

THE N/NEWS

NO. 34 JANUARY 1995

NEWSLETTER OF THE
NESBITT/NISBET SOCIETY
AUSTRALIA



STARTING POINT

OUR YEAR AGAIN: A year ago our first newsletter for 1994 started with some comments about 1994 being the international 'Year of the Family'. The comments ended with the wish that 1994 would be a great year for the N/N Society. I suspect that most members, particularly those who have purchased copies of the 'Biographical Dictionary', would agree that 1994 was indeed a great year for us.

I'm not sure whether 1995 has been designated the international year of anything in particular. However it is interesting to note that, according to the Chinese calendar, 1995 is the 'Year of the Pig'. Given our porcine connections (the boar's head on the family coat of arms) does this suggest another successful year for the Society? Let's hope so!

On this last point, the indicators so far are good. Correspondence from members since the last N/News has been pouring in - so much so that the largest section in this N/News is 'Found'. It is great to see connections being made across families and for the newsletter to be the medium by which useful family information can be promulgated.

(NES)-BITS & PIECES

COMIC CONNECTION: Whoever would have thought that there would have been a N/N connection with the comedian Peter Cook, who died earlier this month? However, in reading through excerpts from 'The Complete BEYOND THE FRINGE' (Methuen 1987), I noticed a sketch called 'Sitting on the Bench'. It is a monologue about about a man who didn't quite make it to be a judge (he didn't have the Latin) and who became a coal miner instead. In philosophising about coal mining he says:

"I am very interested in the universe - I am specialising in the universe and all that surrounds it. I am studying Nesbitt's book - *The Universe and All that Surrounds It, an Introduction*. He tackles the subject boldly, goes through from the beginning of time right through to the present day which, according to Nesbitt, is 31 October 1940. And he says the earth is spinning into the s(?) (and) we will all be burnt. But he ends the book on a note of hope. He says: "I hope this will not happen". But there's not a lot of interest in this down the mine."

I don't know who this Nesbitt is, but I'm glad he's not from my part of the family!!

By Ian T Nisbet (based on an article in 'The Age', 14 January 1995)

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 be in the N/News! Please send any suitable cuttings you may come across to the editor.

CAFE AU LOI

Americans are absurdly litigious but Britain is not far behind

An American court has awarded \$2.9 million (£1.9 million) in damages to a woman who was burnt by a cup of hot coffee. The offending beverage came from a branch of McDonald's hamburger chain. Its victim, 81-year-old Stella Liebeck, tried to drink the coffee while travelling in a car. She wedged the styrofoam cup between her legs in order to remove its lid, whereupon the contents spilt over her lap.

Mrs Liebeck suffered third degree burns to her legs, groin and buttocks which required medical treatment costing \$10,000. Mrs Liebeck's trust in her own co-ordination and reflexes seems to have been over-optimistic. Sensible people would avoid putting a cup of hot liquid close to delicate parts of their anatomy in a moving car.

Nevertheless, and remarkably, a jury in Albuquerque, New Mexico, decided that McDonald's was liable to pay Mrs Liebeck over \$2,000,000. Only \$200,000 of this award was compensation for injury. The rest constituted "punitive damages" against McDonald's for selling dangerously hot coffee. McDonald's coffee is, by the company's own admission, served hotter than most home-made coffee.

But it is not, presumably, so hot as to cause pain or injury when drunk in the normal way. And coffee is, in the usual run of things, expected to be hot. A juror is quoted

as saying that the punitive damages are intended to "send a message" to McDonald's that "the coffee is too hot out there". McDonald's might well retort: too hot for what? For drinking - which is what it is intended for - or for pouring over laps, which it is not?

Was Mrs Liebeck not simply careless? The United States seems to be moving rapidly towards the view that no one is ever a victim purely of his own stupidity. Whatever the injury or mishap, it is always feasible to blame someone else. It is also increasingly profitable. The legal apparatus for fighting such cases is a growth industry in America. No doctor dares to practise medicine in the United States without expensive insurance cover for liability which helps to push up the costs of health care.

But Britain is not immune to this litigious fashion. This week, a window cleaner, Bill Nisbet was awarded £14,000 damages against a homeowner on whose snow-covered steps he slipped. Mr Nisbet was not coerced into proceeding with his window-cleaning in the snow. Nonetheless, Judge William Crawford decided that the property owner was culpable for subjecting him to risk. If British courts are swept along with this silly tide, not even a world of luke-warm coffee and disinfected doorsteps will be safe from the predations of lawyers.

The Times, London, 20 August 1994
(courtesy of the UK N/N Newsletter)

Tributes for a true lady

ONE OF Gisborne Shire's best known citizens, Olive Lock, who died last Tuesday aged 102, was buried yesterday following a funeral service at St Paul's Anglican Church.

Miss Lock lived 101 years at Couangait before entering The Oaks Nursing Home earlier this year.

Until that time she was a familiar figure at The Telegraph Hotel, Gisborne, where she enjoyed lunch about once a month.

There were times when her visits were more frequent than once a month.

"If ever visitors arrived, she would suggest a visit to The Telegraph for lunch," Miss Lock's niece Eve Hunt said.

"So if there were three lots of visitors in the one month, there would be three trips to the hotel for lunch."

Monthly visits to The Telegraph were a tradition with members of Miss Lock's

family, who travelled by jinker to attend the sale days held at the hotel.

During an interview several months ago, Miss Lock said her father William, a farmer, had married Irish dressmaker Anne Jane Nesbitt.

The children of the union were among the 60-odd children who attended the nearby Cabbage Tree School, often walking there through snow which could last for two weeks at a time.

In a number of interviews with *The Telegraph* Miss Lock recalled as one of her most vivid memories how, when she was 18 years old (in 1910) and Halley's Comet was in sight during a trip to town by jinker, the horse became frightened by the light and backed all the way down the Gisborne hill.

— Des Carroll



The Gisborne 'Telegraph', 8 November 1994
(courtesy of Judith Cockbill)

Moonlite's last wish granted

The last wish of the bush-ranger Captain Moonlite was granted yesterday, 115 years after his death.

The remains of the bush-ranger, whose real name was Andrew George Scott, were reburied in the south-western New South Wales town of Gundagai, with his two fellow bushrangers.

Captain Moonlite gained notoriety for a siege of a Gundagai property in 1879. His comrades, James Nesbitt and Augustus Wernicke, died in the final shootout and Captain Moonlite was hanged in 1880 for shooting a police officer.

His final wish was that he be buried alongside his friends in Gundagai. But there was public opposition to this and his remains were put in an unmarked grave in Sydney's Rookwood Cemetery.

Gundagai residents Sam Anderson Asimus and Christine Ferguson spent more than a year researching his life, finally succeeding in having his last wish granted.

"He was educated, he was articulate, he was a poet, an engineer, a sailor, an excellent horseman, skilful with firearms and also quite spiritual," Ms Asimus said.

She believed poverty caused him and his associates to turn to crime. — AAP



Captain Moonlite is reburied in Gundagai yesterday in a funeral attended by 300 people, some in period costume.

'The Age', 14 January 1994

(For more information on James Nesbitt and Captain Moonlight, see Newsletter No. 17, October 1990)

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. One line is all we need!

- * From the US Branch of the N/N Society comes news that Jo Nesbit has retired as secretary/treasurer. The position has been taken by Gail Jones, whose address appears on page 8.
- * Also from the US worth noting is that one of the newer members there, Oroma Nwandi, is the great granddaughter of Otis Nesbit (more of whom appears later in this newsletter).
- * Alison Nisbet Rowbottom, secretary of the UK Branch of the N/N Society, and her husband Steven are in Australia until April. While spending most of their time in Perth, they may visit Melbourne sometime in February.

SOCIETY NEWS

TENNIS AFTERNOON: On Saturday 5 November, a small number of N/Ns gathered at the home of Gavin and Jan Nisbet for an afternoon of tennis. Unfortunately, the Melbourne weather conspired against our budding(?) champions, with the strong winds making conditions particularly trying. Despite this, a good time was had by all in attendance. Many thanks to Gavin and Jan for making their home available and for providing the refreshments.

N/N YULETIDE FESTIVITIES: The traditional N/N Christmas was extremely popular last year, when around forty N/N members and guests made their way to the home of Ian and Joy Nisbet on 10 December. With Lesley Nisbet leading the way on the piano, all present joined in on the singing of our standard selection of Christmas carols. The musical flavour of the night was enhanced by the arrival of Mr Bill Walker of the Rats of Tobruk Pipe Band, who played a number of tunes on the bagpipes and also talked a little of his experiences at the Edinburgh Tattoo. Bill had last played the pipes for us at the Christmas party of 1987 (see Newsletter No. 6, January 1988), and certainly didn't seem to have lost any of his lung capacity in the interim.

The musical interlude was followed by supper and the ubiquitous raffle. Those of us who have been to many N/N Christmas parties knew not to have eaten before arriving. We were not disappointed! Supper is definitely a misnomer - the food provided more closely resembled a three course meal. As always, thanks are due to the ladies of the Social Committee for their efforts. Also many thanks to Ian and Joy, and all who helped to make the evening a success.

The Christmas party stands out as one of the highlights of the N/N social calendar.

UK PUBLICATIONS: Mark Nesbitt, the Publications Officer of the UK Branch of the N/N Society continues to impress with his productivity. His latest offering is 'Nesbitt/Nisbet families in Scotland pre-1855', by Andrew Nisbet. This publication is made up of three separate volumes, the details of which appear below.

Nesbitt/Nisbet families in Scotland pre-1855. Volume 1. Lothians and Lanarkshire. East, Mid and West Lothian, Lanarkshire (including Edinburgh and Glasgow) by Andrew Nisbet. 1994. ISBN 1-897875-06-1. £6

Nesbitt/Nisbet families in Scotland pre-1855. Volume 2. Lowland counties. Ayr, Berwick, Dumfries, Kirkcudbright, Peebles, Renfrew, Roxburgh, Selkirk, Wigtown by Andrew Nisbet. 1994. ISBN 1-897875-07-X. £6

Nesbitt/Nisbet families in Scotland pre-1855. Volume 3. Northern Counties. Aberdeen, Angus, Argyll, Banff, Bute, Caithness, Clackmannon, Dunbarton, Fife, Inverness, Kincardine, Kinross, Moray, Nairn, Orkney, Perth, Ross & Cromarty, Shetland, Stirling, Sutherland. Cumulative Index to Marriages by Andrew Nisbet. 1994. ISBN 1-897875-08-8. £6

Master copies of these volumes have been sent to Bruce Nesbit. As they are specialised research tools, it is unlikely that they will be reproduced for all members in Australia. Any Australian member who would like a copy can order the volumes directly from Mark. Details are available from Bruce, Ian M. or Ian T.

FOUND

SAPPHIRE/RUBYVALE CONNECTION: Following the note in N/News 33, the following letter was received by Ian Clarke from R. Ian Nisbet:

"With reference to the Nesbits you found in Sapphire/Rubyvale (N/News October, 1994), I believe they probably 'belong' to me, though the surname should be NISBET rather than NESBIT.

"My paternal grandparents lived in the Sapphire/Rubyvale area. I believe my grandfather (whom I never met) James Stewart (Jim) Nisbet was a gun buyer on the sapphire fields, and my grandmother Alice, kept a store. They had three children, my father, Ian James Stewart Nisbet, his brother, Gordon, who was killed in Malaya in WWII, and their sister, Gem, who married a Roy Dean of Maleny, and subsequently died of cancer when I was quite a young boy (about 1950).

"I have been a member of the N/N Society for about six years now (Membership No. 201), but have never really participated in either the affairs of the Society, or the history of my own family.

"Your query may have stimulated me to action. I know my sister (Mrs Gem Delaney) has some details of the family going back quite a few generations. I shall contact her for further information.

"While I am not absolutely certain in claiming the 'Sapphire Connection', the facts I know seem to fit. I shall follow this up with my sister, and hopefully obtain more detailed information. I thank you for prodding me out of inactivity."

From R. Ian Nisbet, PO Box 188, Aitkenvale, Townsville, Qld 4814.

It's great to see that the small note from Ian Clarke in the last newsletter has provided the impetus for Ian Nisbet (yet another one!) to look further into his family history. Other N/Ns may be able to help him along. Please let us know so that we can follow progress via the newsletter.

NORMAN J. NISBET: The following letter was received from Jim Nisbet in response to the notice in the last newsletter asking for further information about Norman J. Nisbet. As Jim points out, we already had some information on Norman in one of our own early newsletters. Jim goes on to provide much more:

"Before reading further please refer to N/N Newsletter No. 7 of April 1988, page 3, item 'A Nisbet Heirloom' and amend the date 1936 on page 4 to read 1976. It's amazing the amount of information in the Newsletters, isn't it? If only we could recall it all!

"The facts as asked for:-

"Norman James Nisbet is (was) my uncle and was born 23.10.1881 on his grandfather's farm 'Riversdale', near Kiama, on the N.S.W. south coast. He married Margaret Charlotte Cameron, a New Zealander, in London on 29.6.1935, with the marriage following a shipboard romance on a trip to the United Kingdom. He died on 30.12.1943 at Cremorne, Sydney.

"His father John Dykes Nisbet, arrived in Australia in April 1864 and was involved in grazing pursuits as a station manager and property owner until a fatal accident on his property 'Woodlands' near Nyngan, N.S.W. ended his life at the early age of forty-six.

"Norman followed in his father's footsteps early in his working career on a property near Bombala, but eventually had business interests in Sydney. He was interested in radio as a hobby in the early days and his nieces, N/N Society members Jean Kebblewhite and Beryl Elsley, recall being entranced listening to a crystal set on headphones. He also acquired an interest in collecting and repairing old clocks (maybe some of French origin are now in other well known hands?). He also inherited the Thomas Earnshaw chronometer No. 520, referred to in the April '88 article. This timepiece had a remarkable history and its full story has been told by astronomer Thomas E. Booth (Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society and Member of the British and Australian Astronomical Societies) of Katoomba, in his book 'It was All a Matter of Time', in which three members of the N/N Society were able to assist in its research and compilation. I quote from the acknowledgements therein:



Norman John Nisbet

"The author would like to thank Mr Jim Nisbet of Neutral Bay, for his assistance and also for permission to quote from Agnes Busby's Reminiscences, now held in the Mitchell Library. Mrs Jean Kebblewhite and Mrs Beryl Elsley who, with the help of A.B.C. Radio with Caroline Jones and the late Philip Geeves (who assisted in locating the Nisbet Family), made possible the last four chapters of this book."

"To amplify the 'Nisbet Heirloom' article I am enclosing photocopies of chapters 18, 19 and 20 of the above-mentioned book which I hope you will find of some interest."

From Jim Nisbet, 'Thornton', 53 Yeo Street, Cremorne, NSW 2090.

Thank you Jim for providing this information about Norman Nisbet and reminding us about the information which we already had available. Anyone who would like to see the chapters of Thomas Tooth's book provided by Jim can get them by contacting the Editor. The photograph of Norman Nisbet comes from that book - one can only assume that a transcriptional/typographical error has converted Norman James Nisbet to Norman John Nisbet!

JEAN NISBET - FOUND IN THE BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY: Bill Hughes has already had a positive outcome to his purchase of the Biographical Dictionary. The following is quoted from a letter written to Ian M. by Bill:

"Congratulations on the publication of the Biographical Dictionary which I commend to all. My research into my Nisbet/Bennet/Ogilvie (ancestry) has always been a problem but I found the answer in the dictionary. My Jean Nisbet, who married Sir Alexander Ogilvy on 2 April 1749, is the daughter of William Nisbet and Christine Bennet. My problems are now with the Bennets. Can you recommend anyone who is interested in this family and do you know the whereabouts of the estates of Grubbot and Dalziel?"

Bill goes on to mention two Nisbets he found in the 'Journal of the Orders and Medals Research Society'. The two are Capt. T Nisbett, 28th Light Cavalry-Adjutant of the Behar Light Horse, and Major Alexander E Nesbit, Bolivian Section of the Royal Engineers.

From Major W E Hughes, 18 Dalmeny Street, Toowoomba, Queensland 4350.

Anyone with information on the Bennets might like to contact Bill directly. With regard to the Dalziel estates, John Barth is currently preparing a paper on the Nisbets of Dalziel which should be available in the near future.

OTIS B NESBIT AND CLARENCE R NESBITT: Bruce Nesbit recently received his copy of the reprint of 'Nisbet of that ilk' (as advertised in N/News 33). In flicking through the book he noticed the following entry on Otis B Nesbit (of 'Nesbitology' fame) on page 210:

"In the United States, both north and south, the number of Nisbet families and their descendants is very large and it is learned that Nisbet reunions are held from time to time. A periodical account of their activities is compiled and maintained by Dr. Otis Burgess Nesbit of Gary, Indiana. Dr. Otis Burgess Nesbit was born in Kansas January 31st 1871. He took his M.D. at Bennett College, Chicago in 1902 and is a Fellow of the American College of Physicians Association. His great-grandfather was Samuel Nisbet born in Scotland in 1754, died Cynthiana, Harrison County, Kentucky, 1814. Samuel Nisbet married Mary Berry and, it is believed, had five sons, John, Robert, Samuel, James and William, and six daughters. His will is dated March 7th, 1814.

"Another historian is Clarence Ralph Nesbitt of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, who has written a history of Nisbet with an account of his immediate family. Clarence Ralph Nesbitt was born in Georgia 29th March 1888. He graduated with the A.B. degree from Columbia University, New York in 1917, served in the United States Army 1917-19, and has since been engaged in the banking business in New York and Pittsburgh. His great-grandfather was William Nesbitt of Lawrenceville, Georgia, the son of Joseph Nesbitt who went to America from Rathfriland County Down, Ireland, in 1770.

"Research into Nisbet family history in the United States has been so fully made by Dr. Otis Burgess Nesbit and Clarence Ralph Nesbitt that no attempt need be made here to treat any of it in detail. Any of the Nisbet name who are interested in these descendants will be well advised to apply to these two authorities."

Note that 'Nisbet of that ilk' was first published in 1941, so it is no longer possible to 'apply to these two authorities'!

MINNIE BROWN DENNY (nee NESBITT): An N/N member found this person in searching the Victorian Register of Births, Deaths and Marriages. Minnie was born in 1890 and died in 1971 at the age of 81 at Win. (probably Windsor). The registered number of death was 24672. Her parents were William Nesbitt and Jemima Eleanor Napier, registered number of marriage 6062. Does Minnie 'belong' to any of our members?

OBITUARY - PHOEBE ELLEN NISBET (nee HOLLINS): It is with regret that we note the passing of Phoebe Nisbet on 28.12.94 at the age of 90 years. Although not an N/N member herself, Phoebe was the mother and grandmother of a number of Society members. She will be greatly missed by her family and friends, who have many fond memories of her long and happy life.

NOTICE BOARD

(Upcoming events in the Local and Overseas Calendar for 1995)

16 February	Executive meeting
18 March	Country Gathering - venue to be somewhere on the Mornington Peninsula - details to be forwarded soon - put this date in your diary now!
April	Newsletter 35
July	Newsletter 36

GENERAL COMMITTEE:

PRESIDENT: Ian M Nisbet, 26 Walnut Rd, Nth Balwyn, Vic 3104, Aust.
SECRETARY: Ian G Nisbet, 1 St Johns Pde, Kew, Vic 3101, Aust.
ASS SEC: Effie Todd, 18 Hillview Ave, Mt Waverley, Vic 3149, Aust.
TREASURER: Peter Watson, 30 Mitchell Rd, Box Hill North, Vic 3129, Aust.
EDITOR: Ian T Nisbet, 17 Palpera Tce, Greensborough, Vic 3088, Aust.
ASS ED: Ian G Nisbet, 1 St Johns Pde, Kew, Vic 3101, Aust.
ARCHIVIST: John Barth, 15 Duke St, Ashburton, Vic 3147, Aust.
BOARD: Bruce Nesbit, Gavin M Nisbet, Graeme Nisbet, Lyndell Watson,
 Ian G O'Brien, Karen Nisbet, Robert K Nisbet.

NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE:

Ian T Nisbet, Ian G Nisbet, Gary Nisbet, Graeme Nisbet, Karen Nisbet.

PUBLICATION OFFICER: Bruce Nesbit, 6 Kent Crt, Bundoora, Vic 3083, Aust.

MEMBERSHIP CONTACT OFFICER: Lyndell Watson

DISTRIBUTION OFFICER: Andrew Nisbet

EDUCATION AND INFORMATION COMMITTEE:

Graeme Nisbet, Ian G Nisbet, Gavin Nisbet

SOCIAL COMMITTEE:

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

REGIONAL OFFICERS:

George Nesbitt, 110 Ardross St, Ardross, WA 6153, Aust.
 Brian S Nesbitt, 14 Davitt Cl, Isaacs, ACT 2607, Aust.
 James E Nisbet, 53 Yeo St, Cremorne, NSW 2090, Aust.

OVERSEAS CONTACTS:

USA: Mrs Gail Jones, 321 Dixon Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15216, USA.
UK: Peter W W Nisbet, 7 Stafford Pl, Weston-super-Mare, Avon BS23 2QZ.



The Nesbitt/Nisbet Society is a Worldwide Clan Society