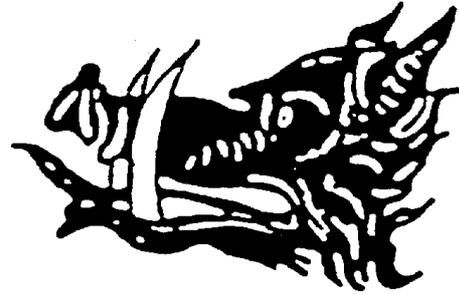


# THE N/NEWS

NO. 90 January 2009

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
NESBITT/NISBET SOCIETY  
AUSTRALIA



## STARTING POINT

*I wish you and your kin a happy and prosperous New Year – albeit in the face of the economic downturn in late 2008.*

*New Year is a time of reflection; and for the Australian Branch of the N/N Society 2008 was probably not our best year on any account; the passing of a number of foundation/long term members; missed AGM; decreased membership and attendance at our Christmas Gathering. But, New Year is also a time of renewal and aspirations; New Year's resolutions, plans for the coming year and changes to, and re-alignment of some of our priorities.*

*There is no denying that our membership is aging, with few new members, and thus also shrinking. We have carried several committee positions vacant and have doubled up on several roles for committee members. Is it possible to match some of the needs of the Society with individual member's plans for 2009 (& beyond)?*

*Your services are needed by your Society, both formally as a committee member and indirectly as ambassadors for the Society if we are to ensure our continued existence and I urge you to please consider!*

*Make this one of your New Year's resolutions! Then act and contact me via the homepage.*

*Chairman & Editor*



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## NOTICE BOARD-D

(Upcoming events in the Local and Overseas Calendar)

Apr	N/NEWS # 91
July 25-26	2009 - International Gathering of the Clans, Edinburgh, Scotland
Jul	N/NEWS # 92
Oct	N/NEWS # 93

Note: the social calendar can be viewed on the homepage.



## MEM-BOAR-SHIP

The annual subscription notice for the year September 2008 to August 2009 is being issued with this newsletter. It would be most appreciated if you were to promptly complete and return these with payment for your subscription and/or donation as this will spare our few committee members from having to chase outstanding dues. Your on-going support for your Nesbitt/Nisbet Society is sought.

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We have noted a change of address for Mark & Robyn Nisbet to Berwick, Vic.



## (NES)-BITS & PIECES

### Nelson, New Zealand

*The article below was supplied by New Zealand Regional Officer, John Nesbit.*

Earlier this year on a personal family history research trip and with several enquiries for other N/N's I found my way to Nelson - a significant place for many N/Ns, since it was here in 1842 that the first Nesbitts arrived in New Zealand, followed by others.

During my stay in Nelson I found my way to both The Nelson Provincial Museum (Tasman Bay Heritage Trust) and the Isel Park Research & Archive Resource Centre. At Isel Park the collection of photographs and archival material is awesome; the staff at Isel Park are passionate about their work, almost as excited as I when a new link was found.

I recommend that anyone with two or three hours to spend in Nelson visit Isel Park; be prepared to find the odd skeleton or two.

It is essential to phone and make an appointment to visit.

**The Nelson Provincial Museum**  
Cnr. Hardy and Trafalgar Streets  
Nelson  
Tel: 064 3 548 9588

**The Nelson Provincial Museum Isel Park  
Research Facility**  
Isel Park, Hilliard Street  
Stoke  
Nelson  
Tel: 064 3 547 9740

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### John Grant Nisbet – Family Reunion

The descendants of John Grant Nisbet formerly of 74 Damside Street, Dunfermline, Scotland are called to a family reunion in Port Lincoln, South Australia on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

*Colin Nisbet can be contacted at 3 Tyler Street, Henley Beach South, South Australia 5022.*

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### NN Society DNA Project – or is that DN/NA?

Our Society project was started in 2003 by Tom Nesbitt and to date 66 people have been tested. We have been able to prove biologically that many Society members are DNA cousins, even though we had no prior knowledge of this. Due to the very high death rate of our ancestors and necessary remarriages, not all members are matching other people. This simply means your ancient male ancestor was given the NN name because his widowed mother remarried a NN man and everyone took the name. The other possibility is in the ancient Barony of Nisbet peasant farmers could have assumed the NN name and became John of Nisbet which was his location. Surnames were not common in the UK until the 1400's but they are among the "world's oldest surnames." The Illegitimacy rate in the UK in 1500 AD was only 3%, so this is least likely reason for not matching others. We have found that we have 3 large DNA groups and a couple of smaller ones.

Group 1 is the Clan Chief's group and descends from the original Nisbet of that ILK family, dating back to the 1100's and ancient Barony of Nisbet near Duns, Scotland. This group has 12 members tested, including Mark Nesbitt, our Clan Chief.

Group 2 is the largest group with 20 members tested. They seem to descend from the Covenanters and the Nisbet of Greenholm family, but this is still not proven. The Covenanters are known to have settled in Newark, NJ in 1685 and we have one Nesbitt descended from them who is group 2. The Covenanters also settled in Southern PA during the 1730's and we have several people tested from these Nesbitt's and most of them match with group 2.

Group 3 is also a large group with 15 members tested and it is the only group present in all 3 locations: UK, North America, and Australia. In America, they are represented in the book "Nisbet Narrations" and may also descend from the Greenholm line, but again this is not proven with any records.

*Those wishing to participate in our DNA project should contact Tom Nesbitt via email at: tomnesbitt@zoominternet.net*



## FOUND

### Mr J R Nisbet – motorcycle enthusiast

*Alan Ames, our motorcycle enthusiast spotted a reference to **Mr J R Nisbet** on page 28 of a book entitled "100 YEARS OF THE ISLE OF MAN TT – A Century of Motorcycle Racing" by David Wright. (TT = Tourist Trophy) An excerpt follows:*

The start and finish point of the 1911 races in Douglas was located on a flat section of road between the bottom of Bray Hill and the downward slope was very welcome to those who had difficulty bump-starting their machines. Clerk of the Course **Mr J R Nisbet** controlled affairs at the start with the aid of a megaphone, scoreboards were erected at the side of the road, the timekeepers had a small wooden shed to work in, and the press occupied a room in an unfinished cottage close to the finishing line. However, there was no room for riders' 'replenishment area', so official refueling points were created at Braddan and Ramsey.

*Is there any more known about J R Nisbet?*

\*\*\*

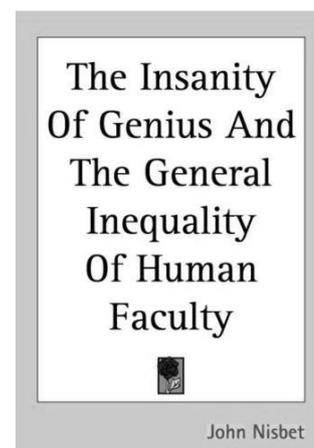
### John Nisbet – author

*When undertaking an internet search for John Nisbet, I came across the following entry:*

The Insanity of Genius and the General Inequality of Human Faculty

by **John Ferguson Nisbet** - 2005 - Psychology - 368 pages

*books.google.com.au/books?isbn=1417975032.*



\*\*\*

### Robert Nisbet – fact or fiction?

*I was recently given a copy of the "VICTORIAN READERS SIXTH BOOK, second edition" (1940) published by the EDUCATION DEPARTMENT VICTORIA where, on pages 213-217 is a story entitled "THE FEATHER" which includes a leading character by the name of Robert Nisbet.*

Essentially, the story is about a group of Quakers who have remained in their houses, after pleading with officials to do so, even with the imminent threat of an Indian uprising. **Robert Nisbet** has travelled thirty miles on foot to offer moral and spiritual support for the Friends. This he does as an address to the regular meeting of the Quakers. Whilst the meeting is underway, an Indian war party approaches and even though initially intent on wiping out the white folk, they see no weapons, signs of hatred or resistance, so lay down their weapons and join the meeting in silent meditation. On closure of the meeting the Indians are invited (gesturing and signs) to join the meal. Whilst supping it is found that both **Robert Nisbet** and the Indians are able to converse in French. Robert receives assurance from the Indians that the Quakers are deemed friends and now enjoy the protection of the Indian chiefs, which is indicated and signified by the placement of a single white feather in a particular manner over the doorway of their residence/s.

On undertaking a little internet research re: the source and some other details I wonder whether there may be any historical and factual basis to the story. Basic details follow:

- *Notes & Comments* (p.244)

#### THE FEATHER

A Story of Peace and Good-will.

Author – Unknown. The story is abridged from the *Friends' Quarterly Examiner* of July, 1916.

- The **Friends' Quarterly Examiner** is a Quaker publication (**The Friends Quarterly** since 1947).
- Easton township, Pennsylvania: In 1736 Thomas Penn, son of William Penn, and Benjamin Eastburn, surveyor general, selected and surveyed the "Thousand Acre Tract" of land at the confluence of the Delaware and Lehigh Rivers. William Parsons and Nicholas Scull began their survey for a town in the 1750s at a spot called by the Indians "Lechanwitauk" or "the Place at the Forks." The new town was to be called "Easton" in the new county of "Northampton." The Great Square (now known as Centre Square) was, and remains, a gathering place for residents and travelers. In fact, on July 8, 1776, the square was the site for one of only three readings of the Declaration of Independence.  
Source: <http://easton-pa.com>

*So, was Robert Nisbet, a Quaker of Pennsylvania, fact or fiction? Is any of this story factual? Perusing NA newsletters and records indicate many N/N's in Pennsylvania – perhaps our NA Branch can advise?*

\*\*\*

#### **John Nisbet – (honest old John)**

Sir Walter Scott  
Old Mortality  
CHAPTER IX (excerpt)

Sir Robert Hamilton himself felt neither remorse nor shame for having put to death one of the prisoners after the battle with his own hand, which appears to have been a charge against him, by some whose fanaticism was less exalted than his own.

“As for that accusation they bring against me of killing that poor man (as they call him) at Drumclog, I may easily guess that my accusers can be no other but some of the house of Saul or Shimei, or some such risen again to espouse that poor gentleman (Saul) his quarrel against honest Samuel, for his offering to kill that poor man Agag, after the king's giving him quarter. But I, being to command that day, gave out the word that no quarter should be given; and returning from pursuing Claverhouse, one or two of these fellows were standing in the midst of a company of our friends, and some were debating for quarter, others against it. None could blame me to decide the controversy, and I bless the Lord for it to this day. There were five more that without my knowledge got quarter, who were brought to me after we were a mile from the place as having got quarter, which I reckoned among the first steppings aside; and seeing that spirit amongst us at that time, I then told it to some that were with me, (to my best remembrance, it was

honest old **John Nisbet**,) that I feared the Lord would not honour us to do much more for him. I shall only say this,—I desire to bless his holy name, that since ever he helped me to set my face to his work, I never had, nor would take, a favour from enemies, either on right or left hand, and desired to give as few.”

The preceding passage is extracted from a long vindication of his own conduct, sent by Sir Robert Hamilton, 7th December, 1685, addressed to the anti-Popish, anti-Prelatic, anti-Erastian, anti-sectarian true Presbyterian remnant of the Church of Scotland; and the substance is to be found in the work or collection, called, “Faithful Contendings Displayed, collected and transcribed by John Howie.”

*Sir Walter Scott authored a number of old Border tales and ballads and devoted much of his leisure time to the exploration of the Border country. His novels included **Waverley**, **Guy Mannering**, **Old Mortality**, **Rob Roy** and **Tales of my Landlord**. **Old Mortality** takes its name from the nickname of a late 18<sup>th</sup> century scot, Robert Paterson, who wandered Scotland cleaning and repairing the tombs of the Cameronians, who were a sect of strict Covenanters in the reign of Charles II. This fiction of Scott, is said to be based on the anecdotes told by this supporter of their cause, covering a period from the late 1600's.*

*The main characters, battles and places are historically based. The reference to “honest old John Nisbet” is within a real quote and is most probably a reference to the martyr, John Nisbet of Hardhill (executed 1685), whose son Sargeant (James) Nisbet fought at Drumclog and who personally accounted for seven of Claverhouse's troopers. The excerpt gives an insight into the torment that some of these “soldiers” went through and the mechanisms that they put in place to cope and/or live (& die) by.*



## SOCIETY NEWS

### N/N Society 25<sup>th</sup> Gathering – Gunsgreen House

From <http://www.berwickshire-news.co.uk/news/Nisbet-Society-celebrates-its-25th>

**Published Date:** 01 October 2008  
By Kenny Paterson

### Nisbet Society celebrates its 25th gathering

THE 25th Nesbitt/Nisbet Society Gathering was held at Eyemouth's Gunsgreen House - built by one of their most famous members.

John Nisbet had the house built in 1753 on the south side of the harbour, allowing him to develop his business of smuggling goods in and out of the port.

A presentation to mark the occasion was made on Saturday at Netherbyres House, where Clan chief Doctor Mark Nesbitt gave Colonel Simon Furness an antique tea poi to add to the collection of furniture gathered in the house ready for its reopening as a visitor centre.

President David Nisbet, who is stepping down from his role after nearly 25 years, explained the significance of the tea poi to the Nisbet dynasty and Gunsgreen House.

"A tea poi is used to make tea and in 1784 Prime Minister William Pitt abolished tea tax. Three years later, merchant John Nisbet was out of business as there was no longer any need for tea to be smuggled into the country."

Saturday's 25th celebrations were witnessed by 20 members of the Nesbitt/Nisbet clan, with two - Maria Ruchart (nee Nisbet) and Doctor Frederica Hoech - coming from the Munich branch in Germany.

The group received a tour of Gunsgreen House by Col Furness and administrative manager Derek Janes. They then moved to Netherbyres House, where the presentation was made to Gunsgreen House and Col. Furness gave a detailed talk on the past, present and future of Gunsgreen House.



He told Nesbitt/Nisbet members that the coach house attached to Gunsreen had been renamed Nisbet's Tower in memory of their smuggling relative and would be used as a self catering apartment for holidaymakers.

The society's general meeting was also held, where Peter Nisbet stood down after 25 years service as secretary and treasurer, before next year's International Homecoming Gathering and Games, to be held in Edinburgh, was discussed.

A traditional Scottish high tea was then enjoyed at Eyemouth Golf Club.

David Nisbet added: "The society was started to provide genealogy information and a friendship to all clan members worldwide. We now have active members from USA and Australia." Saturday provided an excellent day for all."

\*\*\*

### **Annual General Meeting 2008**

*The year 2008 "got away" from us and one of the impacts is that our formal AGM will be replaced by a set of Reports and informal committee review. The reports will soon be available on the homepage.*

\*\*\*

### **Christmas Gathering**

*Albeit on fairly short notice, a somewhat smaller than usual group of 15 N/N's gathered for Christmas fellowship at the home of Ian G & Lesley Nisbet on the evening of December 6, 2008. A number of formal apologies were received. One of Lesley's music students, Kim Falconer, enchanted us with several pieces as flute solos and then as accompaniment to Lesley on the keyboard for quite a number of Christmas Carols. A vote of thanks was offered to Joy & Ian M Nisbet for having so generously and graciously hosted our Christmas Gatherings in the past and for so long. A sumptuous supper and a grand raffle were then enjoyed by all. I would like to once again thank our hosts for their efforts and also to thank Kim for her music.*



## **N/N's IN THE NEWS**

### **Victorian Premier's Reading Challenge**

*The PRC Achievers Honour Roll 2008 issued as a supplement to **The Age**, of Monday, November 17, 2008 on page 89 included a few N/N's, being:*

*Prep  
Darcy Nesbitt  
Detlyn Nesbitt*

*Grade 1  
Thomas Nisbet*

*Grade 5  
Paula Nesbit  
Bailee Nisbett*

*The challenge being to read 15 books (30 for prep to grade 2) between January 30 and August 31. Some 115,000 students between prep & year 10 achieved this in 2008. Well done to the five (5) young N/N's listed; keep up the reading & studies.*

\*\*\*

### **Tertiary Places 2009**

*Listed in the Tertiary Places 2009 supplement to **The Age**, of Tuesday, January 20, 2009 were some four (4) young N/N adults, being:*

*Nesbit J M*

*Nesbit N J*

*Nesbitt L J*

*Nesbitt R L*

*Congratulations on offers of a placement at a Victorian tertiary institution and every success with your studies.*

\*\*\*

## David & Debbie Nesbit – DIYer's

The following article was supplied by our New Zealand regional officer, John Nesbit (source unknown).

### Methven Hammer Hardware

**M**ethven now has a specialist DIY and hardware retail store, offering local people a convenient way to obtain all their home improvement materials under one roof.

When Hammer Hardware opened in Methven last October, it filled a longstanding need in the town for a local supplier of DIY and home maintenance products.

The store's owners, David and Debbie Nesbit, are familiar faces in Methven, having run the Supervalu Supermarket for three-and-a-half years. In fact, it was while they were operating the supermarket that David and Debbie realised there was a gap in the market for a specialist DIY and hardware retailer in Methven.

Debbie recalls supermarket customers were always asking for hardware items such as paint, nails and other home improvement materials. The couple eventually approached Hammer Hardware and pointed out the opportunity to open a branch in Methven.



Owners, David and Debbie Nesbit

If David and Debbie had to sum up the philosophy of Methven Hammer Hardware in two words it would be 'convenience' and 'service'. They will go out of their way to find any item a customer needs, if it is not already in the store. Usually, they

can get it within two or three days. If necessary, they will deliver materials to a customer's door.

Hammer Hardware runs a regular advertising programme focused on the "it's your local" message, stressing the convenience of being able to buy DIY and hardware materials locally. Debbie and Dave believe it makes sense for Methven people to shop locally at Hammer Hardware for all their home improvement materials.

Furthermore, they will spend time to help customers pick the right tool (or product) for the job and offer helpful advice on the right way to go about tackling it. The store carries a good selection of power tools (specialising in Ryobi and Makita brands), hand tools, garden tools and equipment, outdoor furniture, electric and gas heaters, kitchenware and appliances.

Hammer Hardware also supplies a wide range of Taubmans and Wattyl paints and will tint it to customers'



requirements. If the paint you need is not in store, they will get it usually within two days.

The store also carries a range of timber, and can order in any type of timber and other building materials that a customer requires, usually within one or two days. If you are arriving with a trailer to pick up timber, there is a large off-street parking area and loading area behind the store.

To meet the needs of Methven's sporting community, David and Debbie have also introduced a range of sporting, outdoor and camping equipment. They are planning a Fishing Expo in September.

David and Debbie are continually expanding their range of products, to meet the needs of local customers. Their next project is to develop a small garden centre behind the store, with a range of plants, shrubs and garden construction materials such as railway sleepers, in time for the spring.

Methven Hammer Hardware offers ATS members discounts on all products in the store (excluding specials).



### HAMMER HARDWARE

#### Hours:

Monday – Friday 8am – 5.30pm

Saturday 9am – 1pm

Sunday 10am – 1pm

Watch out for extended summer weekend hours

85 Main Street Methven

Ph (03) 302 9664

Fax (03) 302 9665



August 2008 5



## ERRATA

In N/News 89 page 6, ARTHUR BRUCE NESBIT was "The son of John Herman Nesbit, by his first wife Isla (Eila) Agnes Carter." Bruce was also the Society's first Honorary Member – receiving this honour in recognition as convenor, inaugural newsletter editor, publications officer and for his tireless effort on behalf of the Society whilst in these roles.

## **NESBITT/NISBET SOCIETY CONTACTS**

### GENERAL COMMITTEE:

PRESIDENT: Ian M Nisbet, 26 Walnut Rd, North Balwyn, Vic 3104, Aust.  
CHAIRMAN & EDITOR: Gary Nisbet, 37 Neuparth Rd, Croydon North, Vic 3136, Aust.  
SECRETARY & TREASURER: Ian G Nisbet, 1 St Johns Pde, Kew 3101, Aust.  
ASSISTANT TREASURER: Heather Ames, 7 Plant St, Malvern, Vic 3144, Aust.  
ARCHIVIST: Vacant  
BOARD: Effie Todd, Gavin Nisbet, Lyndell Nisbet, Karen Nisbet.

### NEWSLETTER COMMITTEE:

Gary Nisbet, Ian G Nisbet, Karen Nisbet, Glen Hollebhone.

### PUBLICATION OFFICER:

Vacant

### EDUCATION AND INFORMATION COMMITTEE:

Ian G Nisbet, Gavin Nisbet.

### SOCIAL COMMITTEE:

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

### NSW REGIONAL GROUP:

SECRETARY: Glen Hollebhone, 28 Derna Road, Wattle Grove, NSW 2173, Aust.  
CORRESPONDENTS: Mary & Keith Nisbet, 4/125 Cardinal Ave, West Pennant Hills, NSW 2125, Aust.  
COMMITTEE: Frank Nesbit.  
GENEALOGY CONSULTANT: James E Nisbet.

### ACT REGIONAL OFFICER:

Brian S Nesbitt, 14 Davitt Cl, Isaacs, ACT 2607, Aust.

### WA REGIONAL OFFICER:

Pippa Letch, 40 Honeymyrtle Turn, Stirling, WA 6021, Aust.

### NZ REGIONAL OFFICER:

John Nesbit, 64a Somerfield Street, Christchurch 2, NZ.

### OVERSEAS CONTACTS:

North America: Diana Hawkins, 5930 Creekside Lane, Hoschton, GA 30548, USA.  
UK: Angus Nisbet, 7 Trent Avenue, London, W5 4TL, UK.

**The Nesbitt/Nisbet Society Australia is a member of the Council of Clans**

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

### INTERNET SITE:

**<http://www.nnsoc.asn.au>**