



Clan Forsyth

SYDNEY BRANCH

NEWSLETTER

CLAN FORSYTH SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA – SYDNEY BRANCH

PO BOX 396, ROSEVILLE NSW 2069

March 2015 #1

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<http://www.clanforsythaustralia.org/>

Forsyth Annual General Meeting & Lunch

Sunday 29th March 2015. 12 for 12.30pm start

Club Willoughby

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

Entrance from Crabbes Avenue. Ample parking.

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

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

RSVP: Judy Forsyth (President) on 9634 2749 by 23rd March

Some photos from the Clan Forsyth Day.

Held on Saturday 8th November in 2014 at the Uniting Church, Clanwilliam Street Willoughby. Members brought a large range of memorabilia to display. The focus was on The Centenary of the start of WorldWar One. Included were photos, letters, articles, medals, uniforms etc.





Mabel Lilian Wyatt (28.6.1916 – 19.10.2014)

Mabel passed away on Sunday 19th October 2014 at Wesley Gardens nursing home in Belrose NSW. She was 98.

Mabel was the wife of the late Ivor Forsyth Wyatt OBE. Ivor was the son of the National Trust Founder, the late Annie Forsyth Wyatt OBE. He was Honorary Secretary of the Trust for many years, then President for a number of years and Chairman of a variety of environmental committees and associations. He was also a founding member of Clan Forsyth, Sydney Branch.

Mabel worked behind the scenes as Ivor's diligent supporter, doing secretarial work for his many 'community undertakings.'

She was also a fabulous cook, mother, grandmother and great grandmother. Plus she was a wonderful aunt to the clan's newsletter editor, Chris, and to his brother Rod. Summing up, Mabel Wyatt was a lovely, gracious lady and is sadly missed.



In April 1970, the Queen and Prince Phillip visited Australia for the Bicentenary of Captain Cook's landing at Kurnell. During their stay Her Majesty was invited to open Old Government House at Parramatta which had been acquired by The National Trust. Ivor Wyatt, as President of the Trust at the time, accompanied the Queen to the podium for the opening speeches. Mabel walked beside Prince Phillip but had difficulty keeping up with the Prince's long strides.

Natesha Michaela Carol Gill

Natesha passed away on 7 November 2014 from a rare, aggressive cancer at Bear Cottage, Sydney. Aged 14 years. Late of Goulburn and Canberra and dearly loved daughter of Anna Gill and Darren McArdle. Loved sister of Daniel and Kyah (Baby Cakes) Gill and Brock and Domonic McArdle. Sadly missed by her ohana. Her funeral service was held on 13 November 2014 at the Goulburn Historic Waterworks, Marsden Weir. Natesha was the Great Granddaughter of Pat White (nee Gardner) who is a member of the Clan and Great Great Granddaughter of Thomas Todd and Ann Forsyth.

Next Clan Forsyth Day

Sunday 27th September 2015

Uniting Church, Clanwilliam Street, Willoughby. From 2 to 5pm.

Please place this date in your diary and bring your memorabilia - particularly photos, letters, articles, medals etc. relating to Forsyths in World War One. We promise you a delicious afternoon tea and a chance to meet other clan members.

Wedding News

Simon Lee (son of the Newsletter's Editor Chris) married Kelly Orsobego on 5th October, 2014. The ceremony was held at St Fiacre's Catholic Church in Leichhardt followed by a Reception cruise on Sydney Harbour.



Engagement

Kathryn Crossley, daughter of our Clan Treasurer, and Chris Paver announced their engagement at Christmas. They expect to marry in 2016

Welcome to New Members!

Robina Burt of Riverwood, Helen Sutherland of Tamworth, Harold and Margaret Forsyth of Cootamundra and Victoria Marquis of Glebe. We're looking forward to seeing you at our clan functions.

MEMORIES of Denise, a member of the Clan Committee



Back in the 1940's 50's my childhood, going away in my school holidays was a regular event. My mother would pack the big 'globite' suitcase with a travel rug attached with leather straps. This would contain all our clothes, fashion did not seem as important as comfort back then and one could wear the same thing day after day. If it was winter we wore topcoats, knitted beanie hats, mine had a pom pom on top, hand knitted gloves, scarfs and socks. Warm underwear was packed warm singlets, fleecy lined bloomers, woollen trousers, overalls for me and warm nightwear. As I only had one pair of shoes, my school shoes.

Thus we would depart for Central Station looking like human snowballs, here we would go and say hello to the engine driver and stoker before we found our booked seats on the 'choot choot' train which clickety, clacked and swayed all the way up the Blue Mountains. In those days the Blue Mountains were a holiday and

honeymoon destination far removed from the urban sprawl with small houses on large blocks of land and many walks and look outs over the vast ravines.

We stayed at boarding houses usually run by genteel ladies who took in guests to supplement their war widow's pensions. These 'guest houses' were a far cry from the weekend retreats now available. Now reproduction furniture, silk flower 'arrangements' and prints are the generic décor not to mention the spa baths and champagne on arrival artificial fire places with fake fires and gourmet chefs. On our arrival at the station we would be met by a taxi and deposited at our chosen accommodation greeted by the owner and conducted to our room usually with linoleum or Feltex on the floor, iron bedsteads with kapok mattresses and short chenille bed spreads. At night we would gather in the lounge round a roaring log fire talking, knitting and playing games such as Snakes and Ladders and sharing lollies. When it came to bed we would race down freezing halls to our beds, grateful for the hot water bottle and eiderdowns for a snug night's sleep. No matter how cold it became we always had the windows open and I remember the lovely smell of the night bush and wood smoke. On these mountain holidays we would rise early and gather in the dining room for a hearty breakfast, always porridge to begin and a big pot of tea to conclude. Coffee was never served and the only time I saw 'coffee' it came in bottles with a Turkish man in a fez hat, I believe it was chicory? After breakfast we would go for a walk 'up the airy mountains and down the rushing glens'. These were wonderful walks with lots of steps and wonderful scenery of waterfalls ferns and wildlife. It was not uncommon to spy lyre birds, platypus, reptiles and little furry animals on these walks.

At some point we would stop and enjoy lukewarm tea from our thermos, apples and chocolate. We would walk for miles and at a very young age would do a ten mile hike with many precipitous steps. We were always ravenous when we returned to our base for the Windsor soup, meat and three vegetables followed by rice pudding. Meals seemed to play a big part of our lives

When the weather was too wet or the mist would come down. The roaring fire would have a cheerful gathering nesting into the big brown moquette lounges, I would make mountain devil dolls with seed pods that looked like little fox heads with pipe cleaners. The adults rested and snoozed by the fire with their books and knitting falling off their laps with the wonderful crackling and log shifting noises of a real fire. No wonder we returned home well rested with rosy cheeks ready for the next school term.



REGINALD JAMES THOMAS FORSYTH (1893 – 1918)

Reg Forsyth was born on 2nd February 1893 at Lile Cottage, 41 Hayberry Street Crows Nest, next door to Lewis Cottage (nbr 39), where he grew up. Reg's parents, John Lile Lewis Forsyth and Elizabeth Christina Crowley, had been given both terraces upon their marriage by John's grandfather, James Forsyth, the pioneer tanner of Willoughby.

Reg grew up a popular and talented young man, driven to do the best he could at whatever he turned his hand to. He represented the YMCA at gymnastics, being especially proficient on the horizontal and parallel bars. Reg left school aged 14 and became a wagon boy for the local wine and spirit merchant. Five years later he was in charge of one of the departments of the business. He moved on to be a travelling salesman for the large city firm of Lasseters, a job which came with a motor bike provided, which added adventure to his work. Then in 1914 WW I commenced.

Reg's younger brother Dick signed up immediately into the infantry, and was enmeshed in the killing fields of Gallipoli and the Somme. Reg had the idea if he could ride a motor bike, then he could ride a horse, and so decided he would join the Australian Light Horse Brigade. Never mind he had only ridden a horse once or twice; he borrowed a quiet horse from his neighbour and taught himself to ride and jump a horse in the playground of Crows Nest school, with the aid of long school benches as hurdles.

Although the Brigade was mostly made up of country lads with years of horse riding experience, Reg made the grade and departed in August 1915 for the Middle East as a sergeant with the 7th Reinforcements for the 1st Australian Light Horse.

Initially he was in training camp south of Cairo until around April 1916 when they commenced guard duties over key transport links near Suez, such as bridges, protecting them from bands of pro Turkish Arabs. During this time, Reg's diary described the extreme heat, with temperatures over 50 degrees C inside their tents, masses of flies and occasionally hornets. Food supplies in the desert were sometimes short, and he received his fair share of maladies including a septic sore on his hand. He had seen aircraft being used for reconnaissance and bombing and was even sent out into the desert to retrieve equipment from a crashed machine. Aircraft must have aroused his sense of adventure, because around this time he started to follow up enquiries for people to volunteer to join the Flying Corps.



From May 1916, the 1st Light Horse joined with other forces to defend the Suez Canal, to turn back Turkish advances east of the canal. The Battle of Romani was 'fought between 3 and 5 August 1916, and finally put a stop to the Turkish threat to the Suez Canal and marked the beginning of the British forces' drive out of Egypt and into Palestine. The British defences were sited amidst a series of towering sand dunes, 35 kilometres east of the canal, which the Turks tried to outflank to the south early on 4 August. Initially, only the 1st Light Horse Brigade was in position to meet the Turkish attack. Heavily outnumbered it was forced to fall back, but as the day progressed both mounted and infantry reinforcements steadily arrived, allowing the position to be stabilized. The position was held throughout the night and before dawn the next morning the 1st and 2nd Light Horse Brigades advanced on foot with the bayonet. Turkish resistance collapsed at this point, and large numbers of prisoners were taken¹.

Reg saw action in July and August. His diary notes his admiration for the Turkish soldiers, as 'fine shots'. At the Battle of Romani, he fought non stop for 30 hours. On 4th August he was wounded in the chest and arm, but managed to ride to the nearest Field Ambulance. From there he was moved to the hospital at Ishmalia, on the Suez Canal. Unfortunately, his arm turned septic, which was not unusual back then as penicillin was not yet discovered. His wound was cut seven times and tubes inserted in an attempt to stem the sepsis and associated fever. By 12th August his condition had improved and he was sent to the military hospital in Cairo. However while in hospitals, he had his money, his camera and his hat stolen. In October 1916, while recuperating at a military hospital, Reg formally submitted his application in response to the call for volunteers to join the new Australian Flying Corps. He had a series of tests including a flight which he thoroughly enjoyed. He was hooked. He wrote home saying he saw 'this is where my future lies' and he saw that 'aviation in Australia after the war is going to be a big thing.'



Reg was always thinking ahead. He was now in the 68th Australian Squadron, Royal Flying Corps. His November letter said 'It is a splendid Corps and the work is just into my boots' and then 'again one great advantage is I am learning something all the time and there are plenty of chances for bettering myself far past anything I could have achieved in the Regiment.' The Australian Flying Corps trained and operated as part of the British Royal Flying Corps until the RAF was formed in April 1918, and the AFC disbanded along with the AIF in 1919. The RAAF was not formed until 1921.

Reg commenced as an aviation mechanic and remained in Egypt until January 1917 when he was transferred to England, travelling by boat via Alexandria, Malta, Marseilles, and Le Havre to Southampton. He was stationed near Grantham in Lincolnshire, 25 miles east of Nottingham. There was plenty of work fixing aircraft and their engines, as these early planes were very unreliable and frequently crashed. Bear in mind that the Wright brothers first powered flight had only occurred in 1903, and practical use of aircraft only became possible around 1907, so aircraft had barely been in use for 10 years. Flying was a huge, but risky adventure. When granted leave, Reg often travelled to London and stayed with distant relatives of his grandmother, Anne Lille Lewis (Forsyth). Such trips and taking girls out cost money, which he rarely had much of, and so had to write home or borrow funds.

Like many, he applied to be a pilot and finally in June 1917 he was sent for a medical exam. About this time Reg had started having occasional bouts of illness of unknown cause, perhaps a carry-over from his wounding in action. He had lost over one stone (7 kgs) since arriving in

England. The doctor advised him he had a weak heart through overwork. Nonetheless he passed the medical and entered pilot training in July 1917. Pilot Officer Training School was in Oxford. He passed his exams, was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant, and in early August was sent to Wyton near Huntingdon, about 12 miles north west of Cambridge. His first flying lessons soon followed and by mid August, Reg was flying solo. First he flew Farman aircraft from France, then later English Avro and Royal Aircraft Factory FE2B airplanes. His log book and diary record each day of his flying training. The overriding factor in whether he flew or not revolved around the English weather. In winter especially, the wind and rain prevented any activity. Usually they flew early morning when the weather was less intense. His diary also records the many crashes, often fatal, which occurred in the training corps. More pilots were killed in aircraft training accidents in WW I than were shot down by enemy fire.



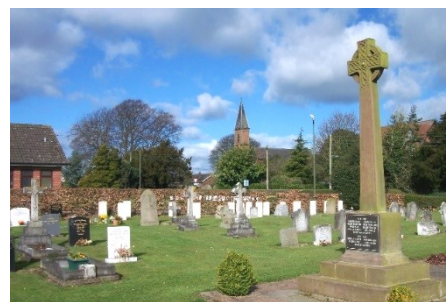
He met up with brother Dick while on leave in London and tried to convince him to join the flying corps, but Dick would not leave the infantry. In early September Reg was posted to Retford about 17 miles west of Lincoln. Here he experienced a couple of forced landings due to engine failures or bad weather, with fortunately no lasting damage to either pilot or aircraft. He started to do longer flights sometimes flying off for a day or two away from Base. He started night flying, but all was not well. His mystery illness had returned and quite a number of his fellow training pilots had crashes, a number of which were fatal. At one point seven were killed in three days. In addition the renowned English winter was closing in, limiting flying opportunities and casting a pall over the countryside. In November he

experienced another engine failure, but again walked away from the machine, having been able to guide it in the dark to the airfield. In late November he was posted to the airfield at Ternhill near Market Drayton, north of Shrewsbury.

Some of the aircraft used castor oil and the fumes made him ill. He started taking a tonic but still remained off colour. Just before Christmas he travelled to London on compassionate leave, as the father of the family he stayed with there had died. The girl he knew there was also not well. In many ways, it was a miserable Christmas for him. By the time he returned to base, more of his fellow pilots had been killed in training accidents, and he asked one of the local people he knew to be his second next of kin. By early January 1918, Reg had accumulated 69 hours total flying time, 61 of which were solo. In January 1918, he commenced advanced flying training, and started flying Sopwith Pup aircraft (pictured), which were used for training in combat techniques.

His log book notes that on one aircraft, B6089, the engine used to cut out on turns and climbs. He was flying B6089 on 20th January 1918, for some formation flying, but he got ahead of the other machines, and in accordance with procedures, made a vertical bank to fall back into formation. His aircraft then went into a vertical spin and crashed.

Reg received serious head injuries and a broken ankle. He was admitted to the local hospital, but died of his injuries on 16th February 1918. Second Lieutenant Reginald James Thomas Forsyth's grave (pictured) is in a church graveyard at Tilstock, not far from Ternhill airfield. Always striving to improve himself, like many of those airmen at the time, he perished doing what he loved, in the great adventure of flying. In one of war's ironies, his brother Dick having survived the killing fields of Gallipoli, then went to the mud and guts of the Somme trenches. Not tempted to join his brother in aviation, Dick survived the Great War, returned to his family in Sydney, married and lived into his 80s.



Article supplied by David Forsyth AM, Australian Clan Commissioner.

Callum decided to call his father-in-law the "Exorcist" because every time he came to visit he made the spirits disappear.

Jock exclaimed to his friend Hamish, "I love summer in Scotland. It's my favourite day of the year!"

Andrew Forsyth, a Scottish minister, was making his rounds to parish homes to receive their tithes and offerings. One of his parishioners gave, but had a distinctly stingy attitude when parting with his money without receiving something in return. As he put the gift away, Andrew commented dryly, 'Tha Good Book says tha Lord loves a cheerful giver, but the Church o' Scotland canna be so choosy.'

Missing Memberships

Did you pay your Clan membership and make a donation by Direct Deposit to the Clan's bank account on the following dates: **27 October 2014, 14 November 2014 or 24 November 2014**? If so we have received your direct deposit but cannot update your membership as you, the Payee, did not include your details when making the direct debit, or return the membership form, so we can match payments and membership. Please identify yourself by email and the amount of your payment against the date and we will update our records.



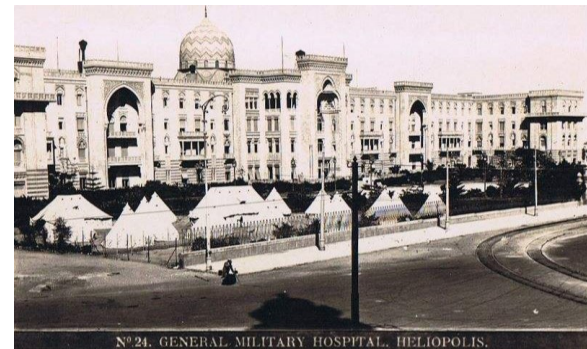
JAMES DAVIDSON FORSYTH (Contribution by Judy Forsyth) 3rd Light Horse Field Ambulance (No. 894) and Base Records Corp, Melbourne (No. 204)

James Davidson Forsyth was born 25th January, 1861 at Kelso, Roxburghshire, Scotland to Robert Forsyth & Jane (Davidson) Forsyth. When both his parents died in 1870 he and two of his siblings migrated to New Zealand to live with their Uncle James Davidson and two Aunts. He moved to Melbourne in 1888 and then married Annie McBrearty the daughter of a well-documented New Zealand Doctor.

The attestation paper tells us James enlisted in the A.I.F, in Melbourne on 14th October, 1914 at the age of 43 years and 9 months. In fact his age was 53 years and 9 months. The required age for enlistment in 1914 was 18 to 35 years, later extended to 45 years. His occupation is Clerk and his Next of Kin was Mrs. Annie Forsyth of Fairfield, Melbourne. Information is also given that he had previously served in His Majesty's Army in 4th Highland Co, A.E.R.V.B. for 2 years – I cannot locate any

information about this Company. He also served in Hawera Rifles, New Zealand. He left behind his wife, Annie, and his children aged from 13 to 26.

James embarked at Melbourne on the "Chilka" on 2nd February 1915 as Sergeant and left Alexandria on 21st July, 1915 for Dardanelles, Gallipoli on "Kingstonian." James was only at Anzac Cove for a month when on 29th August, 1915, he suffered a gunshot wound to his right foot. He was transferred to Mudros and then admitted to 2nd London General Hospital at Wandsworth. He spent 11 days in treatment. It is probable at this time he visited some of his wife's family in England and



Scotland. He re-joined the 3rd Light Horse Field Ambulance ex Hospital Heliopolis 3rd January 1916. On 6th March, 1917 he was detailed for transport duty to Australia and on 8th he left the Suez on "Willochra" on nursing duties, arriving home in Melbourne on 12th June, 1917 and discharged medically unfit.

That wasn't the end of his war effort as on 26th July 1917, just one month after arriving home he enlisted into Base Records Corp. Melbourne. His age 46 years & 7 months – still 10 years out. On 31st December 1919, he was discharged consequence of demobilisation of Corp. He had two sons who also served in the First World War.

James Davidson Forsyth, Base Records Corp. 8th Battalion A.I.F. No. 55141. Gilbert John Forsyth, 13th Battalion A.I.F. No. 208 Anzac Provost Corp.

We need NEW Members!

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

clanforythaustralia@hotmail.com

A 2015 Membership Renewal Form is enclosed with this email or printed newsletter.

Please pay your membership fee electronically or by cheque.

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

Another option for contributions: the Newsletter Editor's email address: cwlee@optusnet.com.au

We are also looking for someone to become Clan Secretary.

Please email us if you are interested.