

August 2012 Research Paper – Newsagents of Oatley – Additional material

I have been contacted by Russell Shaw who grew up in Oatley from about 8 years of age and became an electrician, having started his apprenticeship with A.C. Hardy of Myall Street – Russell now lives in country NSW.

Russell had read the August 2012 OHG research paper on newsagents in Oatley – by Mike Flanagan and me - and made contact to offer some details and experiences of his time as paperboy, and to record his liking and respect for Jim Yates, Oatley West newsagent, for whom Russell worked for some years.

Russell was second of three Shaw brothers who lived in Oatley at 22 River Road, on the corner of River Road and Mulga Road, next door South of what is now the Oatley Gospel Chapel.

Parents Neville and Hazel Shaw moved to Oatley from Katoomba about 1953 - 1954, when Russell was about 8 years old (born 1945), with older brother Ken who was quite a few years older than Russell; youngest brother Phil was born after the family came to live in Oatley at their River Road home.

Russell and Phil attended Oatley public school, it being closer than Oatley West Public school.

Russell took over as paperboy for Jim Yates from older brother Ken about 1959-1960.

Russell worked for Jim Yates for about 5 years, initially by pushbike for morning and afternoon deliveries, and at some stage also began doing the Saturday and Sunday morning deliveries with Jim as driver and Russell in the back seat calling out the addresses and papers required. The vehicle used was a soft- top Austin A40, with the hood down.

Russell spoke very warmly about Jim Yates who he said was quite a character, very knowledgeable and witty, and of a very friendly disposition.

Russell recalls the Austin A40 had a tendency to “drop out of” third gear which required the driver to hold his left foot against the base of the gearstick, causing much difficulty if one had to use the clutch - a problem Russell had to contend with later when Russell, having by then got his driver’s licence, filled in for Jim during some periods of injury or bad health. Russell said during some such periods Jim’s brother Brian, who worked as an upholsterer, helped out with deliveries and manning the shop. Russell also mentioned Jim’s father, ex-policeman Roy Yates, was frequently at the Newsagency, having each time walked there from his home in Ada Street, Oatley East – despite having a quite severe limp from a permanently injured leg.

Russell spoke of Jim Yates ability to toss papers with absolute precision - he described an occasion when he, Russell, with his head down in the back seat of the Austin reading the delivery list was jolted as the car came to a screeching halt, and quickly backed up outside an old fibro home with its front door open allowing vision through the hallway of the house and beyond through an open back door, showing a man sitting at a table in a rear room of the house – Russell said Jim called out “*paper delivery*” and tossed the paper so precisely into the hall that it skidded right up to the man in the rear room – the man leaned down, picked up the paper and waved ‘*thanks*’ to Jim who went off on the rest of the round.

Thank you, Russell for your interest and contribution.

Written from telephone conversations with Russell Shaw, August 2021

Cliff Crane

26 August 2021





53 Ada St
Oatley, New South Wales
Google
Street View

Moore
53 Ada St
NSW 2223
The Hungry
Spoon Cafe Oatley

Google