

# NESBITT/NISBET SOCIETY AUSTRALIA



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NEWSLETTER NO. 11.

APRIL 1989.

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## STARTING POINT

(Latest News and Views from the Editorial Staff)

**A CALL FOR PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS:** Now that our society is up and running we must market ourselves. You, the members, know what we have delivered to date and later in this newsletter will find new ways in which the society can be of assistance in the genealogical sense. As always your comments, suggestions and voluntary assistance in any form is sought and welcomed. Please be on the lookout for prospective N/N members (e.g. relatives, persons of the name, relatives thereof) and present our society and services to them.

We need to make the general population - the Smiths and Joneses aware of our society, thus providing contacts from whom to draw data and assist our genealogists so as to allow the N/N Society to flourish and improve its services.

Gary R. Nisbet.

## (NES)-BITS AND PIECES

(Snippets of General Interest By N/Ns, For N/Ns and About N/Ns)

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS FOR 1988/89:** We take great pleasure in welcoming to the society the following five new members. Added to the eleven listed in Newsletter 10 our number of new members for this year has risen to sixteen.

Richard I.S. Nisbet, 65 Cay St., Saunders Beach, Townsville, Qld., 4818.

Susan J. Nisbet, 40 MacDonell St., Yarralumla, N.S.W., 2600.

Graeme & Catherine Nisbet, 31 Bruce St., Mitcham, Vic., 3132.

Judith & John Cockbill, 'Cardross', Kirribilli Rd., New Gisborne, Vic., 3438.

Ruby H. Rawlinson, c/o R.R. Nesbit, RDI Thornton Rd., Cambridge, N.Z.

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**SHIP SURGEON ALEXANDER NISBET:** The material for this article was obtained from the book, "Convict Ships 1788-1863" by Charles Bateson. Alexander Nisbet is mentioned on numerous occasions.

Between 1824 and 1840 Alexander Nisbet made six trips on convict ships between England and Australia as ship's surgeon .

On page 79 Charles Bateson says, "It was not until the late 1830s that the experiment of sending juvenile offenders in separate ships was tried, but of course, this could only apply to the boys. A few specially selected adult male convicts accompanied these ships as petty officers and an effort was made to educate the youths. Examinations were held and prizes awarded". "While one third of the boys were at school" wrote Alexander Nisbet, ship's surgeon of the Tasmanian transport 'Frances Charlotte' in 1836, "the remainder were on deck where they were allowed and encouraged to amuse themselves with all sorts of games, and as we had a violin player on board, dancing was permitted after school hours. On leaving England some of the seamen were being mutinous and refusing to work, I allowed a watch of 8 boys to be kept during the night, and it was continued throughout fine weather; it was an object of great ambition to be selected for the watch".

(Cont'd page 2)

During the course of six trips Alexander Nisbet was responsible for the health and well-being of 998, (1000 embarked - 2 relanded) convicts during the 13,000 miles journey to Australia. Of that total there were 10 deaths; a figure of 1.0% which more than favourably compares with the overall figures for transportation.

A total of 161,801 convicts embarked for transportation. Of these, 2971 (1.8%) died during the journey and 158,830 arrived in Australia.

As 'transportation' commenced in 1787 and Alexander Nisbet's first trip was 36 years later the improved figures, I would suggest, cannot be credited to his efforts alone, as we must presume that a lot was learned of the many aspects of the transportation of human cargo during those 36 years.

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VICTORIAN BDM CERTIFICATES PRICE INCREASE: Once again the powers that be have found it necessary to add to the woes of us budding genealogists with an increase in price of the various certificates. The increase came into effect on Jan. 1 and are shown below.

If the registered number (RN) of the entry is known and quoted the certificate may be purchased for half price. The society holds extracts of N/Ns from various BDM records and may be able to assist in supplying the RN.

The indexes are listed after this heart-warming information.

a)	Full certificate (search and issue)	\$22.00
b)	If registration number supplied	\$11.00
c)	Change of name certificate	\$11.00
d)	Extract of entry	\$11.00
e)	Priority fee (additional)	\$20.00

Address: Registry of Births Deaths and Marriages,  
295 Queen Street, Melbourne, 3000.  
Tel. 11530 (recorded information)  
(03) 603 5800 (general enquiries)

VICTORIAN BDM INDEXES N/Ns ONLY  
(Compiled by Dot and Colin Nesbit)

BIRTHS	1853-1913
MARRIAGES	1853-1913
DEATHS	1853-1940
MARRIAGES from early Church Records	1837-1853
DEATHS " " " " "	1837-1853

N.S.W. BDM INDEXES N/Ns ONLY  
(Compiled by James E. Nisbet)

BIRTHS	1830-1905
DEATHS	1841-1905
MARRIAGES	1841-1905

QUEENSLAND BDM INDEXES ALL NAMES  
(Compiled by Bruce Nesbit)

BAPTISMS	1829-1856
BIRTHS	1850-1869
BURIALS	1829-1856
DEATHS	1856-1896
MARRIAGES	1839-1899

S.A. BDM INDEXES N/Ns ONLY  
(Compiled by Colin and Dot Nesbit)

BIRTHS	1842-1906
DEATHS	1842-1906
MARRIAGES	1842-1906

Note: A list of interstate registries addresses and charges will be compiled for future publication.

(This section cont'd page 3)

NISBET FINE WHISKIES: Robert Nisbett of Bateau Bay supplied information relating to an hotel mirror depicting 'Nisbet Fine Whiskies'. On being contacted Robert had this to say.

"A photo of a mirror depicting Nisbet Fine Whiskies was taken by my late brother John on one of his many business trips to the U.K. He came across it in an old wares shop in Edinburgh. I've heard that in earlier days, before the big brand names took over the market, numerous small firms used to buy direct from the distilleries and blend the whisky according to the taste of their customers. At the moment I can't authenticate that piece of trivia." Perhaps some of our members may know of the practice and of Nisbet Fine Whiskies!

### SOCIETY NEWS

THE U.K. GATHERING AT THE HIRSEL, COLDSTREAM, BERWICKSHIRE,  
SATURDAY, 27TH MAY, 1989:

Presented at the gathering will be a talk on the refurbishment of Nisbet House by Dr. Hawley, a talk by a genealogist, a short address by Lord Home of The Hirsell and a display of Nisbet Tartan goods by Peter Anderson of Gallashiels.

Contact: Ian G. Nisbet, Australian Branch Secretary for agenda and accommodation details.

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SOCIAL EVENING WITH GUEST SPEAKER: On Friday May 19, at the home of our secretary at 1 St. Johns Parade, Kew, commencing at 8 p.m., Mr. Desmond Regan - Irish Ancestry Group of the Genealogical Society of Victoria - will give a talk on Irish/Scottish History and migration between Scotland and Ireland. R.S.V.P. by May 17, to Ian G. Nisbet, (03) 862 2258.



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PROPOSED GATHERING AT CASTLEMAINE, HISTORIC GOLDMINING TOWN: Sept. 30 - Oct. 1 has been selected for the event. As mentioned in N/L 10 it is proposed to be held over two days. A further trip to Castlemaine will be carried out to select the exact venue and further particulars will appear in N/L 12 of July.



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FAMILY PICNIC: On March 5 a group of N/Ns attended a picnic gathering at Fairview Park Reserve. The reserve, a popular picnic spot situated on the northern bank of the Yarra River at Hawthorn, was in beautiful condition and was complemented by a temperature of 26 deg. C (78.8 deg. F).

The gathering began at 11 a.m. and during the course of the afternoon 28 members representing 10 families attended. It was pleasing to meet for the first time, John and Betty Nisbet, who made the trip from Colac.

Clan members mixed freely and conversation was stimulating and animated.

### FEATURE ARTICLE

(This section is reserved for full length articles of general interest)

**KILTS, TARTANS AND BREACONS:** The following is an extract from a privately published book, 'Nisbet of that Ilk', by Robert Chancellor Nesbitt in 1941:



"Scotland reveals its strongly national feelings in many ways, in none more so than in the wearing of the kilt. It is one of the few countries to cling to its national dress. And in the Tartan 'the clannish folk' express their pride of family and clan. The wearing of the tartan has been so closely related to Scotland's story that considerable attention has been given to its origin and history.

In the Highlands, the home of the kilt, the actual word 'tartan' is unknown. The true Gaelic term is 'Breacon', which is derived from the word 'Breac' meaning chequered, and in this way it is used in present times by the Gaelic people. The word 'Tartan' it is suggested, has a French or Spanish derivation, tiretaine - linsie wolsie or tiritana, a kind of woollen cloth, perhaps so called from its thinness or lightness.

Tartan was the natural costume of the whole race of Scottish Highlanders. It was indeed the ideal dress for the wild and mountainous country, its freedom and warmth both a convenience and comfort, and its variagated colours indistinguishable amidst bracken and heather, providing a natural protection.

In the constant wars and feuds of these primitive people, some badge or mark, would of course be necessary to distinguish friend from foe. It is believed that different setts and patterns came into being in the 12th century, when the clan system began to be evolved out of tribal regimes.

Originally, however, tartan was used not to show the tribe to which the wearer belonged, but as a distinctive emblem of the rank or position which he held. The old laws decreed: one colour in the clothes of the servants; two colours in the clothes of the rent-paying farmers; three in the clothes of the officers; five in the clothes of the chiefs; six in the clothes of poets; seven in the clothes of kings and queens. Eight colours were worn by priests in the early Scotia Church to indicate that while officiating, the priest was superior to the king. These eight colours were: yellow, blue, white, green, brown, red, black and purple. For the clergy, a special sett was designed of blue, black and white.

It is sometimes overlooked in attributing patterns to their respective clans, that anciently, each clan had several setts. These were:

1. Chief's Dress - worn by him and by members of his family only.
2. The Clan Tartan - worn by other members of the clan.
3. The Hunting Tartan - adopted when engaged in the chase by clans whose ordinary tartan was of a brilliant hue. Invariably this was of a dark blue.
4. Family Setts - most of these were lost sight of after the act of 1747 which made it a penal offence to wear the tartan.
5. Mourning Setts - Most of these have disappeared.
6. District Setts - common to inhabitants of certain districts irrespective of the peoples clan names. There were setts peculiar to such districts as Slean, Glenorchy, Atholl, Strathern, Baldenoch &c.
7. Earasaid Sett - worn by the women, almost always on a white ground.
8. Royal Sett - this was the Stuart tartan sett on a white ground, now known as the Victorian tartan. This sett was worn by Prince Charlie during the days of Forty-five.

Of the manufacture of the tartan, the Highlanders exercised both their industry and their art. The weaver received his instructions by means of a small stick around which the exact number of threads in every bar was shown, a practice in use to this very day. The thread was spun first by spindle, whirl and distaff, then by spinning wheel; secondly by thread prepared for dyeing.

Not only was the making of the tartan their own work, the material they used was taken from their own hills. There they gathered bracken, branch and root from which they dyed brilliant, permanent and pleasing colours. Red was obtained from rock lichen, blue from the blueberry with alum, green from whin-bark and cow weed, black from alder tree bark, magenta from the dandelion, orange from bramble and purple from sundew.

After the revolution of 1688 which drove the Stuarts from the throne, tartan and the wearing of tartan plaids became more widespread, and during the period subsequent to the Union of the two kingdoms of Scotland and England in 1701, tartan plaids were worn in the Lowlands of Scotland as a protest against the union, which was far from popular. Indeed, so strong was the national feeling that shortly before the rising of 1715, a special sett of tartan was invented and worn by the sympathizers of the exiled royal family. This sett was known as the Jacobite Tartan.

But the next and last attempt of the Stuarts to regain the throne resulted in the banishment of the tartan. On the 1st day of August 1747 an Act was passed forbidding the wearing of tartan as any part of the highland dress under the penalty of six months imprisonment for the first offence and transportation beyond the seas for seven years for the second. This severe and harsh Act was much resented and in view of the discontent it created, it was repealed in 1782 through the influence of the gallant Duke of Montrose.

Apart from the sorrow and shame brought to the Highlanders, forced to renounce the dress they loved as they did the country of which it was an emblem, great hardship was occasioned in all the villages through the loss of their century-old industries. No more was there any use for the preparation of dyes, the weaving of tartans by the village weaver, the manufacture of weapons and ornaments by the smith of the clan. The measuring stick for setts was laid aside.

When the act was repealed, there was difficulty in tracing the almost forgotten patterns of clan tartans so long locally manufactured. And no dye employed by the tartan manufacturer could excel in fineness and fastness the colours which the villagers extracted from their native hills. Nevertheless, assiduous search was made and assistance given to the manufacturer by the chiefs of the clans in the endeavour to recover as many as possible of the original patterns. The 'Wizard of the North' invoking his ghosts of the past, did much to revive the old clan spirit and with the appearance of 'Waverley', coinciding as it did with the visit of George IV to Scotland in 1822 the wearing of the tartan became so popular that many old patterns were brought out and new setts devised.

Among the clan tartans of the Lowlands are those of Leslie, Kerr, Johnston. Apart from the clan tartans there are a certain number of old family tartans which properly belong only to a head of a particular family and his heirs. Of these family tartans is the Nisbet Tartan.

The Nisbet tartan is the same as that on the background of the 'Nisbet Crest', obtainable commercially. It is basically red and green and has a boar's head on the tartan with the motto 'I byd it'. It is an authentic tartan. The Nisbets are not a 'sept' of another clan".

Note: This material was supplied in 1984 by John Kenard Nesbit, Sutton Coldfields, West Midlands, U.K. Editor.

WANTED  
(Members' Searches)

NISBET, Archibald. b. 1825, Scotland (?). His son John NISBET, b. Glasgow, Scotland c1860, m. 1884, Augusta Charlotte Wangerman, b. Maryborough, Victoria. Information of Archibald Nisbet and his Scottish ancestry is sought.  
Contact: Mrs. Donna Nisbet, 24 Galahad Street, Marsden, Qld., 4203.

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(Cont'd page 6)

N/N, Margaret. Ian O'Brien is having so much difficulty identifying the arrival in Australia of his great grandmother, Margaret N/N (who arrived, he guesses, between 1830 and 1850) that he has decided to find her by elimination. He would be grateful if anyone knowing of the date, ship and port of arrival of any Margaret N/N, and her subsequent movements, would send details to him.

Contact: Dr. Ian G. O'Brien, 4 Ambalindum Street, Hawker, A.C.T., 2614.

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NISBET, Margaret. b. 1800, Chapleton, New Kilpatrick, Stirlingshire; m. 1819 William DALGLISH, b. 1799, Dumbarton. Children: David, b. 1820; John, b. 1822; Alexander, b. 1830; James, b. 1836; Margaret, b. 1839. All arrived at Moreton Bay, Queensland 3/6/1857 on the "Hastings", accompanied by Margaret's brother William. They moved to North Melbourne in September 1857. William NISBET and David DALGLISH were at Port Albert, Victoria, 1860-1861.

Information please on William and Margaret Dalglisch, nee Nisbet.

Contact: James E. NISBET, 53 Yeo Street, Cremorne, N.S.W., 2090, Ph. (02) 90 1943.

\* \* \*

NISBET, Elizabeth Stewart. b. Glasgow, Scotland c1841, m. Alexander Nivison Smith, b. Dumfriesshire, Scotland c1853 at Old Inglewood, Victoria, 22/11/1860. Mrs. Elizabeth S.N. Smith's last address was 29-33 Mary St., (corner of Loch St.) St. Kilda, c1920. Smiths (presumably daughters) continued residence at that address until c1934.

There appears to be seven births registered to this couple:

Elizabeth Smith	b. 1861	Kingower, Vic.
Isabella Watson Smith	b. 1863	Dunolly, Vic.
Jessie Nivison Smith	b. 1866	Dunolly, Vic.
Alexander William Smith	b. 1873	Percydale Creek, Vic.
Alexander Thomas Smith	b. 1876	Charlton, Vic.
John Nisbet Smith	b. 1879	Charlton, Vic.
Herbert David James Smith	b. 1882	Charlton, Vic.

One daughter reputedly married a Dr. McDonald (a specialist in Melbourne) and another, a senior detective with the Victoria Police.

Information wanted of the descendants of Elizabeth Stewart Nisbet.

Contact: Gary Nisbet, 43 Dorset Rd., Croydon, Vic., 3136.

#### FOUND

WHOSE ANCESTOR: Mr. Paris Nesbitt, K.C., who was in the habit of living and talking dangerously, caused a flutter in the high court on the hearing of an appeal in which he acted as council. During the course of his argument he made some statement relating to the Law of Trusts.

"That sounds rather startling," said Sir Samuel Griffith; "what is your authority for that proposition"?

"I should have thought" Nesbitt replied, "that it was unnecessary to require authority for anything so obvious". Turning to the solicitor who was instructing him, he said, "get me a text-book of the Law of Trusts from the Supreme Court Library". As the solicitor was approaching the door leading out of the Court, Nesbitt called out, in the hearing of everyone, "any elementary book will do"!

From P.A. Jacob's excellent book of Legal Reminiscence, a Lawyer Tells (1949) and quoted in Great Aussie Insults (1987) by Bill Wannan.

Note: The Biographical Index of S.A. has this entry: Nesbit, Edwin Paris, parents: Edward Plant and Ann nee Pariss, b. 8/8/1852 Angaston, Adelaide, S.A., d. 1927; occupation Teacher, Lawyer, Judge, Journalist.

Residence: Angaston, Adelaide, St. Peters.

**ANNIVERSARY**

Congratulations to Stan and Pearl Nesbit (nee Norris) of Castlemaine who recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. Stan and Pearl married on 31st of December 1938 at the Independent Church, Kew, Melbourne.

My thanks go to Pearl who has been active in arranging the Castlemaine gatherings of descendants of our mutual emigrant ancestor, John George Mitford Nesbit Sr.

**Editor.**

**MISCELLANY**

"The study of one's own personal history and that of one's ancestors, has in recent years, grown from a casual interest to an abiding concern. And this is as it should be. For only with a clear view of the past can we fully understand and appreciate the meaning of the present and the future". This article appeared in the Irish Link No. 12, 1987 and had previously been carried in the Florida Genealogist, Fall 1981.

**STOP PRESS**

**KAREN NISBET ON TOUR OF AUSTRALIA:** Karen (newsletter and executive committee member) and friend when last heard of in early March had passed through Adelaide, crossed the Nullarbor Plain and were at Perth, Western Australia. It is their intention to travel up the west coast to Darwin and time permitting, 'across the top' to the east coast and home via the Princes Highway. We wish them a safe return.

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**REGIONAL ACTIVITIES:** Good news A.C.T. Ian and Lorna O'Brien and Brian Nesbitt have arranged a social get-together at the Canberra Club on the evening of April 26.

Congratulations to them for their initiative and we hope that it will be the forerunner of many clan fellowship activities in New South Wales.

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**BIOGRAPHIC INDEX OF S.A. 1836-85:** We have received from Ian and Lorna O'Brien a copy of the Nesbitt/Nisbet entries in the index. Members interested should contact the archivist Bruce Nesbit for details.

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# .....NOTICEBOARD.....

(Upcoming Events in the Local and Overseas Calendar)

1989	Apr.26	Social Get-together at Canberra Club, Canberra. (See Stop Press page 7)
"	May 4	Executive Meeting.
"	May 19	Social Evening with a Guest Speaker. Please see page 3.
"	May 27	U.K. Meeting at the Hirsell, Coldstream, near Duns in The Borders, Scotland.
"	Jul.	Newsletter No. 12. (Closing date for material Jun. 1)
"	Aug.	Social Function.
"	Sep.	Annual General Meeting with a Guest Speaker.
"	Sep.30	Country Gathering, Castlemaine, central Victoria.
"	Oct. 1	
"	Oct.	Newsletter No. 13. (Closing date for material Sep. 1)
"	Dec.	Christmas Gathering.
1990	Jan.	Newsletter No. 14. (Closing date for material Dec. 1)
"	Feb.	Family Gathering.
"	Apr.	Newsletter No. 15. (Closing date for material Mar. 1)
"	Aug.	Social Function.

#### GENERAL COMMITTEE:

**PRESIDENT** Ian M. Nisbet, A.M., 26 Walnut Road, Nth. Balwyn, 3104, Vic., Aust.  
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**EDITOR/ARCHIVIST** Bruce Nesbit, P.O. Box 84 Bundoora, 3083, Vic., Aust.  
 Dr. Ian T. Nisbet, Gavin M. Nisbet, Lyndell Watson, Gary R. Nisbet,  
 Karen Nisbet.

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Brian S. Nesbitt	14 Davitt Close, Isaacs, 2607, A.C.T., Aust.
James E. Nisbet	53 Yeo Street, Cremorne, 2090, N.S.W., Aust.

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**The Nesbitt/Nisbet Society is a Worldwide Clan Society.**