

THE N/NEWS

NO. 40 JULY 1996

NEWSLETTER OF THE
NESBITT/NISBET SOCIETY
AUSTRALIA



10th Anniversary Year

STARTING POINT

TENTH ANNIVERSARY YEAR - CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS: Well, we've made it to 10 years! We've had our Tenth Anniversary celebratory dinner (see inside for details), we've passed the ten year anniversary of the inaugural meeting at the house of Bruce and Helen Nesbit (held on 27 June 1986), and this edition of N/News completes our first ten years of newsletters. By any measure we have been extremely successful and can be justifiably proud of the past ten years of achievement. However, every organisation must be continually renewing and revitalising itself if it is to continue to grow and survive. The N/N Society is no different. While we can celebrate the success of the past, we must keep moving toward the future.

To this end, the N/N Committee has been discussing ways in which the Society can be restructured so as to bring in new vigour and ideas and ease the burdens on those who have carried much of the load for the past ten years. In particular, the 'IN trio' (Ian M, Ian G and Ian T) were asked to form a subcommittee to consider these important matters. They have considered a range of options and plan to discuss them at the upcoming Annual General Meeting (see page 7 for details). Of course, any sort of restructure is meaningless in the absence of interested and willing members to take on the various roles. This has been a problem in the past - it must be solved if there is to be a future. The Committee therefore encourages all members to consider what role they can play in the Society's future. Certainly everyone should try and make it to the AGM to hear about future directions and have their say. Let's build upon our great start and look forward confidently to the next ten years!

(NES)-BITS & PIECES

MORE ON ALEXANDER NESBITT: Members will probably remember that, in conjunction with the 1988 Bicentennial, we tried to establish the identity of the earliest emigrant ancestor for any of our Australian N/N families. The earliest N/N we could 'claim' turned out to be Alexander Nesbitt who arrived in Australia in 1837. To honour Alexander's memory we created the 'Alexander Nesbitt Memorial Trophy', which was awarded for the first time at our first country gathering on 30 September 1989. I recently received a letter from Robyn Nesbitt (one of Alexander's descendants) who has been able to shed a little more light on this N/N pioneer:

"A Number of years ago the Alexander Nesbitt Memorial Trophy was instigated and as I am actively researching the family of Alexander I thought you might like an update on the information I have found.

"Alexander was the s/o George and Agnes (nee Gibson) Nesbitt born EYEMOUTH in 1821 (not Maynooth as stated on his Convicts papers and as we first thought in 1988). Alexander was 15 years old when he was convicted of stealing soap and sent to NSW for 7 years. He left behind in Wallace Green in Berwick Upon Tweed, his father, mother, sisters Margaret, Agnes, Mary, Hannah and brothers William, Robert and Thomas.

"Alexander spent 5 weeks on the Hulk 'Gannymede' at Wollwich before being transferred to 'John II' for his journey to Sydney arriving 7 February 1837. He was assigned to E.G. Clarke of Invermein in NSW. His ticket of leave was granted 8th of October 1842 to remain in the Illawarra District and then his Certificate of Freedom was issued 5th July 1843.

"Alexander married Martha Baker at St Peters Campbelltown on 15th April 1845. They had 11 children and lived in the Orange District for the rest of their life. Alexander bought his first block of land in 1861 near Millthorpe.

"Alexander died aged 61 years on 24 October 1880 and is buried at Orange. Martha died aged 67 years at Molong on 4 August 1894 and is also buried in Orange.

"It will be 160 years next year since Alexander arrived in NSW and I have been researching his life and that of his family in the hope that I may compile a book to honour the occasion, so if any person can help me with details of the family I would be delighted to hear from them....

"I have enjoyed researching the family and with the help of two other members - Judy Cockbill and Lurline Gainsford - have been able to compile a reasonable amount, but as you know it never stops."

Contact in writing to: Mrs Robyn Nesbitt, 7 Acacia Avenue, CASINO 2470 NSW; or phone 066 622460.

THE JUDITH DURHAM STORY: A tenuous connection between N/Ns and Judith Durham (of 'Seekers' fame) has been noted by Evelyn Clark. The following is Evelyn's synopsis of a relevant section of the book 'Colors of my life' (The Judith Durham Story) by Graham Simpson:

Judith was plagued by asthma. Determined to find a treatment for her daughter, Hazel (Judith's mother) took Judith and her sister Beverly to an infant dietitian

"who initially suspected I may have suffered lead poisoning. We would wait hours to see this dietitian, Miss Nesbit, Judith recalls.

"Sometimes we would be sitting in her waiting room for up to two hours at a time. I remember her talking to mum about lead poisoning and asking me if I sucked my pencils at school. My nails were very hard and Mum was alarmed that I would cry whenever she tried to cut them."

Once lead had been discounted, Miss Nesbit treated both girls for asthma by modifying their diets to the point of blandness.

Material from Evelyn Clark, Eden Hills, South Australia.

SOCIETY NEWS

OH WHAT A NIGHT!: Well, it may have taken ten years before we could celebrate the tenth anniversary of the N/N Society, but it was worth the wait! With the theme 'A time to reflect - A time to celebrate' in mind, 64 N/Ns and friends gathered at The Savage Club on Saturday 29 June for the Tenth Anniversary Dinner. I don't know how much reflection went on during the evening but there sure was a lot of celebration.

The night began with canapes and drinks, with Gordon Hamilton playing piano in the background. As soon as everyone arrived there was the obligatory photograph. Fortunately a professional photographer (Marshall Thompson) had been arranged, so the photographic session went off with a minimum of fuss. Then it was upstairs for dinner. Despite Ian M's best laid plans, we were already well behind schedule at this early point in the evening.

Ian M gave a short welcoming address, thanking all present for their attendance, particularly guests and those who had travelled a long way (as far as Sydney) to attend. Following the Selkirk Grace (given by John Cairns-Smith-Barth) and the Loyal Toast (proposed by Brigadier Tom Nisbet), dinner was served. After the main course was completed, Ian T was called on to propose a toast to the Nesbitt/Nisbet Society. In doing so, he took the opportunity to thank all those who had made the past ten years so successful. In particular he noted the vision and effort of Bruce Nesbit in getting things started, and the exceptional stewardship of Ian M in keeping the Society moving forward. He then proposed a toast to the Society, invoking the spirit of Alexander Nesbitt in recognition of our N/N ancestors.

The next event of the evening is one of the highlights of our ten year history - namely a private performance by our own Margaret Nisbett MBE, accompanied by Gordon Hamilton. Margaret, one of the country's best known singers of operas, operettas and musical comedy, gave a delightful performance which included the 'Merry Widow Waltz' and 'Love Changes Everything' (from Aspects of Love). While the audience was no doubt much smaller than that which Margaret normally attracts, its enthusiasm for her performance more than compensated for the lack of numbers. At the end of the encore, Joy Nisbet thanked Margaret on behalf of the Society and presented her with a bouquet of flowers.

*To the N/N Society
Congratulations & best wishes
for the future.
Margaret Nisbett MBE*



Desert was then served, after which Ian M made a short speech. He thanked Ian T for the toast to the Society, then passed on messages of apologies and congratulations from N/Ns, both local and international. Those who had written to Ian extending their best wishes included: Stu Nisbet (President, North American Branch), David and Sue Nisbet (UK Branch), William Nisbet (UK Branch) and Peter Nisbet (UK Branch). A range of door prizes were then given out, following which Ian proposed the family toast 'I Byde it' (glasses being charged with Scotch whisky, generously provided by the UK Branch).

By this stage, some of us thought that the evening was pretty much over. Not so! The group was asked to move back downstairs to the Social Room, where the after dinner festivities began. This started with the cutting of the birthday cake, firstly by Helen Nesbit, then by Bruce. Cake, coffee and port were then followed by highland dancing. We were entertained by the Display Team from the Victorian State Committee of Highland Dancing, accompanied by piper Len Trezise, who performed 'Highland Cathedral', 'Strathspey & Reel of Tulloch', 'Blue Bonnets Over the Border', 'Hooked on Scotch', and an encore of the 'Highland Fling'.



Bruce Nesbit about to blow out the Birthday candles with Ian M looking on.

Final drinks were followed by Auld Lang Syne, after which it was time for goodbyes and home. According to Ian M's schedule the time should have been around midnight. In reality, it was around 1.30 am!

Despite a few sore heads the next day (or days in the case of one well known N/N), I'm sure that everyone enjoyed themselves immensely. As ever, thanks go to those who were responsible for organising the evening, namely Joy and the Social Committee. Thanks from all of us - take a bow!

NEW MEMBERS: We are delighted to welcome the following new members:

- * Peter J Nisbet, 1 Elvin St, Macleod 3085, Victoria
- * June Nisbet Howard, 96 Galoola Dve, Nelson Bay 2351, NSW
- * Donna M Nesbit, 34/30 Penenonea Rd, Maylands 6051, WA
- * Mark S Nisbet, 17 Antoinette St, Eltham 3095, Victoria

Peter and Mark were guests at the 10th Anniversary Dinner who enjoyed it so much they decided to join up!

FEATURE ARTICLE

BOARS 'N BEARS

Until my 40th birthday I had never heard of the 'House of Nisbet' and had certainly never come across a 'Nisbet bear'. That all changed when my wife presented me with the birthday present that I would never have expected - Mr Do-It Bear. Of course, the present was more for her than me, and so began her bear collection. Mr Do-It Bear is one of 'The Nisbet Celebrity Collection', a set of specially designed bears by Teddy affectionadoes.

The Nisbet Celebrity Collection

A collection of 'Mostly' bears sponsored by celebrities
in our World of Childhood Treasures

Mr Do-It Bear

Linda Mullins is the keeper of an antique bear called Mr Do-It. Our replica is dressed in an authentic reproduction of the original bear's outfit.

Linda Mullins is known internationally. She has a very large and fine collection of bears and is the author of the book, *Teddy Bears Past and present - A Collector's Identification Guide*.

Linda Mullins is perhaps best known as the Convenor of the *Teddy Bear & Antique Toy Show & Sale* held twice yearly in San Diego, California.

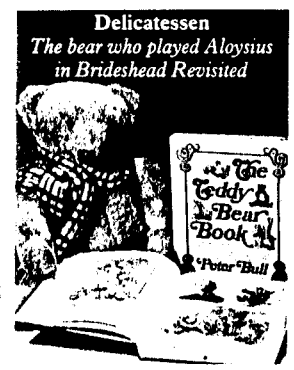


Before going any further about the bears, first a bit of background on the House of Nisbet. The following paragraph is quoted from 'The Teddy Bear Encyclopaedia' by Pauline Cockrill (RD Press, 1993):

"In 1975, Jack Wilson acquired Peggy Nisbet Ltd., a company specializing in portrait dolls. He renamed the firm, House of Nisbet Ltd., and introduced its Childhood Classics traditional teddy bears. Peggy Nisbet's daughter, Alison (who later married Jack Wilson) designed the range. The firm was known for its limited-edition character bears. In 1979, Nisbet invited British arctophile Peter Bull to collaborate on the creation of a Bully Bear range. Nisbet reproduced his bear, 'Delicatessen', in 1987, using distressed mohair, a material that Jack Wilson helped to invent. Dakin UK bought House of Nisbet in 1989."

Delicatessen bear mentioned above made quite a name for him(?)self. The following is from the House of Nisbet catalogue (January 1990):

"Delicatessen is the most famous bear in the world. Born in 1907, he spent the first 55 years of his life in America in a grocery and dry goods store in Saco, Maine. When the proprietor, Miss Euphemia Ladd, retired she sent her bear to Peter Bull. Shortly afterwards 'Deli' auditioned for the role of Aloysius in *Brideshead Revisited* and won the celebrated part 'paws down'. Within weeks he became a famous Hollywood star."



The Nisbet Celebrity Collection is a set of 17 'collectible' bears, each one designed or sponsored by a celebrity of the teddy bear world. Only 5000 of each model was produced, each coming with a signed and numbered certificate of authenticity. It's nice to know that our bear namesakes are valuable collector's items - I just wish there weren't so many of them to collect!

The pictures and descriptions reproduced throughout this article are from the House of Nisbet catalogue (January 1990) and certificates of authenticity. They show some of the bears currently living with us.

Article by Ian T Nisbet.

The Nisbet Celebrity Collection
A collection of 'Mostly' bears sponsored by celebrities
in our World of Childhood Treasures

Hedda Hair Bear

Lillian Rohaly is a real character in the bear world. On both sides of the Atlantic we have enjoyed her famous hat which is festooned with net, feathers and plush animals. Hedda Hair Bear, a hopeless gossip, wears a replica of the famous Lillian Rohaly hat, similarly festooned with little animals.



FOUND

N/N AUSSIE RULES FOOTBALLERS: Bruce Nesbit came across the following information in 'The Encyclopaedia of League Footballers' by Jim Main and Russell Holmesby, published in 1992 by Information Australia, Flinders Lane, Melbourne:

NISBET, Daryl (St Kilda) - 1970, 1 game, 0 goals.

NISBET, Des (St Kilda) - 1944 and 1946-52, 107 games, 6 goals. A sturdy and reliable defender recruited from Caulfield City. Nisbet gave his club wonderful service both on and off the field. He was second in a best and fairest and rose to vice-captain. In later years he was chairman of selectors and a committee man. Des is the father of Daryl.

NISBET, Robert (Hawthorn) - 1958-59, 16 games, 10 goals.

Material from Bruce Nesbit; information reproduced with the author's permission. Note that Des Nisbet was featured in a newspaper clipping in N/News no. 35, October 1995. Note also that our other AFL connection is member Trevor Nisbett from WA who is football manager for the West Coast Eagles.

JOHN NISBET AND FAMILY, NEW ZEALAND: John Nisbett and his wife Mary (nee Fleming) arrived in New Zealand at Port Chalmers c1870. With him were his three sons Robert born 1856, James born 1864 and Joseph born 1866. They settled in Dunedin until 1887 when James and Joseph moved to Wellington and John moved to Timaru. It is presumed that the parents moved too, but no record of them or of their deaths and burials have been found yet.

The youngest son Joseph Thomas has left most of the story as we know it. Although born at Coleraine in Northern Ireland he claimed to be a scot with blood line back to the family of Berwick. There seemed to be some connection also to the Nesbitts of Lismore. At the time of his marriage he altered his name from Nisbett to Nesbitt as did his brother James. John at that time spelled his name originally Nisbet.

Joseph was staunchly a scot, Irish by birth only and a New Zealander by adoption. Proud of his ancestry, a lover of pipe bands, highland music song and dance, Harry Lauder and even Robbie Burns from whom he could quote selected verses. He could even sing quite well. On St Andrews day, which he called 'The 30th of Scotland', he was known to celebrate with a 'wee whisky' - he was a Presbyterian and otherwise abstemious.

In researching the family I find that there is no documentation for the family as all birth, death and marriage records were lost when their parish church in Coleraine was destroyed by fire. Joseph had already told us this while he was still alive.

This is part of a large package of material on New Zealand N/Ns, provided by Michie Jensen. The name of the author is not noted.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

SATURDAY 28 SEPTEMBER

8.00 PM

26 Walnut Rd, North Balwyn

This is your chance to have your say -
 How should the N/N Society move forward into decade 2?
 Put this date in your diary now!

NOTICE BOAR-D

(Upcoming events in the Local and Overseas Calendar for 1996)

| | |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| 15 August | Committee meeting |
| 28 September | Annual General Meeting - see page 7 |
| October | Newsletter 41 |
| November | Tennis day - date to be arranged |
| 7 December | Christmas Party |
| January | Newsletter 42 |

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, 3/208 Alexandra Pde East, Clifton Hill 3068, Aust.
ASS ED: Ian G Nisbet, 1 St Johns Pde, Kew, Vic 3101, Aust.
ARCHIVIST: John Barth, Cecil St, Fitzroy, Vic 3065, 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