

NESBITT/NISBET SOCIETY

Australia



NEWSLETTER NO. 9.

OCTOBER 1988.

STARTING POINT

(Latest News and Views from the Editorial Staff)

Well, maybe sarcasm does pay off! Since our last newsletter, the editorial staff has really been overwhelmed with paper. Not only have we heard of an early N/N (see SUCCESS), but we have also received a number of interesting articles and letters from members. So many in fact that we are unable to fit them all in this time round. Keep up the good work! **Dr. Ian T. Nisbet.**

(NES)-BITS & PIECES

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

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS FOR 1988/89: We are happy to announce that we have two new memberships for the current membership year. Mr. Eric Nisbett and his wife Jean of Riverwood, N.S.W. and Mr. Trevor Nisbet of Wellington, New Zealand. We hope they are only the first of many and we welcome them to the clan.

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THE POT OF GOLD

by

Evelyn Clark of Eden Hills South Australia

July 1988

I first became interested in researching my family history indirectly through my husband, Tom.

When we met 47 years ago, I was told that if the family could prove they were the descendants of a particular 'Clark', there was a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow, just waiting to be collected.

When my husband retired we went on our first overseas trip, determined to either collect the loot, or forever put an end to the fairy story.

One of our relatives had lent me a book on the Clark genealogy which also had a Nesbit name in it. I was in contact with a Mr. Wallace in England who was not related, but he gave me a hint on how to get information out of reluctant elderly relatives. He suggested that I say that HE wanted the information. Sneaky, but it worked and the reason for the reluctance was revealed when several births appeared to be premature.

While researching the Clarks with my husband in Edinburgh and believing my ancestors to be Scottish, I thought I may as well have a look too, but nothing of Nesbit was found.

Subsequently we went to St. Catherine's House, London, where we looked up Johnstones on my maternal side. The first book opened; there he was, gr. gr. grandfather Andrew Johnstone. My husband had found him in ten minutes. I couldn't believe my eyes - yes I was hooked and wanted to know more.

Back in Australia, exchanging Christmas cards with ex-nursing colleagues, a friend sent me a genealogy notice which had been inserted by Bruce Nesbit. I wrote to him. Bruce and other interested parties later formed the Nesbitt/Nisbet Society - Australia. I joined the society and found relatives I didn't know I had, Colin and Dot Nesbit. From them I've received a tremendous amount of information. Our mutual gr. grandfather, William Nesbit, who turned out to be Irish, not Scottish, is still as elusive as ever with ten years difference in age at different times on various documents.

I now have the family story on both sides back to my gr. gr. grandparents apart from one female who is simply shown as, "the wife of _____, the relict of _____, the mother of _____".

Research has done a lot for my education.

Geography: Where is Armagh? Where is Haltwhistle? Never has the atlas had so much use.

My spelling: The dictionary is never very far away and as for my brain - never has so little been used so often for so long.

History: Ancestors have come from England, Ireland, Scotland and New Zealand. One wonders why they came to Australia, then history tells us of various occurrences. The potato famine in Ireland in the mid 1840s; the gold rush in N.S.W. and Victoria in the 1850s; family dissensions and getting away from relatives to go to the other side of the world - aged 18, married to a man you hardly knew.

It is a marvelous record for my grandchildren when they are interested in what went before. They will not have to search as we did, but they will have missed out on all the fun.

Incidentally, the Clark mystery was solved. They are descendent from, not a millionaire, but a shoe maker. Just our luck!

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SUCCESS: As a result of an insertion in the WANTED (Member's Searches) section of Newsletter number 8 by Mrs. Robyn Nesbitt of Casino, N.S.W., a link has been added to Robyn's chain. Robyn received a phone call and a letter from an N/N member, Ms. Lurline Gainsford of Ulladulla, N.S.W. It was discovered that they share the same ancestor, a fifteen year old convict, Alexander Nesbitt. Alexander, a baker's boy from Maynooth, Ireland was tried on 14th July 1836 at Berwick-on-Tweed, Berwickshire, for stealing soap and was sentenced to seven years.

Alexander arrived at N.S.W. on John II in 1837, so must be considered as one of our early immigrants.

Robyn and Lurline are anxious to learn of Alexander's antecedents in Maynooth, Ireland. Maynooth, as I've been informed by members Dot and Colin Nesbit is on the Royal Canal, about 20 km west of Dublin near Dunboyn and Kilcock.

Information regarding Alexander's crime, trial, sentence, vital statistics etc. was obtained from "Extracts from Convict Indents" held by The Victorian Genealogical Society of Victoria.

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NISBET HOUSE, DUNS, SCOTLAND: Stuart Nisbet, president of the North America Branch is also a very competent photographer. In 1983, when he and his wife Nancy visited Duns, they were taken on a tour of Nisbet House by Major David Nisbet (now chairman of the U.K. Branch). Stuart shot a series of 27 photographs, a set of which he forwarded to president, Ian M. Nisbet.

Stuart has offered the photos to members at US\$20 (his cost of printing) plus postage, approx. US\$3.

Enquiries should be directed to secretary Ian G. Nisbet.

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HOUSE OF NISBET DOLLS AND TEDDY BEARS: The world famous 'Peggy Nisbet Dolls' are designed by Mrs. Peggy Nisbet M.B.E. (mother of Peter, treasurer of the N/N Society, U.K.). They are available at a special price to N/N Society members through the Australian distributors.

Details may be obtained from secretary, Ian G. Nisbet.

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WINE BOTTLING: An almost single-handed effort by Heather Ames raised \$59 for society funds. It is efforts like this that are encouraging to the committee and provide necessary funds for future development. Many thanks Heather.

SOCIETY NEWS

SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: The Second Annual General Meeting of the Nesbitt/Nisbet Society - Australia was held on 16th September 1988 at St. Abbs, 26 Walnut Road, North Balwyn, the home of President Ian M. Nisbet and his wife Joy.

Among the 26 who attended was Trevor Nisbet from Wellington, New Zealand. He accompanied Ian and Heather Clarke who were guests of Ian and Joy. Trevor has become a member of the society and hopefully will spread knowledge of the society in New Zealand where we now have three members.

Following the address by president, Ian M. Nisbet and the election of office bearers for 1988/89 (see page 8), Ms. Sue McBeth gave an interesting talk on 'A Genealogical Trip to The British Isles'. Sue and her husband Robert Jephcott have visited the U.K. and Ireland on several occasions over recent years where they carried out family genealogical research. Sue is a professional genealogist and lectures at the Council of Adult Education and was the editor of Scots Link and librarian at the Genealogical Society of Victoria. Sue is a competent and entertaining speaker and interspersed in her talk were many amusing anecdotes.

After Sue's talk all adjourned to the supper room where we enjoyed the usual sumptuous spread prepared by the social committee. A bottle of Scotch Whisky, and a wicker basket made by Joy Nisbet, were raffled.

It seemed a little 'fishy' to me as Ian G. won the bottle of whisky. Ian M. won the wicker basket, but declined to accept. On the redraw it was won by Ian T. Both prizes were taken out by members of the executive.

Need I say more!

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INTERNATIONAL GATHERING: The N/N clan gathering at Ferniehirst Castle, Jedburgh on May 28 was a resounding success. Of the 71 who attended, six were from Australia. They were Mrs. Doris Rea (Sawtell, N.S.W.) and her daughter, Mrs. Patricia Such; Miss Maree Dimattina (Box Hill, Victoria) and her friend Miss Pina Lazzara; and Mr. Peter Nesbitt and his wife Beryl (Corlette, N.S.W.).

Proceedings commenced on the Saturday morning with a welcome by Richard Kerr-Nesbitt (U.K. President), followed by an official welcome to Jedburgh and Ferniehirst Castle by the Provost of Jedburgh, George Jeffrys.

During the ensuing discussions it was apparent that people were impressed with the standard set by the Australian N/N Society.

It was unanimously agreed that Ian M. Nisbet and his committees should be congratulated on their efforts in organising the N/N Society in Australia.

A delicious three course lunch was followed by a talk by author Patrick Delaforce on his new book 'Nelson's First Love' (Fanny Nisbet). It seems that Lord Nelson was not the nice guy history have us believe!

After the talk, the Annual General Meeting of the N/N Society was held. Both Bill Kelsey (Newsletter Editor) and Richard Kerr-Nesbitt resigned their positions, and were replaced by Lt. Col. William Nesbitt and Major David

Nisbet, respectively. Other executive positions remained unchanged. During the course of the A.G.M., Peter Nesbitt presented a report on behalf of the Australian N/N Society and made Richard Kerr-Nesbitt and Stuart Nisbet (N.A. President) "honorary Australians" by presenting them with Australian Flag Pins.

The question of the next international gathering was raised during General Business. Australia was suggested as a possibility by Patricia Such, but it will probably be held at Berwick-on-Tweed.

After tea, the official gathering was called to a close and private gatherings, reunions and 'get-togethers' followed.

Editorial Note: This report is a very abbreviated summary put together from letters by T. Peter Nesbitt and Maree Dimattina. We thank them for their letters and apologise that space would not permit them to be published in full. Excerpts describing other interesting events (after the official gathering) will be included in future newsletters.

The matter of an international gathering in Australia has been discussed by the Australia executive committee who feel it is something which should be considered. What do you think? Please let us know! **Dr. Ian T. Nisbet.**

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A NIGHT AT THE THEATRE: A small group of N/Ns attended the Comedy Theatre, Melbourne on Saturday September 10 to see the musical "Seven Little Australians". It is based on the book of the same name written in the 1890s by Ethyl Turner and to a slight degree is a reflection of her own life.

The dream of producing Ethyl Turner's great novel as a major piece of musical theatre has been with the composer David Reeves for some ten years and has occupied most of his time for the past two of those years.

All who attended thoroughly enjoyed the evening which was capped off with refreshments at the Windsor.

FEATURE ARTICLE

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

A BRANCH OF THE DIRLETON NISBETS

(ABRIDGED)

by Robert Nisbett of Bateau Bay, N.S.W.



We are a branch of the Dirleton Nisbets, the lineage of which was researched by my cousin who spent most of his life in Dunbar, East Lothian, Scotland but now lives in warmer Sussex. Initially he commissioned a 'searcher' from the Lyon's Office (Herald's Office), but once the link was established he continued on his own search for many years to collect the detail. During the past five years I have been assisting him, mainly with the Australian side of the family and just recently we have put it all together.

Our Dirleton connection is through John Nisbet, born 1693, a younger son of William Nisbet of Dirleton. William inherited the Dirleton title and lands from his cousin Sir John Nisbet, Lord Advocate, who had purchased the lands, including Dirleton Castle, in 1663. Sir John died in 1687 and, there being no male issue, left the title and estate to the aforesaid William Nisbet.

Through him this then became the main Dirleton line and continued until the death of Mary Hamilton Nisbet in 1855. Her father, William Hamilton Nisbet great grandson of the original inheritor, was the last male proprietor in this line of the Dirleton Nisbets. Mary Nisbet in her first marriage was the Countess of Elgin. Her first husband Lord Elgin is said to be responsible for bringing to England from Greece the pieces known as the 'Elgin Marbles'.

Our forefather, John Nisbet (whose elder brother, also named William, inherited Dirleton lands and title from his father William) lived in Belhaven, which was the port for Dunbar. He and his sons established a business transporting trade goods by package from Dunbar to the Border Country; bringing back wool and other local products. A partnership was formed with a family named Drysdale who owned ships trading out of Belhaven to London. (No smuggling of course)!!

The Belhaven family tree continued to flourish and somewhere about 1830, as a result of a family disagreement, the additional (t) was added to the name. The first in my line to adopt the double (t) was my great grandfather John, who in 1839, at the age of sixteen and with the assistance of his uncle, a Director of The Honourable East India Company, left Dunbar and sailed to India as a cadet in the Bengal Infantry. When he retired from the then British Army he held the rank of Major General. His eldest son John was born at Agra, India in 1862. At the age of nineteen he emigrated to Queensland. Six years later John Nisbett moved to New South Wales where he eventually became a magistrate and moved around numerous country towns. He married one of the Durack girls whose brothers and cousins drove their cattle from Queensland to the Kimberlys in West Australia to become known in later writings as 'The Overlanders'.

Thus, from this marriage my grandfather established a Dirleton family tree in Australia. I am pleased to say that the tree is no longer a sapling and is still sprouting. My wife and I are very proud of our first grandchild, Jayden Craig Nisbett, just one year old. So the name goes on to another generation.

My cousin William believes he is the last known Nisbett of the Dirleton family of his line. Unfortunately the name and his particular family line will finish there.

WANTED

(Members's Searches)

NESBITT, William Robert, b. 1862, Clarendon, m. Adelaide Matilda Elizabeth Willis Teele in 1889.

NESBITT, James Alexander, b. 1866, Clarendon, m. Annie Mildred Wheeler in 1895. Both William and James were sons of James Nesbitt and Matilda Levingston, or Livingston(e), who migrated to Victoria from Northern Ireland via Liverpool shortly after their marriage at Liverpool in December 1853 and who arrived in Melbourne in April 1854 on the 'Miltiades'. I seek information regarding both antecedents and descendants.

Contact Robert J. Linford, 25 Pelsart Street, Red Hill 2603 Canberra, A.C.T.

* * *

NESBITT, Agnes Ann, age 18 years, m. John James Sherritt, age 26 years at Coote Hill, County Cavan, Northern Ireland, c1853. They arrived at port Phillip on the 'Motoaka' from Liverpool, U.K. on 26/5/1854. John was C of E and Ann, who had married against the wishes of her parents, was Presbyterian. John, who was a Sergeant of Police in Northern Ireland went to work for a Captain Harrison of Prahran, Victoria at 75 pounds a year with rations provided. A child Aaron was born.

NESBITT, Robert, b. County Cavan, Ireland, c1840. Father Hugh Nesbitt, mother Ann Nesbitt (nee Richardson). Robert arrived in Australia aboard the 'Greyhound' on 9/1/1859. One known sister Agnes Ann Nesbitt (see above).

Robert never married but had a family of 5 to Mary Ann Youngman (nee Pettit), namely: Robert James, b. 1874; Mary Florence, b. 1876; Henry Hugh, b. 1878; Annie, b. 1879 and Alfred, b. 1882, d. aged 6 days. All were born at Eldorado near Ballarat, Victoria. Robert died on 14/10/1903 at Eldorado as a result of a fall from a horse.

Seeking antecedents and descendants of Agnes Ann Nesbitt and Robert Nesbitt.
Contact: Mrs. I.A. Wallace, 29 Wedge Street, Benalla, 3672, Victoria.

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NESBIT, Annie, b. 1846, Corncafole, County Antrim, Ireland; m. Thomas EDGE, b. c1840, Moliagul, Victoria, in 1863. Annie's father, James Nesbit, (wife ?) was born c1815, possibly Ireland.

Information is required of antecedents and descendants of Annie Nesbit.
Contact Mrs. Jeanne Campbell, 61 Lewis Road, Wantirna South, 3152, Victoria.

* * *

NESBITT, John Augustus, b. c1832 (? where), d. 1876, Quambone, N.S.W.; arrived Australia during the 1850s from Sao Miguel in the Azores (in the Atlantic off the west coast of Spain); m. Elizabeth Church, 1863 in N.S.W.; they had 3 sons and 2 daughters. Daughter Emily M. Nesbitt b. 1873 near Quambone, N.S.W. m. George Fletcher 1899. Emily d. 1927 at Warren, N.S.W. .

Wanted - information regarding antecedents and descendants of John Augustus Nesbitt.

Contact: Rev. Paul Clark, Bishop House, P.O. Box 28, Forbes, N.S.W.

FOUND

In a recent letter, Mrs. Diane Hewson tells of the unexpected success she received from a good Samaritan in Alnwick, County Northumberland, England. The following is a lightly edited version of her letter.

"I have recently received a letter which has helped me a lot with my research and I wonder if any of the information has connections with other members of the society. I will outline it briefly.

My gr. gr. grandmother was Hannah Nesbitt, bapt. Alnwick, Northumberland, U.K. 1827, d. Burra, S.A. 1913. She came to Australia with her husband, Francis Newman, on the 'Boyne' in 1850. From her baptismal certificate I knew her parents were Anthony and Margaret Nesbit.

On the off-chance of getting help I wrote to the Post Office at Alnwick and was extremely lucky in that one of the men working there passed it on to his father, Mr. Thompson, who has gone to a great deal of trouble to help me.

He searched the gravestones at St. Michael's Church in Alnwick and found those of Anthony and Margaret Nesbitt and Anthony's parents, Thomas and Eleanor Nesbitt.

Mr. Thompson has been so helpful. He copied the gravestone inscriptions and sent me a list of the Nesbitts buried at St. Michael's Church. I have enclosed a photocopy of the list, it may be of assistance to other members of the society, or someone may find a 'link' and be able to help me.

I have been quite excited with the wonderful help this gentleman has given me and he is willing to help further. I hope this information is of value to other society members."

The list of gravestone inscriptions is shown on the next page.

NESBITT GRAVESTONE INSCRIPTIONS, ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, ALNWICK, NBL.

NAME	DIED	AGE	NAME	DIED	AGE
Margaret	24-12-1794	81	Margaret	11-03-1851	56
Anne	23-09-1798	66	Ann	10-12-1851	27
Margaret	Died young		George	19-09-1854	29
George	Died young		Thomas	27-01-1816	76
Catherine	11-10-1808	8	Eleanor	09-12-1834	86
Thomas or Theresa	11-03-1809	1	Anthony	15-09-1834	53
George	25-01-1816	67	Margaret	27-02-1848	58
Catherine	08-08-1835/6	63	Anthony	04-03-1840	25
Isabella	22-01-1810	65	Anthony	21-10-1842	5
John	19-01-1805	53	William	04-09-1828	6
Catherine	27-03-1921	2			
George	11-04-1831	5			
Hannah	21-08-1851	17			

Contact Mrs. Diane Hewson, Pindari Crescent, Queenbeyan, 2620, N.S.W.

* * *

WHOSE ANCESTOR: George Nesbit Morriss, b. 1875 (reg. number 13376) at Yarp (probably near Warrnambool in Victoria's Western District), m. Fanny Jane Reid in 1905 (reg. number 5459) in Victoria.

Father, Jeremiah Morriss, and mother, Sarah Eliza Gray, were both from Armagh, Northern Ireland. Sarah died in Victoria, 1911, aged 74 years.

An alert member discovered this information on microfiche whilst researching the Morriss family.

Ed's Note: If the registered number is quoted certificates may be obtained at a greatly reduced cost.

MISCELLANY

GIFT OF IRISH CONVICT RECORDS: July 1988 saw some encouragement to those N/N members of 'disreputable' Irish descent in their search for information on their 'errant' emigrant ancestors.

An Taoiseach (Prime Minister, for those of us not touched by the Blarney) of the Republic of Ireland, Mr. Charles J. Haughey T.D., whilst on his recent visit to Australia presented Ireland's Bicentenary gift to the people of Australia.

The gift is microfilm records of some 38,907 convicts transported from Ireland to Australia between 1788 and 1868.

They are records from the Convict Department in Dublin which have survived in the State Paper Office in Dublin Castle and include:

- i) Petitions against the sentence of transportation;
- ii) 'free settlers' papers which were held by the Convict Department as they relate to requests and information filed on behalf of the wives and families who wished to be re-united with convict husbands in Australia.

To make life even easier and the records more accessible, IBM in Ireland and Australia spent three years writing and developing software for a computerised index to the microfilm and have donated four Personal Computers to the National Library in Canberra to run the software. Eventually this computer facility will be available in libraries throughout Australia; hopefully in the not too distant future.

Gary R. Nisbet.

.....NOTICEBOARD.....

(Upcoming Events in the Local and Overseas Calendar)

- 1988 Nov. 8 Executive Meeting.
- " Dec. 3 Christmas End of Year Function at 26 Walnut Road, North Balwyn, with a singer of English and Scottish Ballads.
- 1989 Jan. Newsletter No. 10 (Closing date for material Dec. 1, 1988).

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, Lyndell Watson, Gary R. Nisbet,
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REGIONAL OFFICERS:

George Nesbitt	110 Ardross Street, Ardross, 6153, Western Aust.
Brian S. Nesbitt	14 Davitt Close, Isaacs, 2607, A.C.T., Aust.
James E. Nisbet	53 Yeo Street, Cremorne, 2090, N.S.W., Aust.

CONTACTS:

<u>U.S.A.:</u>	
Mrs. R.J. Nesbit	545 Hartnell Place, Sacramento, CA 95825, U.S.A.
<u>U.K.:</u>	
Peter W.W. Nisbet	7 Stafford Place, Weston-super-Mare, Avon, BS23 2QZ Eng.
<u>AUSTRALIA:</u>	
Ian G. Nisbet	1 St. Johns Parade, Kew, 3101, Vic., Aust.



The Nesbitt/Nisbet Society is a Worldwide Clan Society