

**This account of the friendship between the Robinson and Stewart families has been contributed by Margaret Leask, great granddaughter of cartographer Herbert Robinson (Robbo).**

My great grandfather was the cartographer/map publisher Herbert Edward C. Robinson (1857?-1933), also known as HECR or Robbo. He and his wife, Augusta (who died in 1914), were good friends with Nellie Stewart and George Musgrove. Robbo's son and daughter (Eileen Robinson Brooks, my grandmother) were actors in America and Australia. Eileen was of a similar age to Nellie and George's daughter, the actor Nancye Stewart and the family friendship spanned a couple of generations. I have some small black and white photos of Nancye, Eileen, my mother, Peggy, as a young girl, on a Sydney beach with Nellie's grandsons Michael and John Lynton with whom my mother grew up. John Lynton was about the same age as my mother - they were good friends and put on puppet plays together!

My mother was only seven when Nellie Stewart died in 1931, but she always remembered two stories about Robbo and Nellie's friendship.



*Photo: Robbo and Nellie in the late 1920s. Possibly taken on the roof top area of Robinson's map publishing business in George Street, Sydney, now the site of the Four Seasons Hotel.*

In the late 1920s after George Musgrove died, my great grandfather, usually with a bottle of wine, would often visit Nellie (at Point Piper and then Clifton Gardens), and they would lunch together. He was asked why he didn't marry Nellie at this time. His answer was apparently that 'she gets a little cranky in the afternoons.' He was, however, a very kind and generous man and during my research into his papers at the Mitchell Library I came across cheque book stubs indicating cheques he paid to Nellie near the end of her life to help her out when her finances were scarce. The other moving story of their friendship was that after Nellie's death and funeral in

Sydney in 1931, Robbo personally carried her ashes by train to Melbourne for interment in her family's cemetery plot. Robbo died two years after Nellie in 1933.

I was delighted to attend the plaque unveiling ceremony at Point Piper in early November and thrilled, as my late mother would have been, that Nellie Stewart has been remembered and acknowledged in this way by Woollahra Council.

**Margaret Leask**

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