

NESBITT/NISBET SOCIETY AUSTRALIA



NEWSLETTER NO. 17.

OCTOBER 1990

STARTING POINT

(Latest News and Views from the Editorial Staff)

Members will be pleasantly surprised and proud to be reminded that this, our 17th Newsletter, takes the Australian branch of the Society into its 5th year.

This newsletter is accompanied by, among other items, two important enclosures.

The first is a copy of the Society's second monograph, "Josiah Nisbet, R.N. (1793 - 1800)" by Richard Kerr-Nesbitt. The Society is proud to be able to publish the monograph and hopes that it provides much reading pleasure to members. Additional copies may be purchased from the editor at \$4.75 per copy, which includes postage within Australia.

The second enclosure is a 'Dues Are Due' form for 1990/91 which has been modified so that members may make an optional donation. By taking up this option, members can ensure that the Society remains strong and active.

Once again, the annual subscription fee remains at \$12.00 per family. In 1989/90 members received not only four newsletters, but also our first monograph at no additional cost; with this newsletter, comes our second monograph. I'm sure all would agree this represents excellent value for money.

Your continued involvement with the Society will ensure continuation of this service, whilst increased membership should further enhance our development.

P.S. Our membership has increased to 127, including our first new members for 1990/91. We take great pleasure in welcoming Mary Bilton of Maryborough and Ann (Michie, pronounced Mickey) Jensen, both of Victoria.

Dr. Ian T. Nisbet.

(NES)-BITS AND PIECES

(Snippets of General Interest from the Editorial Staff)

A TWIST TO A TALE OF A BUSH LEGEND - THE BUSHRANGERS JAMES NESBIT(T) AND CAPT. MOONLIGHT, GAYS?? Legendary bushranger Captain Moonlight (born Andrew George Scott) may have taken a dark secret to his grave; and it was nothing to do with robbery.

It now appears that the rough tough, adventurer may have been gay. Sydney academic, Dr. Wotherspoon, contends that Captain Moonlight had a relationship with one of his gang, James Nesbit. It shows, Dr. Wotherspoon says, that there is a clear link between the traditional mateship of the bush and latent homosexuality.

Scott had fought in the Maori wars in New Zealand and then in the American Civil War. On his return to Australia, he became a lay preacher in Victoria but he became involved in a robbery and fled to Sydney.

He defrauded a yacht owner and was sent to Pentridge Gaol (Melbourne, Victoria) for seven years.

In 1879 Scott rode north into New South Wales with a gang of younger men. Their raid on Wantabadgery Station went wrong and led to a shoot out, during
(cont'd page 2).

which Nesbit was shot dead.

The bond between Captain Moonlight and Nesbit began at Pentridge Gaol. Doctor Wotherspoon says, "when Nesbit lay dying in McGlede's kitchen, his leader wept over him like a child, laid his head upon his breast and kissed him passionately.

Captain Moonlight also risked his life when Nesbit was wounded, and was emotional at his trial.

In the end Captain Moonlight, due to be hanged, wanted to be buried in the same grave with Nesbit".

Article based on a story which appeared in The Melbourne Sunday Sun, June 14, 1990, by Joe Siracusa.



James Nesbit(t) & Capt. Moonlight

Editorial note: In the several articles in the possession of the Society, James' surname is spelt with or without the double (t).

A photocopy of his prison record from the Public Records Office, Laverton, Melbourne, Victoria, shows him as James Lyons Nesbitt (see Newsletter No. 3).

In Allan Nixon's book '100 Australian Bushrangers' he is shown as James Nesbit (see Newsletter No. 4).

In 'Australian Bushrangers', George Boxall uses the double (t).

The above article from the Melbourne Sun drops the second (t).

To quote Ian T. Nisbet in Newsletter No. 16; "Some things never change".

* * *

JOSIAH NISBET MONOGRAPH: Author, Richard Kerr-Nesbitt, and all in the U.K. who have perused his advance copy are of the opinion that it is "quite excellent".

Richard has ordered 100 copies (in addition to the 20 which are on the way by sea) to cater for the many requests he has received. Others who are to receive copies are "several Nautical Magazines and The Exmouth Journal. Josiah is buried at Exmouth and this will give Josiah a little long overdue attention. In the past he has been hardly mentioned".

A second edition of the monograph was prepared and an additional 100 copies were sent to Richard. Shortly after, in my mail-box there was a letter from Richard with 100 pounds enclosed to cover his costs, with a request that anything in excess of his costs be donated to the Australian Branch of the Society. That figure is \$41.78 - certainly a generous gesture following upon his earlier contribution of \$42 towards publication of the first edition.

On behalf of the Society, many thanks Richard.

Editor.

SOCIETY NEWS

THEATRE NIGHT: On September 28, thirty-two members attended Her Majesty's Theatre, Melbourne, to see the situation comedy 'Lend Me A Tenor'.

It was an entertaining, fast-moving farce and all came away satisfied that they had witnessed an excellent performance.

The award winning play, by the American playwright Ken Ludwig, is in its second year on Broadway and was nominated for seven Tony awards, including Best Play. In addition to winning two Tonys, it won four Drama Desk awards. It has been performed throughout the world in eight languages, including Japanese. It was first performed in Australia at Perth in June 1990.

Ian T. Nisbet arrived in the middle of the performance. His late arrival was due to an aeroplane refuelers' strike. He was returning from a conference on the Queensland Gold Coast, a popular location for such events, particularly
(cont'd page 3).

at this time of year. Ian, his wife Gwenda, and daughters Wendy and Kirsty, had earlier in the month spent a pleasant ten days in Fiji.

The strike also made it particularly difficult for President Ian Nisbet and his wife Joy, who were returning from a business trip and holiday in Honolulu. They were delayed for 40 hours on the return flight.

After the performance, a group of fourteen met at the Windsor Hotel for supper and began heading for home at about midnight.

* * *

FOURTH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, OCTOBER 6, 1990: The meeting was held at 'St. Abbs', 26 Walnut Road, North Balwyn (the home of Ian and Joy) and as usual, events proceeded at a smooth pace.

The President delivered his address and the Fourth Annual Report and Financial Statement. Our second Monograph, recently arrived from the printer, was also distributed.

Mrs. Effie Todd accepted a position on the General Committee, where her talents will be greatly appreciated. Our newest member Mrs Michie Jensen, has joined the Social Committee, and all other office bearers were re-elected.

Associate Member and Guest Speaker for the evening, John Barth, volunteered to take over as Archivist, and for that the editor is deeply indebted.

When Ian declared the A.G.M. closed, John Barth spoke on "The Scots' Character - what is it, and how, if at all, does it differ from others?"

John is in public relations, an author, a lecturer with the Council of Adult Education and a radio producer. He is an eloquent speaker with a keen sense of humour and is thoroughly familiar with the subject. His talk was enlivened by reference to the many humorous traits of the Scots and others.

* * *

PROPOSED U.K. DINNER AND GATHERING: Considering a trip to the U.K.? If you are, then enter Nov. 30, 1990 in your diary and keep May 1991 in mind!

A committee meeting of the U.K. executive was held at Bath in early August and it is proposed to have a meeting (dinner) on Friday, November 30, 1990 at the Naval Club, 38 High Street, London W1 at 6.30 p.m.

Plans are also under way for a Border Gathering in May, 1991, but there are no firm details as yet. Information will be passed on when available.

Nisbet House, Duns (The Borders) is being restored and it is hoped to hold a gathering there at some stage in the future.

Richard K. Nesbitt (past U.K. Society President) who supplied this information says: "Don't forget that if any folks from Australia come through Hampshire, I shall be delighted to see them". His address is 54 West St., Alresford, Hampshire, telephone number 096 273 2922.

Richard is keen to meet and make welcome all N/Ns who visit the U.K.

* * *

COUNTRY GATHERING, MARCH 16, 1991: The venue for the gathering is now being determined and Ballarat, 113 km (70 miles) to the west of Melbourne looks the likely site. Peter and Lyndell Watson visited Ballarat recently and they highly recommend the city as a spot for a gathering.

It's an interesting city which began in 1838 as a sheep run on the shore of Lake Wendouree and really got moving in 1851 when gold was discovered nearby.

Ballarat is known as "The City of Begonias" and one of Australia's most successful and popular tourist attractions, the Sovereign Hill Goldmining Township, is situated there. The city is well served by first class motels and caravan parks. It is probable that the gathering will be held on the shores of Lake Wendouree.

Full details will be provided in our January Newsletter.

FEATURE ARTICLE

In this Newsletter we have no feature article, but we do have:

MORE ON THE BOARS (BOERS): The feature article from Newsletter 16 p. 3, "Boars of the Boer" requires further attention, as indicated below:

a) Amendment (Newsletter 16 p.4):

(3rd #) "Colonel Nesbitt was a veteran.....J.M. Thornhill". should follow immediately after ".....indicated as survivors". (1st #)

b) Errata:

(5th #) Bottom line should read "Maraisburg rather than Mafaisburg".

c) Addenda:

Some follow up to the article appeared in the U.K. Newsletter Vol. VII No. 3 (Summer 1990).

Comments by William F. Nesbitt (U.K. Editor).

1. It has been a great pleasure to contribute to this interesting article from Australia on the subject of Nesbitt's Horse and I am most grateful to the editor for allowing me to reproduce it here. However, there are I believe, a number of points that are not resolved and I am therefore reproducing a number of extracts from 'Who's Who' and 'Who Was Who' that are readily available from libraries in this country. Two immediate questions spring to mind:

a) 'Who was Colonel R.A. Nesbitt's brother, who was saved with him and his mother from the Birkenhead'?

b) 'Have we sufficient grounds to accept that Colonel R.A. Nesbitt and Colonel C.A. Nesbitt are one and the same person, bearing in mind that they appear as two separate individuals in "Who Was Who 1897 - 1916", and "Who's Who 1928" two highly reputable reference works, and no correction ever appears to have been made'?

2. From the information so far available it is still far from clear whether Captain Charles Warren Nesbitt, D.S.O. and Major Randolph Cosby Nesbitt are definitely brothers, or indeed whether they are even cousins. Further details regarding Lt. Col. C.A. Nesbitt (Charles Alexander) are necessary to determine this point.

3. Any further information relating to this subject will be appreciated.

Is this relevant?

NESBITT, COSBY LEWIS, LT. COL. of the 2nd Battalion, 60 Rifles, drowned on October 1, 1853 whilst fording the Kuskanna River in the Province of British Kaffraria, South Africa. At the time he was the Military Commandant of the province.

Is there a connection between Lt. Col. Cosby Lewis Nesbitt and Major Randolph Cosby Nesbitt, V.C. (1867-1956)?

Material supplied by Mrs Ruby H. Rawlinson (nee Nesbitt) c/o R.R Nesbit, R.D.1, Thornton Road, Cambridge, New Zealand.

In her letter to the editor, Mrs Rawlinson stated that there was a plaque to Cosby Lewis Nesbitt in (of all places) the Holy Trinity Church, Geneva, Switzerland, inserted by the officers of H.B.M. 60th Rifles.

(cont'd page 5).

A letter to Mrs. Rawlinson from Freda Zoetewey of Commugny, Switzerland, dated August 12, 1990 has been edited and appears below.

"A South African gentleman, who was visiting Sweden at the time, had written previously to the church archivist at Geneva expressing an interest in Lt. Col. C.L. Nesbitt....Mrs. Offord (the Church archivist) spoke to him and learnt that his interest was not genealogical; he was researching for an article. He had found no mention of Lt. Col. C.L. Nesbitt in standard historical books, however, he would make enquiries when next in the Eastern Cape. Could you please ascertain why a memorial tablet was erected in Geneva? Mrs. Offord could shed no light on the subject".

(When I noticed that Mrs. Rawlinson's maiden name was Nesbitt and her address, c/o R.R. Nesbit, I asked her if our records were correct. They were! It appears that her grandfather used the (tt) but some of his family and descendants had dropped the second (t). Once again, "What's in a name?")

Editor.

WANTED

(Members' Searches)

DR. ALEXANDER NISBET: We seek information and descendants/relatives of Dr. Alex. Nisbet, convict ships' surgeon.

Dr. Alex. Nisbet has appeared on two previous occasions in our newsletters. Newsletter 3 p. 6 and Newsletter 11 p. 1, as adapted from the book "The Convict Ships 1787-1868" by Charles Bateson.

The Society was recently approached by Miss June Slee, who is researching Dr. Nisbet for her Ph.D. at Macquarie University in New South Wales. Dr. Nisbet was ahead of the times in his approach to the treatment of male juvenile offenders during their journey to Australia, and Miss Slee's thesis is based on his methods. She is particularly interested to learn of his roots.

In addition to Bateson's references, it was revealed from copies of letters by Dr. Nisbet (Sept. 1864 - Jun. 1870) to contacts in Sydney, that he purchased prior to 1864, some 10 acres of land in Little Sirius Cove on Sydney's North Shore. He was endeavouring to sell the land from 1864 onwards, but still held it in 1871.

Thus we call on those Australian N/N's who have researched their families to their emigrant ancestors and beyond, and our U.K. and N.A. counterparts to assist Miss Slee in her endeavour, and indirectly the development of our society.

Please do this via our secretary or editor. Any information will be gratefully accepted.

It is interesting to note that Dr. Nisbet's letters were written on paper bearing a Nisbet Coat of Arms and the motto "...byde it" as is generally associated with "Nisbet of That Ilk".

Gary Nisbet.

FOUND

(Whose ancestor)

Sgt. A. Nisbet of 74 Squadron, R.A.F. appears in a photograph as one of five members of that Squadron's Aerobatics team.

From 'Tiger Squadron', The Story of 74 Squadron R.A.F. in two World Wars, by Wing Commander I.R.A. (Taffy) Jones, D.S.O., M.C., D.F.C., M.M.

* * *

(this section cont'd on next page).

Where did they go?

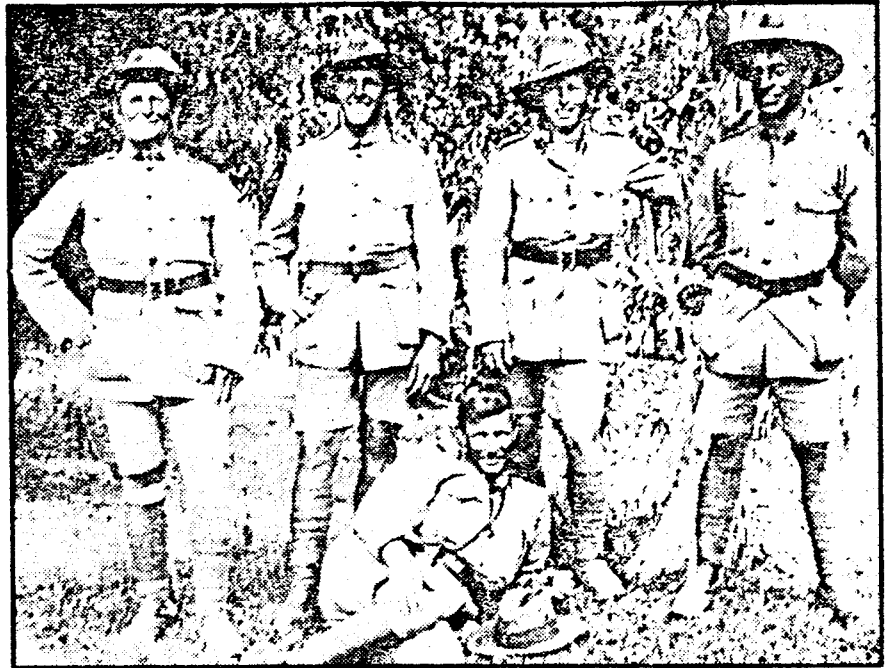
AS the veterans prepare for the last leg of their pilgrimage to Gallipoli to commemorate the 75th anniversary of Anzac Day, thoughts go to those boys of the old brigade.

The soldiers pictured at left are believed to be members of the 1st AIF.

It is thought they were photographed in Palestine. Were they en route to Gallipoli to become part of the Anzac legend? Or were they members of the Light Horse or Camel Corps?

The photograph was sent to us by Mrs R. N. Johnston, of Skipton, who found it among some family photos. Among the words on the back is the message "good to send to *The Weekly Times*".

Hopefully, a reader can tell us more about these smiling young men on their way to war.



These men are believed to be members of the 1st AIF ... A. Hagan, P. Lunn, E. R. Batterham, J. Strong and H. C. Batterham (foreground), but where are they now? The photo may have been taken in Palestine.

Batterham, the name of two of the five soldiers who appear in the above photograph, aroused the curiosity of Dot Nesbit of Ascot Vale, Victoria. As there are society members of that name, Frank and Hazel Batterham (Nesbit), Dot presumed a link and passed the information to me. A phone call to Hazel revealed a family connection, and the following is a lightly edited version of Hazel's letter:

"It was rather a coincidence that Marjorie Batterham, Frank's cousin, of Cowes, Vic., wrote and sent a copy of the photo which was published in the Weekly Times. She supplied the information you asked for.

The Batterhams in the photograph were uncles of my husband Frank.

H.C. Batterham, a bachelor, known as Charles, later went to Western Australia and died in the 1940s.

E.R. Batterham, known as Rowlie donated a large piece of his land at 'The Basin', Boronia, Victoria, to the local council and it is still known as 'Batterham Reserve'.

Rowlie enlisted for World War 2 and was at Balcombe Training Camp. After leaving his Boronia Nursery he moved to Rosebud and was killed in a car accident in 1958.

I believe there are daughters living in Melbourne who have contacted the Weekly Times".

It is both interesting and rewarding to discover this link with the past. Many thanks to Dot Nesbit for bringing the article to our attention, and to Hazel and Majorie Batterham for their contribution.

Editor.

WHEN MELBA VISITED IRELAND - THE NISBETT CONNECTION: Several years ago, Australians saw on television, four two-hour programmes (spread over four weeks) based on the life and music of Dame Nellie Melba. The series was filmed over three months in Melbourne, Queensland, England, France and Hungary. Hungary was included because that country depicted many of the turn-of-the century countries where Melba sang. The series spans a 45 year period.

Dame Nellie Melba (1861-1931), Australia's Queen of Song, married in 1882 Captain Charles Nisbett Frederick Armstrong, youngest son of Sir Archibald Armstrong of Gallen House, King's County (now Offaly), Ireland.

In 1901 Melba visited Ireland and sang with the Belfast Philharmonic Society in the Ulster Hall. She was accompanied to the concert by the Duke and Duchess of Abercorn, with whom she spent a weeks holiday at their ancestral home, Baronscourt, County Tyrone. When Melba arrived at Baronscourt she was tired and a little on edge. She was ushered into the drawing room where the Duchess and Lady Hamilton (the Duke's daughter-in-law), three children and the governess were all solemnly knitting. Dame Nellie, in her autobiography stated. "Before I said 'how do you do'", I cried out, "for heaven's sake stop knitting or I shall go mad".

Dame Nellie sang at a concert at Birr, King's County, near her husband's home, but was well routed in popular favour by the village belle, a strapping lass with red ribbons in her hair.

Melba's son, George Nisbett Armstrong, born 1883, married Ruby, daughter of Colonel Joceelyn Otway. Great-grandson Samuel Vestey became third Baron Vestey of Kingswood, the heir to a \$100,000,000 meat industry fortune which included a 20,000 square mile property in Australia's Northern Territory.

Note: (Australians of my vintage are quite familiar with the Vestseys, being one of many absentee landlords who had vast interests in Queensland and the Northern Territory).

Melba's brother, David Mitchell, married the eldest daughter of Thomas Blayney of Goulburn Valley Vineyards, Nagambie, Victoria.

Sir Nisbett William Armstrong, a nephew of Melba's husband, married in 1910 Clarice Amy, daughter of John C. Hodgkinson of Maryborough, Victoria and they resided at Battery Road, Napier, New Zealand.

Mr Anthony Armstrong Jones, now Viscount Snowden (former husband of Princess Margaret) is of the same family.

From Ulster Link No. 250, P.O. Box No. 135, South Melbourne, Victoria.

Editorial note: Can someone enlighten us as to how the name Nisbett became connected with Capt. Charles Nisbett Frederick Armstrong?

MISCELLANY

NIEZABITOWSKA - ANOTHER SPELLING: The following is an interesting article as it appeared in the U.K. Newsletter Vol. VII NO. 3.

"The Independent, published in London, Wednesday, 7th March, 1990. (Extract).

The coalition declaration was welcomed by the Polish Government spokeswoman Malgorzata Niezabitowska, 'as a big step forward'.

It is understood that the ending 'OWSKA' in the case of a woman, or 'OWSKI' in the case of a man was awarded in recognition of distinguished services. My Polish friend added that 'NIEZABIT' is pronounced exactly the same way as 'Nesbitt'. This would seem to be yet another spelling of the name."

STOP PRESS

THE FIRST FOUR YEARS - 'NEWSLETTERS (1 - 16) IN HARD COVER': The newsletter editors are in the process of indexing the first 16 newsletters and it appears that it will be possible to produce the 'book' for about \$25.00 plus postage. This is certainly not a sales gimmick. We want as many of these books as possible to be in the hands of members so that we may leave behind evidence of our efforts to preserve for perpetuity, the name of Nesbitt/Nisbet. More later!

Editor.

.....NOTICEBOARD.....

(Upcoming Events in the Local and Overseas Calendar)

- 1990 Nov. 2-8 Bill Kelsey (past N.A./U.K. editor) to visit from the U.S.
- " Nov. 30 Social Function - Dinner at Naval Club, London, 6.30 p.m. (See page 3).
- " Dec. 8 Christmas Gathering, 8 p.m. 'St. Abbs', 26 Walnut Rd. North Balwyn, Victoria..
- 1991 Jan. Newsletter No. 18.
- " Feb. 7 Executive Meeting.
- " Feb. 18 Family Gathering.
- " Mar. 16 Country Gathering (see page 3).
- " Apr. Newsletter No. 19.
- " May. International Gathering proposed, The Borders, Scotland.
- " Jun. 22 Social Function.
- " Jul. Theatre Night - Mid. July - Phantom of the Opera.
- " Jul. Newsletter No. 20.
- " Aug. Social Function.
- " Sep. 28 Annual General Meeting.
- " Oct. Newsletter No. 21.
- " Dec. 7 Christmas Gathering.

GENERAL COMMITTEE:

PRESIDENT Ian M. Nisbet, A.M., 26 Walnut Road, Nth. Balwyn, Vic. 3104, Aust.
 SECRETARY Ian G. Nisbet, 1 St. Johns Parade, Kew, Vic. 3101, Aust.
 TREASURER Peter Watson, 30 Mitchell Road, Box Hill North, Vic. 3129, Aust.
 EDITOR Bruce Nesbit, 6 Kent Court, P.O. Box 84 Bundoora, Vic. 3083, Aust.
 ARCHIVIST John Barth, 15 Duke Street, Ashburton, Vic. 3147, Aust.
 BOARD MEMBERS Dr. Ian T. Nisbet, Gavin M. Nisbet, Graeme Nisbet, Lyndell Watson, Karen Nisbet, Effie Todd.

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE:

Bruce Nesbit, Dr. Ian T. Nisbet, Gary R. Nisbet, Karen E. Nisbet.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE:

Joy Nisbet, Gwen Marsham, Heather Ames, Lyndell Watson, Merryn Nisbet, Lesley Nisbet, Elyse Classon, Diana Dimattina, Barbara Leslie, Helen Nesbit, Catherine Nisbet, Michie Jensen.



REGIONAL OFFICERS:

George Nesbitt 110 Ardross Street, Ardross, 6153, Western Aust.
 Brian S. Nesbitt 14 Davitt Close, Isaacs, 2607, A.C.T., Aust.
 James E. Nisbet 53 Yeo Street, Cremorne, 2090, N.S.W., Aust.

CONTACTS:

U.S.A.:
 Mrs. R.J. Nesbit 545 Hartnell Place, Sacramento, CA 95825, U.S.A.
 U.K.:
 Peter W.W. Nisbet 7 Stafford Place, Weston-super-Mare, Avon, BS23 2QZ Eng.
 AUSTRALIA:
 Ian G. Nisbet 1 St. Johns Parade, Kew, 3101, Vic., Aust.

The Nesbitt/Nisbet Society is a Worldwide Clan Society