

THE N/NEWS

NO. 25 OCTOBER 1992

NEWSLETTER OF THE
NESBITT/NISBET SOCIETY
AUSTRALIA



STARTING POINT

CHANGES: Members will notice a few changes with the appearance of Newsletter 25. As mentioned in the last newsletter, Bruce Nesbit has stood down as Editor. As a result some changes have been inevitable; not necessarily as a result in changes to editorial policy, but more a reflection of different word processing systems for producing the newsletter. Most of the features and format remains the same, hopefully maintaining the quality that members have come to expect and appreciate. Some new features will be introduced (as soon as the new editorial committee has had a chance to get organised). As always, members contributions will be gratefully accepted. Comments, criticisms and suggestions are also welcome. We need to know that the newsletter is serving the needs of the members - that is what it is here for!

(NES)-BITS & PIECES

NESBITT COCKBURN OF MARYBOROUGH, VICTORIA: Nesbitt Cockburn, fifty one, clerk of courts and sub treasurer died on 13 December 1879. Born in Dublin the son of Major Cockburn of Her Majesty's 9th Foot, he graduated B.A. at Dublin University before migrating to Adelaide in 1852. He came to Victoria in 1854 where he was employed firstly in the Customs and then in the Law Department. For some time clerk in the City Police Court, he went to Inglewood for eighteen months before coming to Maryborough. He participated largely in public life, being treasurer of the hospital and secretary-treasurer of the Free Library Committee. The limitations of the fight against disease (in this case pneumonia) were realised in the 'Advertiser' report of 15th December 1879 which said "Towards the end of last week the illness or species of pneumonia, which took a more serious turn, and getting from bad to worse, Dr Tremearne of Creswick was communicated with and arriving on Saturday, held a consultation in conjunction with Dr Jackson, the result being that all hopes of his recovery were given up."

The above is a direct extract (reprinted with permission) from the book "Maryborough a Social History 1854-1904" by Betty Osborne and Trenear DuBourg, first published in 1985. It was printed in Australia by Dominion Press - Hedges and Bell for the Maryborough City Council. Dot Nesbit has located the only death notice in the Victorian deaths which could have been that of Nesbitt Cockburn: "1879 (reg. number 11079) listed as Hugh John Nesbitt Cockburn who died aged 51; his birthplace also Dublin; parents John Fortescue Cockburn and Mary Nesbitt."

SIR ALEXANDER NISBET, M.D., R.N. - THESIS BY MS. JUNE SLEE: In newsletter 17 (page 5) we mentioned that June Slee was researching Sir Alexander Nisbet for her Ph.D. thesis at Macquarie University. June called to see Ian M. Nisbet at his office on October 9th to discuss how her thesis was progressing. She expects to complete it by next February. June still has a few gaps in her information and is making a final effort to fill them.

Alexander's medical history is well known, leading through to being appointed Inspector of Hospitals and Fleets, and Honorary Physician to Her Majesty Queen Victoria. What is not known is:

Who were his parents?
 Where and when was he born?
 Where did he receive his early education?
 Details of any other members of his family.

We know that at the time of his death on 22nd June, 1874, aged 79, he lived at Arley Lodge, Blessington Road, Lee in the District of Lewisham, County of Kent. We also know that his wife's name was Lucy S, who was 25 years younger than him, that his daughter was Lucy J, and he also had a son. His sister was Jane Findlater. He served on convict ships a total of seven times.

Any N/N who may be able to help with information should contact Ms. June Slee, 3 Jillong St., Rydalmere, N.S.W. 2116. In due course it is expected that June's thesis will be published as a monograph.

GAVIN & JAN NISBET - TOUR OF ENGLAND AND SCOTLAND: Bruce Nesbit received a card in August from Gavin and Jan - a picture of the inside of the remains of Jedburgh Abbey, with only the walls left standing. Gavin wrote: "Have been to Hawick on the way to Jedburg and Nisbet territory, west and east. Also visited Mellerstain where an arts and crafts exhibition was on in the outer grounds, under canvas. Stayed at Jedburgh and Duns - saw Nisbet House, and visited Edinburgh Castle. Plans for a visit to Ireland have failed due to holidays of the locals therefore will explore North Scotland for seven days."

NEW MEMBER, DR. BRUCE NESBITT OF ONTARIO, CANADA: When Ian and Lorna O'Brien were passing through Ottawa on their return from a study stint at Cardiff University in Wales, Ian took time out to phone Dr. Bruce Nesbitt who lives at Rockcliffe Park, Ontario. Ian informed Dr. Nesbitt of the existence of the N/N Society and gave him (our) Bruce Nesbit's address. As a result Bruce received a letter from Dr. Bruce, which said in part: "I would be grateful if you would send me information about joining your society and any publications you may have available. I suspect that the Ottawa area has the greatest concentration of Nesbitts in Canada, perhaps because of three male Nesbitts - probably Protestant Irish - who settled at Frankston, Ontario in December 1821."

SOCIETY NEWS

WILLIAMSTOWN ADVENTURE, SUNDAY 9TH AUGUST, 1992: A most delightful day was spent in the area of Williamstown which is just humming with sensational history. We were extremely fortunate to have as our guides of the town Mr. and Mrs. Howard Whittaker, who are lovers of Williamstown and all its attributes. These public-minded people gave of their time unstintingly to show us firstly the Museum, housed in the Mechanics Institute; then to escort our 25 members and friends to the ship building area, the former Naval Dock Yards, the Time Ball at Gellibrand Point, and then on to the Commonwealth Gardens containing relics of Lord Nelson. So much information was presented that it is not possible to list it all here; suffice it to say that all present were enthralled with such detail.

After a fleeting 1½ hours of historical wallowing, the group went to the Gourmet Mariner Restaurant where they enjoyed an excellent lunch and wonderful conversation.

Article supplied by Joy Nisbet.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, SEPT. 5TH, 1992: Once again our A.G.M. was well attended, with 28 members present. It was a night of business and pleasure; the business being the various reports and the election of office bearers; the pleasure being Margaret Hookey's address and the excellent supper (as usual). A highlight of the meeting was the appointment of Bruce Nesbit (our retiring newsletter editor) as an Honorary Member of the N/N Society - more of that on the next page.

With regard to the election of office bearers, we were fortunate to retain the services of all those people who have built the Society to what it is today, while also managing to bring in a few new faces. A complete list of office bearers is shown on page 8. Some new positions have been created in an attempt to share the workload around a little more evenly than in the past. No doubt the Society will continue to be well served by its executive and committee!

VISIT BY JO AND RAY NESBIT FROM SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA: Thanks to Ian and Joy Nisbet, many N/N members have had the opportunity of meeting two of our U.S. kin, Jo and Ray Nesbit. Jo is Secretary-Treasurer of the North American branch of the Society and she and Ray are keen to re-establish a North American newsletter. During their six days in Melbourne, several functions were arranged to allow Jo and Ray to meet local N/Ns. The functions included a family 'get together' on Saturday October 3rd, and lunch at the Savage Club and dinner at the Regent Hotel on Wednesday October 7th. The family 'get together' was attended by 25 N/Ns, giving a warm welcome to Jo and Ray. As a memento of their visit, President Ian M. presented them with a copy of The First Five Years of the Nesbitt/Nisbet Society in Australia. Those N/Ns who did not have the opportunity to hear of Ray's exploits as a 'thrillseeker extraordinaire' will be interested to read the newspaper reprint on page 7.

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP TO BRUCE NESBIT: In recognition of his exceptional service to the N/N Society, Bruce Nesbit was awarded an Honorary Membership to the Society at the recent A.G.M. Bruce initiated the Society in Australia and, since its inception, has done most of the work associated with the Newsletter, the Monographs and other publications. At the A.G.M., Ian M. Nisbet prefaced presentation of the award to Bruce with the following remarks:

"Much has been said and written over the past six years in appreciation and acknowledgement of the initiative and outstanding service of Bruce Nesbit in the foundation of the Nesbitt/Nisbet Society in Australia. The time has come when it is appropriate that we should make some permanent and tangible recognition to the man who made it all possible. I therefore have much pleasure and satisfaction in moving that A. Bruce Nesbit be and is hereby elected an Honorary Member of the Nesbitt/Nisbet Society, Australia, in recognition of his outstanding service to the Society since its inception and particularly as Founder in 1986 and then as Newsletter Editor, 1986 - 1992."

N.B. While Bruce has relinquished the Editor's position, he will continue to play an active role in the Society and will remain involved in production of future newsletters. I'm sure all members (and particularly the editorial committee) thank Bruce for his excellent efforts. Mention must also be made regarding the role played by Helen Nesbit in supporting all of Bruce's activities.



In the photograph above we see Bruce Nesbit being handed his Honorary Membership certificate by Ian M. Nisbet. The wording on the certificate encapsulated Ian M's remarks (above). The certificate was set off with a border of Nisbet tartan, creating an award which any N/N would be proud to display. Thanks are due to Karen Nisbet who used her graphics skills to create the certificate.

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENTS

Ian O'Brien, one of our regular correspondents, recently visited Scotland and attended the U.K. Gathering at Floors Castle, Kelso on May 31st. The following is an abridged version of a letter from Ian to Bruce and Helen Nesbit, which is part travelogue and part meeting report, but all of interest to N/Ns.

"We arrived in the Borders the day before the N/N gathering and stayed at a very pleasant B&B just south of Jedburgh. It was a small farm on the east side of the river Teviot tributary; an ideal place for us to do a little bird watching (another of our passions). As evening approached Lorna and I took our binoculars to look for a pair of geosanders which the owner had seen some days before grazing along the river. Instead we were entertained by a very vocal Chaffinch and a multitude of Rooks, but the next morning we saw our first pair of Dippers - marvellous to watch as they dipped in and out of the water for food.

Next morning (31 May) we set out for Kelso via Morebattle where Lorna's great grandfather Boswell was born. The place was so interesting that we were a little late for the start of the N/N meeting (also partly due to an error in the information we obtained on the starting time), but Lorna was delighted that she saw the churchyard with so many names relating to her forebears.

We enjoyed the meeting, the lunch and all the people we met. We arrived as Charles Burnett was discussing the Nisbet Panel, and the hierarchy of people who attended the funeral of an important person - an interesting talk it was too, well illustrated with slides. We both regretted missing the start of it.

Over a most pleasant lunch, our table got deeply engrossed in an interesting conversation on the interaction of Scotland with England, Ireland and Wales, and on the collaboration between the UK and Australian N/N Societies. Mrs Rosi Capper was introduced in the afternoon session as an expert on Mary Queen of Scots, to speak on this topic under the title 'A Border Connection' and though she

denied being an expert she presented the results of some extensive research done by the group she represented, the museum at the Mary Queen of Scots house at Jedburgh.

You will no doubt get a formal report of the Annual General Meeting but some items of interest were the discussion on how Australia had such a successful society, which contrasted with difficulties experienced in maintaining interest in the US, and starting a group in Canada. The activity of Australia in publishing N/N items and monographs was highlighted and congratulated, and interest in obtaining copies of these was expressed. Naturally, I transmitted best wishes etc from the President, Committee and members of the Australian Society. Richard Kerr Nesbitt was unable to attend the meeting due to illness. Like Lorna and I, all were sorry not to have his pleasant company and counsel. Fortunately, we had visited him in January. Some difficulties in obtaining a venue for gatherings (present and next) with direct relevance to the N/Ns unfortunately still remain.

At the end of the meeting a shepherd's crook made by one of the members, a bottle of Scotch whisky and some St Nesbit wine were raffled, the winners to choose one in order. My luck in these things is usually so poor that I didn't even look at my tickets when the winning number was announced. After a pregnant pause, and a second announcement, Lorna said "Check your tickets". For the first time in years, I had actually won something. Lorna responded "Not the whisky!!" I had been carrying a bottle with us on the trip, and it was going down only slowly. I chose the crook (my Scottish Highland forebears on my mother's side - Graham, McPherson - were crofters and shepherds; I'm still working on my

father's Nesbitts). It was very cleverly made from a carved rams-horn head fastened to a natural timber rod. The carving read 'NISBET' on one side and 'I BYD IT' on the other. When I read it my first response was "No I didn't - I won it". The crook hasn't left us since. It was beside either Lorna or me all the way around the Highlands, back to Wales and home on flights, in hire cars and buses through USA (London, Boston, Washington, Baltimore, Ottawa, Chicago, Denver, Spokane, Calgary, Vancouver, Honolulu, Nadi, Sydney and Canberra).

On the way out of Kelso on the morning after the gathering, we decided to visit Ford and Etal, where Lorna's Carsons (married her Boswell) came from. Again she found a great deal of information on relatives in the churchyard and in the registers fortunately copied and kept in the church. She was beside herself with joy, but perhaps only a little less

than my joy when I found my MacPherson GGGF, his wife and several of his family (3 generations) listed on three tombstones at Croik in the top of Ross-Shire. This was a special find in view of the importance of the Croik churchyard as a memorial to one of the brutal 'Highland Clearances' - that of the Glencalvie valley. It is such an interesting and sad story it warrants a separate article. If you would like to read of it I will write something for you. On the way back from the Highlands, we visited a cousin at Muir of Ord whom I found through an advertisement which I placed in the Ross-Shire Journal a few months earlier. It's a great pleasure to meet relatives after spending so much effort to find them. On the way south we had an unexpected brilliant view of a family of Goosanders on River Orchy near Bridge of Orchy north of Crianlarich. This birdwatching gets one in!"



The above photograph was taken at the Floors Castle gathering. From left to right we see Stuart Nisbet (U.S. President), Prof John A. and Dolores Nesbitt from Iowa City, Nancy Nisbet (Stuart's wife), Lorna O'Brien, Jo and Ray Nesbit from Sacramento, and Prof Ian O'Brien.

Birthdays never dull for thrillseeker

By Kelly L. Johnson
Neighbors staff writer

Ray Nesbit knows how to celebrate a birthday. To celebrate his recent 80th birthday, the Campus Commons resident jumped out of an airplane, his first attempt at the daring activity.

On his 75th birthday, he went parasailing in Mexico. Again, it was his first experience with the sport.

On his 70th birthday while on an around-the-world adventure, he let an 8-foot-long boa constrictor slither around his neck.

For his 65th birthday, Nesbit went on safari in East Africa, where he shot and killed a lion that had attacked two native children.

On his 60th birthday, he landed on a glacier in New Zealand at an elevation of 12,349 feet in a Cessna ski plane. Just weeks later, a similar ski plane crashed at the same site, killing several people. As a result, that type of plane was discontinued.

The list goes on.

Explaining her husband's penchant for excitement on

his birthday, Josephine Nesbit joked, "You have to compensate somehow for getting old."

Actually, this year Nesbit's excitement came a little late. He made his tandem jump at the Yolo County Airport in Davis Sunday, after his Nov. 14 jump was postponed because of fierce winds. Even with the winds, though, he went through the skydiving lessons on his birthday. Alongside him were his son, his daughter-in-law and his step-granddaughter.

They joined him again Sunday afternoon for another session of instruction and then the tandem jump. His step-granddaughter jumped twice.

Nesbit said the jump was his son's idea. "My son usually has something crazy for me to do on my birthday," he said.

When Bruce Nesbit, who lives near San Francisco, first proposed the idea, his father said no. "It just sounded like a crazy idea," Ray Nesbit said.

See Birthday, Page 8

'I've done a lot of things in my life. I've been around the world, been to over 100 countries and been in two wars. I've been bombed and shot at and I've survived. So I intend to survive on this one.'

— Ray Nesbit, on trying skydiving

Reprinted from Neighbors-NE, Thursday December 5, 1991, pages 3 and 8. Unfortunately space restrictions precluded the entire article from being reproduced.

O B I T U A R Y

MARY JANE GERTRUDE ('GERTIE') NESBITT, 3.7.1882 - 5.8.1992: It is with regret that we note the passing of our oldest member, Gertie Nesbitt. A simple Mass was celebrated at St. Benedict's Church, Burwood by Father Durkin, who also officiated at Gertie's 110th birthday (see Newsletter 24, page 7). The words 'gentle woman' were reiterated many times in referring to Gertie's life and her devotion to her Church and her Christian principles. Father Durkin referred to Gertie as a prayerful, caring lady who it was a privilege to have known.

Vale Gertie Nisbet.

NOTICE BOARD-D

(Upcoming Events in the Local and Overseas Calendar)

1992	Oct. 15	Executive Meeting.
"	Oct.	Newsletter 25.
"	Dec. 5	Christmas Party.
1993	Jan.	Newsletter 26.
"	Mar.	Country Gathering: Possible venue Gisborne, Woodend or Macedon.

GENERAL COMMITTEE:

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 ASS. SECRETARY: Effie Todd, 18 Hillview Avenue, Mt Waverley Vic, 3149 Aust.
 TREASURER: Peter Watson, 30 Mitchell Road, Box Hill North, Vic, 3129 Aust.
 EDITOR: Dr. Ian T. Nisbet, 17 Palpera Terrace Greensborough, Vic. 3088 Aust.
 ARCHIVIST: John Barth, 15 Duke Street, Ashburton, Vic. 3147 Aust.
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REGIONAL OFFICERS:

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

CONTACTS

U.S.A.:
 Mrs. R.J. Nesbit 545 Harnell 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, Vic, 3101. Aust.



The Nesbitt/Nisbet Society is a Worldwide Clan Society