



September 2024

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<https://www.collins-connect.com>



collinsconnect.2018@gmail.com



Group: Collins Connect


**COLLINS CONNECT WEBSITE**

Check out our new website at  
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Same website address with a new modern look and feel.

## YOUR NEWSLETTER EDITOR



 collinsconnect.2018@gmail.com

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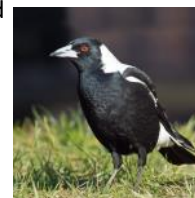

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Collins Connect acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we live and pays its respect to the Elders past and present.



With the arrival of spring down under, there is a hub of activities everywhere. The countdown to the end of the year and Christmas makes some nervous whilst others thrive on the eagerness of Christmas celebrations, visiting families overseas or just having an end of the year break.


It also signals the dreaded 'swooping' season of the Magpies (The Australian Magpie is black and white, gold brown eyes and a solid wedge-shaped bluish-white and black bill.) They are territorial and breeding magpies (almost always males) become aggressive, swooping and attacking those who approach their nests.

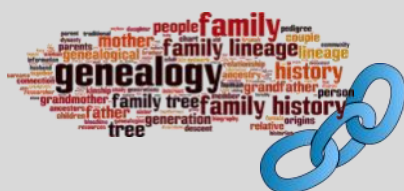


### What does Spring look like in other parts of the world?

## From the editors desk:

It is with a heavy heart that we feel the sadness of the passing of our beloved Collins Connect #1 patriarch and supporter **'NOEL OTTO HARRIS'**. From the conception of Collins Connect, Otto has been a constant stalwart, advocate and campaigner for encouraging us to achieve our 'Mission Statement' and that is *"To delve further into the Collins family tree exploring the many branches to discover our ancestral origins. Introducing the younger generation to the ancestral tree, reuniting annually to socialise, share memories and acknowledge the past, present and emerging generations."* He has shared many memories of him growing up in Madras, his family celebrations, even his recollection of many events during World War II and life in general.

Collins Connect has truly lost a beautiful gentleman with a humble heart. He will be sadly missed but forever in our thoughts and prayers. 



# Celebrating the life of Owen Anthony D'Souza

*A tribute by his loving children, Stephen, Sharron and Sean*

I've been thinking about all the parts of him I carry in me, the jigsaw pieces inside all of us that are our parents. Their good and bad traits. We don't realise how much we absorb them from just being in their presence.

Three beliefs guided all of Dad's decisions: **Family, Tradition, and Faith**. These three values guided everything he did.

**Owen Anthony D'Souza** was born on the 20th of February 1935 to Mabel and Stephen D'Souza and passed peacefully on the 26th of June 2024 after a short battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 89 years young.

Nana Mabel was a seamstress and Papa Stephen was a clerk working for the Indian Railways. Dad was the seventh of ten children. His earliest memories were of his house in Pudapet. He spoke of his father, as a kind and caring man who was slow to anger and never raised his voice.

Papa Stephen passed away when Dad was 8 years old in 1943. Dad remembers that day because the children were away on holiday on Kovalong when they got the news and had to rush back. The death of Papa Stephen threw the family into turmoil, leaving Nana Mabel with the sole responsibility of caring for ten children with absolutely no support. These sorts of insurmountable catastrophes usually signal the end of a sad story, but NOT for US. Papa's sister, Auntie Margaret, scooped them all up, took them in, and gave them a roof over their heads. They were saved.

The elder sisters, Brenda, Nellie, Hazel, Rene, Keris, and Sheryl found work, and soon the family began their climb back, moving into their own place also in Pudapet. Out of sheer necessity, the three younger siblings—Dad, Auntie Dolly, and Auntie Tiny—were sent off to boarding school at St Bede's.

Dad explained it to us like this: the Anglo-Indian Association provided a stipend for education and boarding for some Anglo-Indian children. Nana applied for this, filled out the forms, and the three youngest kids were sent off. Dad was 9 years old. Dad referred to St. Bede's as a boarding school at times and as an orphanage at others. This would be his home for the next 18 years. The boarders had visitors on the weekends, and his elder sisters and his mum would take turns traveling up to see him with gifts.



They were permitted to leave at Christmas time. Dad looked forward to this time to be back with his family. Sometimes Nana couldn't afford to take him back, and he'd have to stay

After leaving school, Dad wanted to join the Air Force. Auntie Brenda at that time was tutoring a child of a high-ranking officer who helped with Dad's application. His first attempt was unsuccessful; they disqualified him because he was underweight. Dad said he always wanted to fly, but Nana forbade it and refused to sign the papers. He commenced basic training at Tambaram Air Force Base on the 18th of March 1954. Dad's first pay check for the month was Rs. 54, and he gave his entire first pay check to his mother. He spent weekdays at the barracks but was allowed home on the weekends, mainly to study.

One weekend, when he was home from the barracks studying, two young ladies walked into Nana's compound to get some dressmaking done. One of those young ladies was my mum, Pamela Dawson. She was with her sister Beryl. Dad said he looked up from his studies, saw Mum, and it was love at first sight!

They were married on the 28th December 1963, at St Patrick's Church St Thomas Mount. Mum got pregnant pretty much straight away and Stephen was born on 12th September 1964 in the military hospital in St. Thomas Mount. A few years later, Sharron was born in the Cantonment Hospital on the 23rd January 1966. That was the hospital Mum worked at the time and they were both looked after well.

Still in the Air Force, Dad was posted to Kanpur and was promoted to the rank of Sergeant in 1967. While in Kanpur Mum, reading the Tea Leaves, wrote to her brother Willie Dawson and asked him to sponsor the family to immigrate to Australia. Due to a mix-up in the paperwork, that approval would not arrive until sometime later.

In March 1969, Dad discharged from the Air Force, the family moved back to Madras, to share a house with Auntie Tiny and Uncle Kenny in European Lines. Dad commenced a job in the steel rolling mills on the outskirts of town and Mum started a private nursing job. Mum fell pregnant again with Sean and gave birth to him on the 6th October 1969. Sean was delivered at home by my Auntie Mercy supervising the delivery as midwife.

The family was on the move again. Dad applied for and secured a job in Kalpakkam, doing security work at the Atomic Power Project and was given living quarters there. The family lived there until our migration approval for Australia came through in 1973. We rushed back to Madras and stayed with Uncle Kenny and Auntie Tiny while all the immigration plans were finalised.

### Owen, the True Patriarch

The term “patriarch” in this day and age can sometimes be misconstrued. However, when we speak of Dad, we refer to a person who holds a central and respected position within a family or community. A true patriarch is often characterized by wisdom, leadership, and a strong sense of responsibility towards their family members or friends.



### A New Land

In August 1973, with Stephen (8 years old), Sharron (7 years old), and Sean (3 years old), Mum and Dad embarked on a new endeavour to Australia. Greeted by Mum’s brother, Uncle Willy, and sister, Auntie Shirley, along with their families in Australia, we adjusted to a new life. Missing loved ones left behind, adapting to a different environment, and facing uncertainty were challenges. Yet, life went on, and we embraced the difficulties, looking toward the future.

### The Family Home

Finally, in 1976, we purchased our first house in Gosnells—1 Ryde St. Mum worked night shifts, and even after a full day of hard work, We remember Dad driving Mum to work every night to the city. They were often like ships in the night, but just watching them interact taught all of us the importance of work ethic and providing for your family. Number 1 Ryde St. was a place of joy, fun, and celebration. Mum and Dad sure knew how to party. It was a humble lifestyle, yet Mum and Dad never left us wanting for anything. Dad only moved out of Ryde St. a few years after Mum passed—it was too hard for him to stay with those memories of Mum.



### Love and Partnership

Mum and Dad spent the next 44 years building a beautiful, rewarding life together. Their journey was filled with love, cheer, family, travel, and, most importantly, laughter. We’ve all personally witnessed these two remarkable people grow, live, and love side by side. They weren’t just spouses; they were best friends who practically did everything together. Mum was sadly taken from us 17 years ago, succumbing to the same dreaded disease that eventually claimed Dad. But their love story lives on—a beacon of resilience and unwavering commitment. They weathered life’s storms together, finding joy in the simplest moments, sharing dreams, and creating lasting memories.

**“They say when someone you love becomes a memory, the memory becomes a treasure.” Sharron Cutts**

### His legacy lives on in....

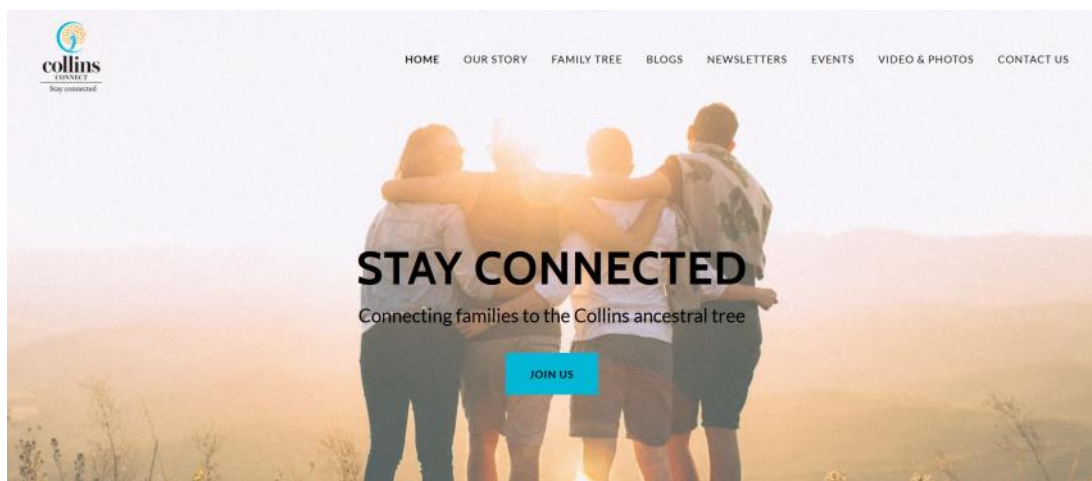
Children: Stephen, Sharron and Sean

Grandchildren: Jordan, Shakira, Sarika, Ayesha, Lennon

Great-grandson: Leon



## Have you checked out the Collins Connect website?



Anyone celebrating a special birthday, anniversary or special occasions, and would like a special mention, please feel free to drop us a line at [collinsconnect.2018@gmail.com](mailto:collinsconnect.2018@gmail.com). We would love to hear from you.



As a family group, we welcome all families to be involved whether its ideas, suggestions and most of all participation.

Why not reach out to a team member or drop us a line?



EDITOR—Karen Collins

**Want to help?**

CO-EDITOR—Corrine Collins

If you would like to contribute to the Collins Connect newsletters, we encourage you to get in contact with any team member.