

Shanklys of Sale.



James McFarlane Shankly was born in Oakleigh on June 29, 1866. His parents had migrated from Scotland with their family in 1858. On January 12 and 13, 1861, three of their sons aged 6, 4 and 2 died of diphtheria. They, in fact, had three sons they named Joseph, the surviving one becoming a well known publican at Pakenham.

James married Mary Ann Donovan, a newly arrived migrant from Bandon, in County Cork and they establish their home in Sale where Jimmy became a paper hanger and decorator. They raised a family of six children. The eldest and youngest were boys and all except the first born, who became a solicitor,

became school teachers.

The youngest, Roy Bruce Shankly became bursar of Ivanhoe Grammar School and his story is best told by a business colleague, F.W. Cheshire.

In "*BOOKSELLER PUBLISHER FRIEND*", an autobiography by F. W. Cheshire, a prominent Melbourne businessman for nearly forty years, Cheshire describes the role of Roy Shankly in his company.

"The next important addition to the staff was Roy Shankly who had been bursar of Ivanhoe Grammar School. He was a Master of Arts and a very capable and ambitious young man who felt he could do better by leaving the teaching profession and entering the business world. I was very pleased to be able to employ him because he had a teacher sister and between them they knew very many other teachers. He joined my staff about the year 1927. It was not long before he had done sufficient research to find who were the principals and bookroom teachers of the country high schools, for him to set out to convert them for their suppliers, to F. W. Cheshire Pty. Ltd. The fact that he had his own car was a tremendous advantage, because up to this time, we had one vehicle for two travellers. It had been my practice to do the country travelling and Ray Wearne the suburbs,."

When Roy Shankly came, it meant that I could spend the mornings in the suburbs and Ray would be out in the afternoons. Shankly did very well indeed in the country and it is fair to say that he laid the foundations of our very strong connection in this area.

The main part of our business was of course selling school books but students also needed exercise books and drawing paper and all the sundries which go to equip the students to proceed with their school work. Because the Manufacturing Stationery Association had a rigid price policy, it was difficult for us to make a satisfactory profit by buying from them, we therefore started importing our own writing paper and having it made into exercise books by a small manufacturing company. This was fraught with difficulties and not always satisfactory, so Shankly and I came to the conclusion that we must run our own manufacturing business. He and I formed a small company. Once again the Specialty Press had room for a small factory so the business of R. B. Shankly Pty. Ltd. was formed with a capital of £1,000 and its address was 174 Little Collins Street. With the forming of this enterprise the result that we were once more reduced to two travellers. I took up the country travelling again and followed the line so well established by Roy Shankly. So well had he planned the enterprise, that it was not difficult for me to retain the customers he had so painstakingly collected.

My half ownership of R. B. Shankly Pty. Ltd. was very short lived. Times were bad, the depression was heavily upon us and it became extremely difficult for me to finance the rapidly growing business. Pressure from the bank, difficulties in obtaining payment for supplies made to the private schools who could not get their fees promptly, compelled me to give up my half share in R. B. Shankly Pty. Ltd. He was more fortunate than I because he had a wealthy friend who could help him, but I only had the reluctant bank. Not long before we moved from Little Collins Street to Degraes Street, R. B. Shankly Pty. Ltd. obtained very large premises in Bourke Street and eventually developed under Roy's management, into one of the largest manufacturing stationery companies in Victoria. The company was sold in 1972 to Edwards Dunlop Limited and remains one of their profitable subsidiaries. Unfortunately, Roy Shankly died very soon after the sale of his business. "

A highlight of my visits to Melbourne when I was a small boy was a visit to Uncle Roy's factory in Bourke Street, down near Spencer Street. I was fascinated by the huge rolls of paper passing through giant machines that drew blue lines, and some with red and blue lines, in the process of becoming VANA exercise books used in most schools in Victoria. After the lines were drawn on the paper, the required number of sheets were assembled with the covers on which were printed weights and measures and arithmetic tables before being cut by giant guillotines into the familiar exercise books.

His business caused him to read British newspapers and during the war, he came across an account of five Shankly brothers who had played football for Scotland, one of them being an R.B. Shankly.

Roy got in touch with their father and established a family connection. As I was in England in the RAAF at the time, I made contact with the family.

Uncle Roy's business prospered. When General MacArthur moved his headquarters north as the Japanese were slowly pushed back through the islands, the Cadillac car that he used in Melbourne was sold and Uncle Roy bought it. It was an enormous vehicle. He sometimes drove it to Lindenow and always brought gifts for all our family.

No one in our family owned a motor vehicle of any kind. That was not to happen until after the war when on Aug. 2nd 1946, I took delivery of a Dodge Utility. It was allegedly new but it had Defence Department tyres on it and was identical to army vehicles of the same type.

Uncle Roy also bought a home in Heyington Place in Toorak. It was so big it had been used as a WAAAF hospital during the war.

Every month while I was overseas during the war, a most welcome parcel of goodies arrived, with compliments of Uncle Roy. On a visit to Melbourne while on leave prior to being discharged from the RAAF, I took four of his six little daughters into the city by train. It was the first time they had travelled by train.