

THE N/NEWS

NO. 30 JANUARY 1994

NEWSLETTER OF THE
NESBITT/NISBET SOCIETY
AUSTRALIA



STARTING POINT

YEAR OF THE FAMILY: Well, it's the start of another year; isn't it amazing just how quickly they pass. Hopefully 1994 will be a happy and successful year for all N/Ns. It hasn't received a lot of publicity as yet, but 1994 has been designated as 'The Year of the Family'. This year, let us re-focus on family values, strengthen family ties, and renew family linkages that we have let slip in the past. And having done so, let's try to keep reinforcing them into the future.

As well as having our own immediate families, N/Ns are fortunate that, through the N/N Society, they are also part of a worldwide extended family. This family needs to be nurtured as well. So, when you think of your family during 1994, also think about your broader family. Together we can make 1994 a great year for our Society.

(NES)-BITS & PIECES

BURIED BY THE SEA: "A History of Williamstown Cemetery" by Andrew Lemon and Marjorie Morgan contains, in Appendix 6, p213, a list of burials. Included in the list are:

Minnie Nesbitt, buried 26.3.1908.
William Waddell Nesbitt, buried 6.6.1893.

Are these people related to any N/Ns?

Material supplied by Ian Clarke of Balwyn and Dot Nesbit of Ascot Vale.

N/N RECORDS: Lorna O'Brien has supplied to Bruce Nesbit several lists which may be of interest to Society members. These lists are:

English Convicts in Colonial America.
Location of graves of N/N British Servicemen who served in France in WWI.
Probate lists, UK 1852-1920.

The complete lists of five pages are available from Bruce for \$2.00 (to cover photocopying and postage) in Australia, and \$2.75 for New Zealand members.

Also from Lorna O'Brien comes the following article from the "Launceston Advertiser".

Launceston Advertiser, Mon., 1 June, 1829.

VARIOUS DEFINITIONS OF A GOOD FELLOW
BY
SIR THOMAS NESBITT

Being desired by His Majesty to draw up, for all whom it may concern, "a definition of a Good Fellow," I thought proper to apply to the members of the club, individually, for such hints as they could furnish with me, for the prosecution of the design. I received the following:-

MR. GOLIGHTLY

A good fellow is one who rides blood horses, drives four in hand, speaks when he is spoken to, sings when he is asked, always turns his back on a dun - and never on a friend.

MR. LE BLANC

A good fellow is one who studies deep, reads Trigonometry, and burns love songs; has a most cordial aversion for dancing and would rather encounter a cannon than a fancy ball.

HON. G. MONTGOMERY

A good fellow is one who abhors moralists and mathematicians, and adores the classics and Caroline Mowbray.

SIR T. WENTWORTH

A good fellow is one who attends the fox dinner, and drinks the Queen's health, - would go to the Indies to purchase independence, and would rather encounter a buffalo than a boroughmonger.

MR. M. STERLING

A good fellow is a good neighbour, a good citizen, a good relation; - in short, a good man.

MR. McFARLANE

A good fellow is "a bonnie, braw John Hielandman".

MR. O'CONNOR

A good fellow is one who talks loud, and swears loudly, cares little about learning and less about his neckcloth, - loves whiskey, patronizes bargemen, and wears nails in his shoes.

MR. MUSGRAVE

A good fellow is prime-flash-bang up.

MR. BURTON

A good fellow is one who knows "what's what," keeps accounts, and studies Ocker.

MR. ROWLEY

A good fellow likes turtle and cold punch, drinks Port when he can't get Champagne, and dines on mutton with Sir Robert, when he can't get venison at my Lord's.

MR. LOZELL

A good fellow is something comounded of the preceding.

MR. OAKLEY

A good fellow is something perfectly different from the preceding, - and Mr Lozell is an ass.

Such has been the mildness of the present Season that most of the Fruit trees blossomed twice, and the Rose trees in our neighbour Mr. PATTEN'S garden are now in full *blom*.
(sic, though the last italicised bit passed over my head, and what is Ocker?)

SOCIETY NEWS

ANNUAL COUNTRY GATHERING SATURDAY 5TH MARCH BENDIGO

Put this date in your diary now. The annual country gathering has traditionally been an enjoyable day for the whole family; this year will be no different. Details will be mailed out to members soon.

REMINDER: Now that the festive season is over and everyone is settling into their normal routines, it is a good time to remind N/Ns about membership renewal. Those members who have forgotten to send in their subscription are asked to 'dig out' those renewal forms and send them in to Peter Watson as soon as possible. Remember, the only way the Society can continue to provide its services is through the financial (and other) support of its members.

MONOGRAPH - NESBITOLOGY: Speaking of services to members, along with this edition of 'The N/News' members are receiving a copy of our latest monograph. Thanks once again to our Publications Office, Bruce Nesbit, we are able to provide a quality publication by and about N/Ns. We trust that members will enjoy reading their copy of 'Nesbitology'.

SOCIETY FUNCTIONS - RECEPTION FOR JUNE SLEE AND CHRISTMAS PARTY: Towards the end of last year two Society functions were held, both at the home of Ian and Joy Nisbet. The first (Saturday 6 November) was an evening with June Slee, who recently completed her PhD on Dr Alexander Nisbet MD and his revolutionary behavioural program. June gave an excellent talk on Dr Nisbet; it was as if she actually knew the man himself! Her thesis was also available for members to view, a highlight being the superb photograph of Dr Nisbet late in life. At the end of her talk, Ian M Nisbet presented June with a bound copy of "The First Five Years of the Nesbitt/Nisbet Society Australia in Newsletters" on behalf of the Society.

The second event (Saturday 4 December) was the annual N/N Christmas Party. As usual, this was well attended and greatly enjoyed by members. Christmas carols were given 'the N/N treatment' and, once again, debate raged about the right tune for 'Away in a Manger'. Predictably, Helen Nesbit maintained her unblemished record of winning N/N raffles!

Both functions were characterised by the sumptuous 'N/N supper'. Many thanks go to the Social Committee for their efforts and to Ian and Joy for their hospitality.

NISBET HOUSE CARDS: The UK Branch of the N/N Society has printed a run of cards featuring Nisbet House. They are available from Peter W W Nisbet (7 Stafford Place, Weston-Super-Mare, Avon BS232QZ, UK) at around A\$10.00 per pack of 12. We are fortunate to have a sample, in the form of a Christmas card from the UK Society to the Australian Society. For members' interest, both sides of this card are reproduced on the next page.

FEATURE ARTICLE

In this edition of the N/News, **Raymond Nisbet Rolinson** and **James Edward Nisbet** share with us yet another aspect of the Dirleton Nisbets:

THE DIRLETON NISBET'S ART COLLECTION.

The recent exciting discovery in Dublin of the long-lost painting "The Taking of Christ" by the Italian baroque artist Caravaggio (1573-1610) calls to mind the fine collection built up over a century by the Nisbets of Dirleton.

This work formed part of the collection which was dispersed on the death of the last of the line, Mrs Nisbet Hamilton Ogilvy of Beil in 1921. She bequeathed some twenty-eight paintings to the National Gallery of Scotland in what was the first major art gift to the Scottish nation. Others were sold or retained by the family.

Much has been written over the years about the sale from the collection, in 1912, of Thomas Gainsborough's Jonathon Buttall (known as "The Blue Boy"). Once belonging to the Prince Regent, this now hangs in the Henry Huntington Library at San Marino, California. Because of the interest in this famous portrait, many other fine paintings have been overlooked.

William Nisbet (1747-1822) was the first member of the family to collect, and both he and his wife were painted by Allan Ramsay. William married Mary Manners, grand-daughter of the Duke of Rutland, whose outstanding art treasures still exist in Belvoir Castle. Mary brought with her, possibly from this collection, Lely's "Duchess of Rutland" painted about 1670. She also brought two paintings of her mother, Lady Robert Manners; one by Allan Ramsay (arguably Scotland's finest portraitist) painted about the time of her marriage in 1756, and another by Sir Thomas Lawrence painted some seventy years later. This dramatic painting, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1826, shows the Lady Robert at the age of eighty-nine on a high-backed red chair against a dark red drape. The artist, then at the height of his powers, captures the dignity of the sitter in her old age.

William Nisbet bought Saftleven's (1609-1685) "Christ Preaching from a Boat", now in the National Gallery of Scotland.

William Hamilton Nisbet, their son, was the greatest and best informed collector of the family. He was particularly interested in Caravaggio and his followers and, whilst on his 'grand tour' in 1776, purchased a copy of Caravaggio's "The Gamesters" from the Barberini Palace in Rome. It was during that visit he was painted by Pompeo Batoni. On his second visit in 1801/1802, William bought four Caravaggesque works from the collection of Marchese Asdrubale Mattei in the Palazzo Mattei. One of the four, "The Tribute Money", was purchased as a Rubens but entered the Gallery as a Ribera. Cleaning and research revealed it to be an important Serodine (1600-1630).

"Christ Disputing the Doctors" by Gramatica was sold in 1921 and "Christ and the Woman of Samaria", catalogued in 1671 as a Turchi, was sold at the same time (but as a follower of Ludovico Carraci). The fourth picture "The Taking of Christ", bought as a Gerrit van Honthorst (a Dutch follower of Caravaggio working in Rome), was sold in 1921 and given to the Jesuit Fathers in Dublin in the 1930s. Long thought to be one of the thirteen known copies, recent cleaning and research has proved it to be by Caravaggio himself. It is currently valued at LStg25 million and is on permanent loan to the National Gallery of Ireland.

William Nisbet also acquired two studio works of Bassano, one of which is in the National Gallery of Scotland. It is interesting to note that the six paintings cost LStg570. La Bruzzi acted as an intermediary for William, and William bought two landscapes by him.

Mary Manners was painted by Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788) in London, soon after her marriage to William Nisbet. This fine full-length portrait, now in the

National Collection, shows Mary in an elegant pose amidst a syivan setting. It is amongst the master's last works.

Another member of the family to add to the collection was Mary Nisbet (1777-1855), daughter of William and Mary (Manners) Nisbet, who at the age of twenty-two married Thomas Bruce, Earl of Elgin and subsequently Robert Ferguson of Raith. She had an interest in Dutch art and bought four superb portraits by Jan de Bray (1627-1697), originally thought to be by Franz Hals. She also bought the "Dutch Family Group", attributed to Nicholas Maes (1634-1693), who painted in Rembrandt's studio and folowed his distinctive style. Other Dutch pictures included works by Cuyp, van Goyen and Verbruggen.

A painting of Mary Nisbet by Gerard,

Painted in 1806, was also presented ot the Gallery. A miniature of her by Henry Bone R.A., painted about the same time, remains with the family.

Mary Nisbet's son-in-law, Robert Christopher Nisbet-Hamilton, added several important paintings. These were two Venetian scenes, "Santa Maria delle Salute" and "San Georgio Maggiore" by Francesco Guardi (1712-1793), and de Heem's "Fruit and Lobster", all of which are now in the National Gallery of Scotland. The "Holy Family and St. Francis" by Bellini and his pupils was sold.

Robert Christopher Nisbet-Hamilton's wife purchased the "Fantastic Landscape" by Paul Bril in 1880, making it the last known piece to be added to this unique family collection.

References:

National Gallery of Scotland (HMSO).

The Progression of a Branch of Dirleton Nisbets to Australia, Robert V. Nisbett.

Italian and Spanish Paintings in the National Gallery of Scotland.

Thomas Lawrence, Leveson-Gower.

Nisbet of that ilk, R.C. Nesbitt.

November 1993

The Scots Link

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THE NESBITT and NISBET SOCIETY

Those who bear the surname Nesbitt or Nisbet and their relatives are fortunate in that there is a very active Nesbitt/Nisbet Society worldwide to which they should all belong. Not only is there an excellent Newsletter that circulates among the members in every State in Australia and in New Zealand, but every now and than an outstanding booklet is published.

"Josiah Nisbit - Royal Navy 1793-1800" tells of the life and activities of a colleague of Lord Nelson.

"The Progression of a Branch of the Dirleton Nisbets to Australia" tells of the move of one of the family of William Nisbet, Laird of Craigintinnie, a suburb of Edinburgh, to Sydney. He was John Hyde Nisbett, son of Major General John Nisbett who arrived there on 14 December 1861. From there members of the family were to be found in a number of places in Australia.

The authors of **"Four Short Stories of Nisbet"** were Stanley Nisbet born 1912 at Isafjord, Iceland; James E. Nisbet born 1922 at Tamworth, NSW, and Raymond Nisbet Robinson born 1930 in Invercargill, New Zealand. This in itself indicates how interesting these booklets are. They are on sale for a nominal cost from Bruce Nesbit, 6 Kent Court, Bundoora, Vic 3083 and should be purchased if only to hand down to your descendants and relatives.

N/NS IN THE NEWS

The article below appeared in "The New Idea", 30.10.93. To most members, the N/N connection will not be immediately obvious. Jacqui Green is an N/N through her maternal line - her mother is Joy Green (nee Nisbet). Jacqui's family (which includes several N/N members) is extremely proud of her achievement.

Jacqui's dream role

Melbourne mother of two Jacqui Green has made the transition from managing a children's wear shop to centre-stage in a theatrical extravaganza. She has landed the lead in the new Australian production of A Chorus Line.

Jacqui, 29, who performed on television variety shows several years ago, thought her dancing days were over before she auditioned for the part of Cassie.

"I began dancing as soon as I left school and I was fortunate enough to stay in work for many years," she says. "Then I had the children and I began managing the shop. I thought, 'I have had a great career as a dancer, but now it is over'. After that I really didn't give it another thought."

Jacqui and husband Mark Atanasouski were busy with their daughters Emma, 9, and Alexandra, 6, when an old friend phoned with news of an upcoming audition.

"She told me about the show and begged me to try out for the part of Cassie," says Jacqui. "I said, 'No way!', but Mark encouraged me to go along and see what happened. I realised that if I didn't go I would always kick myself."

Jacqui has never had formal singing lessons and was nervous. "I didn't think I had a chance as I have never been in a musical before," she says. "There were hundreds of dancers auditioning. But things kept on progressing, then I was told I had the part. It is the opportunity of a lifetime. It is never too late to realise your dream."

Jacqui, who recently returned to Melbourne after two weeks in New York rehearsing with co-star David Whitney (pictured with her) and director-choreographer Baayork Lee, says: "This is a fresh start for me. Mark has been supportive and the girls are excited."

A Chorus Line begins a 15-month national tour by opening at Brisbane's Lyric Theatre on December 8.



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 Lyndall Watson will send it on. One line is all we need!

- * Effie Todd (Assistant Secretary) is our resident golf champ; she recently won the Veteran Championship at Riversdale.
- * Evelyn Nesbit Clark of Eden Hills, South Australia (one of our most active correspondents) is recovering from knee surgery in 1993. I'm sure all N/N's wish her a full recovery in 1994.

NOTICE BOAR-D

(Upcoming events in the Local and Overseas Calendar for 1994)

5 March	Country gathering - Bendigo
April	Newsletter 31
April/May	Clan gathering
4 June	Speaker - Mrs Frances Brown (State Library of Victoria)
July	Newsletter 32
July	Clan gathering
10 September	A.G.M.

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The Nesbitt/Nisbet Society is a Worldwide Clan Society