

THE N/NEWS

NO. 29 OCTOBER 1993

NEWSLETTER OF THE
NESBITT/NISBET SOCIETY
AUSTRALIA



STARTING POINT

A SOCIETY WITH A MISSION: Leading up to the recent AGM, several of the members of the executive met together to discuss where we stand as a society, where we are heading, and whether we are fulfilling the needs of members. Arising from this meeting was a re-affirmation of the direction of the society, as well as some ideas for new initiatives (described elsewhere in this newsletter). One thought arising from the meeting was the idea of a 'mission' for the N/N Society.

N/Ns who work in large companies will no doubt be familiar with the concept of corporate missions. For those unfamiliar with the concept, the basic idea is to have a phrase or sentence which encompasses the reason for existence of the organisation; in other words, what is it seeking to do? The N/N Society already has a number of purposes, as members will have seen printed inside the front cover of our published monographs and in our annual reports. However, a mission is something more than just a list of purposes, something a little grander and a little more inspiring. At this stage, the suggested mission for the society is

"To document and enrich the lives of N/Ns, past, present and future."

Hopefully, this short sentence encapsulates the reason for the existence of the N/N Society. And hopefully, working towards achieving our mission will inspire continued enthusiasm for, and involvement with, the society.

(NES)-BITS & PIECES

ANOTHER DIRLETON CONNECTION: Major W Hughes recently joined the N/N Society and, in his covering letter to Peter Watson, mentioned that the Dirleton Nisbets were part of his ancestry. He wrote, "William Nisbet and Jane or Jean Bennett were my Great Great Great Grandparents. Their daughter Jane Nisbett (sic) married Alexander Ogilvy (7th Lord Banff) and are my Great Great Great Grandparents. I have recovered the Ogilvy family back to about 1420. I wonder if there is an Ogilvy or Douglas Society in Australia?"

From: Major W E Hughes MBE RL, 18 Dalmeny St, Toowoomba, QLD 4350.

(Anyone who can answer this last question may like to contact Major Hughes - Editor.)

N/NS IN THE NEWS

This section is for newspaper cuttings relating to or featuring N/Ns. Now they will not only be in the news - they will also be in the N/News! Please send any suitable cuttings you may come across to the editor.

VIDEO OF THE WEEK



'An Affair To Remember' (1957): Leo McCarey's wonderful romantic comedy in which Cary Grant, as millionaire playboy Nicky Ferrante, woos an initially otherwise-engaged Deborah Kerr in the

greatest of all the Hollywood shipboard romances. They agree to meet six months later at the top of the Empire State Building, "the closest thing we have to heaven in New York". Grant and Kerr are perfect, as is Cathleen Nesbitt in a choice role as Nicky's grandmother, and McCarey's timing, wit and unshamed sentimentality are totally disarming. Hard to find, but it has been released and is highly recommended.

Sunday Age 8.8.93

Herald-Sun 18.8.93



MARGARET Nisbett ... found fresh challenges.

Television opened doors

WHEN opera star Margaret Nisbett returned to Australia in 1962, television opened up a new world of employment for her.

Having trained extensively in opera in Melbourne, teenaged Margaret flew to England in 1954, where she became principle singer with London's prestigious Sadler's Wells Opera Company for eight years.

But 24 operas later, homesick Margaret had had enough and returned home to a surprising abundance of work.

"My first television job back in Melbourne was with Hector Crawford's *Music For The People*, on Channel 7," Margaret said.

"Having television up and running here meant I could diversify into lighter music. I was able to sing operettas, musical comedy and even ballads."

As soon as Margaret

BACKTRACK

Jacqui Johnson

stepped off the plane from London, she took over the role of Maria in the stage production of *The Sound Of Music* from June Bronhill who, along with Dame Joan Sutherland, had worked with her in Sadler's Wells.

Margaret also performed regularly on Channel 9's *Carols By Candlelight* and became a familiar face on Graham Kennedy's *In Melbourne Tonight*.

"After working for so many years in serious opera, it was a real shock working on *IMT*," Margaret said.

"The pranks that happened when Tommy Hanlon Jr was in the chair were unbelievable.

"I remember one occasion when I was singing a duet with Ormond Douglas

and the platform I was standing on suddenly started moving towards the ceiling.

"It was very hard to keep a straight face."

In the 1970s, Margaret co-hosted a music program on ABC-TV called *The Patrick O'Hagen and Margaret Nisbett Show*.

"The ABC's Ripponlea studios were very busy in the 70s," Margaret recalls.

"I appeared in many of their musical comedies and five operas, as well."

Later that decade, Margaret joined the Victorian Concert Orchestra, touring Victorian towns staging Sunday concerts.

She also linked up with the Footscray-Yarraville World Champion Brass Band and toured America and Canada with them.

Margaret's efforts were rewarded in 1980 when she was awarded the MBE for her services to music. Having performed before royal

ty in Britain, Margaret was honoured by the award.

"That sort of recognition is just fantastic," she said.

"As a small child, I recall loving the applause and the recognition and it's that love that has kept me dedicated."

In addition to her ongoing singing career, Margaret currently teaches singing at the Melba Conservatorium and instructs privately.

Her students range in age from 12 to 72.

"I encourage all my pupils to diversify," she says. "There's more work if there are more strings to your bow."

In the tradition of great Australian opera singers, Margaret believes Suzanne Johnston is the next most likely to succeed internationally.

"She'll be a world famous star one day," Margaret says.

"She has a wonderful talent."

SOCIETY NEWS

PROFILE: Continuing on with our series of 'pen portraits', in this N/News we feature our Publications Officer and ex Newsletter Editor, Bruce Nesbit.

A. Bruce Nesbit: Bruce was born at Bendigo, Victoria in 1919, the youngest of four sons of John Herman and Eila Agnes (Carter) Nesbit, first and second generation Australians, respectively. He attended Princes Hill State School, Melbourne, and then Brunswick Technical College until year nine.

During World War II Bruce served in Field Artillery and, with the 2/4th Light Anti Aircraft Regiment of the 9th Australian Division, saw service in Papua New Guinea. His field was communications and he held the rank of Battery Signal Sergeant.

After the war, Bruce married Helen Shields in October 1947. Bruce and Helen have two daughters: Leeane Marie, born Christmas Eve 1948, and Deborah Susan, who arrived in April 1954.

Bruce worked for the P.M.G. (now Telecom) as a technician, senior technician and, for the last thirteen years of his career, as a draftsman and senior draftsman involved in the circuit design of message switching systems using micrologic components.



Over the years, Bruce's avocations have been swimming, basketball, football and, when the craze hit Melbourne, ten pin bowling. Since 1979, he has been involved in his family research and, over the past seven years, has been extremely active in the Australian branch of the Nesbitt/Nisbet Society. In fact, it is thanks to Bruce (with a little prompting from Peter W. W. Nisbet of the U. K. branch) that the Australian branch was started in the first place. His initiative in "setting the ball rolling" and his skill and effort as our first Newsletter Editor, provided a solid base upon which the society has continued to build.

SPECIAL EVENT SATURDAY 6TH NOVEMBER A RECEPTION FOR JUNE SLEE, PhD

On Saturday 6th November at 8.00pm, N/N members are invited to the home of Ian and Joy Nisbet for a reception for June Slee and her husband, Peter. As noted in the last newsletter, June has just received her PhD, based upon her thesis on Sir Alexander Nisbet MD. During the evening, June will present the Society with genealogy documents associated with Sir Alexander and will talk about aspects of her research.

ABOUT OUR GUEST: June was born in Winton, New Zealand in 1945. She moved to Sydney, Australia in 1982 and has worked with behaviourally disturbed students since that time. She completed a PhD in Special Education at Macquarie University; her thesis being entitled "Dr Nisbet's Report, 1836 - 1837, A Study of a Behavioural Program". June is currently working on a project associated with the subject of her thesis - the treatment of convict boys transported to van Diemen's land in the early nineteenth century.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 18 SEPTEMBER, 1993: The formal commencement of another year in the life of the society began with the recent A.G.M. As usual, the night was a mixture of business and pleasure. The business part started with the President's report on the activities for the past year and plans for the year coming. A copy of the report is enclosed with this newsletter. The next item of business was the election of office bearers. Apart from a couple of additions, there were no changes from the previous year. The society is indeed fortunate that to have this supply of people who give substantial amounts of their time to keep things moving along.

The pleasure side of the evening began with a short talk by Graeme Nisbet, describing his and Catherine's recent trip to Europe. Graeme's talk was a mixture of a description of the frustrations of genealogical research and a general travelogue. Of particular interest were Graeme's stories of their trip to the northernmost tip of Europe and their excursion down a salt mine in Germany.

Graeme's talk was followed by the standard, excellent N/N supper.

FUTURE PLANS: As outlined in Ian M Nisbet's report, the executive has some exciting plans for projects over the next couple of years. In the immediate future, there will be another monograph. Bruce Nesbit is already well advanced in preparing "Nesbitology", which will go out to members next year. In the longer term, we plan projects on N/N heroes, an N/N family album, and N/N servicemen and women.

With regard to the N/N heroes, we aim to put together a collection of stories written by N/N members about the heroes in their own families. To be a hero doesn't necessarily mean that the person had to carry out brave and heroic deeds. Any person who has been respected, loved, admired within their family; who has been a significant influence on the lives of their family; who has left a mark; could be described as a hero. These are the people we want N/Ns to write about, so that their stories can be recorded and so that the richness of their lives can be shared with future N/Ns. Further details on this project will be provided to members in the coming months.

FAMILY SNIPPETS

This section is for brief snippets of news to keep members informed on the comings and goings of our extended family. Send snippets direct to the Editor, or scribble a note on your membership renewal form and Peter or Lyndell Watson will send it on. One line is all we need!

- * Helen and Bruce Nesbit, with family members and friends, celebrated the 21st birthday of Benjamin, their number one grandson. The event took place at an Eltham restaurant. Bruce, having left the N/N A.G.M. early, arrived in time for the main course.
- * Effie and Blain Todd are grandparents (for the third time) with the recent birth of Stephanie Jane.

FEATURE ARTICLE

In this edition of the N/News we feature the final part of Mark Nesbitt's excellent article
IN SEARCH OF THE NISBET FAMILY IN EDINBURGH.

Combined with exceptionally helpful staff and a policy of unrestricted admission, this is a great place to work. The size of its stock does mean that most books are in store, so you do need to know what you want to look at. But the cataloguing is excellent, and I found publications here that are in no other library. I also spent a lot of time in the Manuscripts Room (again, helpful and fast) looking especially at the numerous deeds relating to Nisbet House, given in 1947 by Lord Sinclair. A good knowledge of 17th century legal hands is necessary to read these, but I enjoyed seeing the signatures of Sir Alexander Nisbet, his wife Katharine Swinton, and of others involved in the stirring tale of how Nisbet House was lost after the Civil War. Another prize was a letter from Alexander Nisbet the Herald, on the trail of more genealogical information. There is a mass of N/N manuscripts here, and anybody with ancestors likely to write - for example, missionaries and preachers - should look here.

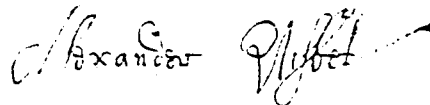
SCOTTISH GENEALOGY SOCIETY (15 Victoria Terrace, Edinburgh EH1 2JL. Tel: 031 220 3677. Library open Tues 10.30-5.30, Wed 2.30-8.30, Sat 10.00-5.00. Membership £12; £2 for one day use for non-members). The SGS has recently found a permanent home in this cavernous basement. A relatively young society, founded in 1953, the SGS is actively expanding its library and collections. I found the lack of a library catalogue unhelpful, but the collections are very varied and well worth a browse. The holdings of memorial inscriptions are very strong, and there are microfiches of the International Genealogical Index and Old Parochial records of Scotland. The quarterly "Scottish Genealogist" is good reading for those actively working in this area.

EDINBURGH CENTRAL LIBRARY (George IV Bridge, long opening hours). This should be one of the best sources for Edinburgh history, but an atmosphere of gloom surrounds this building, and everything is done to discourage the reader. Starting with the Edinburgh Room, no books are on public access, making this collection useless unless the exact book needed is known. An idiosyncratic subject index is maintained, and I was able to find some interesting press cuttings from it. The library does hold some attractive paintings of the mansions of Dean and Craigintinnie, but a staggering £15 (compared to 50p in my local library) was asked for copies, so I have not been able to study these in detail. One painting could not be found.

The Scottish Room, in the basement, is a better bet, although virtually no recent books are to be found and, again, much of the stock is hidden from the public. However, there are two copies of Nisbet of that Ilk, and the Scottish history section repays browsing. Xeroxing, at 15p a sheet, is expensive.

EDINBURGH UNIVERSITY LIBRARY (Special Collections, Edinburgh EH8 9LJ. Tel: 031-667 1011; open office hours). This library is an example of how, despite all the pressures on university library funding in the last 10 years, a good service can still be maintained by committed staff. Jo Currie, Archivist (and author of an excellent article on Edinburgh alumni records in a recent Scottish Genealogist) showed me a variety of Nisbet documents from the Manuscript collection. I enjoyed Alexander Nisbet the Herald's handwritten Blazon of Arms' beginning with 8 pages of accounts and a medical prescription "For Alex. Nisbet July the 14 1688". There are also a number of letters from the 18th century Dirleton Nisbets and others. It was particularly pleasing to find a copy of my ggg-grandfather's Medical Thesis, handsomely printed in Latin, submitted for his M.D. in 1827.

Alexander Nisbet's signature in the Matriculation record of the university for 1675.



FOR ANOTHER VISIT: There are a number of N/N relics I never had time to track down. In the hall of the National Museum of Antiquities is a memorial to Alexander Nisbet and other great figures from Scotland's heraldic past; in the museum itself is a painted ceiling from Dean House, and the Carre Heraldic panel from Nisbet House, this latter given on loan to the museum by R.C. Nesbitt. As a consequence of the reorganisation of the museum as the new Museum of Scotland, both items may be difficult to see in the near future. The missing carved stones from Dean Cemetery need some detective work - perhaps the cemetery office knows about them, and there is the 17th century Renaissance door-pediment, bearing the arms of Nisbet of Craigintinnie seen in the 1950s in the garden of Viewforth, Cammo Road, Barnton. There is even a 1960s council block in Restalrig Park called Nisbet House, presumably in memory of the earlier local landowners. The National Gallery of Scotland has the fine collection of paintings bequeathed by Mrs. Nisbet Hamilton Ogilvy (of the Dirleton line) in 1921; these include a portrait of Mary Manners (1756-1834), wife of William Hamilton Nisbet, by Gainsborough.

CONCLUSIONS: I hope this brief tour of Nisbet/Nesbitt history in Edinburgh will be found useful by visitors. Bear in mind that most of the buildings can be seen on a Sunday, when libraries and archives are shut. Bear in mind too that in this necessarily incomplete account I've left out the context, the amazingly rich and evocative history of the city itself.

FURTHER READING: M. Cant (1986) "The villages of Edinburgh, Volume 1", Edinburgh: Donald.

J. Gifford, C. McWilliam & D. Walker (1984) "Edinburgh". London. Penguin.

J. Grant (1882) "Cassell's old and new Edinburgh". London: Cassell. Most of my illustrations come from this invaluable book.

G. Lorimer (1915) "The early days of St Cuthbert's Church". Edinburgh: Blackwood.

R.C. Nesbitt (1941) "Nisbet of that Ilk", London: John Murray. This is still the major source. There are copies in the National Library of Scotland and Edinburgh Central Library.

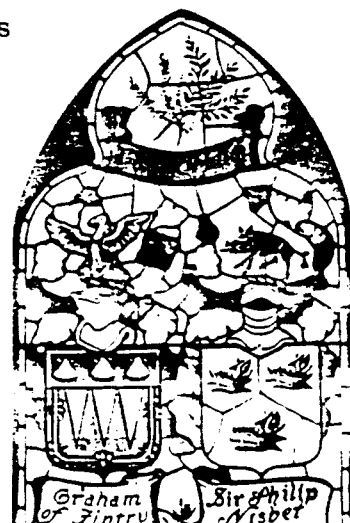
R.V. Nisbett (1990) "The progression of a branch of the Dirleton Nisbets to Australia: a monograph", Nesbitt/Nisbet Society (Australia). Soon to be reprinted by the UK Society. Brings the story of the Dirleton Nisbets up to date.

A. Ross & F.J. Grant (1892) "Alexander Nisbet's Heraldic Plates". Edinburgh: Waterston. Tells the story of the Nisbet estate during the Civil War, drawing heavily of the documents now in the NLS.

Royal commission on the ancient and historical monuments of Scotland (1951). "An inventory of the ancient and historical monuments of the City of Edinburgh".

Edinburgh: HMSO.

D. Wilson (1891) "Memorials of Edinburgh". Edinburgh.



A PANEL FROM THE MONTROSE WINDOW IN ST. GILES CATHEDRAL, EDINBURGH,
SHOWING THE ARMS OF SIR PHILIP NISBET OF THAT ILK TOGETHER WITH THOSE OF
GRAHAM OF FINTRY, TWO OF THE COMRADES-IN-ARMS OF MONTROSE

FOUND

MORE ON THE DIRLETON NISBETS: Recently Mrs Zolla Ashford wrote to Mark Nesbitt of the U.K. Society with the following information:

"I see from your recent publications that you say that you have scant records of William Nisbet of Dirleton's second marriage. Perhaps these few details may be of interest.

"At New Register House, Edinburgh.

OPR 685¹/44. Marriages 1649/94

Mrs Jane Bennet daughter of Sir William Bennet of Grubett 1st Bart to William Nisbet of Dirleton 29 March 1688.

OPR 685¹/46. Marriages 1705/29.

Mrs Jean Bennet lawful daughter of Robert Bennet, Dean of Faculty of Advocates to William Nisbet of Dirleton 23 April 1711.

These two ladies were first cousins.

"William Bennet, Presented as Minister of Ancrum 1623, married 1641 Margaret Eliot eldest daughter of William Eliot of Stobes - issue

1. William born 13 12 1641. 1st Bart. issue
Jane m Wm Nisbet of Dirleton 29 March 1688
2. Robert born 4 1 1645. Dean of Faculty of Advocates - issue
Jean m Wm Nisbet of Dirleton as 2nd wife 23 April 1711.

"Scots Magazine under deaths -

June 30 1762 Dame Jean Bennet relict of Wm Nisbet of Dirleton.

"Scottish Record Office. CC8/8/119/1.

14 April 1763. The will of Jean Bennet, Lady Dirleton proved by Hon. Alexander, Lord Banff, husband of Jean, Lady Banff, Alexander, Earl of Leven, husband of Williamina, Countess of Leven, daughters of Mrs Jean Bennet.

12 knives, handled of Silver, 5 Salt Spoons, 1 Mustard Spoon, 9 Silver tea spoons. Total 14 pounds 4 pence Sterling or 168 pounds 4 shillings Scots."

From Mrs Z. Ashford, 5 Luton Place, Edinburgh EH8 9PD.

- Editor's note -*
1. *This information makes a nice connection to Major Hughes (p1).*
 2. *I wonder how many widows nowadays would like to be referred to as their husbands' "relics"?*

OBITUARIES

WILLIAM LESLIE (LES) NISBET AND JESSIE NISBET (BRANDRUP): It is with sorrow that we note the passing of husband and wife, Les and Jessie Nisbet, on 26 July and 1 August, respectively. Les and Jessie were longstanding and well known residents of Wedderburn, Victoria, and were the brother and sister, respectively of N/N members, Eric and Annie Nisbet (also of Wedderburn). They were also cousins of the editor, who spent many happy times in their company. It would be difficult to find two more genuine and kind-hearted people than Les and Jessie. They will be sadly missed by their family and friends.

NOTICE BOAR-D

(Upcoming events in the Local and Overseas Calendar for 1993/94)

6 Nov.	Reception - Dr June Slee (see p3 for details).
4 Dec.	Christmas Party.
Jan.	Newsletter 30.
5 Mar.	Country Gathering - Bendigo.
April	Newsletter 31.
April/May	Clan Gathering.
4 June	Speaker - Mrs Frances Brown (State Library of Victoria).

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The Nesbitt/Nisbet Society is a Worldwide Clan Society