## **FORSYTH, James Imlay**

James Imlay Forsyth was born on 5th October 1865, in the district of Shoalhaven.

His parents, John Forsyth, youngest son of the late John Forsyth of Sydney, was married on the 12th October 1864, at Jasper's Vale, to Jamesina, eldest daughter of Mr. Peter McLaren of Jasper's Vale, Shoalhaven.**1**

In January 1880 James Imlay Forsyth, a pupil of Nowra Public School, was appointed Pupil Teacher at the Public School, Milton.**2**

In 1886 he was a member of the British Lion Lodge, No. 20, I.O.G.T. in the Shoalhaven district.**3**

In 1895 James Forsyth married Ann Jane Steel, the daughter of Robert and Janet L. Steel, in the district of Woollahra, Sydney.**4**

Children of the marriage were:  
Robert Steel, born 5th October 1895, 76 Regent-street, Paddington

Daisy May Isabel, born 1899, district of Berry

John Stuart Alston, born 1900, district of Goulburn

Janet Ailsa Comyn, born 1901, district of Goulburn

Ina Evelyn Ruth, born 1905, district of Ryde**5**

In March 1895, a burglary occurred at the residence of James Imlay Forsyth, of 76 Regent-street, Paddington. A large quality of silverware, clothing and miscellaneous items were stolen.**6**

In November 1895, Mr. J. Imlay Forsyth, for some time past, first assistant at Bourke-street school (one of the largest schools in Sydney), was appointed to the charge of the Jasper's Brush public school. Since leaving Shoalhaven some ten years previously he has had good experience in various places. In Sydney he was one of the secretaries of the Band of Hope Union of N.S.W. and identified himself closely with other deserving activities.

He took charge of Jasper’s Brush public school that month, replacing Mr. Larcombe, who had died. Mr. Forsyth was, at the time, regarded as an energetic and able young man.**7**

In July 1899 he was appointed teacher at the Marulan School, on the southern railway line, near Goulburn.**8**

In March 1902 J. I. Forsyth was appointed headmaster of Beecroft Public School, replacing Mr. Andrew Fuller, who was appointed to the Bowral district. Within a few months the average daily attendance had risen from 22 to about 60.

Later that year, and again in 1904, he was elected President of the Beecroft Literary and Debating Society.**9**

In January 1903 Mr. Forsyth, of the Beecroft Public School, was having a nice villa residence built in Welham-street. Later that year a Mrs. Hodgson, who had purchased a piece of land adjoining Mr. Forsyth's cottage in Welham-street, contemplated building at an early date.**10**

In 1905 and 1906, Mr. Forsyth, in his capacity of headmaster of Beecroft Public School, would occasionally organise a day’s outing for the pupils – The Museum, Botanical Gardens, Lever Bros. at Balmain, Fowler’s pottery works at Camperdown.**11**

In 1907 the Forsyth property in Welham-street, Beecroft, was described as having an area of 3 roods and 8 perches, owned by Ann Jane Forsyth, but occupied by W. McCoy.**12**

Mr. Forsyth and family would have moved into the Headmaster’s residence at the public school.

In 1909 Mr. Forsyth was complemented on successfully coaching Frank Edwards (who gained a High School scholarship). That year he and Mr. Franks, pupil teacher, accompanied about 40 pupils, for a day’s outing to visit a flour mill at Ultimo. On Prize Day, at Beecroft Public School, Mr. G. Sargent’s gold medal was won by Robert Steel Forsyth, son of the headmaster.**13**

In mid-1910 he was on a Joint Committee involved in the formation of a civilian rife club in Beecroft. A public meeting was held in the local School of Arts for the purpose of taking the necessary preliminary steps. An application was submitted to have part of the Crown Lands at Pennant Hills set aside for a rifle range.

In August Mr. Franks, junior assistant teacher at Beecroft public school, was transferred to Carlingford; and his place at Beecroft was filled by Miss Daniels, from Croydon Park Public School. The headmaster, Mr. Forsyth, at the time was enjoying some three months' holiday as long service leave; and Major Bennett, D.S.O., was relieving him.

In November, Major Bennett was granted leave of absence, and the school was now in charge of Mr. McKerihan, lately of the Northern Rivers district. Prior to leaving, Major Bennett addressed the children, complimenting them upon their orderly behaviour and excellent work; and saying that it was one of the best conducted schools that he had been relieving at. He spoke in very high terms of the capacity and energy of the headmaster, Mr. Forsyth, as was evidenced by the discipline, tone, and progress of the school. Mr. Forsyth took further leave that month for several weeks holiday at Braidwood.**14**

In November 1915 Mr. Robert (“Bob”) Forsyth, eldest son of Mr. J. I. Forsyth, headmaster of the Beecroft Public school, was seriously ill. He was removed from his father's residence to Dr. Abbott's Hospital at Stanmore. A specialist was brought in, who diagnosed the trouble as inflammation of the optic nerves of the eyes — a serious trouble, unless the patient is very carefully nursed and attended to. Bob's genial face and cheery manner had made him a popular friend to many of the Richmond folk. In addition to his duties as assistant to Mr. Shelton at the Hawkesbury Agricultural College, he was secretary of the Richmond Presbyterian Fellowship Union; whilst he was also closely connected with the tennis club and the church choir.

On 11th January 1916, at his parents' residence, Public School, Beecroft, Robert Steel Forsyth (late of Hawkesbury College, Richmond), died in his 21st year.  In February Mr. Forsyth was obliged through ill-health to take a few weeks' leave of absence.**15**

In July 1917 James Imlay Forsyth, Clement Meadmore and Robert Vicars, were elected joint vice-presidents of the Beecroft School of Arts. In January 1918 Mr. Forsyth was appointed a Trustee of the Beecroft School of Arts, replacing Charles Churchill Tucker (deceased). In November 1931 Mr. Robert Vicars was appointed a Trustee of the Beecroft School of Arts, in lieu of James Imlay Forsyth, whose office had been declared vacant.**16**

In May 1921 he was elected President of the Beecroft Progress Association.**17**

In April 1924 Mr Forsyth, master of the Beecroft public school, left Beecroft to take up duties at the Putney public school.**18**

On 12th December 1929, Ann Jane, wife of J. I. Forsyth, of 22 Miriam-street, West Ryde (formerly of Beecroft), died at a private hospital, Sydney.**19**

On 26th September 1937, James Imlay Forsyth died at his residence "Glenorchy," 22 Miriam Road, West Ryde, aged 72 years, the father of Daisy (Mrs. D. Davidson), John, Ailsa, and Ina (Mrs. K. Grainger).

Officers and Brethren of the I.O.R., Eastwood Tent No. 122 were requested to attend the funeral of their late esteemed Trustee, Bro. J. R. FORSYTH, P.C.R.**20**

**Bibliography**

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6 New South Wales Police Gazette and Weekly Record of Crime, Wed 13 Mar 1895

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8 Shoalhaven News and South Coast Districts Advertiser (NSW), Sat 24 Jun 1899; Shoalhaven Telegraph (NSW), Sat 8 Jul 1899

9 Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 8 Mar 1902; Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Wed 2 Jul 1902; Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 1 Nov 1902; Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 12 Nov 1904

10 Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 31 Jan 1903; Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 28 Nov 1903

11 Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 15 Jul 1905; Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 26 May 1906

12 Hornsby Council Ratepayers List 1907

13 Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 6 Feb 1909; Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 6 Mar 1909; Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 25 Dec 1909

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15 Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 6 Nov 1915; Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Wed 19 Jan 1916; Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 12 Feb 1916

16 Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 28 Jul 1917; Government Gazette of the State of NSW, Fri 1 Feb 1918; Government Gazette of the State of NSW, Fri 13 Nov 1931

17 Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 7 May 1921

18 Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 12 Apr 1924

19 Sydney Morning Herald, Fri 13 Dec 1929

20 Daily Telegraph (Sydney, NSW), Mon 27 Sep 1937

**Further References:**

‘Beecroft and Cheltenham, the Shaping of a Sydney Community to 1914’ by Beecroft Cheltenham History Group