

Message to Clan Forsyth Queensland 2015 ANZAC Dinner Guests

Queensland 1963

When I first came to Queensland as Chief in 1979 it was not my first visit for I arrived in Brisbane in 1963 as a new migrant together with my wife Ann and two sons. What a different city it was, my maternal Uncle was Harbourmaster and I joined an import/export firm based in Newstead as their new Queensland Manager.

It was a really exciting assignment for a young man whose previous experience had been as a Tea Broker in Calcutta. What a different City it was, then, Surfers Paradise was just a golden beach with one small hotel, we might travel at the weekend to the "Boolarong" restaurant on Mooloolaba beach for huge tiger prawns or to Mt Tamborine to touch the oldest tree in Australia and enjoy the cool sea breeze.

Living in an old "Stumpy" overlooking the Ascot Racecourse it was an idyllic life and I have the fondest memories of your wonderful homeland. All too soon promotion carried me off to Sydney but the memories remain. When I returned in 1979 I went to Peak Crossing and up the Fassifern Valley past Forsyth Settlement homes, Brisbane had changed, the old buildings with their timber overhangs shielding the fierce sun, like the fans had gone, replaced by air conditioning in modern tower blocks, life had changed and so I realised the Clan Forsyth must also.

Clan Gatherings in Scotland

The Scottish Clan Forsyth gatherings in the 1920's had been occasional tea dances at which the males had surreptitiously supped whiskey from their teacups; in the 1970's and 80's there had been grander affairs at Hotels and Edinburgh and Sterling Castles, dances which were the envy of other Clan Societies who asked to join in. However this did not last into the 90's due to the activists becoming older and exhausted, whilst younger members with growing families were finding it more difficult to find the time.

Sadly in Scotland, troubled with internal squabbles, and isn't that just like every family, the Scottish Society went into a state of hibernation whilst the Societies in Australia, New Zealand and North America flourished demonstrating that our Family was by no means in decline. Happily Scotland is reviving but the lesson learned is that Clan Forsyth might have had its origins in Scotland but the family is global, each Society has to be autonomous and I am so grateful to the Commissioners who keep me up to with current events, the Committees who provide the forum for these family get together and to you the members who preserve the memory of our forefathers and can draw strength from their example.

Common Clan Genealogy

That all our Societies now have a Genealogist collecting family records is a really important aspect of our existence and I hope we will, before long be able to assemble a written record of the whole family in which there will be an interesting chapter or maybe two on you the Queensland families.

Research has now proved that the Forsyth's of Dykes were the original family in Scotland in the 13th Century and that when the line failed in 17th century Forsyths of Nydie having also failed, the descent of the Chief fell to the Falkland branch where it now rests.

Through all those years there have been dozens of siblings from whom you descend and the task is to connect them all. It will not be in my lifetime but it may be in yours or your children's.

Queensland Links to Northern Ireland

Incidentally, many in Queensland descend from Ulstermen and Alexander Forsyth, whose father was the last Laird of Nydie and who went bankrupt in 1610, is thought to have joined the Plantation, for his close friend and neighbour was Alexander Ramsay brother of Thomas of Balmonth who took up a 2000 estate in Ulster in 1619.

Apology

I am really sorry not to have been with you this evening but I will be there in spirit, do have a good evening and I look forward to reading about it in your newsletter

Regards

Alistair Forsyth of that ilk