australia and overseas. We wish you a happy and holy Christmas and trust your 2007 will be healthy and prosperous.

Jim Forsyth, Australian Commissioner Designate

Ethie Castle and its ghosts



Ethie Castle is about 8 km from the town of Arbroath in Scotland and was for a number of years the family home of Alistair Forsyth of that Ilk, Chief of the Clan Forsyth. Recently The Chief sold the castle to the de Morgan family and they now have it as a place to stay and to conduct small conventions.

The Chief still retains land near to the castle and has indicated that one day he may build a cottage on the land in his retirement.

Ethie Castle dates from around 1300 when a sandstone keep was built by the Abbot and Monks of Arbroath Abbey. After passing through the de Maxwell family, the lands reverted to the Abbot of Arbroath, who later became the Cardinal and Chancellor of Scotland.

In about 1530, the castle was remodelled around a courtyard in order to entertain King James V.

Cardinal Beaton, abbot of Arbroath, commissioned the building of the present castle and lived there for several years with Marion Ogilvy, his mistress.

Cardinal David Beaton (1494-1546) bishop and politician, was born in Balfour (Fife) and educated at St. Andrews and Glasgow Universities. He negotiated the marriages of King James V (1512 - 1542) with the French court. As Abbot of Arbroath, Beaton sat in the Scottish parliament from 1525. Beaton was effectively the last Archbishop of St. Andrews, appointed to this position in 1539. He was a powerful figure in the Catholic Church and a fierce persecutor of those of the Protestant faith. As a widely hated man, who was opposed by John Knox, his life came to a violent end in St Andrews on 29th May, 1546 when he was brutally murdered by Protestant reformers in the same year as he executed the widely popular George Wishart.

After Cardinal Beaton's murder it is reputed that the monks of Arbroath concealed their treasury of church vessels, plates and vestments in the walls of Ethie for safekeeping.

The castle was bought in 1665 by the Carnegie family, who later became the Earls of Northesk. It remained with them until 1928. The 7th Earl was Vice Admiral and commanded with Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805. As a tribute, the Earl was entitled to incorporate Trafalgar in his arms and it can still be seen in a dormer at Ethie. It was this Earl who modernised the castle to form a substantial country residence and much of his influence is still found in the castle.

Sir Walter Scott, a friend of the 8th Earl, often stayed at Ethie. During one of his visits he wrote the novel "The Antiquary", where Ethie is reputedly depicted as the legendary Castle of Knockwhinnock with the central character based upon a neighbour during that period.

In recent years the castle has been carefully restored and maintained to form a magnificent home of great character and historic importance.

The Ghosts

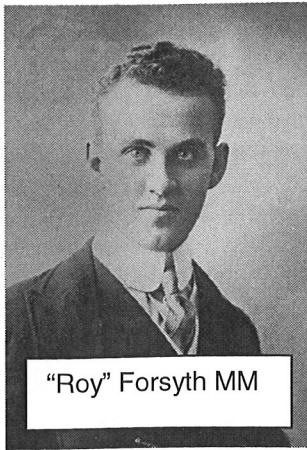
Shortly after his death the ghost of Cardinal Beaton was seen at Ethie and even now, although on much rarer occasions, his ghost has been seen, mainly on a narrow staircase that leads to a secret doorway in his old bedroom. The quite unmistakable sounds of the Cardinal's footsteps have also been heard as he apparently drags his gouty leg, thumping and scraping it along the passageways.

There was another ghost in Ethie Castle – that of a young child – which could be heard crying sometimes in the night. People have heard what sounded like a wheeled toy being pulled along the floor in one particular room. Investigations were carried out to discover the source of the strange sounds. A small skeleton was discovered and alongside it the remains of a toy wooden cart. The skeleton was removed from the castle and given a Christian burial. The ghost of the child is no longer heard.

If you are interested in visiting or staying at Ethie Castle contact Mrs Kirstin de Morgan, Ethie Castle, Inverkeilor, By Arbroath, Angus, DD11 5SP Scotland

The Clan is interested in cataloguing old photographs and artifacts and their location, to assist family members in being able to trace them for the future. Some recent examples include Bowling trophies, bowling balls and photographs of Thomas Todd Forsyth. Old family bibles, fob watches, letters, and original birth certificates are other examples.

If you have such items and are happy to let the Clan know of their whereabouts, please contact one of the Committee.



"Roy" Forsyth MM

"The Towers"

is a fine example of Victorian rustic architecture It was built about 1888 by David Jones, who had built a number of large houses and the railway station in Bathurst, as well as the Bathurst and Goulburn Courthouses. He was an amateur astronomer, hence the tower. The property of 5.2 hectares (13 acres) which he had purchased in 1854 extended to the present Kingsgrove Road. In the 1890s depression, David Jones suffered financial difficulties and was forced to move to Marrickville, where he died in 1899.

"The Towers" was purchased in 1898 by **Robert James Forsyth**, a nephew of **Archibald Forsyth**, proprietor of the Sydney ropemaking firm (**Archibald Forsyth & Co.**). The surrounding streets are named after RJF's son, **Robert Archibald (known as Roy) Forsyth**, who died of wounds in France in 1918 during the First World War, after an action for which he was awarded the Military Medal. Robert James Forsyth died in 1920, and his land at Belmore was acquired by the War Service Homes Commission. "The Towers" was rented to tenants until it was bought in 1941 by A.C.

Fletcher, a dairyman and milk vender, who occupied it until his death in 1987. It was purchased by the then Canterbury Municipal Council but was sold in 1994 to the All Saints Greek Orthodox Grammar School for use as a senior campus.

Barbara Forsyth, one of the Committee has arranged a visit for Clan Members to The Towers on Sunday 3rd December starting at 6pm (see front page for details).

The Principal of the All Saints school will personally conduct the tour. Afterwards clan members are welcome to stay for Christmas Carols.

Bring your family and friends to tour The Towers and join in the carol singing afterwards.

Family History Research

I have the utmost admiration for family history research carried out prior to availability of the Internet. My great uncle Les Forsyth, did a marvelous job researching our forbears, as did many others including Shirley Dalton and Judy Forsyth. In those days, it was all hard slog, manually going through books, paper records, and more recently micro films.

These days, it is a much easier task, with the Internet making available ever increasing amounts of data. Much of this data is free. However many of the more formal records web sites do make a charge, but they give access to large databases in a speedy and accurate manner.

Where do you start?

Well, one free site is www.familysearch.org, which belongs to the Church of the Latter Day Saints. It has a simple search engine and free software downloads for keeping your records. You can also search the surname indexes for free at www.ancestry.com but more detailed information comes at a price.

If your family has been in NSW for some time, then the NSW Government site at www.bdm.nsw.gov.au/familyHistory/search.htm is a great place to start. You can search the indexes for births, deaths and marriages for free, but you will need to pay if you order a certificate. This will often be necessary to confirm your relationship. NSW State Records have lots of other records on line. e.g. Divorce index, bankruptcy index, and the most important, shipping indexes.

Another source of NSW information is at the Ryerson Index showing recent death notices from various newspapers www.rootsweb.com/~nswdps/.

The Australian Government has excellent record services for military service in both World Wars. You can find them at www.awm.gov.au/nominalrolls/ww1 and www.ww2roll.gov.au/.

If your family hails from England, then the best way to find them is at the equivalent UK Government site www.1837online.com. There is a charge to both search and order certificates here, but they can be paid on line. The year 1837 was the first year that English civil records became compulsory for recording purposes. Prior to that, churches were the main source of information, and much of that is not yet available on line. It becomes much harder to find ancestors prior to 1837.

There is also a free index to English/Wales Birth, Deaths, & Marriages at www.freebmd.rootsweb.com/gg/search.pl

And being a Forsyth, if you want information about your Scottish forbears, look at www.scotlandspeople.gov.uk. This site also charges for searching and certificates, but you can view some certificates on line, also for a fee.

Don't forget, we all have 4 grandparents, 8 great grandparents, 16 great, great grandparents etc etc. Researching back to the 16 great, great grandparents takes someone currently aged 50 back to the 1830s, 1840s. Many people really only know something about their grandparents, which leaves huge scope for further research. One of the fascinating things about this type of research is how often people find a forbear who looked like a current close relative, or even themselves.

Most importantly, we have an exceptionally fine Genealogist in Clan Forsyth Sydney, Judy Forsyth. She has been an enormous help and encouragement to those of us who continue to search for our yet to be discovered forbears.

We are considering holding a **CLAN GENEALOGY DAY**, where those seeking information or who want to learn more about getting started, can come along and talk to others. A similar day held some years ago was well received.

If you are interested in attending such an event, please let us know so that we can start making arrangements. Contact David on 9417 6201 or dsforsyth@bigpond.com or Judy on 9809 1562 or jaforsyth@ozemail.com.au.

President's Message

Greetings to all Forsyth Clan members.

Recently one of my sons (aged in his 20s) asked what was the Forsyth Clan all about. For young people in Australia today, it is probably not an uncommon question for families of all backgrounds, irrespective of their ethnicity, place of birth or heritage.

Being fortunate to live in such a cosmopolitan country, our young people grow up in a society which has people from many different nationalities. Many of them have parents or grandparents who were born overseas (my sons have a grandfather born in Scotland). We are also fortunate to be fundamentally free of the bitter religious, ethnic and tribal conflicts which exist in other societies. Recent stirrings on Sydney beaches are minor compared with those we see on the news occurring overseas.

In this context, the question relevance of a Clan or heritage based society is a valid one, and some might argue that the adoption of an Australian society, which is tolerant of all backgrounds, and fundamentally looks to the future rather than the past, should negate the idea of a Clan or society which is based on the past.

The problem with this view is that it ignores the urge that comes to people later in life who want to know more about where their family come from. People in their 20s and 30s tend to be too busy working, having a good time and raising kids to be able to research such things. Later in life, there is well known tendency for many people to question their heritage and embarking on a search for their ancestors.

Genealogy, or Family History, is one of the leading uses of the internet world wide. As the population ages, it will continue to grow in popularity. Societies like Clan Forsyth are excellent sources of family history knowledge, and can provide links and access that is not available on the web. They also preserve many of the informal stories about real people.

It is not that young people are not interested in their heritage, they often are, but are too busy to devote much time to investigate it. What they will come to realize, as many of us have, is that by the time you do become interested, it may be too late to discover some of the information you want, as the older keepers of the stories have passed on. I know I have a number of regrets about questions I failed to ask of my grandparents.

We are fortunate in Sydney Branch to have an excellent Genealogist in Judy, and a number of family members who have stories and information about our forbears. In the small number of Committee meetings that I have attended so far, I have been fascinated to discover many new facts about our family. The Clan Society provides a vehicle for discovering and disseminating such information.

David Forsyth
Sydney Branch President

George Hawley

It was with great sadness that Jim and I learnt of the death of our retired Scottish genealogist. George has helped many members with their family history in Australia and throughout the world.

I remember referring to him a family of a very elderly gentleman. George seemed to pull out all stops on his behalf and came quickly back with a little bit of his family history and the fact that he had a brother, unknown to the gentleman, who died in Scotland at a young age. He was very grateful to George and was thrilled to discover this sibling. He passed away not long afterwards.

We first met George and Irene Hawley on the Clan's first trip to Scotland and the Gathering of the Clans in 1981. The clan in Scotland had organised a supper meeting in the homes of some of their members. I was interested in genealogy and knew George had been appointed their genealogist. Jim and I chose their home to visit and George took each of us into his study and recorded our genealogy. Later he was able to redirect us when we took a wrong turn.

George and Irene moved from Edinburgh to Forres in Morayshire but this did not stop his genealogy efforts. He made numerous trips to Edinburgh on our behalf.

We enjoyed the hospitality in their home in Forres in 1994 and I recall him sitting at the table reading all the latest information we had gained in England about my family (not Forsyth). Jim and I have special memories of our times with their family. We are all deeply indebted to George and his marvelous, unselfish, untiring work as Clan Genealogist. Our prayers and thoughts are with Irene and his family at this time.

Judith Forsyth, Australian Genealogist