

# THE N/NEWS

NO. 37 OCTOBER 1995

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
NESBITT/NISBET SOCIETY  
AUSTRALIA



## 10th Anniversary Year

### STARTING POINT

*TENTH ANNIVERSARY YEAR: The recent Annual General Meeting marked the completion of nine active years for the Nesbitt/Nisbet Society Australia. In his President's address, Ian M Nisbet noted that 'every year is a milestone, but 10 years is a very special anniversary calling for celebration'. To this end, 1995/96 will be a year of activities befitting the occasion. In keeping with the celebrations, each of the newsletters for the year will carry special reminders of this important achievement*

*Looking back over the past nine years of N/N materials, one cannot help but note how far we've come in that time. Our newsletters have continually improved in style, structure and content. Our collection of monographs and other publications grows all the time, making an important contribution to the body of knowledge on N/Ns worldwide. Our biographical dictionary stands as an achievement of epic proportions. Our financial position is strong and has a very stable base (we've only increased membership subscriptions once in the entire nine years). In this tenth year let us celebrate all of these important achievements and congratulate all who have helped to make them happen.*

### (NES)-BITS & PIECES

**MORE ON MR NESBIT, THEATRE ACTOR:** Following his article in N/News 36, Bruce Nesbit received a response from Janet Stone, clarifying one of the statements in the article. Bruce's note on the matter reads:

"A letter from Janet Stone, our Warrnambool member, drew my attention to the fact that on page 2 of Newsletter No. 36 I had given Mr Nesbit the name 'William' as being his Christian name, which was in fact the name of his alter ego in the play *Black-Eyed Susan*. Thank you Janet. It was back to the drawing board for me! Our records showed that in fact 'Mr Nesbit, theatre actor' and Francis Nesbitt McCron were one and the same. I had used the article in Newsletter 14, when I was editor."

*From Bruce Nesbit. Members are referred to Newsletter 14, January 1990 to read more on Francis Nesbitt McCron.*

AND STILL MORE ON MR NESBIT, THEATRE ACTOR: By coincidence, shortly after the appearance of Bruce's article, Ian G Nisbet received an enquiry from a non N/N member regarding one Francis Nesbitt McCrone! The letter from Lindsey Arkley reads:

"I am writing to you on the off chance that you may know of someone who is aware of one Francis Nesbitt McCrone, an English actor who arrived in Sydney in 1842 and died in Geelong in 1853. It was under the name of Francis Nesbitt that he became one of the most famous actors in Australia at the time.

"As part of the research into a book I am writing, I am trying to establish his wife's Christian name. The reason: I believe a letter written to Charles La Trobe in April 1843 about the subject of my book may have been written by her, but I cannot quite make out the signature. If I knew her name, I could probably work out whether it was her signature or not. (Francis Nesbitt was in Melbourne at the time the letter was written, but the signature is not his)."

*From Mr Lindsey Arkley, 2/2 King St, Mentone, Vic.*

*If any N/Ns can help with this query, they should contact Mr Arkley directly. Please note, there is a slight discrepancy in the date of Francis Nesbitt McCrone's arrival in Australia between Mr Arkley's letter and the information in Bruce's article.*

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ANOTHER N/N ACTOR - CATHLEEN NESBITT: Evelyn Clark found the following information on Cathleen Nesbitt in the book 'Rebel Advocate - A Biography of Gerald Gardiner' by Muriel Box. Gerald Gardiner was Lord Chancellor (Britain) from 1964 - 1970. His early ambition was to be an actor, and at Oxford he took part in many performances with fellow undergraduates who later became actors of world renown - Tyrone Guthrie and Emlyn Williams among them.

From Chapter 1, page 34 of 'Rebel Advocate':

"At the time Gerald appeared on the scene the director was to produce Anthony and Cleopatra.

"Gerald hoped to be included in the cast and would have been, but for the fact that he failed his examinations at the end of the first year and was sent to the 'crammer' to catch up.

"It was a great disappointment, for the production turned out to be a very fine one with Cathleen Nesbitt playing Cleopatra opposite the astonishingly handsome young Anthony, Cecil Ramage.

"During rehearsals their emotional relationship, in the play, obviously had a deep effect on them, for they fell in love, and by the time the play opened in December 1920, they had already decided to marry as soon as possible.

"How the marriage progressed is revealed in Cathleen's autobiography, 'A Little Love and Good Company'.

RIGHT: Miss Cathleen Nesbitt congratulated by Miss Fenella Fielding on winning the Emmy Award for Best Supporting Actress at a Gala Party held at Fortnum and Mason.  
Theo Cowan



From "The Tattler & Bystander" (London, UK) July 1974, p20.

"Her long and successful career continued into her nineties, her last appearance being in New York in the production of 'My Fair Lady' in 1980.

"In the media she is often referred to as the lover of the poet Rupert Brooke, almost never as the wife of Cecil Ramage."

Material from Evelyn Nesbit Clark, 3 Willowie St, Eden Hills, South Australia.

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SIR ALEXANDER NISBET, MD: N/News 36 contained a copy of the newspaper article '\$15,000 for diary of convict ship soldier'. Ian M Nisbet pointed out to Bruce Nesbit that the 'Dr Nisbet' mentioned in the article was none other than Sir Alexander Nisbet. A quick search of June Slee's thesis on Sir Alexander (which Bruce has on his computer) located the incident in question, as described below:

"On 16 June 1825 he (Nisbet) left Sydney, as a passenger, on C.S. *Royal Charlotte*, bound for Calcutta. During that voyage a series of events occurred in which Nisbet featured prominently. According to the *Sydney Gazette*, the crew had refused to work when the ship was 'dropping down the harbour', so the captain (Corbyn), keen to sail that afternoon, ordered the troops to take the place of the crew 'whilst Dr Nesbitt, (sic) it is said, became the man at the helm'. Later (after the men had returned to work), the ship was wrecked on Frederick's Reef off the Queensland coast and Nisbet with fourteen others, rowed in a long-boat to Moreton Bay where they received help from the government brig, *Amity*. Nisbet eventually left Sydney on 6 October 1825 as the medical officer on board the ship *Norfolk*."

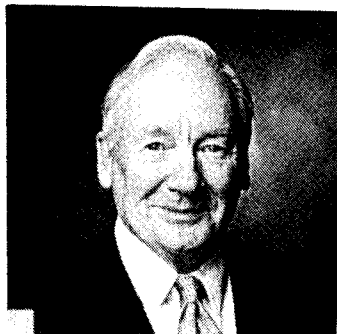
Material from Bruce Nesbit.

*Note that it is our intention to release an abridged version of June Slee's thesis as an N/N monograph in the near future.*

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## 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.



From 'Mitre 10 Annual Report 1995'  
(a nice picture, if not quite news!)

**J Ian M. Nisbet** A.M., F.C.A.  
Chartered Accountant practising as Ian Nisbet & Co.  
National Secretary since the Company's inception in 1964.

# The heavenly Saints

By HOWARD LEIGH

**A**S a footballer, former Caulfield City player John "Des" Nisbet was a man who stood up to be counted during one of St Kilda's most barren eras at the Junction Oval (St Kilda Cricket Ground), from 1944-1952.

In the words of football historian and author Russell Holmesby, his contribution to the battling Saints as a player in 107 games and later as an administrator over a five-decade period has been "whole hearted."

Managing director of Albany Refrigeration in Malvern, Nisbet is one of the 100 greatest St Kilda footballers in Holmesby's latest book, *Heroes with Haloes*, which was released last month.

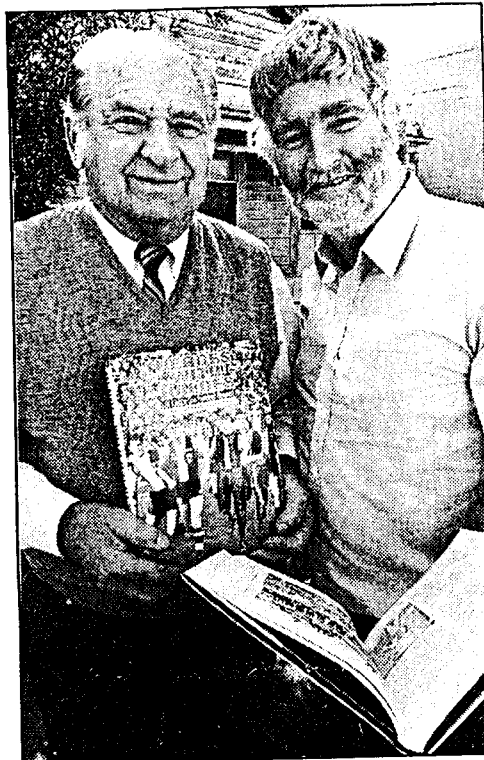
It is a rich volume of interviews with all living Saints legends such as triple Brownlow Medallist Ian Stewart, Brownlow Medal colleague Neil Roberts, Ross Smith, Brian Gleeson and Tony Lockett, 1966 premiers captain Darrel Baldock and coach Allan Jeans, Test cricketer Keith Miller, Robert Harvey, Keith Rosewarne and Roy "Up There" Cazaly.

Faithful enforcers Carl Ditterich, Jim O'Dea, Robert Muir and Eric Guy speak out with frankness.

Holmesby's top 20 list — headed by Stewart, Lockett, Baldock, the late Colin Watson, Bill Mohr and Dave McNamara — has created debate among Saints and football fans in general.

"I believe the personal anecdotes add spice, flavour and flare to the rich history of the club which was formed in 1873," Holmesby said.

He rated Stewart as the King of the Saints



**Saints hero:** Author Russell Holmesby (right) reflects with John "Des" Nisbet on his five decades with St Kilda Football Club. Picture: **Jim Hooper**

because he was "a footballing perfectionist". "Few men in the history of the game have possessed the gifts of Stewart," Holmesby writes.

■ *Heroes with Haloes* is available at the St Kilda Football Club, Moorabbin, for \$49.95 (plus \$10 for postage and handling).

From 'Southern Cross', 6 September 1995  
(supplied by Heather Ames)

## SOCIETY NEWS

**ROBBIE BURNS NIGHT, 29 JULY 1995:** In recognition of this special event, an exceptional number of N/Ns and guests turned up at the home of Ian M and Joy to hear Mr Thomas Paterson (Honorary World President of the Robert Burns Federation) talk about the man himself. With the bicentenary of Burns' death coming up in 1996, Mr Paterson is working hard to raise both interest in Burns and Scottish culture in general. It was indeed a privilege to have him speak to our Society. Mr Paterson made the interesting observation that Australia has 6.5 million people of Scottish descent, compared with only 5 million Scottish nationals in Scotland!

Once again the Social Committee did a superb job in catering for the function. As always, thanks a due to them, and to Ian and Joy for their hospitality.

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**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 16 SEPTEMBER 1995:** A group of 20 or so N/Ns 'mixed business with pleasure' to attend the ninth AGM at the home of Ian M and Joy. The business part of the evening was handled expertly (as ever) by Ian M. He gave a concise but thorough overview of the year just gone, followed by some insights for the year to come. Copies of the 'President's Address' and 1995 Annual Report will be circulated to members, so the content of these documents will not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that the Society is in good shape, with another great year coming up. In recognition of the importance of our tenth anniversary year, Ian agreed to stay on as President (as usual, he was nominated for the position by John Classon). The *status quo* was also maintained with virtually all the other executive and committee positions. Thank you to all those who agreed to take on or continue playing an active role in the running of the N/N Society.

With the business part of the meeting completed, it was time for the guest speaker – none other than our own Tom Nisbet. Tom described his tour of Papua New Guinea as part of the 'Australia Remembers' celebrations. Together with fellow veterans, politicians, medical attendants and journalists, Tom left Sydney on 29 June aboard a Russian cruise ship. A number of sites were visited in Papua New Guinea in the period 5 – 8 July, with the group returning to Cairns on 11 July. Tom described the various remembrance services, complementing his talk with photographs, maps and pamphlets. It was undoubtedly a moving experience for the veterans to return to the war sites after the passage of 50 years. As noted by Ian T in thanking Tom for his presentation, Tom is an N/N hero – recognised by both his Country and his family.



## FEATURE ARTICLE

Following on from the 'Robbie Burns night' with Tom Paterson, Elyse Classon was inspired to write the following article regarding her grandfather, John Nesbit. It describes some of the trials of being a tenant farmer in Scotland last century.

### JOHN NESBIT, TENANT FARMER

For those of us who were fortunate enough to hear Tom Paterson's talk on Robert Burns and his emancipation of the Scots, it was with a smile on my face to hear him citing the irreverence of farmers working their fields on the Sabbath, as it was only a few days prior to this talk that I had received a copy of letters from Berwick-on-Tweed on my grandfather's misdemeanour in doing this very thing. Quotes from both landlord and my grandfather, one John Nesbit, will verify that Tom Paterson was correct in his facts.

Letter from David Milne Home, landlord, 29th November 1872:

*"When on our way to church yesterday, one of my family called my attention to steam and smoke issuing from your Engine chimney, and it suggested the idea that you were employing your servants in farm work, as usual.*

*I am sure it is unnecessary for me to inform you, that on a Fast Day, appointed by the proper authorities, quite as much as on the Sabbath, people whether belonging to the Church or not, are bound by law, to abstain from ordinary professional business, and to abstain from setting others to such work".*

Signed David Milne Home, Paxton House.

Reply from John Nesbit, Tenant Farmer 29.11.1872:

*"It pains me exceedingly to think it necessary to write me on such a subject, 'yes it does', although your letter is evidently couched in the most respectful terms. But my feelings are naturally so acute, that what would not at all move another, greatly agitates me.*

*As to my present distress, I am sure you very well know, that it has been with the greatest difficulty and cost, that we have secured the present harvest of corn and potatoes. Indeed, the potatoes are not all up yet, and should they be all got up, it grieves me to the heart, both to think and say, that when gathered in, the whole harvest is almost worthless. We are told in the market that our wheat particularly, is not fit for human food and that all the world are preparing to supply the wants of England and that therefore we may give our wheat to the cattle and pigs.*

*Nevertheless, although I do not go to the Kirk, yet all my servants are allowed to go to their several places of worship, both on Sundays and Fast Days. It happens however, this year, that only my steward goes to the Kirk, and on Wednesday night I said to him 'will you be going to the Kirk tomorrow?'. 'No', said he, 'all the other men are dissenters, and they get straw to pit the potatoes, we must thrash tomorrow and that will save time to get up the potatoes on Friday and Saturday, and if those days are dry, for this is the best week we have had for long, let us make good use of it'. All this was readily agreed to by me, and how fortunate for us that my steward was not at the Kirk, as after midday the engine pump got out of order, and without his watchful care, there might have been an explosion" ... etc.*

Signed John Nesbit, Paxton South Mains.

It is thanks to John and Elizabeth Home Robertson of Paxton House who supplied me with a copy of the above letters, and for publication they have been somewhat condensed .

It was interesting to note in the Paxton Guide Book, construction began about 1757 and that James Nesbit was the Master Mason from Kelso.

Paxton House has now been transferred to a Heritage Trust and Mr Home Robertson has suggested it might be a suitable location for a N/N International Gathering.

Article is by Elyse Classon, née Nesbit, 2/11 Wright Street, East Kew, Vic. 3102.

## THE WANTED LIST

**JOHN NESBIT:** b 1820s, son of William, Crookham area, Northumberland. Any information sought and appreciated.

Contact: Edna M Nesbit, 64 Ripley Court, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, NE9 7HY, England. (*From the English publication "Family Tree", August 1995*).

**CHRISTINA MUIRHEAD:** daughter of John and Euphemia (Nisbett) Muirhead, b 1843 Glasgow, Scotland. Had an illegitimate daughter, Margaret Muirhead, b 17.10.1860, Backers (Barkers) Creek, Castlemaine. Christina married Alexander McKenzie 20.5.1865 at Auckland, New Zealand and settled in Dunedin, New Zealand. They had 10 children. Seeking information on the forebears of John and Euphemia Muirhead, and particulars of any further issue and their movements from Glasgow in 1843 to Castlemaine 1860, then to Auckland in 1865.

Contact: Stan Gawler, 29 Seddon Street, Rotorua, New Zealand, who would be pleased to receive any assistance. (*From 'Ancestor' Vol 22, No 7, 1995*).

## FOUND

The following article appeared in the 'Melbourne Herald' of Sat 4 April 1936, page 4:

"Searching through some old play manuscripts in his office yesterday, Mr. P. Finklestein of J.C. Williamson's, discovered an ancient document, red sealed, lead stamped and dated 1804, of which he is eager to find the owner.

"It is a manorial deed, made by the 'General Court Baron of the manor of Sewardstone in the County of Essex, granting to Thomas Nesbitt, of the Bank of England, Gentleman, and to William Taylor, of London, Gentleman, that piece of ground, parcel of this manor, adjoining the garden at ... Fair Mead Bottom, now in the possession of Thomas Loddington'.

"The faded yellow parchment and the pointed clerkly script add to the interest of the quaint phraseology of this deed, penned the year before Trafalgar.

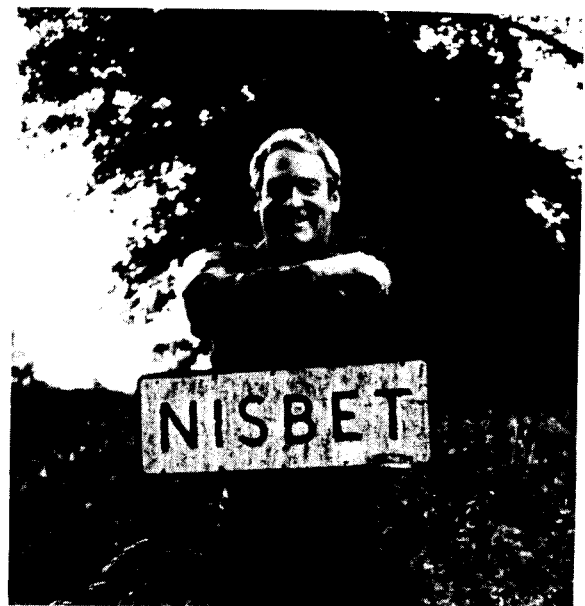
"Mr. Finklestein is at a loss to account for its inclusion among his manuscripts and believes there may be in Melbourne descendants of the original holders. The document has some historical interest and for someone it may have commercial or sentimental worth."

The newspaper clipping has been in the possession of Mr Ken Lodington, PO Box 165, Casino, NSW for many years because of the Thomas Loddington connection. Who was Thomas Nesbitt, Gentleman, of the Bank of England? Is there a link with any Society member?

Material from Bruce Nesbit.

## OBITUARY

**ROBERT KEITH NISBET:** It is with great regret that we note the passing of Robert Nisbet on 9 August 1995. Robert was an active Society member, attending many functions, contributing newsletter material and serving on the Board since 1992. As noted in the eulogy read at Robert's service, "Central to Bob's life was his family. He often spoke ... of his family in South Australia. As one who left home at an early age, ... he came to realise the importance of family as he got older. Bob took great pride in his Scottish ancestry and loved to wear the Nisbet tartan." From Robert's extended N/N family, we extend our sympathies to Anne and the rest of his immediate family. The photo at right (reproduced from Newsletter 10, January 1989) was taken during a trip to the UK by Robert and Anne. This is how we remember him.



## NOTICE BOARD-D

(Upcoming events in the Local and Overseas Calendar for 1995/96)

|            |  |
|------------|--|
| 21 October | Tennis day at the home of Gavin Nisbet |
| 9 December | Christmas Party                        |
| January    | Newsletter 38                          |
| Feb/Mar    | Country Gathering                      |
| April      | Newsletter 39                          |
| May/June   | Social function                        |

### 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, 102/442 St Kilda Rd, Melbourne, Vic 3004, Aust.  
**BOARD:** Bruce Nesbit, Gavin M Nisbet, Graeme Nisbet, Lyndell Watson,  
 Karen Nisbet, Gary R 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.

10th



year

**The Nesbitt/Nisbet Society is a Worldwide Clan Society**