



Clan Forsyth

SYDNEY BRANCH

NEWSLETTER

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

December 2009

THERE ARE NOW TWO SANTAS!



**Jock Forsyth,
the 'Heeln Santa'
and Angus, his "Heeln Coo"**

The North Pole's Santa this year realises he will be very busy delivering children's toys. He knows he will have no time to deliver almost every Scot's favourite refreshment on Christmas Eve. Therefore he has asked his mate in Scotland, Jock Forsyth, to deliver Scotch Whisky on 24th December to the many Scots around the world who love their wee drams.

However Jock doesn't like reindeer. He thinks they have antlers which are far too large. They could get caught in tree branches, particularly on eucalypts in Australia. Instead he will be harnessing his favourite, flying 'Heeln Coo' called Angus. There is one slight problem though. Angus cannot see very well and sometimes gets lost and bumps into mountains. Jock hopes this will be not be a problem this year, as he will have his GPS Unit with him, just in case.

Be on the look-out at Christmas for Jock and Angus. We hope they deliver down your chimney the gift you would most like for Christmas...as long as it's a bottle of Scotch.

Season's Greetings to all our Clan Forsyth members and their families. We hope the Festive Season is good for you and 2010 is happy, healthy and prosperous for you all.

MEMORIES OF A VICTORIAN CHILDHOOD - PART 2

By Denise Park (nee Forsyth). A member of the Clan Forsyth Committee



The Forsyth family, of which I descended, were very strict Methodists. Work was considered honourable. Responsibility, integrity, honesty and consideration of others were part of ones life. Back at the Tyneside home the servants were mainly Irish refugees from the great potato famine, they married within the household staff and were the families responsibility, there was a great deal of loyalty between the Tannery workers and servants for the family, gifts were still being sent in my childhood. During the 1900 depression, workers were always paid first, the family second. This resulted in the ruination and subsequent skulduggery, which unfortunately occurred. Politics, (Sir Henry Parkes was a close family friend) The Bank of New South Wales and factions of Willoughby Council who wished to

obtain land and construct the stone bridge at Northbridge conspired to bring the family down. This was the story told by my aunt Alice (Forsyth / Walker).

In those times when the bank foreclosed they took the lot ! The character building learned from her family stood Aunt in good stead to withstand some turbulent times.

Our life at Gordon was very structured and followed the Forsyth tradition albeit without the servants – Monday was washing day, early in the morning the modern gas copper was lit, a perilous business of mini explosions and high danger of eyelash loss compared to the previous wood fired copper. We washed with borax, washing soda and grated soap prepared in the 'dipper'. Breakfast would be served with frequent checks of the boiling copper till my mother would exclaim 'there she blows' and race to extinguish the gas before too much water boiled over. The washing would then be lifted with the wooden copper stick and placed in an adjoining concrete tub where the items would be scrubbed then through the hand wringer for rinsing in a tub of bluebag, then back through the wringer. We also had a large mangle for very large linens out on the clothesline with clothes props. Clothes props and pegs were purchased from the gypsies. When dry the linens would be dipped in boiled starch wrung by hand and dried again before damping down wrapping in oil cloth preparatory to ironing which was done on Tuesday along with the airing. How much simpler in the 21 Century!

The black telephone had pride of place and was used for such things as ringing the doctor, not for frivolous chatter as today. On the rare occasions it rang we would all stop. Aunt would remove her apron and pat her hair into place before picking up the receiver, we would all stand round expectantly awaiting the news. Likewise the telegram boy who rode a bicycle importantly ringing his bell to hopefully scare the dogs. This boy would come to the front door, which was considered in bad form as the servant's entrance was at the kitchen door.

To be continued



MARGARET RECEIVES AN AWARD

Margaret Snodgrass (nee Forsyth), who is a clan committee member and a director of Forsyth Real Estate in Willoughby, recently received a Citizen of the Year Award from the Mayor of Willoughby City Council. The honour was for her volunteer work with St Thomas' School in Willoughby, Willoughby Public School, Willoughby City Council's representative on the community participation committee at Royal North Shore Hospital, Willoughby RSL and the NSW Cancer Council. She is President of the Inner Wheel Club of North Sydney, the Patron of the Northern Suburbs Netball Association, Committee Member of the FFFAIF (Families & Friends of the First AIF) plus a Justice of the Peace. She was

recognised for her willingness to take on menial volunteer jobs as well as more dignified fundraising and patronage roles. **Congratulations Margaret!**

Jock Forsyth was traveling by train and seated next to a stern-faced clergyman. As Jock pulled out a bottle of Scotch whisky from his pocket the clergyman glared and said, "Look here, I am sixty-five and I have never tasted whisky in my life!" "Dinna worry, Minister," smiled Jock, pouring himself a dram. "There's no risk of you starting now!"

John Howard Forsyth

1924 - 2009



It is of course, impossible for any service like this or certainly any brief words like mine to do justice to another human being, let alone someone as beloved as my Dad, or you may also have known him as John Forsyth, to his workmates Jack and occasionally, I noticed, even from my mother Johnnie.

The story of his life can be told very briefly, Born 4 December 1924 to Charles and Agnes Forsyth in Croydon, their only surviving child (an elder brother had tragically died in childbirth two years earlier).

John was named after his grandfather, his father Charles' father John Forsyth who as a young man of 21 years old had arrived in Australia from London in February 1863 on the 824 ton immigrant ship Lobelia to join their father James who had come ahead to seek his fortune (found gold at Sofala and Jesus Christ there with the Primitive Methodists).

John Howard Forsyth studied at Croydon and then Ashfield junior Tech and Ultimo Tech; before becoming an apprentice in the NSW Government Railways from 1941.

In May 1943 first met one Lorna Dorothy Kerley, a trainee teacher from the central west of NSW at a youth tea at Croydon Congregational church and after pursuing her for nearly two years was engaged and In January 1947 married.

John Forsyth finished his apprenticeship and was promoted to Fitter at Chullora Locomotive Workshop in 1945, engaged in the dangerous and heavy work of repairing large steam locomotives; then served about five years in the Locomotive Design Office at Wynyard.

The demise of the steam locomotive created the opportunity for him to change his occupation to what he described in his own words to "a sort of archivist and historian for twenty six years, trying to save what I could of records and drawings on the way to the rubbish" This involved eighteen years of supervising the working of Vintage Trains, special one off steam workings across Australia and a number of years running railway exhibitions.

John retired in 1986 after, as he put it, "years of understaffed and the spasmodic input of unmotivated and often unreliable subordinates," but that did not stop him doing what he loved doing, collecting facts, researching and writing on railway detail, as well as travel, and continuing service where he could, most recently on the residents Committee at Alan Walker Village.

In time three sons - Robert and David and Graham, then many grandchildren and now grandchildren.

He passed away after increasing illness, possibly due to the asbestos with which he worked at Chullora, in the morning of Sunday, 1 November which in the Christian calendar is All Saints Day.

**Eulogy by Right Reverend Robert Forsyth,
eldest son of John & Lorna Forsyth.**

John Howard Forsyth was one of the founding members of our Clan Forsyth Society in Sydney, and served for a time as its first treasurer. Our thoughts are with his family at this time.

Traditional Scottish Recipe - Chocolate, Orange and Whisky Mousse

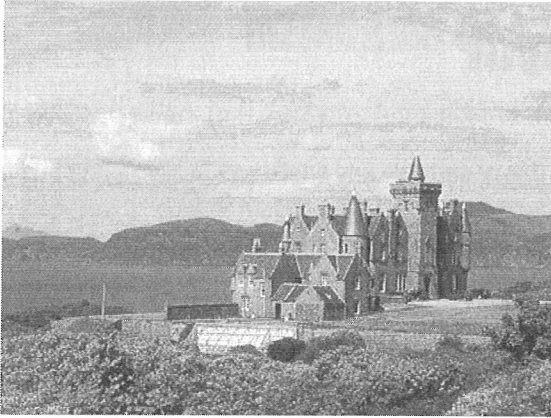
Here's a delicious sweet to finish off any meal - the chocolate, orange and whisky make a great combination! The quantities given below are sufficient for six servings.

Ingredients (Mousse): 250g plain chocolate which has been broken into smaller pieces. 4 large eggs - separated into whites and yolks. 2 tablespoons Scotch whisky. 2 tablespoons double cream (whipping cream). If you adjust the amount of whisky, add a bit more cream too! Finely grated rind of one orange.

Ingredients (topping): 150ml or a generous half cup of double cream (whipping cream). 1 tablespoon Scotch whisky. Pinch of caster (fine) sugar. Finely cut orange rind for decoration.

Method: Place the broken chocolate, whisky and cream in a heatproof bowl and sit in a pan of simmering hot water, stirring until melted. Important - don't allow the mixture to boil. Remove from the heat and allow to cool but remain melted. Whisk the egg whites until they are stiff. Beat the yolks with the finely grated orange rind. Stir the egg yolk mixture into the cooled chocolate cream. Then fold in the whisked egg whites.

Spoon the mixture into six individual dishes/glasses and chill in the fridge for at least three hours. Just before serving, whip the cream for the topping with the whisky and sugar. Decorate the mousse with the cream and the orange rind.



FORSYTH CASTLES

Glengorm Castle - Isle of Mull

The visitor to Scotland is immediately struck by the number of Castles and Towers that are to be seen in the countryside most of which date from the 14th to 16th Century. This was a time when the central authority of the Crown was still weak and Monarchs had introduced and copied the feudal system on the French pattern. Loyal subjects were given grants of land on which they were expected to build a fortification from which the land owner could protect his tenants and administer the "Kings Peace". As the

central authority and the rule of law was established, it became less necessary to fortify these houses giving rise to more comfortable and roomy structures which never the less were often influenced by the earlier castles in design.

There is often a desire to visit castles that have an association with Forsyth though sadly many no longer exist and are just recorded sites. This and subsequent articles aim to give information on the castles or sites that may be of interest. The first study should be Glengorm Castle on the Isle of Mull, Argyllshire. Today it is the centre of an hotel business and takes guests who might wish to visit. The castle built in 1860 is an example of a later castle but is none the less interesting for it occupies a dramatic cliff top position on the north coast of Mull, overlooking the sea.

The genealogy and fortunes of this cadet branch of our family is worth following and our earliest record is of ALEXANDER Forsyth of Pittodrie in Aberdeenshire c1690. (Pittodrie Castle is now an hotel and the present building is much altered from Alexander's time when only a fortified tower existed) Alexander had a son WILLIAM born 1707 who became Laird of Greens & Harthill, a property at Keig in Aberdeenshire. He was educated at Marischal College, Aberdeen University 1725-9 and later entered the Presbyterian Church becoming ordained on 19th June 1754. He married Margaret the daughter of John Turner of Turnerhall in 1765 and they had four children, the youngest of whom was JOHN ALEXANDER born in 1770. Being the younger of three sons John looked elsewhere for a future and took ship for Jamaica where he acquired land for a sugar plantation which he called "Leighfield", he married in Jamaica but died in 1790 after his son JAMES was born. With John's death the plantation was sold and mother and son returned to Glasgow with a considerable fortune. In 1831 James married Maria Magdalene Muller and they moved to Mull where James had purchased the Quinish Estate, a property of over 10,000 acres together with the neighbouring estate of Glengorm extending a further 7,000 acres. It was on the cliffs at Glengorm that James decided to site his new home and so the castle was built. Unfortunately James was a man with an eye to business and he became extremely unpopular for clearing his estates of tenants and replacing them with sheep flocks. James and Maria had one son JAMES NOEL MULLER FORSYTH born at Quinish House in 1844 and three daughters, this James, on attaining the age of twenty three purchased a lieutenants commission in the 82nd Regiment of Foot which was also known as the South Lancashire Regiment based at Preston, and in which he served from 1867 to 1871.

Although the choice of an English regiment might seem unusual for a young man with such strong Scottish connection the fact that the South Lancashires were stationed in Jamaica and the officers would have had social contact with the Plantation owners could provide the answer.

On returning home, James busied himself with his considerable estate and became respected and popular for his charitable work on the island of Mull. In 1872 he married Mary, daughter of Thomas Constable of Kirkland (Thomas was the fourth son of Archibald Constable who had established T & A Constable, printers to the Queen of which firm Chief Alistair became Chairman in 1982.) James was appointed Justice of the Peace in 1880 and Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Argyll in 1885. In 1892 he was appointed to the Commission to enquire into Crofters holdings and having become interested in the Forsyths, joined the group of Glasgow Merchants who founded the Forsyth Family Association in 1915, during the start of the Great War. James died in 1923. James and Mary had three sons and three daughters. The eldest son born in 1874, qualified as a Scottish Solicitor in 1904 and emigrated to Vancouver, Canada in 1910. During WWI he served in the Canadian Infantry, was wounded on the Somme in 1916 and served the remainder of the war as a prisoner in Germany, he died in Vancouver 1941. James's brother Noel Constable Forsyth was born 1878 and after qualifying as a Doctor of Medicine at Edinburgh University joined his brother in Vancouver. It was the third brother Thomas Constable Forsyth born in 1885 who eventually sold the estates and himself emigrated to Alberta, Canada. The interest in Glengorm Castle is that it was built by a Forsyth with funds earned from enterprise in Jamaica and is still in excellent condition for anyone interested to see. It is also quite likely that the decedents of the family are living in Canada today.

Courtesy of Chief Alistair C.W.Forsyth of that Ilk, Chief of the Clan Forsyth

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

Clan Forsyth Sydney Branch Newsletter, December 2009

THE GATHERING 2009 - UNITES SCOTS FROM HOME AND ABROAD FOR A HOMECOMING CELEBRATION.

The year of 2009, the 250th Anniversary of the birth of Robert Burns, marked a government initiative to welcome those with a connection to Scotland to come home

More than 47,000 people from at least 40 countries, with an additional 20,000 lining the Royal Mile watched 8,000 people marching down the Royal Mile with their clan in Edinburgh on the evening of Saturday 25th of July. It was the world's largest clan meeting and Highland Games.

Lord Sempill, Co-director of the Gathering said: "This has exceeded my wildest expectations. There has been a great sense of occasion with everyone enjoying themselves. I've not been able to walk ten metres without someone thanking us for organising this Gathering. It has been a truly wonderful occasion and we would like to thank everyone who has been part of the event and made it the weekend that really has been a historic occasion and a once in a life time opportunity."

A pageant, *Aisling's Children, Tales of the Homecoming* was the culmination of a week of activities including heavy events and a hill race up Arthur's Seat. The name, Aisling (pronounced Ashling) means a dream or a vision. It is a Gaelic and Irish language poetic genre - a *vision poem*. In *Tales of the Homecoming*, Aisling, as the narrator represented Scotland and her children - in Gaelic, her Clann. In this context Scotland's children were being welcomed home.

The pageant began with Aisling MacLean using the sight to show Scottish history beginning with The Declaration of Arbroath. This document means as much to those of Scottish descent as the Magna Carta means to the English and The American Declaration of Independence (which it may, in part, have influenced) means to the Americans.

As the stories of six generations of Aisling's direct descendants are told, the parallel history of Scotland is also related. The narrative commences with the signing of the Declaration of Arbroath; a translation of the declaration in English follows. The story covers the events leading up to and including Reformation, The Battle of Culloden, the Highland Clearances right up to the present day. The many Scots who left for Canada, America, Australia and New Zealand. The story on one of Aisling's descendants who came to Australia would strike a chord with the many Australians who attended the event.

Peter Lederer, VisitScotland Chairman said, "...It has proved to be a huge draw for clans and visitors of Scottish descent or simply a love of Scotland, to take part in the celebration of our culture, heritage and some of many great contributions Scotland has given to the world."

Excerpts taken from the programme book of the event performed at The Gathering in Edinburgh on the 25th and 26th July, 2009. This pageant was the highlight of a weekend of activities and the Homecoming gathering official website.

Translation of the Declaration of Arbroath

To the most Holy Father and Lord in Christ, the Lord John, by divine providence Supreme Pontiff of the Holy Roman and Universal Church, his humble and devout sons Duncan, Earl of Fife, Thomas Randolph, Earl of Moray, Lord of Man and of Annandale, Patrick Dunbar, Earl of March, Malise, Earl of Strathearn, Malcolm, Earl of Lennox, William, Earl of Ross, Magnus, Earl of Caithness and Orkney, and William, Earl of Sutherland, Walter, Steward of Scotland, William Soules, Butler of Scotland, James, Lord of Douglas, Roger Mowbray, David, Lord of Brechin, David Graham, Ingram Umfraville, John Menteith, guardian of the earldom of Menteith, Alexander Fraser, Gilbert Hay, Constable of Scotland, Robert Keith, Marischal of Scotland, Henry Sinclair, John Graham, David Lindsay, William Oliphant, Patrick Graham, John Fenton, William Abernethy, David Wemyss, William Mushet, Fergus of Ardrossan, Eustace Maxwell, William Ramsay, William Mowat, Alan Murray, Donald Campbell, John Cameron, Reginald Cheyne, Alexander Seton, Andrew Leslie and Alexander Straiton, and the other barons and freeholders and the whole community of the realm of Scotland send all manner of filial reverence, with devout kisses of his blessed feet.

Most Holy Father, we know and from the chronicles and books of the ancients we find that among other famous nations our own, the Scots, has been graced with widespread renown. It journeyed from Greater Scythia by way of the Tyrrhenian Sea and the Pillars of Hercules, and dwelt for a long course of time in Spain among the most savage peoples, but nowhere, could it be subdued by any people, however barbarous. Thence it came, twelve hundred years after the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea, to its home in the west where it still lives today. The Britons it first drove out, the Picts it utterly destroyed, and, even though very often assailed by the Norwegians, the Danes and the English, it took possession of that home with many victories and untold efforts; and, as the histories of old time bear witness, they have held it free of all servitude ever since. In their kingdom there have reigned one hundred and thirteen kings of their own royal stock, the line unbroken by a single foreigner.

The high qualities and merits of these people, were they not otherwise manifest, shine forth clearly enough from this; that the King of kings and Lord of lords, our Lord Jesus Christ, after His Passion and Resurrection, called them, even though settled in the uttermost parts of the earth, almost the first to His most holy faith. Nor did He wish them to be confirmed in that faith by merely anyone but by the first of His Apostles - by calling, though second or third in rank - the most gentle Saint Andrew, the Blessed Peter's brother, and desired him to keep them under his protection as their patron for ever.