

NESBITT/NISBET SOCIETY

Australia



NEWSLETTER NO. 4.

JULY 1987.

STARTING POINT

(Latest News and Views from the Editorial Staff)

FIRST BIRTHDAY: We are fast approaching the anniversary of the formation of the Nesbitt/Nisbet Society - Australia. It is a good time to reflect on the achievements of the first year and think about the challenges yet to come. In just twelve months we have built up a membership of one hundred and nine, organized a national society structure and initiated communication and interaction between N/Ns around the country and overseas.

While the hard 'setting up' work has been done, there is plenty still to do. We must ensure that the initial enthusiasm and interest continues. The first step in this task is to maintain the level of membership. If all members renew their membership we will have a solid base for continued growth of the society.

Who knows what levels we can reach during our second year of existence?

QUESTIONNAIRE: Included with this copy of the newsletter is a questionnaire which we would ask all members to complete accurately and candidly. Only by knowing what members want and what they think of the effort so far, can the society function to serve its members' interests. Future directions will be taken according to the desires and needs of members - take this opportunity to have your say.

Dr. Ian T. Nisbet. Editorial Staff member.

(NES) BITS AND PIECES

(Snippets of General Interest By N/Ns, for N/Ns and About N/Ns)

FRONT RUNNER: R.G Nesbitt of Adelaide won the Easter Gift (now the Stawell Gift) in 1896 off 11.5 yards at 3 to 1 on. The prize money in that year, expressed in the currency of today was: 1st., \$180; 2nd., \$30; 3rd., \$14.

"The men got moving at the same instant. Nesbitt deposed Robertson and Errington when about half the distance had been covered, and, drawing away, won comfortably. Robertson, Errington, Stuckey and Rogers finished in that order. Time, 12.5 seconds. Nesbitt was eighteen years of age and stood 193 cm in stockings, and weighed 82 kg. A protest against Nesbitt for incorrect performances was dismissed". The brochure in which this article appeared contained a photograph of Nesbitt in Wig and Gown, no doubt taken at a later date. Eighteen years does seem rather young for him to have been a barrister.

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SIXTY-EIGHT YEARS MARRIED: Florence and John, both aged 92 years (parents of Jack Nesbitt, member of Paynesville) recently celebrated their 68th wedding anniversary. John, while serving with the Australian forces in England during W.W 1., met Florence a Lancashire girl while on leave. He liked what he saw, "very nice" is how he described her. They married at Chorley. "It was very quiet" John said. They planned nothing special for the event, just another day at their East Bentleigh home which John built thirty years ago.

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(NES) BITS AND PIECES (Cont'd)

Extracts from
"PIONEERING DAYS IN QUEENSLAND"
by James Nisbet, written 1910 and covering the period 1859 - 1879.

WITH REFERENCE TO NISBET RANGE: "It was a big downs country on the west of the Thompson (River) which largely decided my going there. The ranges come in close to the river with much sandy country and occasional spinifex which is not desirable from a pastoral point. We had struck a small creek which looked rather promising and as it was afternoon we ran up it to look for a night's camp. In quite a short distance, as we came through between two points of gideah timber we opened out the great sea of downs stretching as far as the eye could carry. It was a Grand Sight! And the almost certain fact that no white fellow had ever ridden there or looked across those plains before gave me a bit of a thrill, both pleasant and novel".

"A bit away on the downs was a conical hill which we made for in the morning and from the top of which was a great uninterrupted view of the country to the west and south. I named the hill Mount Warbreccan and it bears that title on the charts yet".

WITH REFERENCE TO OONDOOROO STATION (north of Winton): "The acquisition of three blocks of land which had just been taken up on the western watershed cost me something like a hundred pounds each and having these I applied immediately for a lot of the adjacent crown lands making up the whole area to something over nine hundred square miles, every acre of it being grand grazing country".

"At one place at the junction of a small creek which came in from the downs, there were thousands of round stones, round as cannon balls, from the size of big marbles up to a foot or eighteen inches in diameter. A blackboy seemed to greet the round stones as old acquaintances giving frequent utterances to the word 'oondooroo' and as the sound was soft and the word certainly uncommon I adopted it as the name of the Station".

NOTE: Mr. James E. Nisbet went on to say: "Nisbet Range would in all probability have been named after my grandfather, or more likely his brother, James Nisbet who were early pioneers in the grazing industry in Western Queensland. James Nisbet was the first white man to see much of the land in that area and at one time held three hundred square miles of country west from the Thompson River".

"There is another Nisbet Range (1910' high) a few miles roughly S.E of Cairns. I do not know after whom it was named".

"Nesbitt Creek, was also probably named after James Nisbet, who was the original owner of 'Oondooroo Station'. This creek would have at that time been on the station, which was in excess of nine hundred square miles and strangely enough was not considered to be a large property".

"There is also a Nesbitt Street in Winton and I guess the name has been misspelt, as is so common."

"Unfortunately, my grandfather, John Nisbet was accidentally killed at an early age and I have no records of his early years in Australia".

Article based on a letter from James E. Nisbet, 53 Yeo Street, Cremorne 2090, Sydney N.S.W. James is our Regional Officer for N.S.W.

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STUDY TOUR: N/N Society members Dr. Ian and Lorna O'Brien of the A.C.T. leave on a study tour on June 27 via Vancouver and San Francisco to Heathrow, and they will be based at Southampton. Ian said that he is quite disappointed that they will not be there for the International Gathering. He hopes to contact Peter Nisbet of Avon. Both Ian and Lorna are keen to go to the Shetlands to meet Andrina Nisbet and do genealogical research in that area. They will be away for about six months.

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ROYAL HONOURS: Nesbitt/Nisbet Society members will be pleased to note the recent Queen's Birthday Honours list. Mrs. Lily May Nesbitt of West Lakes, South Australia was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for services to the community.

The Executive has congratulated Lily on behalf of the society.

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NESBITT PLACES: On a recent trip members Jack and Margaret Nesbitt of Paynesville Victoria obtained this information for our archives.

In Lismore N.S.W. there are several places of interest, namely, Nesbitt House, Nesbitt Lane and Nesbitt Park. From information Jack has given it appears that these places are all named after the one, George Nesbitt.

George Nesbitt was born approximately 1859 in Castlederg, Northern Ireland. He came to Australia about 1888 and married Adina Morgan at Darlinghurst, Sydney. George Nesbitt was very much a public figure - for charities etc., and was President of the local Agricultural Show on several occasions.

He opened a general store in Lismore with Sam McMaster and John Morehead. Nesbitt House is built on the site of the old store.

He was the Mayor of Lismore in 1906 and a member of the Legislative Assembly from 1913 to 1920.

His death certificate shows that he had no children. He willed the majority of his estate to his wife and the remainder to local charities.

Their names appear on a Bequest Plaque at the Lismore Base Hospital.

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N/Ns IN AUSTRALIAN HISTORY, by Lyn McFarland, Archivist.

While looking through the 1985 edition of the Australian Almanac I came across the following entry, (p. 10)...

1834

October- The Battle of Pinjarra, in which 80 were killed occurred in Western Australia when Captain Stirling attacked a party of aborigines in reprisal for the death of one, Hugh Nesbit, killed earlier in the year.

I decided that this was worth following up to see what else I could find out about Hugh Nesbit.

From the Western Australian Historical Society Journal, 1927-1936 comes a transcription of a tablet held in the Perth Museum.

(Cont'd on page 4)

Erected by Thomas Peel
To the memory of
George Budge
Late Private 63rd Reg't
Age 45 years
Cruelly murdered by natives on Feb. 23, 1832
At Mandurah.

Also

Hugh Nesbit
Late Private
21st Reg't Scots Fusiliers
Aged 19 years
Who fell victim to the same tribe
On April 16, 1834.

It appears that natives had been raiding flour mills in the Swan River District. When some of the offenders were apprehended, their fellow tribesmen planned revenge that centred around Thomas Peel, who along with Captain James Stirling, founded the Swan River Colony in 1827. They let loose some of Peel's horses, and then, one named Monang stayed nearby so that he could lead Peel to the ambush.

A gentleman named Barton (or Barron) had come to buy a mare from Peel. He offered to go after the horses. Private Nesbit, batman to a Lieutenant Armstrong, offered his services as well. When they were deep in the bush they were set upon by hostile natives. Barton managed to escape with serious spear wounds, but Nesbit was not so lucky. When they found his body the next day it was barely recognizable and contained dozens of spear wounds.

The culmination of these events was the Battle of Pinjarra in October 1934.

SOCIETY NEWS

NAVAL CLUB MEETING LONDON: N/N Society member Mona Mountier from Wynnum Queensland on May 16 wrote from London that she attended the function at the Naval Club on the 14th and was made very welcome. There were thirty in attendance including Mona and six from America. Mona was asked to pass on to their Australian kinsmen heartiest congratulations on membership and the work being done here. Peter Nisbet, secretary for England South expressed his deepest thanks and appreciation for the friendship offered to his son Angus during his stay in Australia. The president Richard Nesbitt stressed that we should all try to help each other, particularly in regard to visitors from other countries.

Mona joined our society as a result of publicity given the society in the Queensland Genealogical Society publication "Generation" of December 1986.

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SOCIETY GENERAL MEETING 22nd May: BORDERS, BATTLES, BRICKS, BROGUE AND MORE: Members enjoyed an evening of insight into the history of the Scots, particularly that area of the Borders of which N/Ns were an integral part. The view of the past and present history, traditions and geography of the Borders area and with particular reference to Nisbet House was provided by Janet Gibson.

As an encore, husband Bill gave all present an all too brief insight into Scottish Tartans.

Prior to talks by the Guest Speakers, Janet and Bill Gibson, the president, Ian M. Nisbet gave a brief report of the first year of the society.

Following an expression of appreciation to the Speakers by Gavin Nisbet all enjoyed a hearty supper.

GATHERING 1988: U.K. President, Richard Kerr Nesbitt of Alresford, Hants, England, attended a Kerr Clan banquet held at Forniehurst Castle, recently renovated by Lord Lothian - Peter Kerr - Chief of the Kerr Clan. In a letter to our President, Ian Milton Nisbet he said, "I was so impressed that I have booked the Great Hall for the N/N Gathering on SATURDAY 28 MAY 1988". (Note change of date). "It should be quite an occasion and I hope that by holding the gathering at an historic place - Nisbet Country - we can attract a good attendance from overseas".

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NOTICE - FORTHCOMING EVENTS

WORKSHOP/ FORK TEA: A continued activity aimed at sharing each others experiences in their searches for family history. Bring along a casserole, or something which may be shared around and eaten with a fork. Also bring along your family trees; and particularly old family **photographs**. The aim of the night is to have a mix of food, and food for thought on your family history search.

For any queries and R.S.V.P. contact me.
IAN G. NISBET
SECRETARY.

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: The Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday, 19th September, 1987, at 26 Walnut Road, North Balwyn, Victoria, commencing at 8.00 p.m.

The business will include:

A Report from the Executive.

The Financial Report for the year ended 31st August, 1987.

Election of Office-Bearers.

Fixation of the Annual Subscription for 1988.

The Executive recommends that the Annual Subscription be increased by \$2.00 to \$12.00, to match the increased costs of producing the newsletter. This will maintain the present size and high standard set by the editorial team.

Members who are unable to attend are invited to send any relevant comments or suggestions on the activities of the Society to me.

IAN M. NISBET
PRESIDENT.

FEATURE ARTICLE

(This section is for full-length articles of general interest)

In this newsletter we give you more of James Nesbit mentioned in Newsletter No. 3. Worthy of note, even if not 'noted'; from the book "100 Bushrangers 1789-1901", by Allan M. Nixon.

James Nesbit began his criminal career early in life, with a sentence of a month's hard labour for larceny when he was sixteen. He was barely out of prison for that sentence, handed down on 28 July 1873, before he was back again for another three months hard labour for larceny, to which he was sentenced on 8 September 1873. After that he stayed out of trouble until June 1875, when he received fourteen days for being drunk and disorderly.

The young labourer and 'tobacco manufacturer', which probably means that he worked in a tobacco processing plant, was born in Buninyong, Victoria in 1857. He must have had a discouraging family background. During the trial of Captain Moonlite's gang, of which James Nesbit was a member, the Melbourne Argus reported that his father James Nesbit senior had been charged at the Melbourne City Police Court with having thrashed and abused his wife and was sent to gaol for six months.

On 15 July 1875, James Nesbit appeared before Mr. Justice Stephens at the Melbourne Criminal Sessions, under the alias of James Lyons. He was on the serious charge of robbery in company, and Stephens gave him four years at hard labour.

He served his time in Melbourne Gaol, Pentridge, Williamstown, and again Pentridge, and his record shows that he was a fairly troublesome prisoner after his first sixteen months confinement. On 11 December 1876 he received forty eight hours solitary confinement for disobedience, and after that he received a series of punishments for relatively minor offences such as idleness, talking, improper language, quarrelling, leaving his seat at divine service, and the peculiar charges of 'claiming paper improperly' and 'having trousers improperly'.

He was released on 17 September 1878 and set free with prison pay of L3.13.9d, (approximately \$7.40). Nobody knows how he occupied the next few months, but he was waiting for the release of a man whom he had met in Pentridge. His Pentridge record shows that on 13 August 1878 he had his 'indulgences deferred for one day' for giving tea to a prisoner named Scott, and this was Andrew Scott who called himself Captain Moonlite and enlisted young James Nesbit into his bushranging gang.

No doubt the two men discussed a bushranging venture while they were in Pentridge, and Captain Moonlite lost no time in forming his gang after his release from Pentridge in March 1879. (The story of Captain Moonlite's gang is told in Andrew Scott's biography in this book).

For young James Nesbit, membership of the gang led to his death at the age of twenty two.

Nesbit, like the rest of Moonlite's young accomplices, was devoted to his leader. He always showed himself ready to obey his leader's lightest wish.

When the police surrounded the gang at Wantabadgery homestead in N.S.W., Nesbit made a desperate attempt to cover Moonlite's escape by rushing out of the homestead with his rifle blazing to divert the police. Constable Bowen shot him dead, and Moonlite avenged him by shooting the policeman.

When the battle was over, Moonlite asked to see Nesbit's body. The police led him to a shed behind the homestead, where Moonlite looked at the corpse and muttered, 'He died trying to save me, he had a heart of gold'.

James Nesbit's criminal record ends with the note, 'Engaged in bushranging with Andrew G. Scott at Wantabadgery, New South Wales, and shot dead by the police'.

Material by Dot and Colin Nesbit of Ascot Vale Victoria, Australia.

MORE ABOUT CAPTAIN MOONLIGHT: The better side of Captain Moonlite took over when the four bushrangers who survived the fight at McGlede's farm, Wantabadgery N.S.W., were tried for Constable Bowen's murder.

"If the law has been so broken that it must be avenged by a human life, then let me be the victim and spare these youths", he pleaded in an emotional address to the court. "God created them for something better than the gallows."

The jury was apparently impressed and finding the four guilty as charged, recommended mercy for all except Scott, the ringleader of the gang and the actual killer of Constable Bowen. Williams and Bennet were sentenced to death and reprieved. Scott and Rogan were hanged on January 20, 1880. The newly established Sydney Bulletin commented that Andrew George Scott had been

determined to 'die game' and had done so. Captain Moonlite would have been proud of him.

Material supplied by Mrs. Evelyn Clark of Eden Hills South Australia.

WANTED (Members Searches)

For descendants of William Nesbit (farmer), born c1815 Ballygonny, Co. Londonderry, Ireland, died Neilborough Nth., Victoria, Australia, 1885.

William Nesbit was the son of James and Elizabeth Nesbit, nee Beattie. He married Margaret Ritchie, nee Fairweather, a widow from Arbroath, Scotland in 1854 and was living at Geelong, Victoria at the time. Children: George, Mary Jane, James, Thomas and William.

Mary Jane Nesbit married James Falls from Tempo, Co. Fermanagh, Ireland. James Nesbit married Mary Ann Brown and they had fourteen children. Ivy Agnes Nesbit married James McFarland from Plumbridge, Co. Tyrone, Ireland.

Contact Mrs. Helen Williams of 19 Archer Avenue, Ascot Vale, 3032, Victoria, Australia.

* * *

Mrs. Margaret Vickers seeks connections with ancestors in Northern Ireland. Her father Samuel James Nesbitt was born 1901 Kilcam, Co. Armagh; his brother Albert and sister Emily migrated to New Zealand. Her grandparents in Ireland were John Nesbitt and Margaret Nesbitt, nee Girvan.

Contact Mrs. S.M. Vickers, Kartigi, RD2, Palmerston, OTAGO, New Zealand.

FOUND

WHOSE ANCESTOR: The following information was supplied to the secretary by non-members and may prove useful to N/N members.

Daniel Nesbitt who married Mary Ann Murray died in Goulburn N.S.W., on 30/6/1927 aged 73 years. The couple had two children, Kevin and Alice, who never married as both entered religious orders.

Jane Nesbitt born at Heathlodge, Cavan, Ireland 1842, married Henry Robert Brett on 1/8/1862 in New Zealand. She died in Rockhampton Queensland on 9/11/1884. Her parents were Edward William Nesbitt and Jane Nesbitt, nee Wilkinson.

NOTICE BOARD

(Upcoming Events in the Local and Overseas N/N Calendar)

- 1987 Aug. 8 Workshop/Fork Tea. The venue is 1 St Johns Parade, Kew, Victoria, commencing at 7.30 P.M.
For further information please see page 5.
- Aug. 20 Executive Meeting.
- Sep. 1 Closing date for material for inclusion in N/L No. 5.
- Sep. 19 Annual General Meeting. (Please see page 5)
- Oct. Newsletter No. 5.
- Nov.
- Dec. 5 Christmas End of Year Celebration. Please make a note in your diary for this event. More details later.
- 1988 Jan. Newsletter No. 6.
- May 28 International Gathering at Forniehurst Castle, in N/N Country, Scotland. (Please note revised date)

A POEM FOR GENEALOGISTS

If you could see your ancestors
All standing in a row,
There may be some of them perhaps
You wouldn't care to know.

But there's another question
Which requires a different view,
If you could meet your ancestors,
Would they be proud of you?

From Family Tree Magazine, Vol. 3., No. 5, p 23, by Russ Bell of Australia.

STOP PRESS

It has come to my attention that I inserted an incorrect post code in Newsletter No. 2 for a SEARCH on behalf of Ian G. O'Brien of the A.C.T. The correct code is 2614. For anyone I may have inconvenienced I offer my apologies. Editor.

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ARE YOU INTERESTED IN THE N/N SOCIETY?
CAN YOU CONTRIBUTE
TO THE DIRECTION OF THE SOCIETY?

If so, how about nominating for a position on the Executive, or on one of the Work Groups, at the Annual General Meeting?
For more details see page 5 of this newsletter or contact our secretary.



EXECUTIVE:

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The Nesbitt/Nisbet Society is a Worldwide Clan Society