



Clan Forsyth

SYDNEY BRANCH

NEWSLETTER

CLAN FORSYTH SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA – SYDNEY BRANCH
PO BOX 396, ROSEVILLE NSW 2069 September 2013 #2
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Clan Forsyth Open Day

Sunday 10th November, 2013

Willoughby Uniting Church, Clanwilliam Street, Willoughby.
From 2pm to about 5pm in the Red Lounge Foyer.

Bring your Forsyth memorabilia to show everyone: photos, paintings, correspondence, your family tree, antiques, collectables etc. Afternoon tea will be served.

David Forsyth will be invested as our new Commissioner on the day.



Last year's Open Day



Our New Commissioner

The Clan Chief, Alistair Forsyth of that Ilk, has appointed...

David Forsyth AM

as Commissioner for the Clan Forsyth in Australia.

David was awarded an Australia Medal in the 2013 Australia Day Honours List. He is a past-president of the Sydney Branch of the Clan. His father, the late Ray Forsyth, was also a past-president.

There's more about David on Page 6 of this newsletter.

Report on the 2013 Annual General Meeting

Held on Sunday 10th March at the Chiquita Café in Willoughby.



Office Bearers for 2013-2014

President: Judy Forsyth. **Vice President:** Bill Forsyth. **Treasurer:** Tim Crossley. **Secretary:** Denise Park.
Assistant Secretary: David Forsyth. **Membership:** Barbara Forsyth. **Welfare:** Margaret Snodgrass.
Genealogy: Judy Forsyth. **Newsletter Editor:** Chris Lee.

Something Amusing from the Clan Chief

Here is a little story for your newsletter from the "Northern Territory Times" of 1875. "We are sorry to learn that a German chemist has succeeded in making a first-rate brandy out of sawdust. We are a friend of the temperance movement and we want it to succeed; but what chance will it have when a man can take a rip saw and go out and get drunk with a fence-rail? What is the use of Prohibitory Liquor Law if a man is able to make brandy smashes out of shingles from his roof or if he can get delirium tremens by drinking the legs of his kitchen chairs? You may shut an inebriate out of a gin-shop and keep him away from the taverns but if he can become uproarious on boiled sawdust and desiccated window sills, any effort at reform must necessarily be a failure. It will be wise, therefore, if temperance societies will butcher the German chemist before he gets any further"

Best wishes, Chief Alistair.



Forsyths and Newcastle Upon Tyne

Take a very quick look at this picture and you could be forgiven for thinking that you are looking at the Sydney Harbour Bridge. In fact it is an iconic bridge in England's Newcastle upon Tyne, and a design on which the Sydney Harbour Bridge was based (the Sydney one is bigger).

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE is well known as a major industrial city in the north east of England. It was once known as the City of Black Velvet for its place as the chief coal export city in the UK. In the 1500s, it had a monopoly through Royal decree; hence the phrase '*Taking coals to Newcastle*'.

Newcastle today has morphed from a steel, coal and ship building city into a far

more culturally diverse metropolis. It aspires to be a major player in science and the arts, and the city centre along the river Tyne has been transformed from an ugly industrial shipping lane into a modern riverside tourist attraction (see photo below). Before its reputation for coal, it was a major wool trade centre. It is also well known for Newcastle Brown Ale. People from thereabouts are known as 'Geordies'.

Built on the site of a Roman fort and bridge called Pons Aelius, Newcastle is thought to have been named after a new castle built in 1080, by Robert (II), Duke of Normandy, William the Conqueror's eldest son. You can still visit the castle keep. Fragments of Hadrian's Wall are still visible in parts of Newcastle.

The Tyne Gorge, between Newcastle on the north bank and Gateshead—a separate town and borough—on the south bank, is famous for a series of seven bridges, including the Tyne Bridge of 1928 (the one like ours), and Robert Stephenson's High Level Bridge of 1849, the first road/rail bridge in the world. In the 19th century Newcastle was a powerhouse of the industrial revolution. One of the industries with a major centre in Newcastle was tanning. Those of you from the tanning Forsyth families will now see the link. Newcastle was a major shipping port, and a number of the Forsyths served as mariners, including James (b1818), John (b1821) and Brother Thomas (b1824), sons of Thomas Warner Forsyth and Martha Rosewall. We know Thomas and Martha were married at St John's Horsleydown in Bermondsey, London and that their first two sons,

James and John were born there. Their third son Thomas was born in Newcastle, so we can surmise that the family moved from London to Newcastle between 1822 and 1824. James, John and Thomas therefore grew up and were educated in Newcastle on Tyne.

This move was most likely to find work, but could have been to reunite with other family members. Thomas and Martha had more children in Newcastle. There is a Jane Forsyth, parents Thomas and Martha, baptised in Newcastle on Tyne in 1829. It is probable that Jane is their fifth child, given the timing of James 1818, John 1821, Thomas 1824 and then Jane 1829, it is possible that a fourth child was born around 1827, the records for which are yet to be discovered. Martha died in 1832 age 41, and was buried in Westgate Hill cemetery in Newcastle on Tyne in 1832. We do not know the reason for her death. At the time of her death, James would have been aged 14. It perhaps explains why so much of James' property and street names in Willoughby preserved memories of her and Newcastle including the Rosewall Tannery, Rosewall Street, Tyneside Avenue, and of course the family houses (still standing in High Street Willoughby) named Rosewall and Tyneside. He also commissioned a painting of Martha, which must clearly have been done from his memory of her.

There is evidence that Thomas Warner Forsyth remarried, to a Rebecca Affleck in 1836 at St Johns Newcastle. The 1841 census shows Thomas (age 50-55) and Rebecca (age 40-45), plus James (age 20-25) and Margaret (age 20-25) and Thomas (age 18 months). Undoubtedly these are our family. The second Thomas is almost certainly the infant Thomas Todd Forsyth, who was born in 1839 in Leeds. They were all living in Buckingham Street Newcastle. In the same street were the Charltons; the daughter Elizabeth likely the one who married John Forsyth, second son of Thomas and Martha. This John and Elizabeth were the parents of James Brown Forsyth who came to Australia in 1866 and went into the tanning industry like his uncle James and cousins Thomas Todd, John and Robert. At some time after 1841, Thomas and Rebecca moved back to Bermondsey. James and Margaret were also in Bermondsey, but John and Thomas appear to have remained in Newcastle. Those in the tanning business like James could have gone to London seeking work, as Bermondsey was the epicentre of the leather trade in England. The mariners John and Thomas could have continued working from Newcastle. Les Forsyth's book states that James also occasionally worked as a mariner, and indeed he probably worked his passage to the USA in 1849, and later from there to Australia.

Thomas Warner Forsyth died in Bermondsey Workhouse in 1849. Rebecca returned to Newcastle and is listed in the 1851 census as a servant age 51 living at Hugman's Tan yard with John Hugman. Rebecca died in 1860 age 70 at Elswick Workhouse in Westgate Newcastle; her death certificate notes her as widow of Thomas Forsyth, leather dresser.

James was a tanner and also a mariner, born in 1818 in Bermondsey as noted above. After leaving school, he was apprenticed to his father Thomas in the Morocco leather making trade. James married Margaret Todd 26th February 1837 at All Saints church Newcastle on Tyne. Margaret was born in 1818 in Newcastle on Tyne, her parents Robert Todd (carpenter/builder) and Jane Matterson.

There are some interesting points to note. James and Margaret were not married at their local church which was St Andrews, in the north west of Newcastle, but at All Saints in the south near the river. Why was this done? A quick look at the date of birth of their first child might provide the reason. Robert Forsyth was christened 7th June 1837, at St Andrews, Newcastle on Tyne. Compare this to James and Margaret's marriage date of 26th February 1837, and you can see the probable reason. In those days a church even a few miles away was as good as being in the next county, and there was no internet or availability of records to check such dates. Clearly this was a love match.

Sadly this first born Robert must have died between June 1837 (his birth date) and September 1838, when their second son, Robert Todd, was baptised at St Andrews. Sadly this second Robert also died, on 1st February 1839. Small wonder then that James and Margaret left Newcastle for London, and christened their next son Thomas Todd Forsyth, born in Leeds in 1839, possibly on their way to London. They did not name another child Robert (clearly after Margaret's father Robert) until 1848 after the birth of their sixth son. Robert Forsyth who came and settled in Australia with Margaret and his surviving siblings in 1863.

One can only speculate about why they did some things. Life at this time in England was very difficult, with most of the population struggling to make ends meet. Cholera raged through London and particularly badly in Bermondsey, which by the mid-19th century had become a notorious slum. Newcastle upon Tyne was much the same, with industrial fumes and cholera outbreaks just like Bermondsey. Escape to Australia enabled a better life.

John, the second son of Thomas and Martha, and father of James Brown Forsyth, was a mariner as noted above. He married Elizabeth Charlton in 1844 at St John the Baptist Newcastle on Tyne. They lived at 19 Buckingham St Westgate Newcastle on Tyne. The 1851 census for Newcastle shows Elizabeth age 28 living with her mother and sister at 265 Harle St. Elizabeth is listed as a widow, and as having two sons, James (JB) aged 5 and Thomas aged 1, suggesting John died between 1848 and 1850. James Brown Forsyth came to NSW around 1866, and was a tanner, but John had died according to the 1851 census, and Elizabeth presumably stayed in Newcastle.

(Article compiled by David Forsyth, newly appointed Commissioner for Clan Forsyth in Australia)



All Saints Church Newcastle upon Tyne. A rare elliptical church, built c1789, now closed. James Forsyth and Margaret Todd married there in 1832.
Modern Newcastle upon Tyne showing the bridge.

Sad Passing



Morris Lloyd "Andy" Forsyth passed away on 10th July 2013 and was buried on 15th July. His service was held at the Sapphire City Chapel, Inverell and he was interred in his kilt at Inverell New General Lawn Cemetery. Andy was born on 19th January, 1918 and married Valda June Lavender on 3rd February 1951. Valda passed away on 21st October, 2011. Andy is survived by two children, Graham and Warren, and is a grandfather and great grandfather. He was the sixth child of David Forsyth (b. 2/8/1875 d. 8/7/1908) and Hannah Julia Jane Henrietta Pischke (b. 1/3/1888 d. 16/4/39). David and Hannah had 17 children over 22 years. Andy was the piper at the ceremony to inaugurate Clan Forsyth in Australia and on Sydney harbour cruises of the Sydney clan during the early years.

The Changing Face of Friends

By Denise Park, Clan Secretary



I overheard a conversation behind me on a train by two young girls, which led me to define and recall the changes that I have lived through. The subject of friends was the basis of their talk. "I have 500 friends on my Facebook" said the first. "I only have 200" mused the other. "Oh you poor thing" the first girl sympathised.

On thinking back to times past we had family, neighbours and acquaintances met through common circumstances and sundry people who came and went for various reasons. There were family and close friends who visited frequently or we visited them.

There was a set unspoken protocol which involved the following: A basket of cakes, jams and fresh flowers from our garden, Magazines and gifts from our guests nobody ever went empty handed or just 'dropped in', as done today. One regular lady visitor always bought Bonds singlets embroidered with cabbage roses - we had drawers of them!

The silver tea service and fine porcelain cups served of a linen and handmade lace and embroidered tablecloth, lace doileys on the cake plates also the cake forks and fine napery completed the table or traymobile. Of the food, well, I wish we still had such delectables!

Our visitors usually came in the afternoon and then between 3pm and 3.30pm and departed by 4.30pm this was after our rest time after luncheon. Following 'the rest' ladies would dress in their afternoon clothes to receive. Friends would be ushered straight into the drawing room and those not so well known would be placed in the vestibule till invited to join us.

Ladies would also have their hats, gloves and bags placed in the main bedroom on the bedspread. Ladies often wore fox fur tippets and I loved the little eyes and pincer mouth biting their tails. Those who were not so well known would have their clothing placed on the hallstand. We had one friend who had a pet carpet snake which took a liking to the brim of my grandmother's hat and liked to curl around in a very exotic fashion, scaring the ladies.

Another grandmother was a champion of animal's rights and used to rescue organ grinders monkeys, these looked cute but liked to bite and were quite capable of mass destruction, particularly of finery.

The ladies handbags were made of leather and smelt of 4711 and xxx peppermints and there was always a freshly laundered linen handkerchief a powder compact, and smelling salts among the contents.

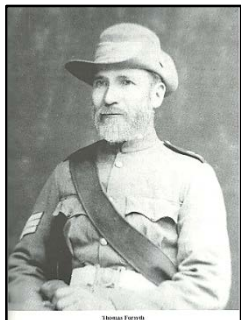
Hospitality was always conducted in the home.

I wonder how one could possibly conduct a friendship with 500 people. Times were so different!

Fred Forsyth's wife sat down next to him on the couch as he was flipping through the TV channels. She asked, "What's on the TV?" Fred said, "Dust!" **Then the fight started....**

Fred's wife moaned, "I feel horrible. I look old, fat and ugly. I really want you to pay me a compliment." Fred replied, "Your eyesight's damn near perfect." **Then the fight started....**

Fred's wife hinted to him about what she wanted for their upcoming wedding anniversary. She said, "I would like something shiny that goes from 0 to 150 in 3 seconds." Fred bought her bathroom scales. **Then the fight started...**



Thomas Forsyth, Blacksmith

Thomas Forsyth was born in St. Cuthbert, Edinburgh, Scotland in 1850. He was the son of Alexander and Margaret Forsyth (nee Tennant) and arrived in Parramatta with his family at the age of three. Thomas followed his father's trade as a blacksmith and in 1879 he married Maria Louisa Smith (Granny Smith fame) in the home of Maria's sister at South Creek. St. Marys. They had six children born to this marriage.

Thomas set up his home and forge in Church Street, Parramatta just to the north of Lennox Bridge (Opposite Prince Alfred Park). From here he worked as a busy blacksmith and on their property they had a large number of fruit trees and grew a lot of vegetables, also selling hundreds of punnets of strawberries to the fruit shops in town.

Grapes were also grown on a trellis across the yard, which stretched from Church Street to Sorrell Street at the back. The forge was nearer to the river than the house.

Thomas is best remembered for his making of the gates and fence at the George Street Gatehouse entrance to the Parramatta Park. The beautiful gates show Thomas' trademark which he stamped on all his work, the Orangeman's sign of a five point star in a circle. The fence surrounding the Lady Fitzroy Memorial in the Park, the fence along O'Connell Street from the river to Macquarie Street are all testimonies of work of Thomas.



Family members also tell of Thomas owning one of the first motor cars in the district. He always packed the family into the car on a Sunday when the washing up was finished after lunch and travelled the road to Windsor. The story goes that every dog along the route came out and barked as the car sped by and the family were very bored with this weekly trip, but the route never changed. Thomas died in 1932, aged 82 years. Maria passed away on 5 October, 1931 aged 71 years and they are both buried in Rookwood cemetery. *Written by Margaret Spratt (decd), a descendant. Taken from "Men of Parramatta" published by Parramatta & District Historical Society Inc.*

Parramatta Park Gates and Fencing.

Further Research tells us that Alexander Forsyth with Margaret (Tennant) and children Mary, Thomas & William arrived in Sydney on 27 July 1853 on "Empire". Alexander, George & Henry were born at Parramatta NSW. Thomas Forsyth (born Scotland) married Maria Louisa Smith on 16 Sep 1879.

Maria's parents were Stephen Smith & Charlotte Harding, her grandparents Maria Ann Sherwood & Thomas Smith (Maria Ann Sherwood/Smith) was the famous granny Smith. Maria Ann Sherwood was the daughter of Hannah & John Sherwood and was born at Peasmarsh, Sussex, a rural area, in 1800, and baptised there. In 1819 she married Thomas Smith from the adjoining village of Beckley, Sussex. They lived at Beckley, had 8 children born and baptized there. Three children died between 1821 & 1838 before they came to Australia. They arrived in November 1838, on the ship "Lady Nugent". Maria Ann was a baby when they arrived. Granny Smith was fondly called that by everyone's kids. She was the midwife and delivered all the babies in the area. Two of Granny Smith's sons married into the Harding family as did one of the Forsyths. Thomas' parents, Alexander & Margaret Forsyth are buried at the very pretty May's Hill cemetery attached to a park on the Great Western Highway at Parramatta. If you are passing this way it is worth a stop. It is kept beautifully by "The Friends of May's Hill Cemetery".

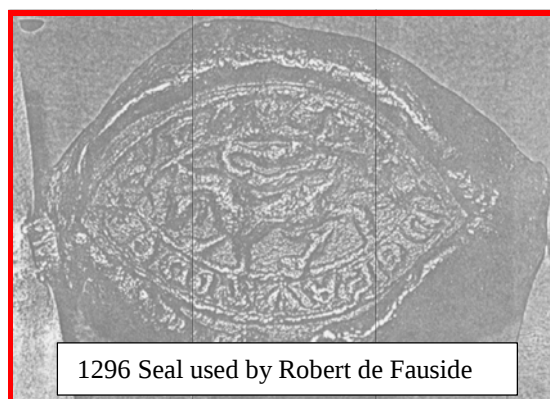


What Indeed is in a Name

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

As the world appears to get smaller, not in physical size of course, but in links and mixtures with other cultures and races, so there is a need to define ourselves, who we are and where we came from so that this is the importance of the study of genealogy and its newest companion DNA. It is of great credit to Mike Forsyth and his associates that Clan Forsyth has embraced this modern scientific research but as with its companion, genealogy, we must be cautious in the reading of the results. In the latter half of the 19th century genealogical studies became the preserve of the romantics, there was a Clan Chief who had his genealogical tree drawn up to show he was a direct descendent of Adam, others who would relate themselves to the nobility of Europe with spurious claims based on unsupported genealogy.

Charles Edward Stuart, "Bonny Prince Charlie" has several claimants to be his descendants and therefore rightful Kings of Scotland but none have been able to produce documentary verification, so they continue to dream on. Yes, I fear the Clan Forsyth has had its dreamers too, one who claimed the family had 2,000 years of history and was descended from "Forceti the Just", a Norse mythological figure. As for the "Viscomte de Fronsac" though this illustrious family once existed in Aquitaine, France there is not a shred of documentary evidence to support the claim that here was the foundation of our family. This of course is where DNA will come into its own as a valuable tool to eliminate earlier fantasies or at least give them some credibility and make further investigation worthwhile. The overall conclusion of the Forsyth/DNA study is that the family is of Celtic origin but perhaps one should be cautious in equating Celtic only with Irish for the Celts migrated into Europe before the 4th century through France displacing the Romans. Their migration pattern spread to Britain, including Scotland Ireland and Wales. This then is the basis of the modern day Celtic Union consisting of Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Cornwall and Brittany in France, a body who are dedicated to maintaining their ancient bonds and heritage with gatherings in the various participating countries. Perhaps then we should not discard the traditional view that the Forsyth origins are to be found in France. In support of this theory we find the use of the prefix "de", as used in France in early Scottish documents, referring to Forsyths up until 1463 describing Thomas de Forsyth, Canon of Glasgow Cathedral. In the latter half of the 13th century Scottish Kings in a drive to civilise Scotland by the introduction of feudalism on the French pattern gave grants of land to those of French origin who would settle in Scotland. The traditional date for the arrival of the Forsyths was 1285 and the event that happened in this year was the marriage of King Alexander III to Yolande de Droux daughter of Count Robert de Droux whose lands were in the Limousin district just North of Aquitaine. Yolande's retinue took up grants of land and it is possible that Robert de Forsyth who became a personal retainer of King Robert the Bruce found his way to Scotland and when, following the death of Alexander III, Yolande returned to France in 1287, Robert remained to become a trusted member of the Royal circle. This then is an alternative to the de Fronsac theory but certainly needs verification. Stoddart in his Ordinary of Arms quotes the arms of Forsyth as three cross crosslet fitch on a bend before his descendent David Forsyth of Gilcomstone and later Dykes was granted the Chief's Scottish arms borne today, perhaps they could be identified in French Heraldic Armorial. It is unfortunate that the



1296 Seal used by Robert de Fauside

early Forsyth name was confused with the distinctly separate Fawsides who also French had settled earlier accompanying the Compte de Saye as his hereditary Armour Bearers, Saye becoming the Earl of Seaton.

The early genealogy of the Fawsides is given in the 1890 Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries p370 showing them having settled before 1124 in Tranent, East Lothian, the site of Fawside Castle and the local parish church, the arched doorway of which carries their Arms being Three Besants on a bend, very distinct from Forsyth's. The article on Fawsides states that Roger and William Fawside swore fealty to King Edward I in 1296, the "Ragman Roll", they were of the same family having seals that both show a tree with four branches as distinct from Robert who nevertheless seems to have called himself de Fauside, as his seal shows but this plainly bears an animal possibly a Lion being his French crest and may indicate a different family, perhaps our own, this is a subject of controversy amongst heraldic experts and had the DNA tests been available then this could have been clarified. The Forsyth/DNA tests have indicated 17 different lines which may at first sight cause dismay until one consults the traditional genealogical study and realises that these differences are caused by heiresses marrying on the basis that the husband change his name to Forsyth, which many were only too willing to do. The first example of this is where the Rev. James Forsyth of Tailzerton who was married to Marioun, daughter of the 4th Lord Elphinstoun, but there was no issue and nobody to inherit the Tailzerton estate. Marioun's sister was married to Robert Bruce of Airth who had two sons, the second of whom was James Bruce who had inherited the small feu of Garvell in Stirlingshire. By arrangement between the sisters James Bruce of Garvell inherited the Tailzerton estate on condition he changed his name to Forsyth, which he did in November 1675 on the death of Rev James. There was issue including a daughter Rebecca who married Hugh Wilson, a portiner of Cornton in Stirlingshire and he was also persuaded to change his name to Forsyth and they had two sons James and Robert. This change of surname was not uncommon and in 1842 John Forsyth an Aberdeenshire Merchant who was married to Margaret Grant Neice of Frederick Grant of Ecclesgreig, assumed the additional surname of Grant and the Forsyth-Grants became a well-known family at St Cyrus Kincardineshire, where they continue to live today. A look at the Register of the Great Seal Of Scotland shows that in 1642 a Thomas Cowie, living in Struthers near Elgin changed his name to Forsyth.

Another interesting case highlighted by this issue is recorded in a contract in 1666 whereby James Forsyth the son of John Fawdyde of that ilk purchased a half share in the trading barque "The Margaret" of Kirkcaldy a port in Fife. James thereafter continues to be known as James Forsyth. These few instances have begun to throw light on the apparent anomalies thrown up by the DNA study. What is the message? Certainly that Forsyth is a name to be proud of with many seeking to join our greater family, perhaps not all are descended from one man the original Robert, which was the theory of Sir James Moncreiff, Albany Herald and a prominent authority on Scottish genealogy, though many will be through a female line. Science in the hands of Mike Forsyth is clearly asking the genealogists to lift their game and explain just how we all connect though this is a massive task and the burden for those in the U.S.A and Canada as well as Australia and New Zealand is record your families now for it will be so much more difficult in 200 or 300 years' time. Work continues in Scotland and Northern Ireland but there is yet much to be done clearly outlining a purpose for the Clan Forsyth Society.

SOURCES

Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland 1890. Ragman Roll preserved in the English Record Office, Chancery Lane, London.
The Register of Deeds, Ref. RD2/116 The Bruces of Airth by W.Armstrong 1892. Wikipedia. Ref.Celtic migration.
Fasti Ecclesiae Scotticae. Sasines of Lanark 1618-1720

More Details about the Clan's New Australian Commissioner



David Forsyth AM, BE(Aero) Grad Dip FRAeS MILT

David is a direct descendant of Willoughby pioneer tanner James Forsyth who first came to Australia in the 1850s. David was born in Sydney not far from the original tannery site. He has lived most of his life in the Willoughby area, excepting his first 10 years of schooling in Melbourne. David married Susan in 1978 and they have two grown up sons, James and John.

David has had a 40 year career in the airline industry, joining Qantas as an engineering cadet, and working as a professional engineer before moving into management, where he headed a number of Engineering Divisions. In 1997 he became the General Manager Regional Airlines and in 1999 Executive General Manager Aircraft Operations, responsible for all Qantas Flight Operations, Engineering, and Maintenance.

Since leaving Qantas, David has worked as an independent consultant and served on a number of Boards, including as Chairman of Airservices Australia, Chairman of Safeski's Conferences, Vice President of the Royal Flying Doctor Service of Australia (SE Section) and President of the Royal Aeronautical Society Australian Division. He is currently a visiting lecturer at the UNSW School of Aviation and is Chairman of the Industry Advisory Panel. In 2013 he became a Member of the Order of Australia for significant service to the aviation industry.

David has always loved the Australian bush, from his childhood days as a scout, and is a regular bushwalker and 4WD traveller to the most remote parts of Australia's deserts. He also enjoys quiet kayak paddles around Sydney's Middle Harbour. He has recently become a volunteer guide for the National Parks & Wildlife Service.

We need NEW Members!

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

clanforythaustralia@hotmail.com

Plus here's a reminder to pay your membership fee if you haven't already.

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

Another option for contributions: email the Newsletter Editor's email address:

cwlee@optusnet.com.au

