

CLAN FORSYTH SOCIETY – AUSTRALIA

QUEENSLAND BRANCH

July 2012



Our Annual Dinner back in March was a wonderful night as usual. I'm sure that everyone who attended had a great time. Vice President, Geoff Forsyth, *below left*, did a terrific job as MC. Bruce and Baydon Mitchell, our musicians, kept everyone up on the dance floor, playing everything from the Chicken Dance, to Ballroom, to music for the Scottish Country Dancing. We had all the pomp and circumstance of addressing the Haggis which our President, Val Ashton, *on left with Sue Forsyth*, carried in. Our Scottish Country Dancers, *below right*, led by Glenys Ashton, did a great job getting everyone involved. We would love to hear from anybody who is interested in joining our little troupe. It's great fun and good exercise. Anybody of any ability can give it a go. If interested contact Heather on PH: 32817553



This year we celebrated the year of the farmer. Val had the cerebral cogs working overtime with her farm themed quiz and our raffle prizes were locally produced wine donated by Clan friends Merv & Marlene Welk, hampers made of locally produced veges, eggs and jams. I'm sure our first prize, a bottle of scotch donated by Trevor Forsyth, had to have it's origins on some sort of farm. Even our dancers had farm themed dances with 'Beef Stew', 'White Cockatoo' and 'Farmer's Harvest'

Activities Day

At the end of May we had our activities day, which was a whole lot of fun. The weather forecast was for a miserable day. Glad they are so often wrong as it couldn't have been more perfect. The kids had a ball in the jumping castle, *right*, the disc bowls was very competitive with Garry Ashton & Ashleigh Kerkin



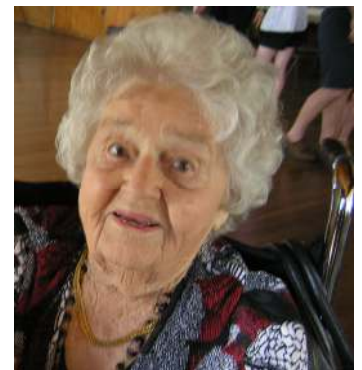
winning, pipping out Garry's daughter Stacey & Merv Welk.

Victor & Stuart Ashton won a very hard fought contest of 500 against Les & Joyce Forsyth. Jacinta Ashton won the talent quest with a great song and coming runner's up were a couple of budding magicians Ashleigh & Tulliah Kerkin, *left*.



Bethel Gordon celebrates 95 years.

Bethel was born on the 16th May 1917 at Ipswich. She grew up in Peak Crossing, one of 9 children born to Caroline & Hector Forsyth. Eaton & Iris passed away at birth, Mabel died of diabetes at the age of 10 after she had been in hospital for 4 years. Lenny died at Milne Bay during the war in 1942. That left Doris, Bethel, Joan, Enid (passed away in 2010) and Max. Bethel married Matt Gordon on the 31st August 1940 and they went on to have two girls, Carmel & Rosalie. Sadly Matt passed away on the 22nd August 2005, but the dynasty grows on. Bethel has 6 grandchildren and 17 great grandchildren. Now let me give you a little insight into this marvelous woman. First I must tell you of the 'lemon' episode. When she was quite young she was given some lemons by Mr Scrag. While walking along the railway line the train came by. On board were a couple of her classmates, Mick O'Neal & Mervin Winks, and they called out for her to throw them a lemon. So she did. But oh no it missed them and went into the next carriage and hit an elderly gentleman in the eye. Next day at school Mr Bradshaw the headmaster wanted to know who was responsible for throwing the lemon. Standing forward Bethel owned up to the deed after which she received a stern lecture. Now we jump forward to when she was a teenager. Sisters Joan & Bethel and cousin Edna (Gamlen) decided they were going to the dance in Harrisville (unknown to their parents). Hitching a ride on the railmotor, they were hoping to get a ride home with Jackie Collins. His sister had other ideas and wouldn't let him. So what was the alternative. Walk. So off they went on foot home to Peak Crossing. Because they weren't suppose to be out they jumped into the grass out of sight at the side of the road whenever a car came by. They got home very dishevelled in time for Bethel to get dressed to go to the dairy. Their parents never found out. Now we are jumping forward a few more years when husband Matt was giving Bethel a driving lesson. They were going up Billy Auldhaus' hill when she got a smack on the knee to tell her to take her foot off the clutch. She responded with a few expletives after which she got out of the car and told him to jam his vehicle up his ****. So ended the driving lesson, never to be repeated. All this was happening with young Carmel in the back seat.



Bethel has always been a great supporter of the Clan attending our functions and for the last five years she has been the eldest at the annual picnic. The baby on her knee (the youngest at the picnic) changes every

year, but Bethel isn't giving up her crown as the oldest yet. At the great age of 95 she is now a resident of the Fassifern Aged Care Village, Stark Ave, Boonah. So if you are ever in the area, drop in and have a chat and a laugh. She always has a great story to tell.

It would be great if I could get stories from other Clan members so that I could share them with you all.

Tripping about

Rhonda and Keith Noe have just come back from a 7 week trip to the Great Britain and Europe. On their stop over in Paris they met up with their daughter Margie and her husband Wade who were coincidentally holidaying there. The weather held good for their entire trip (hard to believe). They had a wonderful time seeing all the sights on offer.

Some upcoming events that you might be interested in.

7th July

the 16th International Tartan Day will be held at King George Square, Brisbane City Hall. 9am – 4pm with plenty of Scottish fun and entertainment. The day is presented by Aussie Scots. For more info: www.aussiescots.org.au

17th –19th July

Boondooma, QLD - Scots in the Bush Scottish & Celtic Festival
Scottish pipe bands, dancers, folk singers & poets, The Noosa Pipe Band, The Clan, The Rum City Highland Dancers plus others-3 days of fun filled entertainment for all the family. Info: Buddy Thomson & Lynne Bennett Ph 07 4168 0168
or buddythomson@bigpond.com.

26th August

The most important date on our calendar. The Annual AGM and Picnic at Peak Crossing. Keep the date free and come along for a good old fashion get-together and chin wag. We will have our usual Bring & Buy Stall and Beth will have the genealogy there.

10th – 11th Nov

We are organising another reunion with our more northerly Forsyth's in Monto. More information about this weekend at a later date.

While in Scotland Rhonda and Keith Noe found a little book concerning the Forsyth's which over the next few newsletters I will give excerpts.

‘FORSYTH. Established in Scotland since at least the twelfth century, the Forsyth's have shared in both the nation's glorious fortunes and it's tragic misfortunes. Stalwart defenders of the nation's freedom and independence , they were equally firm in the defence of their faith, often at bitter cost to themselves.

Origins of Scottish Names by George Forbes

It all began with the Normans. For it was they who introduced surnames into common usage more than a thousand years ago, initially based on the title of their estates, local villages and chateaux in France to distinguish and identify these landholdings, usually acquired at the point of a bloodstained sword. Such grand descriptions also helped enhance the prestige of these arrogant warlords and generally glorify their lofty positions high above the humble serfs slaving away below in the pecking order who only had single names, often with Biblical connotations as in Pierre and Jacques. The only descriptive distinctions among the peasantry concerned their occupations, like Pierre the swineherd or Jacques the ferryman. The Normans themselves were originally Vikings (or Northmen) who raided, colonised and eventually settled down around the French coastline. They had sailed up the Seine in their longboats in 900AD under their ferocious leader Rollo and ruled the roost in the north east France before sailing over to conquer England, bring their relatively new tradition of having surnames with them. It took another hundred years for the Normans to percolate northwards and surnames did not begin to appear in Scotland until the thirteenth century. These adventurous knights brought an aura of chivalry with them and it was said no damsel of any distinction would marry a man unless he had at least two names. The family names included that of Scotland's great hero Robert De Brus and his compatriots were warriors from families like the De Morevils, De Umphravils, De Berkelais, De Quincis, De Viponts and De Vaux. As the knights settled the boundaries of their vast estates, they took territorial names, as in Hamilton, Moray, Crawford, Cunningham, Dunbar, Ross, Wemyss, Dundas, Galloway, Renfrew, Greenhill, Hazelwood, Sandylands and Church-hill. Other names, though not with any obvious geographical features, nevertheless derived from ancient parishes like Douglas, Forbes, Dalryell and Guthrie. Other surnames were coined in connection with occupations, castles or legendary deeds. Stuart originated in the word steward, a prestigious post which was an integral part of any medieval household. The same applied to Cooks, Chamberlains, Constables and Porters. Border towns and forts – needed in areas like the Debateable Lands which were constantly fought over by feuding local families – had their own distinctive names; and it was often from them that the resident groups took their communal titles, as in the Grahams of Annandale, the Elliots and Armstrongs of the East Marches, the Scotts and Kerrs of the Teviotdale and Eskdale. Even physical attributes crept into surnames, as in Small, Little, and More (the latter being 'beg' in Gaelic), Long or Lang, Stark, Stout, Strong or Strang and even Jolly. Micklejohns would have had the strength of several men, while Littlejohn was named after the legendary sidekick of Robin Hood. Colours got into the act with Black, White, Grey, Brown and Green (Red developed into Reid, Ruddy or Ruddiman). Blue was rare and nobody ever wanted to be associated with yellow. Pompous worthies took the name Wiseman, Goodman and Goodall. Words intimating the sons of leading figures were soon affiliated into the language as in Johnson, Adamson, Richardson and Thomson, while the Norman equivalent of Fitz (from the French-Latin 'filius' meaning 'son') cropped up in Fitzmaurice and Fitzgerald. The prefix 'Mac' was 'son of' in Gaelic and clans often originated with occupations – as in MacNab being sons of the Abbot, MacPherson and MacVicar being sons of the minister and MacIntosh being sons of the chief. The church's influence could be found in the names Kirk, Clerk, Clarke, Bishop, Friar and Monk. Proctor came from a church official, Singer and Sangster from choirists, Gilchrist and Gilles from Christ's servant, Mitchell, Gilmory and Gilmore from servants of St Michael and Mary, Malcolm from a servant of Columba and Gillespie from a bishop's servant. The rudimentary medical profession was represented by Barber (a trade which also once included dentistry and surgery) as well as Leech or Leitch. Businessmen produced Merchants, Mercers, Monypennies, Chapmans Sellers and Scales, while down at the old village watermill the names that cropped up included Miller, Walker and Fuller. Other self explanatory trades included Coopers, Brands, Barkers, Tanners, Skinners, Brewsters and Brewers, Tailors, Saddlers, Wrights, Cartwrights, Smiths, Harpers, Joiners, Sawyers, Masons and Plumbers. Even the scenery was utilised as in Craig, Moor, Hill, Glen, Wood and Forrest. Rank, whether high or low took its place with Laird, Barron, Knight, Tennant, Farmer, Husband, Granger, Grieve, Shepherd, Shearer and

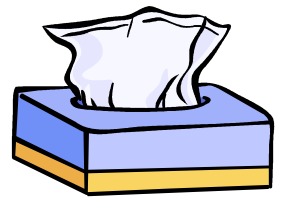


Fletcher. The hunt and the chase supplied Hunter, Falconer, Fowler, Fox, Forrester, Archer and Spearman. The renowned medieval historian Froissart, who eulogised about the romantic deeds of chivalry (and who condemned Scotland as being a poverty stricken wateland) once sniffly dismissed the peasantry of his native France as the jacquerie (or the Jacques-without-names) but it was these same humble folk who ended up over-throwing the arrogant aristocracy. In the olden days, only the blueblooded knights of antiquity were entitled to full, proper names, both Christian and surnames, but with the passing of time and a more egalitarian, less feudal atmosphere, more respectful and worthy titles spread throughout the populace as a whole. Echos of a far distant past can still be found in most names and they can be borne with pride in commemoration of past generations who fought and toiled in some capacity or other to make our nation what it is now, for good or ill. ‘

What about the Forsyth name, I hear you say. You will have to wait for the next newsletter to find out the answer to that.



With the flu season well and truly upon us, we hear that a few of you out there have succumbed to it. To all who are feeling unwell we wish a speedy recovery.



SIMPLY SHARING

When we share laughter, there's twice the fun;
When we share success, we surpassed what we've done.
When we share problems, there's half the pain,
When we share tears, a rainbow follows.

When we share dreams, they become more real;
When we share secrets, it's our hearts we reveal.
When we share smiles, that's when our love shows;
When we share hugs, that's when love grows.

When we share with someone on whom we depend,
That person is always family or friend.
And what draws us closer and makes us all care,
Is not what we have, but the things that we share.

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