

# NESBITT/NISBET SOCIETY AUSTRALIA



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NEWSLETTER NO. 8.

JULY 1988

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## STARTING POINT

(Latest News and Views from the Editorial Staff)

FIRST AUSTRALIAN N/N: The response to the search for our earliest immigrant N/N has been underwhelming to say the most.

Members of the executive and the newsletter committee have made the following claims:

Ian M. Nisbet clan.	John Nisbet in 1852 on the 'Julia' (subject to varification).
A. Bruce Nesbit clan.	John George Mitford Nesbit Sr. in 1856 on the 'Acadia'.
Ian T. and Gary R Nisbet clan.	John Nisbet in 1858 on the 'Donald McKay'.

None of these comes close to the seven convict immigrants noted in Newsletter number 1; the first of whom was Pat Nesbitt (male) in 1802 on the 'Atlas II'.

Can anyone claim and verify Pat as an ancestor or do better than us?

Ian T. Nisbet.

## (NES)-BITS & PIECES

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

GATHERING: Mrs. B. Lesley Elsley, nee Nisbet, of Earlwood N.S.W. writes:

"Descendents of John Dykes Nisbet and Agnes Frances Robb gathered in Sydney recently to view the extensive collection of family data accumulated by Mr. James E. Nisbet of Cremorne, N.S.W.

Old letters, diaries, journals, photographs, etc. obtained from as far afield as South Africa, New Zealand and Queensland provided an incredibly detailed insight into the lives, thoughts and conditions under which our pioneering families existed.

Mr. Nisbet's dedication and perseverance over many years to collate such a valuable collection was acknowledged and warmly applauded by all in attendance".

NOTE: James Nisbet traces his ancestors to his gr. grandfather, John Nisbet, b. c1775, 'Chapelton', Newkilpatrick, Scotland. His grandfather John Dykes Nisbet b. 1845, Glasgow, married Agnes Frances Robb in 1873 in N.S.W.

James is the Regional Officer in N.S.W. and members are invited to contact him should they need help on local matters or have suggestions to further develop the society in N.S.W. (James E. Nisbet's address is shown on page 8).

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LIEUTENANT MALCOM NISBET: Here is an article which appeared in U.S.A. Newsletter Vol. 2 No. 2 (1984), edited by the founder of the Nesbitt/Nisbet Society, Prof. J.A. Nesbitt, of Koser Avenue, Iowa City, Ia., U.S.A. I found it particularly interesting (ed). (Cont'd next page)

2.

Lieutenant Malcom Nisbet, killed in the Flushing Battle 1944, is remembered in 1974.

The Sunday Express carried the following item on June 9, 1974.

"Amid the guns a hero played the piano. The townspeople of battle-torn Flushing could hardly believe their ears when, during a lull in the fight for the Dutch port, the sound of piano music wafted out from a shell-scarred building. In the eerie silence after the crashing din of battle came the calm sad melody of the tune, Broken Blossoms.

That was nearly thirty years ago. But the people of Flushing have not forgotten the sound of the piano that gave them hope when their town was being ravaged by battle. And when they celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Liberation of Flushing in November they would like the relatives of the young British officer who played the piano to join them.

The young man was Second Lieutenant Malcom Nisbet, age 22. The battle of Flushing was his first action - and his last. He was given command of No. 13 Platoon of 'O' Company of the 4th Battalion of the King's Own Scottish Borderers.

Astonished: On the night of November 1, 1944, having crossed the River Scheldt, he was fighting his way through the docks when he and his platoon reached the house of butcher Ko de Visser. In the front room they found a grand piano. When a lull in the fighting came, Lieutenant Nisbet astonished his comrades with a rendition of Broken Blossoms. From then on, during lulls in the fighting, the 200 Dutch remaining in the town, the British and the German soldiers, were treated to a musical interlude. The following day Lieutenant Nisbet was killed.

Major Richard Hill, assistant regimental secretary of the King's Own Scottish Borderers said, 'We will try to trace any relatives of Second Lieutenant Nisbet. Our Old Comrades Association has plans to go to Flushing in November'".

And so the young officer is still remembered in 1988, 44 years on.

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THE ENGLISH AUTHOR, ROY CONYERS NESBIT: The report 'Amy, the Riddle is Solved' by Geoffrey Levy which appeared in the Melbourne Sun Jan., 9. 1988 referring to an article by Roy Nesbit struck a cord in my memory which sent me searching through my files. I remembered receiving a letter from a John Kenard Nesbit in England which included numerous pages relating to N/N BDMs in various parishes of Northumberland England, compiled by his brother Roy. Some of the sheets were signed Roy C. Nesbit and in John K. Nesbit's covering letter he had mentioned that his brother's second given name was Conyers.

With these clues I visited Collin's Bookshop which revealed that the author was indeed the brother of John K. Nesbit of Sutton Coldfield, West Midland, England, who wrote to me in April 1985.

The Amy of whom he writes is Amy Johnson a famous English flyer who in 1930 flew her flimsy Gipsy Moth solo from England to Australia in 19 days; the first woman to accomplish the feat.

Mystery and rumour surrounded her death in a plane crash on Jan. 1, 1941 which tarnished the Amy Johnson legend. Roy Conyers Nesbit, the aeronautical historian and author has pieced together the facts for the highly regarded periodical 'Aeroplane Monthly'. For once the belated truth about a dead hero wipes away the mud with logic, reason and research of infinite value. This, when it is fashionable and profitable to dig only for dirt.

John Kenard Nesbit writes of his brother: "Roy was born in 1921, educated at Wanstead County High School, London, and served with the R.A.F. from 1939 to 1946, being commissioned in 1941. He was a navigator in light bomber aircraft and flew in 49 operations. He was demobilized as a Flight Lieutenant and was mentioned in despatches.

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In 1950 he obtained a B.Sc. (Econ) with Honours second class at the London School of Economics and after a post-graduate course in Business Administration went into industry, eventually in 1967 becoming managing director of Eltain Ltd., clothing manufacturers.

His investigative work started some years ago when delving into family history. When he started compiling his memoirs it snowballed into a number of articles for 'Aeroplane Monthly' and they became a book 'Woe to the Unwary', published by Kimber. Because of his hitherto concealed talent he was encouraged to do more. To this stage he has written six books. Another book 'Failed to Return', not released yet, will include the researches into the loss of Glen Miller and Amy Johnson. He has also completed 25 articles for English, French and German magazines.

Roy is now retired and living in Swindon. His time is devoted to his writing and intensive research, the thoroughness of which has earned him considerable respect. He is currently President of the Beaufort Aircrews Reunion in the U.K.

Roy's nephew, Peter who designed the covers to the books published by Kimber, London, is a graphics artist and is considering emigrating to Australia. He has no relatives here." **Editor.**

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**EUCALYPTUS, ESSENCE OF AUSTRALIA:** A book of this name by Des Shiel, which describes the story of the Eucalyptus oil industry in Australia, mentions the names F. and W. Nisbet as distillers in the Tarnagulla region in the 1920s.

The two men in question are in fact Frank and Bill Nisbet who operated a Eucalyptus oil still near their property at Woolshed Flat just north of Wedderburn. The still, although a little run down these days, is still operational and is run on an irregular basis by Bill's sons Les and Eric Nisbet of Wedderburn. They are true Eucalyptus devotees, who will tell you the oil has hundreds of uses - from clearing a blocked nose to cleaning out your car's radiator. **Ian T, Nisbet.**

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**MOUNT NISBET** in Papua New Guinea is situated approximately 40 km S.S.E. of Kokoda and 19 km S.E of Templeton's Crossing on the Kokoda Trail.

It is in the area referred to as "The Gap" which would be familiar to soldiers who fought on the Kokoda Trail during W.W. II and pilots of the U.S.A.F. and R.A.A.F. who flew "The Gap" to Port Moresby from Buna and Gona and all points north on bombing raids and the evacuation of wounded. It was possible to fly through "The Gap" only when weather permitted. More often than not heavy mist and fog made flying very dangerous. I have not been able to ascertain the person after whom the mountain is named, perhaps a member can enlighten us.

Material by Dot Nesbit of Ascot Vale, Victoria.

#### **SOCIETY NEWS**

The Society's membership drive continues with success. Our numbers have struck 116 paid up members with the addition of the following 16 members.

#### **NEW MEMBERS FOR 1987-88.**

BARTH, John, 15 Duke St., Ashburton, 3147, Vic.

ROLINSON, Raymond N., 28 Coronation Ave., Mosman, 2088, N.S.W.

NISBET, Karen E., 19 Nethercote Dr., Mt. Waverley, 3149, Vic.

WALSH, Mrs. Sue, P.O. Box 134, Charlton, 3525, Vic.

LARMOUR, W.A. (Bill), "Longview", Buckrabanyule, 3525, Vic.

NISBET, Alan W., 11 Bond St., Bellambi, 2518, N.S.W. **(Cont'd next page)**

NESBITT, Robin K. & Peter J., 7 Acacia Ave., Casino, 2470, N.S.W.

RALLS, Mrs. Glenys, P.O. Box 262, Trafalgar, 3824, Vic.

WALLACE, Mrs. Isabelle, 29 Wedge St., Benalla, 3672, Vic.

REA, Mrs. Doris, Fl 3/67 Boronia St., Sawtell, 2452, N.S.W.

PRELL, Coral V., Helmut & Gerald Karl, 12 Gordons Rd., Lower Templestowe, 3107, Vic.

NISBET, James, 6 Maple Street, Belrose, 2085, N.S.W.

DIMATTINA, Maree, 4 Roselea Street, Box Hill North, 3129, Vic.

NESBITT, Donald R., 47 Paxton St., Frenchs Forest, 2086, N.S.W.

GREEN, Amy & Doug, RSD Romsey, 3434, Vic.

NISBET, Mark W., c/o Post Office, Yolla, 7325, Tas.

We take this opportunity to welcome them to our clan and encourage them to make use of not only our newsletter but all services.

We would also encourage all members to actively recruit potential kin/clansmen (oops! clanspersons) so that continued development of our society is ensured.

**Gary R. Nisbet.**

**NOTICE  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Annual General Meeting will be held on Friday 16th September 1988, at 26 Walnut Road, North Balwyn, Victoria, commencing at 8 p.m.

The business will include:

A Report from the Executive.

The Financial Report for the Year ended 31st August, 1988.

Election of Office-Bearers.

Fixation of the Annual Subscription for 1989.

(The Executive recommends that the Annual Subscription continue at \$12.00)

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.**

**EVENING WITH SPEAKER:** A small group attended a meeting at the home of Ian and Lesley Nisbet at 1 St. Johns Parade, Kew on 20th May.

The president, Ian M. Nisbet, gave a brief address and outlined the progress made by the society over the past year, after which the secretary, Ian G. Nisbet, introduced our speaker for the evening, Mr. Kevin Richardson, of Glen Iris.

Kevin is the secretary of the Descendants of Convicts Group, a sub group of the Victorian Genealogical Society, and vice president of the First Fleet Fellowship. He gave an interesting talk, based on knowledge he had gained while researching his family history. He can claim six convicts among his ancestors. The most serious crime committed by any of them was 'stealing a sheep'. I was surprised to learn that there are 500 Victorian members and 3000 N.S.W. members of the First Fleet Fellowship (people who can trace their ancestry back to the First Fleet).

Supper, provided by the Social Committee, and wine tasting followed to wine-d up a pleasant evening.

Many thanks to our Social Committee and Ian and Lesley.

**Editor.**

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**INTERNATIONAL GATHERING OF THE NESBITT/NISBET SOCIETY  
28 MAY 1988.**

**PRESS RELEASE:** A memorable gathering took place at Ferniehirst Castle on Saturday, 28 May, 1988.

Some years ago the Nesbitt/ Nisbet Society was formed, and branches have developed in the U.S.A. and Australia. A Gathering has been held every year, but this is the first occasion it has been held on the border, the area from which this Clan came originally and a few miles from the village of Nisbet.

Ferniehirst Castle has been restored recently by Lord Lothian: it was built in 1598 and is a perfect example of a frontier fortress. Lord Lothian's skilfull restoration and magnificent portraits of historic figures made the Great Hall a perfect setting for such an occasion. The paintings include original portraits of Mary Queen of Scots and James VI.

The Gathering was arranged by the President of the Society, Richard Kerr-Nesbitt.

The Provost of Jedburgh (George Jeffrys) opened the Gathering by welcoming the 75 guests on behalf of the Town.

The programme included 'Discussion Groups' examining ways and means of developing the Society's activities.

A splendid lunch followed (provided by the well known caterer, Michael Wares) which was in turn followed by a talk by the author Patrick Delaforce on his book which covers the life of Francis Nisbet who became Lady Nelson, Duchess of Bronte.

The Annual General Meeting was then held after which the guests were able to explore the grounds, the Border Clan Centre and the museum of the Kerr family history.

**Richard Kerr-Nesbitt.**

**FEATURE ARTICLE**

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

Many members, when filling in their questionnaire requested articles from the N.A. and U.K. Newsletter. This interesting article by Miss Andrina Nisbet of Altona, Mid Yell, Shetland, appeared in the Spring 1988 edition of the N.A. and U.K. N/N Society Newsletter.

**NISBETS OF SHETLAND**

In the late 1960s, I suddenly got the urge to try to trace my family tree and despite comments from my father as to what I might discover, I started to look in the local records. I have been searching ever since.

I was lucky in many ways as Shetland is a distinct area with separate records, and my main research was mainly on one island - Yell. I had surmised that as Nisbet was quite an unusual name in Shetland and only appeared in two islands, Yell and Unst, I would find it of recent origin. (There was also a rumor of fleeing Jacobites)!

Imagine my surprise to discover there had been a Nisbet in Yell in 1538. Among the records of the Earldom of Orkney was a decree by a Court held in Yell, later confirmed by the King's Court of Bergen. This decree was signed by Rolf Nesbet lawrightman in Yell. (A lawrightman was an official mainly charged to look after weights and measures, but who also officiated at courts for the Lawman). Who Rolf Nesbet was or where he came from I have never managed to find out.

In 1544, John of Neysbyth was a signatory to a land conveyance document and he used his own seal.

In the 1570s several Nisbets are mentioned - Peter and John, (possibly the same John) and their families, Ninian Nisbet who may have been their father, David Nisbet Burgess of Bergen who may be another brother, and Sunniva who was a daughter of Ninian.

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Peter Nisbet of Kirkabister, Yell, is very well documented. He bought and sold land, appeared in lawsuits, signed deeds and left a very detailed will. He was married 3 times and had a total of 15 children. He died on August 1, 1603. His will was disputed, as the children of his first two marriages claimed he had left too much to his third family. However, it seems to have been amicably settled and, according to the law, all his children got their share.

He was quite well off for the time. Besides his land and animals, he had a large amount of household goods, including 3 beds, 7 bolsters and a feather bed. He also left a silver belt, a silver cross, 2 silver spoons, a silver whistle, a pair of silver clasps, a gun and a sword and 11 "angell nobills" and 16 "dollours".

For the next 60 years or so the Nisbets - all Peter's descendants - remained one of the leading families on the island. They are stated to be the last people to trade direct with Norway. There were also some Nisbets on the neighbouring island of Unst - possibly a branch of the same family.

From about 1660 until 1770, very little is known of the individuals in Shetland as records are poor. This is the time when Scots lairds and ministers seized land, most illegally. The Nisbets began the period as landowners and ended it as poor tenants.

I trace my family branch to a Peter Nisbet born about 1771; and in fact, all present-day Yell Nisbets are descended from him. There were other families of Nisbets, but they have either died or emigrated.

My future research ambitions are:

1. To fill in the gap between the 1600s and 1771. Pretty impossible!
2. To trace a John Nisbet born 1826 who disappeared after 1851. I think he may have emigrated.
3. To trace the Bergen connection of the 1500s.
4. To find out where the Shetland Nisbets came from.

It will probably take the rest of my life!

**Andrina Nisbet.**

**WANTED**

(Member's Searches)

NESBITT, Alexander, b. 1821, native of Maynooth, place of residence in 1837, Berwick-on-Tweed, Scotland. Arrived N.S.W. 1837 on John II; m. Martha Baker 1845 at St. Peters Church, Campbelltown, N.S.W. Alexander and Martha had 11 children and lived at Spring Terrace (Millthorpe) near Orange N.S.W.

Contact Mrs. Robyn Nesbitt, 7 Acacia Avenue, Casino, 2470, N.S.W.

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NISBET, John, (b. 1907, Scotland), m. Myra Aileen Boxall (b. 1913), in 1932 at Hobart, Tasmania. The marriage was dissolved in 1941. John Nisbet served on H.M.A.S. Dateshen which Mrs. Tucker believes was sunk during World War II.

Mrs. Tucker (a non member) who wrote to me recently stated that she has only vague memories of her father and said "for many years I have wished to know any information of him".

Contact Mrs. Betty A. Tucker, 3 Aerodrome Road, St. Helens, 7216, Tasmania.

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NESBITT: Antecedents of John Nesbitt born c1840 Co. Kilkenny, son of William and Catherine (nee Farrell) Nesbitt. Arrived Australia c1863. Married at

(Cont'd next page)

Carisbrook, Vic. 13 Jan. 1865 to Mary Sexton, daughter of Thomas and Bridget (nee Eagan) Sexton from Co. Clare. Miner at Majorca and Maryborough, Vic. Died 5 Dec. 1904. Son, John Michael Nesbitt married Anna Sophia Maria Zinnecker and were the grandparents of Jack Nesbitt who seeks relatives in Ireland.  
Contact Jack Nesbitt, Government Road, Paynesville, 3880, Vic.

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ANY SUCCESS? We would like to know if entries in the WANTED section have been fruitful. As the name and address of the contact person is published, correspondence is generally direct and we are often unaware of any successes. Please let us know of any links which have been made by writing to the secretary, Ian G. Nisbet.

#### FOUND

WHOSE ANCESTOR: Tom Nesbitt (c1829-1910), a Scotsman and an accomplished cabinet-maker was engaged in the extension to the Wonnangatta Station homestead which was extended from five rooms to fourteen, about 1880.

He proved to have been a master craftsman whose skills were to be seen in the many items he made for the owner Mr. Bryce. A Card Box, 12" x 4" x 3" deep with a 1" deep lid was a masterpiece with all eight corners faultlessly mitred. The lid, which had holes drilled for cribbage was embellished with black and white inlays between the cribbage holes.

The doors in the extension were well made by Nesbitt and fitted with store locks, whereas those of the first section were roughly made with latch-string catches.

Locally grown blackwood was used for the furniture amongst which was a three door wardrobe to ceiling height with a large drawer at the base.

Sideboard, tables, chairs and ottomans were executed with rare care and skill, with embellished designs of scrolls and whorles.

Imagine the value of such items of their quality on today's market.

Note: Wonnangatta Station was situated in Northern Gippsland on the Wonnagatta River on a bearing of 15 degrees S.E. of Mansfield at the junction of the Wonnangatta and Conglomerate Rivers.

Material from the book, "The History of Wonnangatta Station," by Wallace Malcom Mortimer was supplied by Colin and Dot Nesbit of Ascot Vale, Melbourne, Victoria.

#### OBITUARY

Mrs. Gwen Nisbet, M.B.E.: It is with regret that we note the death of Gwen Nisbet on May 13th, 1988.

A memorial service was held at St. John's Anglican Church, Camberwell on May 19th after a private funeral. A large number of people were present at the service, including several N/N members. Gwen and her husband Kenneth (dec.) were foundation members of the society and both took an active interest in the society. Gwen was the mother of Gavin, foundation treasurer, and member, Mrs. Barbara Leslie.

An article outlining Gwen's activities in the music world was featured in newsletter number 5.

#### STOP PRESS

BIRTH: We have great pleasure in announcing the arrival of yet another N/N member. Peter and Gail (Rawson) Nesbit of Keilor, Victoria, are the happy parents of a baby boy, Christopher Scott. Christopher, who weighed in at 4.05 Kg (8 lbs 13 ozs), arrived on the 25th June at the Essendon Maternity Hospital.

Peter and Gail can now add another generation to their Nesbit Family Tree.

**NOTICE BOAR-D**

(Upcoming Events in the Local and Overseas Calendar)

- 1988 Aug. 17 Executive Meeting.
- " Aug. Picture Night followed by Supper. (To be notified).
- " Aug.  
or  
Sep. Botanical Gardens Gathering. (To be notified).
- Sep. 16 Annual General Meeting. (See 'NOTICE' on page 4.).
- " Oct. Newsletter No. 9. (Closing date for material, Sept. 1).
- " Dec. 3 Christmas End of Year Function.

**GENERAL COMMITTEE:**

PRESIDENT Ian M. Nisbet, A.M., 26 Walnut Road, Nth. Balwyn, 3104, Vic., Aust.  
 SECRETARY Ian G. Nisbet, 1 St. Johns Parade, Kew, 3101, Vic., Aust.  
 TREASURER Peter Watson, 30 Mitchell Road, Box Hill North, 3129, Vic., Aust.  
 EDITOR Bruce Nesbit, 6 Kent Court, P.O. Box 84 Bundoora, 3083, Vic., Aust.  
 ARCHIVIST Bruce Nesbit, 6 Kent Court, P.O. Box 84 Bundoora, 3083, Vic., Aust.  
 Ian T. Nisbet, Gavin M. Nisbet, Karen E. Nisbet.

**NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE:**

Bruce Nesbit, Ian T. Nisbet, Gary R. Nisbet. Graphics by Karen E. Nisbet.

**EDUCATION/INFORMATION COMMITTEE:**

Heather Ames, Ian G. Nisbet, Gary R. Nisbet.

**SOCIAL COMMITTEE:**

Joy Nisbet, Gwen Marsham, Heather Ames, Lyndell Watson, Merryn Nisbet, Lesley Nisbet, Elyse Classon, Diana Dimattina, Barbara Leslie.

**REGIONAL OFFICERS:**

George Nesbitt ~~110 Ardross Street, Ardross, 6153, Western Aust.~~  
 Brian S. Nesbitt 4 Crowther Place, Curtin, 2605, A.C.T., Aust.  
 James E. Nisbet 53 Yeo Street, Cremorne, 2090, N.S.W., Aust.

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