

THE N/NEWS

NO. 21 OCTOBER 1991

NEWSLETTER OF THE
NESBITT/NISBET SOCIETY
AUSTRALIA



STARTING POINT

(Latest News and Views from the Editorial Staff)

How time flies! The Annual General meeting has slipped by again. To the incumbent committee members we entrust the N/N Society - Australia, (and we know they will look after it); the majority have been involved since its inception.

Our Society is well developed and continues to build on its strengths. Members' interest is evident by the quantity and quality of submissions for the Newsletter.

The passing of time precipitates change, you may have already noticed some. Consider how you may serve your society and make that conscious decision as to when; now or in the near future.

Remember, you the members, are the future of the society.

Gary R. Nisbet

(NES)-BITS & PIECES

(Snippets of General Interest)

TOURING NORTHUMBRIA AND SCOTLAND: During their recent tour, George and Dorothy Nesbitt of Ardross, Western Australia were made most welcome when they attended the Mellerstain Gathering in May, and were pleased to hear the tribute paid to the work done by the Australian branch. George supplied the society with a copy of the address, 'The Irish Connection', delivered by the U.K Newsletter Editor, William F. Nesbitt.

It is an interesting, well-researched document which was published in the U.K. Newsletter. Vol. VIII No. 2. Summer Edition 1991

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DRESS ROSE TARTAN: Joy Nisbet displayed a sample of the Dress Rose Tartan at the Annual General Meeting on 14th September. This tartan is particularly suitable for a skirt or full kilt.

Bill Gibson, of the House of Scotland supplied the following information:

"House of Scotland can supply to order, Dress Rose Nisbet, 56" (142.25 cm) wide, worsted pure wool material. The price, \$88.50 per yard (91.45 cm). The price would change only if the Australian dollar changed in value."

Contact: House of Scotland, 115 Whitehorse Rd., Balwyn, Vic. 3103.

Phone: [03] 817 5151 - Fax: [03] 817 4596.

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Early U.S./U.K Newsletters edited by Prof. John A. Nesbitt, contain a wealth of interesting information which is not accessible to most Australian members. It is our intention to include snippets in this and future newsletters.

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EYEMOUTH DISASTER: The following is a lightly edited version of an article which appeared in the U.S. Newsletter Vol. 1. No. 1, 1983, written by a lady who, at the time, was at least in her late seventies.

"I was born in the village of Rosewell, near Edinburgh on 11th November 1901. My father Jacob Nisbet, was born in the fishing village of Eyemouth, on the South East coast of Scotland. His father (my grandfather) was Alexander Nisbet who was drowned in the Eyemouth Disaster which occurred off the East coast of Scotland one hundred years ago (c 1883 Ed.).

The sea was very calm when the fishing boats departed in the morning; then a sudden squall arose and all the boats from Dunbar to Berwick-on-Tweed were wrecked on the rocks and over a hundred fishermen perished.

My grandmother was left a widow with five sons and a daughter to bring up, the daughter only two days old! I have many cousins with the Nisbet name, but have lost touch with them. My only brother was named Alexander and he named his only son Jacob, who was born in 1927.

I believe the lineage goes back for a long time, but I have not tried to trace it. I remember being told by my grandmother that the Nisbets were border 'sheep stealers', so maybe the English hanged some of them for that.

I hope this is of interest to the Nesbitt/Nisbet Society as I am sure some members have connections with my Berwickshire Nisbets."

Material by Mrs. Margaret Ann Nisbet Dodds, 18 Glebe Avenue, Stirling, Scotland FK8 2HZ.

Editorial note: This may be the same Nisbet family as that of Alexander Nesbit of Eyemouth, the convict boy whose trial at Berwick is covered in our Feature Article.

SOCIETY NEWS

THE ULTIMATE RESEARCH TOOL: Just imagine if, when looking for a Nesbitt/Nisbet ancestor or relation, how easy it might be if you could turn to one book and find them. That's the objective behind a recent project begun by our archivist, who is compiling a 'Who's Who' of Australian N/N's (by whatever spelling).

The idea is to compile biographies of known N/N's, past and present, in one document which can then be published annually and circulated to all our members. Ever adventurous, we hope the project will be taken up by our affiliates overseas, so that the work becomes an international project.

Of course, we're going to need your help. You can do this in two ways. Firstly, you can send in any details you wish recorded about your family - either the migrant, or, we hope also, his descendants. Secondly, whenever you come across any mention of an N/N, send it on. Each small piece will help complete what is, after all, a jigsaw of the movements of those of our name.

It does not really matter what shape or form the information you have is in, we'll format it and add it to the collection. But, for those of you who would like it, we can send you a proper form for completion and return.

Please send your contribution to the archivist, John Barth, 15 Duke St., Ashburton, Vic. 3147. You can also fax him at home on (03) 885 7777, or ring him at home on (03) 885 9275 if you have any queries.

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YUM(MY) CHA: Twenty three society members lunched at the Oriental Chalet in Bulleen on 11th August. The number of courses and variety of food was determined only by self control i.e. being able to say 'no' and knowing your (stomach's) limits. Social intercourse was as free flowing as the food, especially once Saint Nesbitt * materialised.

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All round (and weren't we all!) a very enjoyable experience. Thanks to the Social Committee for organising such.

* Note: Saint Nesbitt is not quite a Saint, but the next best thing - a good bottled red! It is made and bottled at the property at Hingaia Road, Karak, South Auckland, New Zealand.

Gary R. Nisbet

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5TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: The meeting, as usual, was held at "St. Abbs", 26 Walnut Road, North Balwyn - the home of Ian and Joy Nisbet - with 20 in attendance.

The President presented his address and commented upon, among other things, that after five years, the membership in Australia had established at a level that enabled a sound financial structure to be maintained.

The meeting re-elected all existing Office Bearers and was pleased that Ian Nisbet consented to act as President for another year.

At the conclusion of the Meeting, a Fifth Birthday Celebration Supper was enjoyed by all and we were treated to an exhibition of Bruce Nesbit's cake cutting technique as he cut the special birthday cake.

A raffle was held for two excellent prizes of a large Azalea and a bottle of Scotch which were won by Liz Barth and Alan Ames. Alan donated his prize which was won by Lesley Nisbet. Two lucky prizes were won by Liz Barth and Sue Ames. Liz, nearest birthday to the event, and Sue, the youngest to attend.

Graeme Nisbet

HO HO HO!



CHRISTMAS PARTY 7TH DECEMBER: Please enter this date into your diary as a reminder to attend our traditional Christmas Party at 'St. Abbs', 26 Walnut Rd., North Balwyn, Vic. 3104, commencing at 8 p.m.

U.K. GATHERING 1992: In a 'Message From The President' - Richard Kerr Nesbitt - delivered at the Mellersatin Gathering, 1991, he said, in part, "..... we very much hope to be able to hold the next Gathering at Nisbet House, if Dr. Hawley can complete the restoration work in time. Should this prove to be impossible, then the Gathering will be held in another suitable location in the Border Country. In any event the Gathering will take place on either Saturday 23rd May, or Saturday 30th May 1992. The actual date will be announced in the next Newsletter. Another suggestion, is that in future years we should hold the Gathering on a date that coincides with one of the Border Festivals, such as 'Jethart Callants Festival' in Jedburgh, but this would not be in 1992, although the 1992 Gathering might well provide a suitable opportunity to discuss an idea at the Annual General Meeting."

Australian and New Zealand members who may have in mind, a trip to the U.K. in 1992, should enter into their diary the proposed date/s of the gathering, for the last month of the northern Spring.

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FEATURE ARTICLE - (AN EARLY SOAPIE?)

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

The following article which covered the trial of James MacFarlane and Alexander Nesbit appeared in the Kelso Mail, The Borders, Scotland on 11th July 1836.

Alexander was the emigrant ancestor of three N/N Society members, and there are no doubt many more who are descended from Alexander and his wife Martha Baker who married in 1845 at Campbelltown, N.S.W. They had 11 children.

Alexander arrived, aged 15 years, at Port Jackson (Sydney) N.S.W. on John II from Sheerness. It was thought that his 'native place' was Maynooth, to the west of Dublin, Ireland, but it is now thought that he was from Eyemouth, Berwickshire, to the north of Berwick-on-Tweed.

This is the same Alexander Nesbit who has been immortalized by the Australian Branch of the Society by the Alexander Memorial Trophy, presently held by Marie and Jack Foley. (See Newsletter 19 page 5).

"BERWICK - FELONY: James Macfarlane and Alexander Nesbit were next placed at the bar, charged with breaking into the warehouse of Messers Sked and Crossman, in Dewar's Lane, Berwick, and stealing two hempen sacks, valued at one shilling and, a quantity of brown soap, valued at five shillings.

Mr Losh stated the case and called the following evidence in support of it. Benjamin Mace (witness) is a twine spinner in Berwick, and he knows the prisoners; recollects Macfarlane coming out from the head of Dewar's Lane with another boy, on the 24th April last; does not know who the other was; he was about the same height as Nesbit; they were carrying bags under their arms at about half past eight at night; knows where the warehouse is; the boys were about twelve yards from the head of the Lane when he observed them, and they turned down Bridge Street.

By the Recorder: Witness thinks Macfarlane wore cordroy trousers on the morning he saw him; he wore blue trousers when brought before the Magistrates.

Margaret Foreman senior sworn: Is the wife of James Foreman, and keeps a grocer's shop; recollects buying one bar of soap from Nesbit on the 25th of April; she afterwards went to Nesbit's father's, (home?) she did not see the prisoner there, but met him in Sampson's Walk and desired him to take back the soap and return the money; gave him one bit back; prisoner said he had got the soap from on board a foreign vessel; did not say what he had given for it, but the people in the vessel had asked him to take it up to sell. Witness saw the prisoners together the same day in Sampson's Walk; called them to take back the soap, as she understood it had not been got from a vessel; Macfarlane said he "had nothing to do with it"; Nesbit said, "are you going on that way already?" Nesbit then said "give the woman back the money," and Macfarlane replied "I have no money;" Nesbit answered "you have"; and then the latter went to the Rev. Mr Barnes's stable door, opened it, took off his shoes and got two shillings, gave the money to Macfarlane who gave it to the witness; Nesbit went with her and she gave back the soap; it was brown soap, something whitish.

Margaret Foreman Junior, corroborated the evidence given by the former witness.

James Muir examined: Is a stucco manufacturer and knows the prisoners.

Witness bought a bag from Nesbit on the 25th of April; in course of that day he applied to Nesbit to take back the bag, as he heard it was stolen; witness did not care whether he received back the money or not; Nesbit said he would take back the bag in a little time; Nesbit said he got it from a French or a Dutch-man with soap; Macfarlane was present; witness threatened to give the bag to Mr. Proudfoot, and did so.

Jane Laidlaw knows both prisoners; recollects Monday the 25th of April, on which day Nesbit came to the house selling soap; he had given in exchange knives, forks, spoons etc, for it. In the evening Nesbit returned with a sack, there was no soap in the sack; witness marked the sack before it left the house.

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Eleanor Hunter recollects being in Mrs Laidlaw's in April, when Proudfoot came in; she gave him the sack; showed him two, on one of which Proudfoot made his mark; would know the sack.

George Howe is a prisoner; knows both the prisoners at the bar; recollects Nesbit coming to his house on the 25th of April requesting him to buy soap; he had a sack in which the soap was contained; prisoners went to Mr Foreman's shop to weigh it, and came back, and witness paid him for some; in seven minutes Nesbit came back to offer another piece, which witness refused. Witness went to a ship in the harbour and asked the mate about the matter; the mate said they had no soap for sale. He then made Nesbit take back the soap, and received his money from him. Nesbit promised to give witness a pint or two of beer if he would not tell Proudfoot, and said that Macfarlane had given the soap to him.

James Proudfoot recollects on the 25th of April, going and getting the soap from Mrs Laidlaw. (The bag and the soap was produced.) Ellen Hunter marked the bag; witness got another sack from James Muir.

Joseph Gilchrist is warehouseman to Sked and Crossman; knows the sacks, but cannot say as to the soap. He recognised the sacks, one of which had contained fuller's earth and the other had not; saw the ten sacks last in the warehouse on the 16th of April, on the 26th of April he found two missing, but missed no soap till Mr Proudfoot came, when he observed, that four bars had been taken out of the window; he then looked and discovered that in all, three stones of soap had been stolen.

Alexander Crossman examined: Is of the firm of Sked and Crossman, dealers in soap. (The soap produced.) This is the kind of soap they sell; the warehouse is about 60 yards down Dewar's Lane. Joseph Gilchrist, re-examined by the Recorder, (witness examined the soap now produced.) This is the same he had in the warehouse in colour and quality; the warehouse is locked at night, and the window looks into the yard; off this window he found some wooden rails (broken) on the 25th of April. Could not say if they appeared recently broken or not, but had not observed them broken before. Henry Paylin's hayloft adjoins the warehouse.

The Recorder summed up the evidence and the jury retired at about half past three o'clock, and remained in consultation for two hours, when they returned to Court, and the Foreman stated that they wished to have the evidence of Margaret Foreman the elder heard again in reference to Macfarlane's criminality. The witness having been dismissed, the Recorder read over the evidence again, particularly that part relating to the transfer of the two shillings by Nesbit to Macfarlane at the Rev. Mr Barnes's stable door. Upon hearing this the jury again retired and after further deliberating till six minutes past seven o'clock returned with a verdict of 'not guilty' for Macfarlane, 'guilty' against Alexander Nesbit.

The Recorder then sentenced Nesbit to 'transportation beyond the seas' to such place as His Majesty in Council should be pleased to appoint.

The prisoner, who appeared to be quite young then wept most bitterly on hearing the sentence, although his conduct during the trial seemed nearly as callous as that of Macfarlane's."

Material for this article was supplied by Richard Kerr Nesbitt, President of the U.K. branch of the Society.

WANTED

Nesbitt, Robert, b. 1828 or 1832, Newtownards, Co. Down, Northern Ireland. He died on 22nd May 1911 at Auckland, New Zealand, aged 82.

Robert enlisted in the 65th Regiment at Glasgow in 1852 aged 20 years and was discharged - having completed his engagement - at Auckland in 1864.

He was a weaver by trade. (presumably in Ireland, Ed.) He arrived at Auckland in June 1854 on the 'Egmont'. Robert was a Presbyterian and it is believed that he had a brother, Hugh - who may have dropped the second (t) -

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who went to Australia and probably lived in the Goulburn/Young area of New South Wales.

His parents were probably Hugh Nesbitt and Florence Rachael McBride of Newtownards and Killyleagh, Co. Down, Northern Ireland.

Information is sought from anyone who may be a 'link' with Hugh Nesbitt of N.S.W., Australia.

Contact: Mrs Beverley Wharry, 19 Matua Road, Tauranga, New Zealand.

FOUND

A NEAR MISS: Our secretary, Ian G. Nisbet received an interesting letter from Shirley Nesbitt of Howick, New Zealand which he passed on to me.

Shirley tells of her experience when searching for her husband's relatives in Ireland, and I'm sure readers will find her story interesting. Rather than edit her letter, I think I should let Shirley tell it as it happened.

"Thank you for your welcome. Your newsletter is superb. Enjoyed Margaret Vicker's letter p.11; could relate well to what she said.

In 1989, along with my sister, I toured all of Ireland. We hired a car in Dunoolghaire and stayed in country houses throughout Ireland.

After many adventures we arrived in Belfast. I knew from earlier research that the street my husband, John Taggart Nesbitt had lived in as a boy was no longer there, but armed with a street map we photographed the church and school he had attended. We then tried to find the vicinity of the now demolished street.

Anyone who has been to Ireland, knows about the Irish doors - you don't know what's behind them until you turn the knob! After a little detective work, one finds that the door on the corner is usually a pub.

In Northern Ireland, women are frowned on for entering the domain of the men, but in we went. We were lucky. One of the men knew where Leggogh Street had been. His Aunt had lived there for many years. He thought maybe she had known my mother-in-law, Martha Nesbitt.

'There she is across the road. That's her wearing the blue hat.'

I hurried over, introduced myself and asked the question. 'Yes, yes, she knew who I meant, but if she didn't hurry she would miss her seat at the Senior Citizens' Monthly Luncheon' and off she shuffled.

A Near Miss? I'll never know! Look forward to your next newsletter.

Regards

Shirley Nesbitt."

Editor

WE WERE WRONG

In Newsletter 20 page 2, 'Brown Clan Gathering', paragraph 5, Alleyne Hockley's address should read 24 Wilkie Street.

In the next article 'Nesbitt/Nisbet Arrivals in Australia', paragraph 1, we inadvertently promoted our secretary to professorial status or, alternatively, granted Ian G. O'Brien honorary Nisbetship/Nesbittshep.

With apologies to Alleyne Hockley, Ian G. Nisbet and Ian G. O'Brien.

OBITUARY

Robert Melleson Nesbitt died on 11th May 1991 at the age of ninety (b. 15/9/1900) He was the son of Robert Chancellor Nesbitt, author of 'Nisbet of that ilk'. His career as a lawyer in London was interrupted during W.W. 2 when he served in the R.N. off the Welsh coast, with a stint in the Admiralty Arch, helping draw up the Italian Peace Treaty.

While he was not actively involved in the N/N Society, being in his eighties when the society was founded, he was always glad to hear about its activities, and greatly encouraged my own interest in the family history.

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The obituary on the previous page appeared in the U.K. Newsletter Vol. VIII. No. 2. Summer Edition, 1991 and was written by Mark Nesbitt, 14 Kirkby Close, Cambridge, CB4 1XP, U.K.

MISCELLANY

ROYAL SOCIETY OF ST. GEORGE, MELBOURNE BRANCH, INC.: For those members who are English or of English extraction, it will interest them to learn of the existence of the above society.

The first Royal Society of St. George to be established outside England, was set up in Australia in 1901 in Sydney. And the first Society of St. George in Victoria was founded in 1948.

It is a very active society and the brochure which I've received shows that there were four functions held in the month of August.

For further information contact Secretary, Mrs. Joyce Rider on (03) 885 1459.

Material supplied by the Rev. William Coffey, who produces the Scots and Irish Link magazines. P.O. Box 135, South Melbourne, Vic. 3205 or P.O. Box 370, Thames, New Zealand.

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NEW MEMBERS 1990-1991: We take great pleasure in welcoming the following new members, some of whom we have previously mentioned.

Mary Bilton, Maryborough. Vic.; Ann and Frederick Jensen, Mt. Eliza, Vic.; Sandra Mann, The Grange, Qld.; Jason Heeps, Elwood, Vic.; Winifred Edmondson, Horsham, Vic. and John and Shirley Nesbitt, Howick, N.Z.

For full addresses please see enclosed Membership List, ID's 214 - 219.

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STAND AND DELIVER, 100 AUSTRALIAN BUSHRANGERS, 1789-1901: The book by Associate member Allan M. Nixon of Bendigo, Victoria, has received favourable reviews by Brian Patterson and Caroline Van de Pol - in the Melbourne Herald-Sun - over recent months. It has been described as, "having been meticulously researched, which brings to light new facts about the lives and foul deeds of those notorious criminals (including an N/N) and destroys some previously unquestioned folklore".

I have a copy and found it to be a 'good read', and I regularly pick it up and browse through it.

Published by the Lothian Publishing Company Pty Ltd, 11 Munro Street, Port Melbourne, Victoria 3207. **Editor**

STOP PRESS

NESBITT/CALDWELL LINK? As a result of Robert J. Linford's Feature Article, 'An Essay Into Irish Genealogy', which appeared in two parts in Newsletters 19 and 20, Mrs. Ray Caldwell of Burwood, Victoria, is of the opinion that she and Robert may share the same Nesbitt ancestors in County Down, Northern Ireland.

We hope to have more about this in the next newsletter.

NOTICE BOAR-D

(Upcoming Events in the Local and Overseas Calendar)

- 1991 Dec. 7 Christmas Party.
- 1992 Jan. Newsletter.
- " Feb. Executive Meeting.
- " Mar. 21 Proposed Autumn Gathering at Geelong.
- " May. 23) U.K. Gathering. Nisbet House or at another
" or 30) suitable location in The Borders, Scotland.

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 Nisbet, Graeme Nisbet, Karen Nisbet.

SOCIAL COMMITTEE:

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

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 Brian S. Nesbitt 14 Davitt Close, Isaacs, A.C.T. 2607, Aust.
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The Nesbitt/Nisbet Society is a Worldwide Clan Society