

# GEORGE STANLEY NEWTON & ISABELLA SPROTT CONNOR

## PREFACE

This is one of seven biographies of my paternal ancestors in Australia, whose family tree is shown on the following page. 'Stan' and 'Ella' Connor are my grandparents and I have vague recollections of Ella. They were both born and raised in rural Australia, met in Eden New South Wales and settled around Sydney where they raised their family. Their story spans WWI, The Great Depression, and WWII.

The biographies in this series are;

Thomas James Connor (1813-1880) and Anne Peake (1811-1894)

Edward Thomas Newton (1813-1882) and Eliza Martin (1817-1903)

Sprott Boyd (1814-1902) and Catherine Cutler (1819-1894)

George William Connor (1842-1873) and Eliza Newton (1843-1912)

Robert Mitchell Boyd (1849-1912) and Eliza Agnes Brown (1855-1884)

**George Stanley Newton Connor (1871-1951) and Isabella Sprott Boyd (1882-1957)**

George Boyd Connor (1919-2014) and Sybil Kane Whiting (1922-1995).

Each of the stories can be read in isolation. Inevitably, there is overlap between them, so some repetition is unavoidable but I have tried to keep this to a minimum. For easy reference, family trees are included at the end of each story.

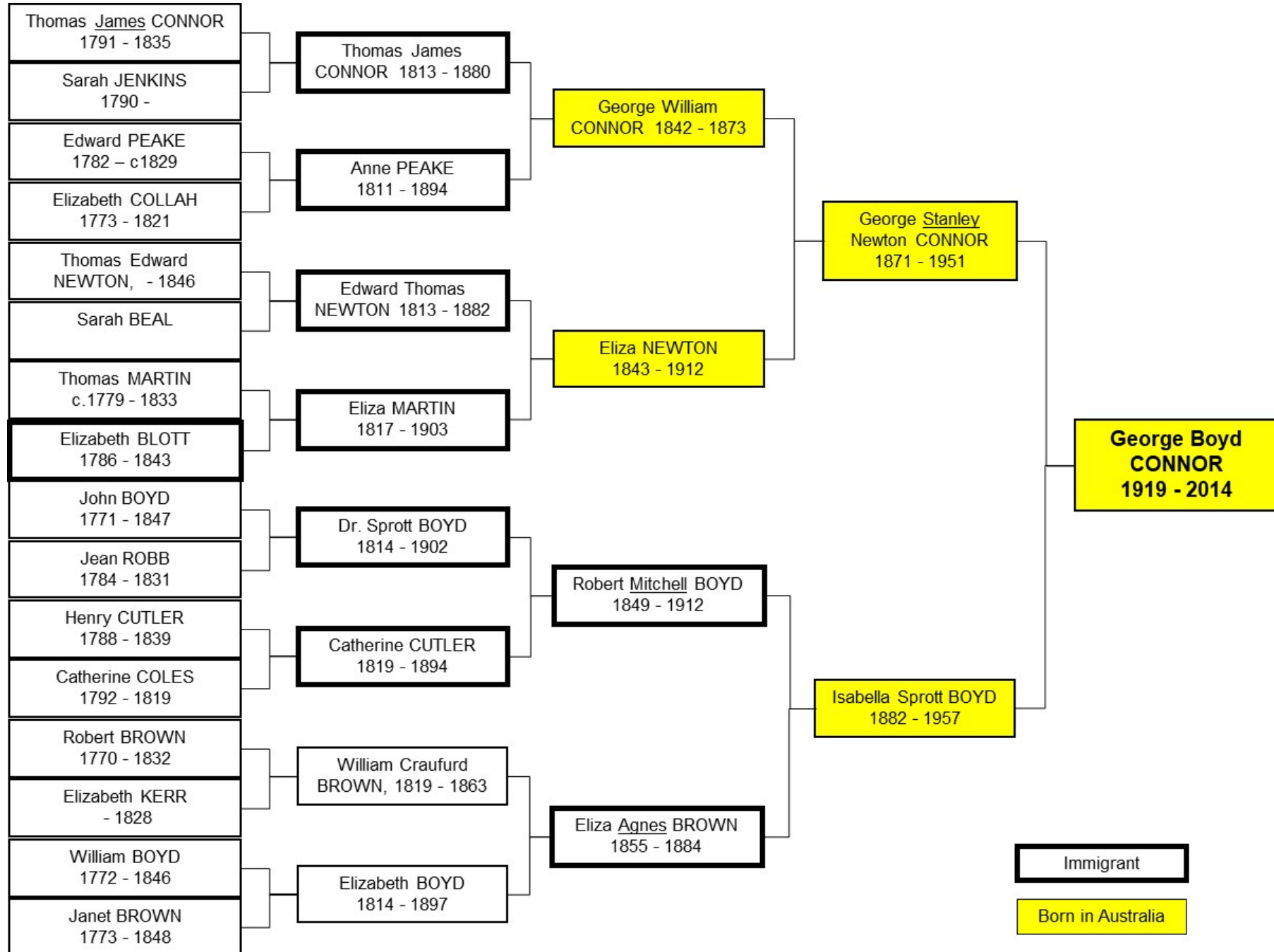
This biography relies upon information which has been freely given by many members of the Connor family, in particular, Stan and Ella's son (my father) George Connor. I would like especially to thank Elaine Roberts (nee Boyd) for access to invaluable information in her grandfather J. Archibald Boyd's diaries and letters.

The National Library of Australia 'TROVE' database was an invaluable resource. Ancestry.com.au provided transcripts of many important records of the Connor and Boyd families. Thanks go also to members of the Port Albert Maritime Museum, Port Albert, Victoria for their help in researching local Gippsland newspapers, and to Pat Raymond of the Bega Valley Genealogical Society, Pambula, NSW for research of local Eden-Monaro newspapers. My thanks go to them all.

Important references are given as footnotes on each page.

Andrew George Connor  
Perth, 2018

## MY FATHER'S ANCESTORS



## GEORGE STANLEY NEWTON & ISABELLA SPROTT CONNOR

### Stan Connor's single years

George Stanley Newton Connor, known as Stan, was born near Alberton, Victoria on 25 March 1871, the first child of George William Connor and Eliza Newton, who were married in Alberton on 13 July 1870 and settled on a dairy farm selection called *Jack Rivulet Run*, a few kilometres west of Alberton. The property was 115 acres of lush river flats along the Albert and Jack Rivers, and was subject to regular flooding.

Stan's brother, William Edward Ernest ('Ernie') Connor was born on 7 May 1872 and his sister, Georgia Alice Connor, was born on 16 August 1873.

Soon after Georgia was born, and before she was named, her father George Connor fell seriously ill. On 28 August 1873 "*being of sound mind but deeply impressed with the uncertainty of human life*" he made his last Will and ten days later, on 7 September 1873 he died at age 30, of 'valvular disease of the heart and Bright's disease of the kidneys'. He was buried in the Alberton Cemetery.

George's death left Eliza with three children under three years of age, a half share in the *Jack Rivulet Run* and other local pieces of land that George had selected during 1873, half the stock on the farms, and the benefit from a £500 life insurance policy, some of which was to be held in trust for his children until they turned 21. George bequeathed the other half of the stock and property to his father and silent partner, Thomas James Connor who was head teacher at the Alberton School.

The Connor and Newton families were large, and had extensive farming interests in the area, so Eliza had an extended family to help her through the crisis. Eliza's parents, Edward and Eliza Newton and parents-in-law, Thomas and Anne Connor were living close by; she had four brothers, two sisters, one brother-in-law and four sisters-in-law and their young families all living in the district. Her brother-in-law Arthur Connor and brother Alfred Newton were co-executors of George's estate, and helped Eliza manage the properties. So, although Stan and his siblings did not know their father, they had grandparents and numerous uncles and aunts as role models, and numerous (mainly younger) cousins to play with while they were growing up in Alberton.

Eliza made sure that the family regularly attended the local St Luke's Church of England at Alberton. Music was of great importance in the Connor family. All of Stan's paternal uncles and aunts played some sort of musical instrument or sang and performed at local concerts and benefit events. For many years until she married, Stan's aunt Florence ('Dott') played the harmonium at the church. Stan's brother Ernie learned to play the flute and sang in church choirs but, according to his son, Stan did not maintain any interest or talent for music later in life.

Stan attended the Alberton School (No. 1 Registered School in Victoria) where his paternal grandfather, grandmother and aunt Florence were teachers. The curriculum was basic reading, writing, arithmetic, history, general knowledge, sport and music. In 1880, Stan's grandfather Thomas Connor, who was still teaching Stan at the Alberton school, died and was buried in the Alberton cemetery. In 1882, his maternal grandfather, Edward Thomas Newton also died and was buried at Alberton. The same year, Eliza sold *Jack Rivulet Run* and the family moved into a cottage on a 40 acre block just north of Alberton on the Yarram road, called *Homeleigh*. Stan was a good student and received a Certificate from the Alberton School inspector in March 1882 (aged 11). He finished his education at the age of 14 or 15 and followed his father on to the land, helping his uncle Arthur Connor manage the

various family farms and learning about farming, grazing, timber work and bush craft, which would help him in later life. He also learned to shoot.

Like all the Connor men, Stan was a keen sportsman. He played cricket for the Alberton Cricket Club (he was a specialist bowler and batted in the middle order) and in his late teens, he tried his hand at athletics, entering the 130 yards handicap sprint and 440 yards handicap hurdles races at various athletics meetings in the region. Stan was not a back marker however and was rarely in the prize-money.

Not much is recorded about Stan during his twenties (1891-1900). Australia and Victoria suffered a severe economic depression from 1890 to 1893. Stan and his brother Ernie left Alberton during this period and initially went to grazing properties in the Monaro high plains country. Their uncles Bill (William Robert) Newton and Wally (Walter Ernest) Newton had properties near Delegate - Bombala and at Narrabarba – Nadgee. Bill Newton had pioneered this country and, as a young man, was part of the survey team that pegged the N.S.W. - Victoria border between Mt. Indi and Cape Howe. Avril Connor recalls that Stan and Ernie, (the Connor Brothers as they became known) selected two properties at Tombong and Tingiringi, situated 25-30 km west of Bombala and 10-15 km north of Delegate. Ernie and Stan worked the properties for themselves, selling sheep and cattle at the Homebush markets. With their Newton uncles and cousins, and their neighbours the Walcott family, they drove cattle and sheep from the Monaro, through heavily timbered country over the Great Dividing Range, to winter pastures on the Narrabarba and Nadgee properties nearer the coast.<sup>1</sup> They mainly used the route over Mt. Imlay, roughly along the present Mt. Imlay Road, and occasionally, the route from Bombala to Nethercote. Stan used to visit the family at Alberton at Christmas.

Both the Connor brothers continued playing cricket; Stan was a bowler and Ernie a batsman and occasional wicket keeper. They played together in matches for the Delegate, Tombong, 'Country' and 'Victorian Natives' teams against Bombala and Cathcart, but Stan did not take his cricket as seriously as Ernie, who played regularly in many teams up to District level against Sydney representative sides. Stan seems to have had a more itinerant life-style.

There was active gold mining and prospecting in the Bombala region at that time – mining in the Yambulla Goldfield, just north of the Victorian border, was at its peak. Stan was attracted by the possibility of making his fortune from finding and mining gold and, in 1895, he was underground manager of one operation in the Monaro district.<sup>2</sup> In 1896, after reports came through of a high-grade gold find at Malacoota, Stan moved there and worked at the Spotted Dog Mine near the shores of Lake Malacoota. As well as the lure of gold, Stan was attracted to the lake scenery and the rich soils around the Mallacoota inlet. The Spotted Dog Mine ceased major production in 1899, although prospecting and small-scale mining in the area continued until at least 1905.

No doubt Stan followed the gold trail north towards Pambula, which gave its name to an important goldfield. The country around Pambula was (and is), in many respects, similar to Malacoota which Stan admired so much. In April 1901, Stan Connor met John Archibald ('Archie') Boyd in Eden.<sup>3</sup> This was the first recorded link between the Boyd and Connor families, a link which would become much stronger in the future.

By 1902, Stan Connor aged 30 had moved to Narrabarba, just south of Eden, although he returned to Delegate occasionally, where he was roped in to play cricket. On the 1903 electoral roll, he was described as a 'farmer', but more accurately, he continued grazing

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<sup>1</sup> Letters from WEE Connor

<sup>2</sup> Gippsland Standard 6 Jan 1897

<sup>3</sup> Diary of J.A. Boyd

sheep and cattle in some loose arrangement with his uncles Bill and Wally Newton. He began to visit Archie Boyd more often, sometimes to talk and dine, or to play cards (euchre and cribbage) or to attend tennis parties at the Boyd's new house *The Hollies* on the outskirts of Eden. Stan must have been on the lookout for a suitable farm of his own because, in April 1903, Stan and Ernie bought the *Broadwater* Estate near Pambula from the A.J.S. Bank for a little over £500, financed with a large mortgage.<sup>4</sup>

In July 1903, Eliza's mother died in Alberton and, later that year, Georgia became seriously ill with exophthalmic goitre, to the extent that in February 1904, Eliza had to commit her to the Kew Asylum in Melbourne. Georgia died there six weeks later and was buried in Melbourne Cemetery. Eliza, then aged 62 and with little to keep her in Alberton, sold her holdings and moved away from her siblings to live with Stan and Ernie at Pambula. She invested money in the *Broadwater* Estate, ownership of which was approximately equally divided between Eliza, Stan, Ernie and Georgia's estate.



The *Broadwater* Estate, 2012

The *Broadwater* Estate was a little over 393 acres of land on either side of the present-day Prince's Highway, with frontage on to the tidal Broadwater or Pambula Lake as it is called today. It was originally owned by Isaac Shaw who, in 1860, built and operated the Vulcan Repose Inn to cater to passing travelers. The Estate had been on the market for at least two years when the Connors bought it. We don't know if the inn survived until bought by the Connors, but there are no records of them ever having operated an inn on the *Broadwater*

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<sup>4</sup> Pambula Voice 1 May 1903

Estate. Perhaps the inn became their home. By August 1903, they were making “vast improvements to the property, in the way of clearing, fencing, ploughing etc.”<sup>5</sup>

Using their knowledge and experience gained at *Jack Rivulet Run*, Eliza, Stan and Ernie gradually improved the property, establishing pastures, and planting fruit trees and vegetables. It was not without setbacks – a bush fire in December 1904 destroyed some fencing and came close to their house. By 1906, they were exhibiting fruit, vegetables, merino sheep and working dogs at the Eden Agricultural Society show, and winning prizes. Ernie was on the show committee, as was Archie Boyd with whom they competed for prizes in the fruit and vegetable categories. At the 1907 Pambula show, the Connor Brothers won prizes for their horses, poultry and farm produce. Ernie was the horse lover of the family, and they won jumping competitions at the Eden show.

The *Broadwater* provided an excellent supply of fish and oysters on their doorstep. Both brothers developed a love of fishing (and oysters), which they carried with them throughout their lives. It was a topic of common interest with Archie Boyd and it may have been a major factor (along with the weather) in Ernie’s decision to retire to Eden in the 1950’s. Stan was not a strong swimmer, but there is a story that he rescued two people from the surf at Pambula Beach. In 1907, Stan became a trustee of the public recreation ground on the western side of the Pambula River, used by the Aquatic Club.

Stan and Ernie joined the Eden Cricket Club and played regularly. Ernie was on the club committee. In the 1903-4 season, Stan topped the bowling averages with 11.1 runs per wicket and the club won five of the seven games played. Archie Boyd was also on the Eden Cricket Club committee – another common interest. The following season, the Connor brothers were playing for the Pambula Cricket Club, and Ernie played in the Bega district team. The Connor family attended the Christ Church (Church of England), Pambula and Ernie joined the church choir.

The Connors visited the Boyds occasionally, and sometimes Mrs. Jeanie Boyd would visit Eliza at the *Broadwater*. In early 1907, Archie Boyd took control (through the Warden’s Court) of a gold mining lease at Nadgee and, knowing of Stan’s past mining experience, employed Stan and a Mr. Lubbe to oversee the prospecting and mining. After four months of disappointing results, Archie decided that he could not afford to keep prospecting and gave up, paying Stan off in August. By this time, they knew each other well.

In 1908, the Labour Party supported compulsory military training and, after winning the 1909 Federal election, introduced a bill into parliament to regulate this. Stan and Ernie, although aged 37 and 36 and beyond the proposed age limit for compulsory training, decided that they should contribute to Australia’s defence readiness. Stan joined the Pambula Rifle Club which held regular range practice and competitions. He was a good shot at long ranges, occasionally winning prizes and had a handicap of 4 to 6 points. Ernie joined the Australian Light Horse 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment and was appointed Second Lieutenant in April 1908. He also joined the civilian rifle club. Stan and Ernie’s father, George Connor, had been a member of the Carlton Volunteer Rifles and, although the boys would not remember him, they had grown up with his uniforms in the house. Ernie in particular was proud of his military heritage.

In 1909, the Connor Brothers continued to work their estate, growing good crops of peas, pumpkins and maize, but it appears that they had begun to follow different paths. Ernie tried to talk Archie Boyd into investing in a sawmilling venture, without success. Ernie took his appointment as an officer in the Australian Light Horse very seriously and spent an increasing proportion of his time training with his Squadron and caring for his horses.

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<sup>5</sup> Pambula Voice 28 August, 1903



In January 1910, Archie Boyd's niece, Isabella Sprott Boyd, known as Ella, sailed from Sydney to Eden for a holiday at her uncle and aunt's place.

## **Ella Boyd's single years.**

Ella Boyd was born on 10 June 1882 at Chatsworth Island, near the mouth of the Clarence River in northern N.S.W. She was the second surviving child of Robert Mitchell ('Mitch') and Eliza Agnes ('Aggie') Boyd (nee Brown). Her father worked for the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and managed their Chatsworth sugar mill. Four months after Ella was born, Mitch left C.S.R. to start an independent sugar growing and milling operation beside Ripple Creek, a tributary of the Herbert River near the town of Ingham in Far North Queensland. Mitch's partners and financiers in this venture were the Wood Brothers, brewers from Newcastle N.S.W. Mitch's older brother Archie Boyd, who had experience of the tropics and managing native labour in Fiji, joined him to help run the enterprise.



Agnes Boyd with Sprott and Ella,  
Grafton, 1882

On the 25 March 1884 at *Ripple Creek*, Aggie had another baby, Archibald Herbert Boyd, but two hours after he was born, Aggie died. She was buried at *Ripple Creek*. Mitch, who was still building his sugar business, was left to care for three young children – the eldest boy, William Sprott Boyd (Sprott), was not quite five, Ella nearly two and the new born baby, Archie. Mitch's sister, Mrs. 'Fanny' Fitzgerald, came out from England to help look after the children. In November 1884, Fanny took Sprott back to England to live with his grandparents, Aunt Fanny and cousin Elsie. At *Ripple Creek*, Mitch had employed a Mrs. Burgess (with her son, Willie) to care for Ella and young Archie. Mitch Boyd travelled on business a lot. When he was at home, Ella only saw her father at night, and probably regarded Mrs. Burgess as her foster mother, who provided constant care, took her to Dungeness, Ingham and Townsville and gave her early education.

In January 1888, Mitch remarried. His new wife, Emily Burton Bradley known as 'Tiny' or 'Tattie', was the youngest child of a Sydney solicitor and family friend of the Boyds. Mitch would have been acquainted with Tattie for many years before their marriage. With the arrival of Tattie at *Ripple Creek* in March 1888, Mrs. Burgess was sent away. Sprott was brought back from England in September 1888 to rejoin his family. In June 1889, a Miss Julia Robson was employed as a governess-cum-companion for the children. She stayed with the family for three years. In 1890, Sprott aged ten was sent to board at Townsville Grammar School to finish his education, while Ella and Archie remained at school at *Ripple Creek*.

Tattie was not warm towards her stepchildren. She was quite strict and a very religious person, who seemed to prefer socialising with men, although she did join in playing tennis at the neighbouring Macknade sugar mill. When not at school and Tattie allowed it, the children learnt about nature and bushcraft, fishing, hunting, and horses from their Uncle Archie and cousin Reggie, Archie's half-caste Fijian son. Their father Mitch was away on business even more. In this environment, Ella learned early to become confident, independent and self-sufficient. She grew up in a man's world, surrounded by labourers from Oceania and Asia, and Australian aboriginals.



Ella Boyd ca. 1890 (aged 8)



Ella Boyd ca. 1892 (aged 10)

In 1892 after ten arduous years establishing and running the *Ripple Creek* plantation and sugar mill, Mitch and Tattie took Ella and young Archie to London for six months to have a holiday and to meet their grandparents and other relatives. Ella recalled visiting her mother's family in Edinburgh, the Browns. They were strict Presbyterians and very religious and while staying with them on this trip, she had to go to church three times on Sundays. Ella met her aunt Isabella Erskine Brown, after whom she was named. Ella corresponded with her grandmother Elizabeth Brown until her death in 1897.

In 1894 Ella was sent to Sydney to board at Kambala, an Anglican girl's school at Rose Bay, to round out her education. By the time Ella finished her education at the end of 1896, she had become an attractive young woman.





Ella Boyd, ca. 1897 (aged 15)

Ella settled down to life on the plantation with her stepmother and father. Her Uncle Archie, his wife Jeannie and young son (also named Archie) left *Ripple Creek* in late 1898 and moved to Eden N.S.W. Her brother Archie was sent to board at The Kings School in Parramatta in 1900 and by then, her older brother Sprott was at Sydney University studying Mining Engineering. Only her cousin Reggie remained at Ingham. Mitch continued to spend many weeks each year away on business, so Ella and her stepmother Tattie became closer and did everything together. They would spend winters at *Ripple Creek*, riding in to Ingham sometimes, occasionally going to Townsville and to picnic race meetings in the region. In January, they would head South for the cooler weather, stay in Brisbane and with Tattie's family in North Sydney, and return to Far North Queensland in June or July. Usually they travelled by coastal steamer but occasionally, they took the train between Brisbane and Sydney. In Sydney, they would go to shows, socialise with relatives, old friends and acquaintances, and buy clothes.

In December 1907 after several years of on-and-off negotiation with C.S.R., Mitch Boyd and his partners the Wood Bros decided to close the *Ripple Creek* sugar mill, sell it for salvage value, and to sell their grazing land and cane farms.<sup>6</sup> By this time, the family had become

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<sup>6</sup> The Queenslander 2 May 1908

quite wealthy. In July the following year, Mitch and Tattie took Ella back to England, via Adelaide and Capetown on the S.S. *Geelong*, to visit their surviving English relatives. Ella was 26, single and a highly eligible. Mitch and Tattie probably hoped that Ella would meet someone 'suitable' during the trip, as Mitch had done when he met and married Ella's mother in Edinburgh in 1878.



Ella Boyd, England, 1908

(The Indian gold and ruby necklace she is wearing is a family heirloom, a gift from a grateful Maharajah to her late grandfather William Craufurd Brown.)

The family stayed with cousin Elsie Roper at Forde Abbey, Somerset, and spent three months touring the continent in 1909, visiting Paris, Venice, Florence and Rome (where Ella caught the measles). They returned to England briefly and departed for Montreal, Canada aboard the S.S. *Virginian* on 25 June. The family spent six weeks travelling across Canada and the U.S.A., visited Sprott who was a mining engineer working in Salt Lake City, and sailed from Vancouver on 13 August for Sydney via Honolulu and Suva aboard the S.S. *Marama*.

In the summer of 1909-10, Ella decided to accept an invitation from her Uncle Archie and Aunt Jeannie Boyd to stay with them at their home *The Hollies* in Eden, on the New South Wales south coast, and tell them about her European tour.

## Married life



Tennis party at *The Hollies*, December 1909

Stan and Ella met at a tennis party at *The Hollies* on Australia Day, 26 January 1910. Ella was a mature woman of 28 years, attractive, well educated and travelled, and from a well-to-do family. Ella was clearly an attraction for several men in the Eden district, including Stan, who visited *The Hollies* again on the 5 February 1910 and, after playing cards all night, drove Ella to the wharf in his sulk (un-chaperoned), for her to catch the steamer back to Sydney. Stan was eleven years older than Ella, but he was an imposing man, 6ft 3in tall and 17 stone, and had the nickname “old granite” around Pambula. During 1910, Stan was often at the Boyd’s place.

Based on the Kitchener Report of 1910, Australia’s defence forces were re-organised and Ernie Connor was appointed as Area Officer for a new Australian Light Horse Squadron based at Wagga Wagga, N.S.W. In November 1910, Ernie took up his posting and the brothers parted ways.

After Ernie left Pambula, Stan and his mother Eliza continued to run the *Broadwater* farm. Stan was 39 years old and Eliza was in her mid-sixties. Then, in June 1911, Eliza lost her two maiden sisters, Emma Sarah Newton and Alice Newton, quite suddenly. Eliza was heartbroken and over the rest of 1911, she became increasingly depressed until, in December 1911, she was diagnosed with acute melancholia and admitted, by request, to the Gladesville Mental Asylum, Sydney. On 3 April 1912 after three and a half months in hospital, Eliza Connor died of “exhaustion of melancholia” and the following day, Eliza was buried in the Church of England portion of the Field of Mars Cemetery at Ryde, Sydney. Stan and Ernie attended the funeral.

Stan now lived at *Broadwater* and ran the farm on his own. On returning from Sydney after his mother’s death, he thought about oyster farming and borrowed books on the subject from Archie Boyd. Stan saw Ella whenever she visited Archie’s place in Eden and, during her visit in January 1912, he proposed to Ella and was accepted. Archie liked Stan, describing him as “a good stamp of a man” and “a good fellow”, but Archie disliked his engagement to Ella because Stan “has not a cent and little chance of making one.” He



suspected that Stan was a gold-digger but was resigned to the fact that Ella wouldn't care – she had made up her mind.

In July 1912, Ella's father Mitch Boyd visited his brother Archie in Eden and spent time with Stan at *Broadwater*. From Archie Boyd's letters, it appears that Mitch and Stan came to some sort of agreement about Stan and Ella's future. By November 1912, Stan had moved to an orchard farm at Lugarno on the southern outskirts of Sydney, leasing the *Broadwater* estate to Mr. Sam Robinson. The purchase of the 48-acre farm was financed by Mitch Boyd, with a deposit of £437/10/-.

This brought Ella and Stan closer together and they saw each other more regularly, but in December, soon after Stan moved to Sydney, Ella's father Mitch suddenly died. He left a substantial inheritance in trust for Ella and her two brothers, which would have relieved Stan and Ella of any financial difficulties they may have had. The contract for purchase of the Lugarno land was part of Mitch's estate. However, Ella's stepmother Tattie insisted that the marriage be postponed for a suitable mourning period – two years. This was quite tough on the couple and may have been a deliberate test of their commitment.

The settlement for purchase of the Lugarno orchard was completed on 2 April 1913 with Tattie as the titleholder, but it was clearly held in trust for Ella according to Mitch's wishes. While waiting for the wedding date, Stan continued to work and live at the Lugarno orchard; Ella stayed with her step-mother Tattie, first at *Kuringai* in Ben Boyd Road, Neutral Bay and then at *Bauhinia*, a smaller house in Ivy Street Wollstonecraft after *Kuringai* was sold. In 1913, Ella and Tattie took a trip back to North Queensland. Ernie returned to Eden briefly to attend the funeral of Sam Robinson, the lessee at *Broadwater*, and to find a new caretaker.



Stan Connor (c.1913)

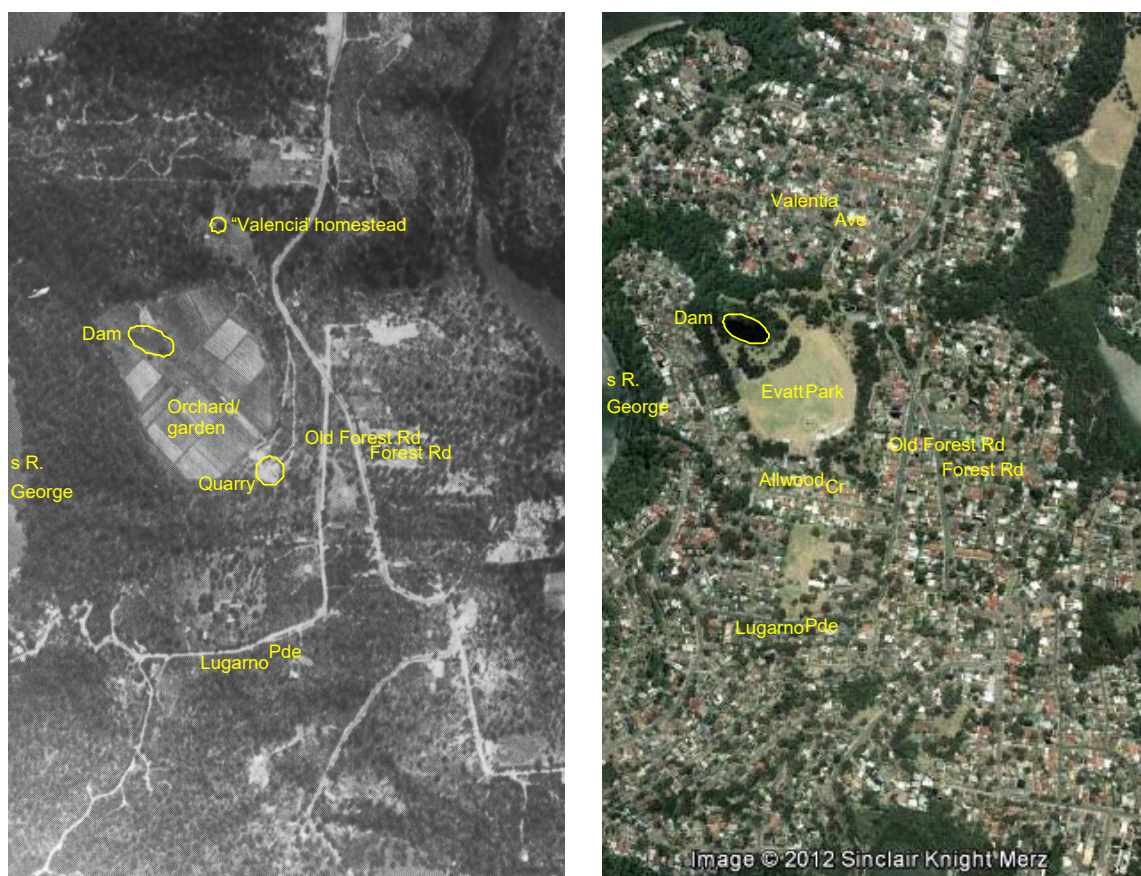


Ella Connor (c.1914)

Ella and Stan were married on Valentine's Day, 14 February 1914 at St. Thomas' Church of England, North Sydney by the Rev. Horace Crothy, M.A. Ella was 32 and Stan 43. St. Thomas' was Tattie's local church and from then on, became closely linked with descendants of the Connor family. The altar at St Thomas' was donated by Tattie and her children in memory of Mitch, and was dedicated in November 1914.

Stan and Ella set up home at their 48-acre property, called *Valencia*, at Forest Road, Lugarno. The house was quite small – a timber plank cottage with iron roof, three bedrooms, kitchen, living room and back verandah. There was a separate laundry and of

course, long drop toilet (8-10ft deep and 6ft long with 4 seats) which never needed to be re-dug. There was no electricity; lighting was from carbide lamps, a Coolgardie safe was used for food storage, and water was from tanks or, in an emergency, from a well on the property. They had a telephone (Kogarah 681), and Ella used it to call her step-mother Tattie every night. The nearest house was about half a mile away – the Boatwright family. The nearest settlement was Peakhurst at the top of Forest Road, about five kilometres away – about an hour in the sulky. It had a store, a church and half a dozen houses. From the orchard at night they could clearly hear the steam engines and their whistles as they went through Mortdale and Oatley stations. Ella's brother Archie Boyd visited them in June 1914 and reported that Ella and Stan were very comfortable; but for Ella, who had become used to comparative luxury, it must have been difficult to adapt to life at Lugarno. It probably reminded her of childhood at *Ripple Creek*.



Valencia, Lugarno. 1937 (L) and 2012 (R)

The property had a well-established orchard covering about 20 acres when Emily Boyd bought it from Mr. L.C. Russell Jones' estate. The orchard was located in a natural bowl between surrounding sandstone ridges, caused by an intrusion of basic volcanic breccia. The soil on top of the volcanic intrusion was more fertile than the surrounding ridges. On the southern contact of the intrusion, where the sandstone had been baked hard, Stan started a quarry for road metal.

Some of the very old fruit trees had been replaced during the period 1900-1905 and some newer varieties planted. When Stan arrived, the orchard had Granny Smith and Jonathan apples; Moore Park apricots; St. Michael, White Siletta, Joppa, Valencia and Washington Navel oranges; China pears (for cooking) and Williams pears (for eating); peaches and nectarines; Lisbon lemons; Wickson plums; and mandarins. They tried growing grapes also

but the crops did not survive the hot summers and, eventually, the vines were ripped out. They also grew vegetables - cucumbers, rockmelons, tomatoes, beetroot, watermelons, peas, beans, cabbages, and potatoes. Over time, vegetables became the main source of year-round income; the fruit provided seasonal income. The property was not irrigated and they had to rely solely upon rainfall.



They had four bee hives for honey, and about forty chickens that kept them in eggs, some of which they preserved in waterglass solution for sale. The property backed on to the George's River so, like the *Broadwater*, oysters and fish were readily available. They had cows for milking, and made their own butter and cream; five horses (including 'Dudley' the draft horse), four cats (including 'Ninky'), and numerous dogs ('Irish', 'Boyd', 'Nigger' and 'Leechy') tethered around the orchard to keep fruit pilferers at bay.



Ernie Cross (L), Stan Connor and Fred Cross (R) at the packing shed, Lugarno.

There was a packing shed (the original farm house) in the middle of the orchard. Stan had permanent help from brothers Fred and Ernie Cross who lived nearby and whose father had managed the orchard for many years. Stan brought his own horticultural and bush experience from Alberton and Pambula. He did his own blacksmithing to shoe the horses,



sharpen the drills for the quarry and fix farm machinery. The orchard and vegetable garden required constant attention and horse-drawn ploughing.



Stan Connor in the orchard at Lugarno.

The produce was taken at night along Forest Road to the Haymarket in Sydney. Stan had a cartage arrangement with neighbour Mr. Ernie Webb and some of his market gardener friends on the other side of the George's River. In the beginning, the produce was carted by horse and dray, but eventually trucks took over.

Stan was ineligible to enlist in the Australian Imperial Forces at the start of WWI in August 1914, because he was married and too old (at 43). Initially, the upper age limit for enlistment was 35; in June 1915 this limit was revised upward to 45. The pressure on eligible men to enlist was enormous. Although he was not obliged to do so, Stan continued his military training and joined the Rockdale Rifle Club. He competed in interclub events during 1914-16, sometimes gaining a place in the top three. Stan (Serial No. 38241) was awarded a Marksman's Certificate by the Military Forces of the Commonwealth of Australia for the year ending 30 June 1916.

After their marriage, Stan and Ella decided to start a family. On 25 January 1915, almost a year after they were married, Ella and Stan had a stillborn daughter at Nurse Christmas' private hospital, North Sydney. Ella was close to death herself and was in hospital for some time after the birth. After leaving hospital in March, Stan took Ella on a holiday to the Blue Mountains and by May, Ella said that she had recovered completely.

On 16 April 1916, Ella and Stan had a daughter, Constance Emily Connor (Emily), at the Mayfair private hospital, North Sydney. Once again, the birth was not easy; Ella was confined in hospital and was still there at the end of May.

On 10 March 1918, Ella and Stan had a second daughter, Catherine Newton Connor, followed on 8 November 1919 by a son, George Boyd Connor. Both Catherine and George were born at Redhaven Private Hospital, Alfred Street, North Sydney.



The two girls shared their own bedroom. George slept at the end of his parents' bedroom, which was quite large. There was no local public school, the nearest one being 5 km. away at Peakhurst - too far to send the children each day in a horse and sulky - so Ella was both mother and schoolteacher to her children. She had help from a cook named Martha Gosling and a neighbour Ethel Chivers, who came and taught the children for two hours each day. Ella and Stan bought a piano and Mrs. Chivers taught them to play it. Ella took the children to the Holy Trinity Anglican church, Peakhurst on Sundays in the sulky. Stan was a less frequent church-goer. On one of these trips, Ella lost a cameo brooch (possibly inherited from her mother) and offered a reward for its return. Ella was a member of the church-based Mothers' Union, Holy Trinity Peakhurst Branch, and was on the church committee.

When not "at school", the children had the run of the property. Stan instilled in his children a love of fishing and of the natural world, teaching them about the flora and fauna of the bush around the orchard. Stan always said that if you don't frighten animals they won't hurt you. He could let bulldog ants and huntsman spiders crawl over him and not be bitten, although he and George used to get stung when trying to raid wild bee hives. Stan once accidentally swallowed a bee and had to put a spoon down his throat to keep his airway open until the swelling subsided. Ella also came from a family with a love of the bush. Her father Mitch Boyd and uncle Archie Boyd were amateur naturalists who contributed to collections in the Australian Museum.

In January 1918, Stan sold the *Broadwater* property in Pambula to W. Grenenger for £450, - less than he had bought it for in 1903. In 1921, Stan advertised a house in Wollstonecraft for sale for £2700. This may have been his mother-in-law's house *Bauhinia* in Ivy Street, after Tattie moved to 7 Gillies Street Wollstonecraft in 1916.



Ella Connor with Cath (L), George and Emily (R), Taronga Zoo, c.1923.

In 1922, Stan took up golf and became a member of the Bonnie Doon Golf Club which, at that time, was located at Arncliffe. On Saturdays, Ella was a golf widow. Stan used to leave for golf at 7 a.m., ride his horse to Hurstville Station, leave the horse in a paddock, catch the train to Arncliffe and walk to Bonnie Doon, returning the same way at about 10 p.m. Stan had been a good cricketer in his youth and, as is the case with many good cricketers, he was also a good golfer. He used to drive the golf ball straight and long. He practiced his

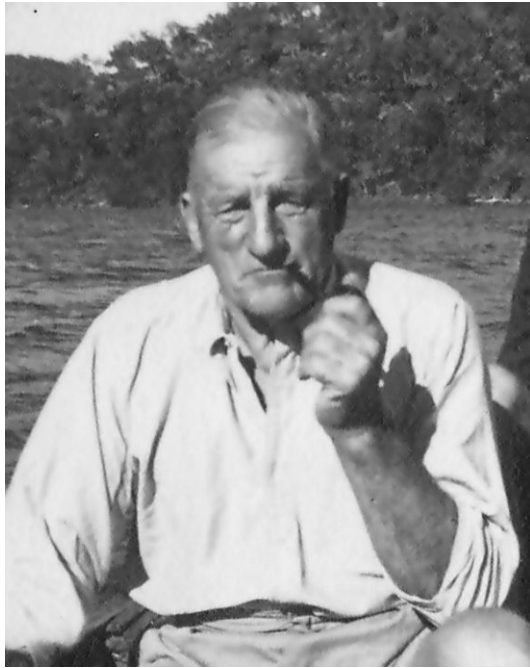
short irons in the paddock near the house. At the start, Stan played off 18-20 handicap, but he was down to ten handicap by 1925 and five handicap by end 1926. He competed for Bonnie Doon Golf Club in inter-club matches around Sydney – from Long Reef in the north to Pennant Hills in the west. His name often appeared in the golf results in Monday's Sydney Morning Herald, and he won numerous trophies, including the William Vicars Cup in 1924. Stan's nickname on the golf course was "Crumbs" because that was his most serious swear word.

In 1927, Stan and Ella sent Emily (10) and Catherine (8) to board at Wenona Girl's School in North Sydney. Income from the trust fund set up by Ella's father probably covered the children's school fees, because the orchard would not have been very profitable during these depression years. Ella had been a boarder herself at Kambala when her parents were living in North Queensland. They chose Wenona because of its close association with St Thomas' Church, North Sydney, and so that the children would be close to their step-grandmother who lived nearby in Wollstonecraft. At that time, there was no Sydney Harbour Bridge; travelling from North Sydney home to Lugarno took hours and was only practical on long weekends. For Sunday leave, their step-grandmother's place was within walking distance. George stayed at Lugarno and 'made his own fun', in between home schooling.

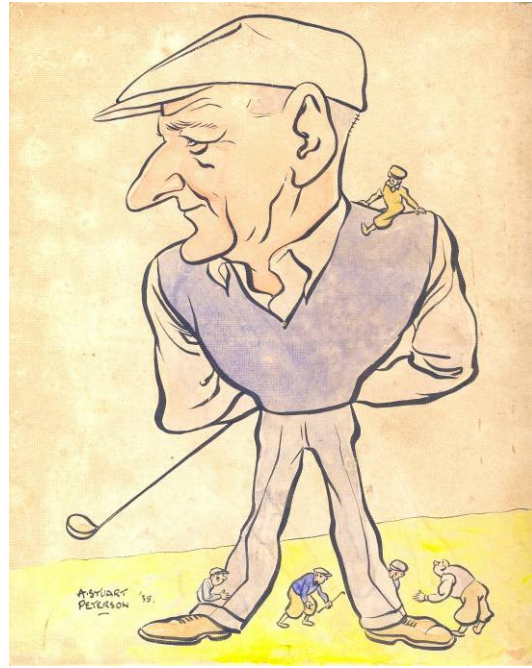
Electricity reached Lugarno in 1927, the same year that Ella finally inherited the Lugarno land that had been held in trust for her until she was 45 years old. Stan and Ella bought a block of land in Penshurst and they began building a house there, using foundation stone quarried from *Valencia*. At the end of that year, Stan and Ella moved to their new house at 36 (later renumbered 40) Laycock Road, Penshurst, which was closer to stores, and the Penshurst railway station. They bought their first car and no longer had to rely on the horse and sulky for transport. Young George (9) went off to boarding school at Sydney Church of England Grammar School ('Shore') in 1929. Ella's cousin, Archibald Sprott Boyd (son of J. Archie Boyd from Eden) and her step-cousins, the Bradley boys, had attended Shore school. Like Wenona, it was close to George's step-grandmother's house. All the children would return home for long weekends and, after the Sydney Harbour Bridge was completed in 1932, they could come home every Sunday by train.

With the move to Penshurst, Stan and Ella leased *Valencia* to Ernie Webb, Ernie's brother-in-law Rowley Jones and Phil Walker, who had market gardens on the other side of the George's River at Menai. The Webbs moved in to the old farm house. By the 1930's, fruit fly had reached Lugarno and vegetables, rather than fruit, were the main income earner from *Valencia*. Ernie Webb and Stan began to convert the orchard into a market garden. To support the market garden during dry weather, they built a small dam across the creek which ran through the property. This dam ('Webb's Dam') exists today in Evatt Park.

By 1936 aged 65, Stan had effectively retired, although Ella and Stan maintained ownership of *Valencia* for many years. He went on fishing trips occasionally with friends and relatives as far south as Jervis Bay. In the 1935-36 Christmas holidays, Stan took his son George down to Eden for three weeks to visit their relatives Laurie and Vi Palmer (née Newton) at Nadgee and to visit his old fishing grounds. They also went north to visit Ella's younger brother Archie at Macksville. By this time, Emily and Catherine had left Wenona, having attained their Intermediate Certificates and completed a course at Miss Hale's Secretarial College, and were employed as clerks.



Fishing trip, 1934.



G.S.N. Connor, 1935.

Stan continued playing golf regularly at Bonnie Doon throughout the 1930s. He played stroke, bogey, four ball best ball, foursomes, mixed foursomes, match play and Canadian foursomes competitions, sometimes in inter-club competitions, occasionally paired with a professional golfer, and once with test cricketer A.F. Kippax. Stan was a club character and was caricatured for his efforts. He was an inaugural member of the Senior Golfers Society of N.S.W. in 1936, and became one of those rare golfers who occasionally shot a golf score less than his age.



Stan and Ella Connor, c.1940.

In 1939, Stan and Ella sold the house in Penshurst and bought a large, four-bedroom house, named *Chatsworth* after Ella's birthplace, at 8 Roslyn Avenue, Roseville. Emily, Cath

and George lived with them. Ella's stepmother Tattie still lived by herself at Wollstonecraft and required more and more help from Ella. Roseville was much closer to Tattie's place, so Ella, Emily and Cath could visit her often. After one year at Sydney University, their son George joined the AIF and in 1940 went to the Middle East. For a period in mid 1941, George was on the Missing, Believed Wounded list and it must have been a worrying time for the family. Fortunately, as a result of the armistice with the Vichy French, George returned to his unit after two months as a prisoner of war.

Stan's last reported (in newspapers) game of golf was in December 1941. It seems that he gave up membership of Bonnie Doon soon after moving to Roseville. Bonnie Doon was a club in decline at that time, due to the war and the State Government's threat to resume the golf course for an extension to Mascot airport, which it did in 1946.

After George returned from the war in 1944, Stan used to go and watch George play first grade Rugby Union for University. Stan also helped arrange his niece Avril Connor's wedding to Harold (Mick) Walcott at the Shore Chapel in April 1947. However, Stan had an accident one day in the city when he was struck while crossing tram lines and fell. The fall was the result of a stroke, because his health and mobility were severely affected afterwards. Golf was not possible after the accident.

In 1948, Ella sold 20 acres of *Valencia*, the orchard part, to Ernie Webb who continued to run the market garden, but moved out of the old homestead. Demand for housing was increasing, and from 1948 onwards, Ella sold off sections of the property for residential development, firstly Allwood Crescent on the south and west sides of the market garden, and then Valentia Avenue on the north side. During the development of Valentia Avenue, the old homestead was demolished.

After Stan's stroke, Cath and Emily helped Ella to look after Stan, who could recognise people and get around the house a bit, but required constant attention. He was unable to attend his son George's wedding to Sybil Whiting in December 1948. Ella did attend but on the way in to the church, fell and broke her arm. She stoically put up with the pain during the ceremony. After his marriage, George moved to Broken Hill, but he returned to Sydney occasionally to see his parents and, in August 1951, to stand in for Stan at the marriage of his sister Emily to Anthony Pearson. Not long afterwards George was posted to Nigeria for nine months' work. While he was away, George's wife Sybil and son Andrew stayed with the Connors at Roseville so Stan and Ella met their first grandchild, although Stan probably did not remember it.



Ella with her first grandson Andrew, Christmas 1951, Roseville.

After being incapacitated and almost helpless for a long time, Stan died at the family's Roseville home on 3 November 1951, aged 80, of coronary sclerosis and cerebral arteriosclerosis. He was cremated at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium on the 5 November.

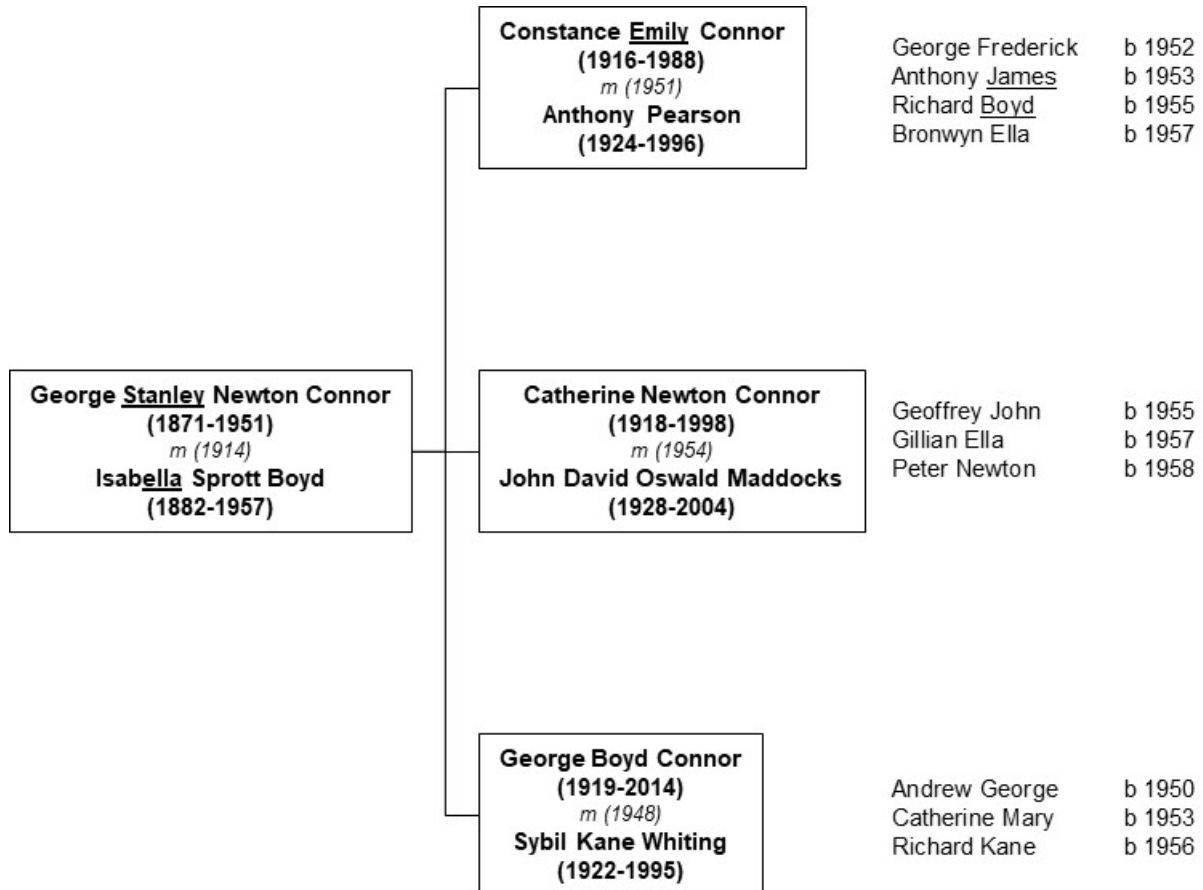
Ella sold the Roseville house after Stan died, and the family moved to a smaller place at 12 Avon Road Pymble, close to the Pymble railway station. Ella executed her last Will on 23 June 1952. Emily and Tony Pearson moved to Tasmania in late 1952, soon after their first son George was born. Cath married John Maddocks on 31 July 1954, and the couple stayed at Pymble with Ella, who continued to care for her stepmother Tattie until she died at Wollstonecraft on 4 November 1954, aged 91. Tattie was buried next to her husband Mitch Boyd in the Waverley cemetery. She left the bulk of her estate to her Bradley nieces and nephews. Ella was the sole executor and trustee of her will, but was not a beneficiary.

Cath and John stayed with Ella until after their first child, Geoffrey was born in August 1955. After that, they moved to a house that Ella had bought at 11 David Street, Clifton Gardens, Mosman, but Cath continued to care for her mother, visiting Pymble regularly. Ella became seriously ill in 1956 and was diagnosed with ovarian cancer. She sold the Pymble house and moved into a hospital in Mosman to be closer to her daughter Cath. Emily and Tony's only daughter was born in Tasmania in March 1957 and was named Bronwyn Ella Pearson after her grandmother. Ella died at the Mena Private Hospital, Mosman on 31 May 1957 aged 74, and was cremated at the Northern Suburbs Crematorium. Her ashes are there, next to Stan's. Cath and John's first daughter Gillian Ella Maddocks was born three months later, and also carries her grandmother's name.

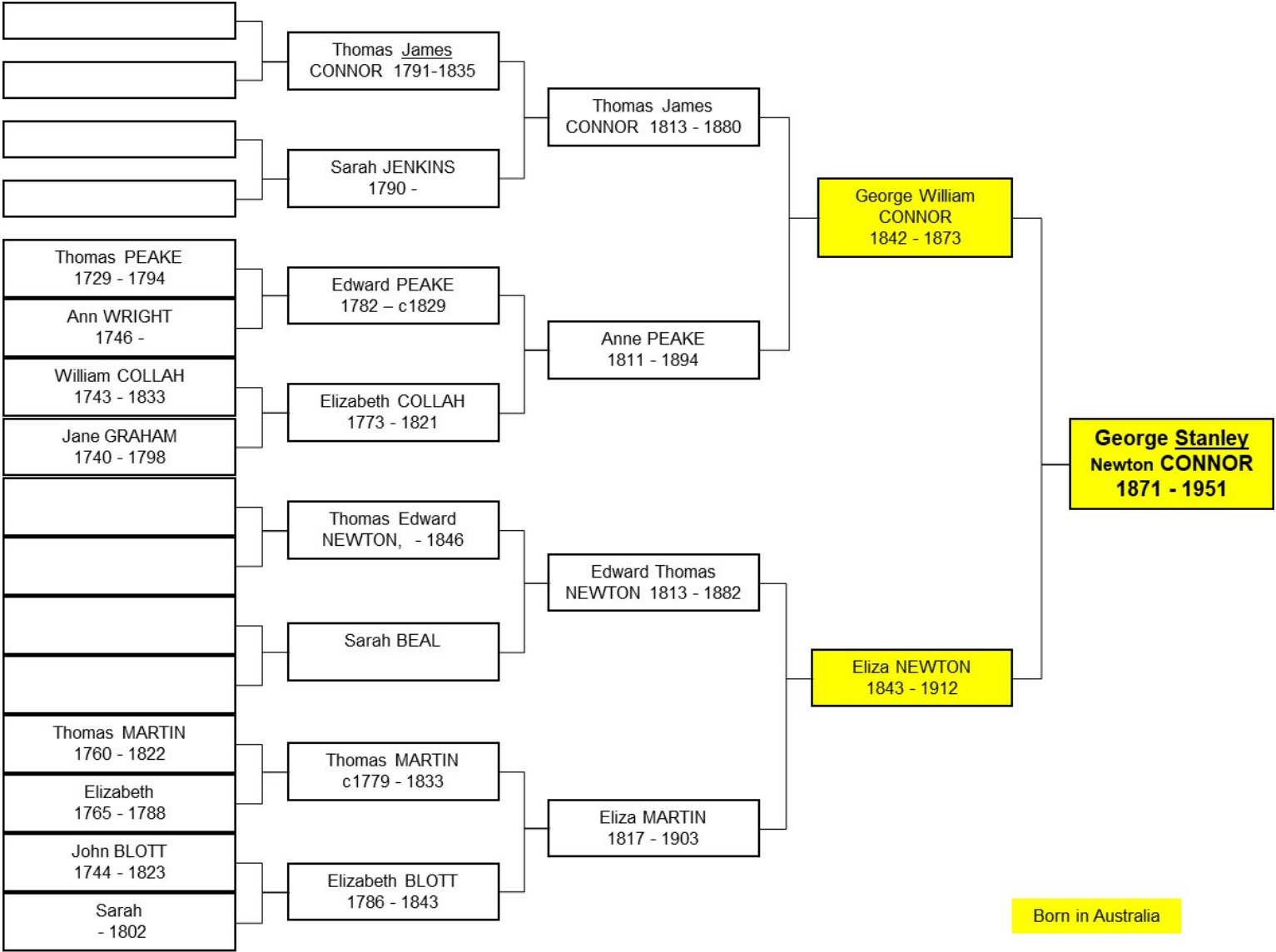
Ella left an estate valued at £23,957 equally to her children Emily, Cath and George. It included the house at 11 David Street Clifton Gardens, various vacant lots at Valentia Avenue Lugarno, the residue of a trust account set up by her father, stocks and shares, and numerous family heirlooms.

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## STAN AND ELLA CONNOR'S FAMILY



ANCESTRY OF GEORGE STANLEY NEWTON CONNOR





## ANCESTRY OF ISABELLA SPROTT BOYD

