

THE N/NEWS

NO. 45 OCTOBER 1997

NEWSLETTER OF THE
NESBITT/NISBET SOCIETY
AUSTRALIA



STARTING POINT

Members will notice a slightly different look to this edition of The N/News. Yes, the Editor has a new computer system - and he's still trying to work out all the features! As if it is not enough having to learn a different word processing package, there are also a heap of new features to learn as well. You'll just have to bear with me. For this edition, I've tried to keep the format as similar as possible as before. However, over time I expect to be able to improve the 'look and feel' of the newsletter by including additional graphics and by moving to a 'desktop publishing' package. Of course, the 'look and feel' is one thing; content is another matter. For that, I'm dependent on material from you. There can never be enough in the file, so keep sending in articles, snippets, photos, etc. so that The N/News stays topical and interesting.

(NES)-BITS & PIECES

NISBETS OF DALZIEL: John Barth has just completed the first draft of a new monograph on the Nisbets of Dalziel. To whet the appetites of members, below is the introduction from this monograph, setting the scene for Dalziel.

“A full understanding of the present comes only from a close reading of the past. The more we know of the past, the clearer the present comes into focus, if by only adding the proper span, tone and pace to our immediate endeavours.

“If proof of this is wanting, we need look no further than Dalziel, a small corner of a modest country, which has nevertheless undergone change without loss of continuity for 2,000 years and more. The reason for this is not only the obvious fact that present parameters can only be shaped by those set previously, but also because institutions, boundaries and the people who create them are inherently conservative by nature - out of self interest, as we will discover.

“The story of Dalziel necessitates a journey through time, from the very beginnings of the written record to the present day, to a very different place from that lived in by most of our readers, to alternative mindsets, social strata and experiences almost beyond our ken. Only then can we start to comprehend such a place, its times and the people, particularly our Nisbets. There are many questions and problems still unanswered, and this is a regret. To paraphrase Robert Chancellor Nesbitt, the story could be longer, it could have been shorter, but here it is.

“It is perhaps difficult to imagine, from an Australian perspective, how anyone could make a living out of a piece of land of plus or minus about 1,000 acres. All the more so when that land, apart from near the river alluvia, was clay. If you add in the fact that, before the discovery of rich mineral beds and, indeed, industry of any but a rudimentary kind, the only income available was either from the rent or the produce. And then, when that income had to support a lifestyle and a position in society we would envy today, we are prone to lose all understanding of how people managed. In broad outline, this was the position of the Nisbets of Dalziel who, for over 300 years (and for perhaps far longer) did just that. That they did not prosper is no surprise, but that they survived at all, and for so long, is a tribute to the hardiness of their race.”

All will be revealed on the Nisbets of Dalziel when the full monograph is published in the near future. Look out for it!

N/N HOUSES: We’ve all seen photos and heard descriptions of Nisbet House located near Duns in the Borders region, but recent information shows that there are several other residences with an N/N affiliation.

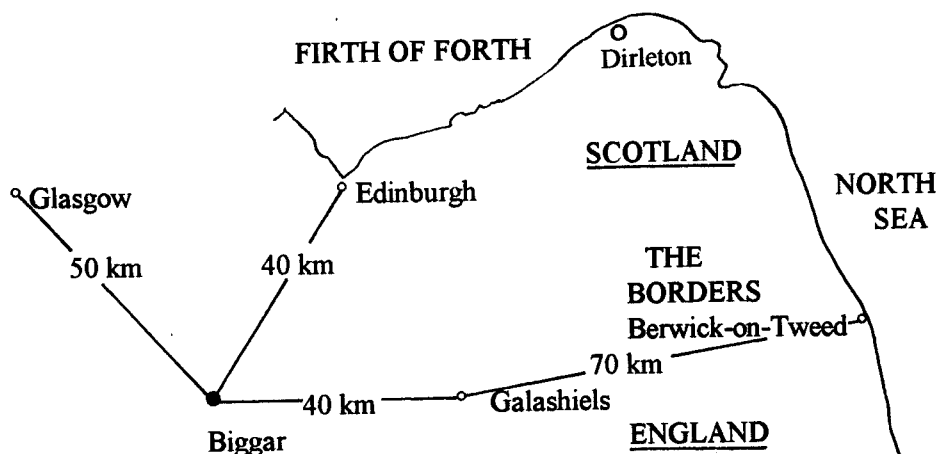
Information on another Nisbet House located at Biggar, Lanarkshire, Scotland comes to us from Lorna O’Brien.

“I first saw this house in 1992. I had not long made contact by mail with the owner, Tony Bertram, a long-lost cousin, a descendant from my Batman line. On our arrival for afternoon tea, my husband Ian insisted he park our car at the back entrance! As I left the car to be cuddled and kissed by my ‘lost’ cousin, imagine my surprise when I looked up over Anthony’s shoulder to see ‘Nisbet’ written along the top storey of the old bluestone home.

“I have a feeling there is a link here to the Nisbet family. Going over twenty odd pages of research I have on this line, I found one surname that links into the Bertram family name; it is the surname Chancellor, a name also often used as a Christian name by the N/N families.”

As shown below, Biggar is located 40 km SW of Edinburgh and 50 km SE of Glasgow.

Information from Lorna O’Brien, 4 Ambalindum St, Hawker, ACT 2614.



The next information on an N/N residence comes from the Berkeley County Economic Development Board. It describes Nesbitt House located in South Carolina. The material below is reproduced from the Internet site <http://www.users.sccoast.net/jornes/deanhall.htm> under the heading 'Nisbetts of Dean - Dean Hall Plantation'.



"DEAN HALL," COOPER RIVER, BELOW THE TREE

Sir Alexander Nisbett of Dean, Scotland purchased and named Dean Hall Plantation in South Carolina around 1725. Shortly after his arrival he built his home, a brick house that set six feet from the ground on an arched foundation with a veranda surrounding three sides of the lower story. There was a double flight of stone steps which lead to the entrance hallway which ran the entire length of the house. It was said that Dean Hall looked more like a village than a plantation with its pretty out buildings which surrounded the handsome home that is now called

Nesbitt House.

Nesbitt House Today

- Nesbitt House was rediscovered among dense forests in 1967.
- The House was relocated to Old House Tract, Fairlawn Barony, on Highway 52, Moncks Corner, SC.
- The classic 18th century building was restored in 1968.
- The present owners have retained its original, typical, and simple plantation construction including, exposed hand-hewn beams, and rare corner posts.



The final information relates to Nisbet Castle located near Duns, and comes in the form of a query from Stu Nisbet which was recently published in the UK newsletter.

"Does anyone have any information on NISBET CASTLE; ie descriptions, drawings, etc? It was the ancient ruin over which NISBET HOUSE was built in 1633. Some people thought parts of the old castle were incorporated into the structure of NISBET HOUSE when it was designed. I would appreciate it if anyone with this information could contact me."

Contact Mr Stuart Nisbet, 1443 Dorothy Drive, Glendale, CA 91202, USA.

SOCIETY NEWS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: The AGM of the N/N Society Australia was held on the afternoon of Saturday 11 October. About twenty N/Ns were in attendance to hear reports from the two Ians (President, Ian M and Chairman, Ian T) on the activities of the Society for the past twelve months and what was on the horizon for the next year. Copies of the reports presented to the AGM are included with this mailing of The N/News, so the contents will not be described here. Suffice it to say that the Society is in good shape financially, membership has increased slightly and interstate activities are booming (in NSW). All in all it's been a pretty good year.

The highlight of the afternoon was a surprise presentation to Bruce and Helen Nesbit in recognition of their Golden Wedding Anniversary on 4 October. The surprise almost didn't happen, when Bruce and Helen decided they wouldn't attend the AGM as they had a family celebration later the same day. However, thanks to some collusion between Joy, Ian M and Leanne (Bruce and Helen's daughter), they were convinced into modifying their plans. A good thing too! What better way to complete the formalities of an AGM than with a glass of champagne to celebrate a wonderful achievement. Congratulations to Bruce and Helen from their extended N/N family.



N/NEWS FROM NSW: Two pieces of information on the activities of the NSW Regional Group have been received. The first is a retrospective on the 'Christmas in July' held on 26.7.97; the second is advance notice of the next function, 'Christmas in December', to be held on 6.12.97. When you think of it, NSW must be a great place to live - it seems like it's Christmas all the time!!

'Christmas in July' from Mary Nisbet:

"This was a very successful and a most enjoyable event. We were very happy with the number who attended and seemed to have a good time. There was a keen interest shown for our Christmas Party lunch on 6.12.97. This will be our second and final social occasion for 1997.

"We hope to plan four gatherings for 1998."

'Christmas in December' from Graham Nisbet:

"It is now only a couple of months until our Christmas party! Time to be booking some accomodation in Nelson Bay and making some plans to get to Peter and Beryl's on December 6th.

"Our last Christmas party, the one in July, was a great success. We had good company, good cheer and some very good fruit mince pies. And who could forget the strawberries dipped in chocolate? Let's make the Christmas in December gathering every bit as good. Please try to be there if at all possible.

"Since we began the NSW branch of the N/Ns we have had five new members join. Our NSW mailing list now runs to about 40 people!

"Mandy and I are looking forward to seeing as many of the NSW N/Ns as possible at Nelson Bay in December. Please make sure it is firmly marked in your diaries."

The function is to be a BBQ lunch at the home of Peter and Beryl Nesbitt (7 Sandy Point Road, Corlette). RSVP to Mary Nisbet (02 9484 4306) or Mandy Nisbet (02 9617 2363). Graham also extends a welcome to any interstate N/Ns who may be in NSW at the time.

NISBET NARRATIONS: The North American Branch of the N/N Society has reprinted a 439 page book entitled 'Nisbet Narrations', primarily for use as a research tool for US N/Ns. It may, however, be of interest to N/Ns outside the USA. The following is a review of the book by Irene Pollands Hall reproduced from the North American Branch News, Issue 8, October 1997.

"There are times when I wish that my elusive ancestors came from a different branch of the Nisbet family tree. Comparing the meager information that I have been able to accumulate on mine with the wealth of detailed genealogy that has been accumulated in this 439 page book is one of those times.

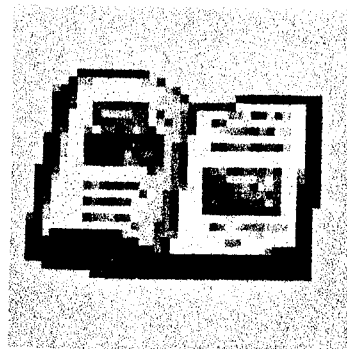
"If your Nesbitt/Nisbet antecedents go back in this country (USA) to before 1800, there is a very good chance that they may appear in this tome. One family of American Nisbets goes back to the nephew of John 'The Martyr' Nisbet, of Hardhill. This James Nisbet III came to America in 1685, settling first in New Jersey. However, the family that predominates in this 1961 book by Newton Alexander Nisbet is that of John Nisbet and Sarah Brevard. John was a grandson of John 'The Martyr' Nisbet and the son of James Nisbet, Military Governor of Edinburgh Castle, and his wife Agnes Woodburn. This John arrived in America in 1731, staying first in Pennsylvania and then settling in North Carolina. From there his descendants have moved to almost all parts of our country.

"Without knowing any of the history of this book, I would say that the author must have spent many years in gathering the information. He evidently wrote letters to representatives of all branches of the family, then carefully compiled the information. And, this is very important, he cited his sources, often quoting verbatim from the answers he had received to his letters, and giving evidence that he used when he had to make conclusions.

"There is also a good bit of history of the various branches of the name in Scotland, plus some short biographies of collateral families. Some of these surnames are Brevard, Polk, Ney, Young, Anthony, Hall, Pickens, Douglass, Ivy, Phifer, Huey, McKain, Simonton, Boyce, Hood, Coffey, Fee, and a few others. If there is any complaint at all about this book, it would be that there is not an index to every name. However, there is a very good Table of Contents to the 38 chapters, and most chapters are devoted to a particular branch of the family.

"The Nesbitt/Nisbet Society USA has re-printed the original book, and it is available (but only while limited supplies last) from our president, Stuart Nisbet."

Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of this book should contact Stu Nisbet, 1443 Dorothy Drive, Glendale, CA 91202, USA (e-mail: nnprez@juno.com). The cost is US\$30 - plus postage for those outside the USA.



NISBET OF THAT ILK: Another N/N book review to note appeared in the latest UK newsletter (Vol. XIV, No. 3, Autumn 1977). This was a reproduction of a review of 'Nisbet of that Ilk' written by J P Brooke-Little, CVO, MA, FSA, FHS, Clarenceux King of Arms, who is the Honorary Editor of 'The Coat of Arms' (in which the review was originally published). Members may remember that 'Nisbet of that Ilk' by Robert Chancellor Nesbitt was recently republished by his grandson Robert Anthony Nesbitt. It was obviously well received by the reviewer:

"In 1941 Robert Nesbitt wrote the only, and by general consensus of critics of family histories, also a classic, book about the Nisbets, Nesbetts and a host of other variants of the name, of Berwickshire and the Borders. This was published in a limited edition of 250 copies by John Murray.

"Now, the author's grandson, Robert Anthony Nesbitt of that Ilk (his right to be Chief of Name and Arms have been recognised by Lyon in 1995) has persuaded Phillimore's to publish a facsimile of his grandfather's book with additional material contained in 27 pages of 'prelims'. Modern printing techniques being what they are, the old text, printed on war-time paper, is greatly improved; indeed it is a very handsome book.

"Perhaps I should first write something about the original work. I found the text strangely, for a family history, compelling and packed with much local and even general history, exceptionally well recounted and most evocatively Scottish. This demonstrates the amount of research which the author must have put into the book, for he had but little Scottish blood. His ancestor had left for England in the 17th century and the senior line, having married a Chomley heiress from Yorkshire, came south to London where the family became prominent, particularly in the Drapers' Company.

"The author collected material from relatives and it was this mass of Nisbetiana that prompted him to weave it into a continuous story, illustrated with many old monochrome photographs and useful pedigrees.

"The present facsimile volume contains a Foreword by Robert Anthony Nesbitt, which has some additional information and brings the account of the family up to date. There is also an interesting introduction by Robin Majdalany, who was the efficient Editorial Consultant, which *inter alia* asks the question why the families of Gordon, Nisbet, Swinton, Ridpath and Dunse, whose baronies are contiguous in Berwickshire, all have three boars' heads in their arms.

"This book was worth republication, not only because the first print run of the edition was so jejeune, but also because there is now a thriving Nesbitt Society and most essentially because it is such a good read and demonstrates that the study of a family's history can be an excellent way of reliving history."

NEW MEMBERS: We welcome the following new members to the Society:

- Catherine Hunter & Rowland George FREW, PO Box 15, Tumbarumba 2653, NSW.
- Rosane & Francis Michael McNAMARA, 4/8 Wyagoon St, Neutral Bay 2089, NSW.

THE WANTED LIST

JAMES NESBITT: This search request was received recently by the Editor via e-mail:

"I am a descendant of James Nesbitt who came to Canada with his brother John and sisters Sarah (Welwood) and Eleanor. There were three other brothers but I don't have any info on them .

"Any help people could give me tracing their ancestors back into Ireland and/or tracing the three brothers would be greatly appreciated! I'd be glad to share what info I have with anyone interested."

Contact Mary Frerichs, e-mail address: dougmary@execulink.com.

(If you don't have e-mail access but have some information to give to Mary, please send a note to the Editor for it to be passed on).

FOUND

JAMES NISBETT: Queensland member Bryan Nisbett wrote recently to Ian M describing his family tree. The bulk of Bryan's letter is reproduced here in case any members can find a connection into their own families.



"Our family line traces through a James Nisbett, a mariner born in Newcastle on Tyne, England in 1843. He married in Maryborough, Queensland on 26.2.1872 and had four children:

1. William David Nisbett, b 2.3. 1873
2. Margaret Portus Nisbett, b 29.10.1874
3. John Nisbett, b 30.6.1877
4. James Merry Creelman Nisbett, b 21.9.1879

"William Nisbett (1) married and had two children, Walter Percival Nisbett (b 17.9.1895) and Lillian Mabel Nisbett (b 21.11.1898). His first wife died and he remarried and had two sons:

- A. William David Nisbett, b 24.9.1921
- B. James Alexander Nisbett, b ?3.1925

"William Nisbett (A) is my father who is still alive and living now in Invercargill, NZ. He served in the 2nd World War in New Guinea and Bougainville attached to General Staff Headquarters taking minutes of meetings for despatch the next day.

"Obviously I don't know much about the family other than this: William Nisbett (1) and Margaret Nisbett (2) (both) married; Walter served in WWI in France and was repatriated after a gas attack. He had some family."

Contact Bryan Nisbett, 106 Cleveland-Redland Bay Rd, Thornlands 4164, Qld.

REMINDER - WE NEED YOUR ARTICLES, SNIPPETS, REQUESTS & PHOTOS

NOTICE BOARD-D

(Upcoming events in the Local and Overseas Calendar for 1997)

20 November	Committee meeting
6 December	Christmas Party (NSW) - see inside for details
6 December	Christmas Party - home of Ian and Joy Nisbet (Gourmet supper - olde Victorian Christmas cookbook)
January	Newsletter 46
Feb/March	Annual Gathering - date yet to be set

GENERAL COMMITTEE:

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

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COMMITTEE: Peter & Beryl Nesbitt, Frank Nesbit.
GENEALOGY CONSULTANT: James E Nisbet.

ACT REGIONAL OFFICER:

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The Nesbitt/Nisbet Society is a Worldwide Clan Society