

## Chapter 57: Dad Appears on the Scene



Dad and mum in Yarmouth in June 1954. This is one of my favourite photos of them from that period.

Dad is first mentioned in mum's diaries in October 1952 in relation to forming a committee for the newly-formed Young People's Fellowship. Committee members were Joan Storer, Barbara<sup>1</sup>, Hazel Munns, Margaret Varnam, John Overfield, Robert Ollerenshaw, dad, Ken Roome, Ron Rowe and mum. Dad had presumably been involved with Bourne for some time before that otherwise I assume he would not have been selected for such a committee. Further evidence of this is provided by a newspaper cutting among mum's papers which shows that mum and dad appeared in the same chapel play, "The Third Day" on 10 April 1949.<sup>2</sup>

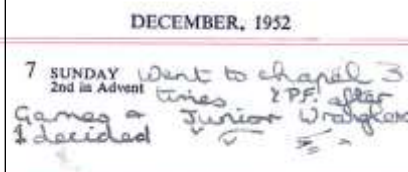
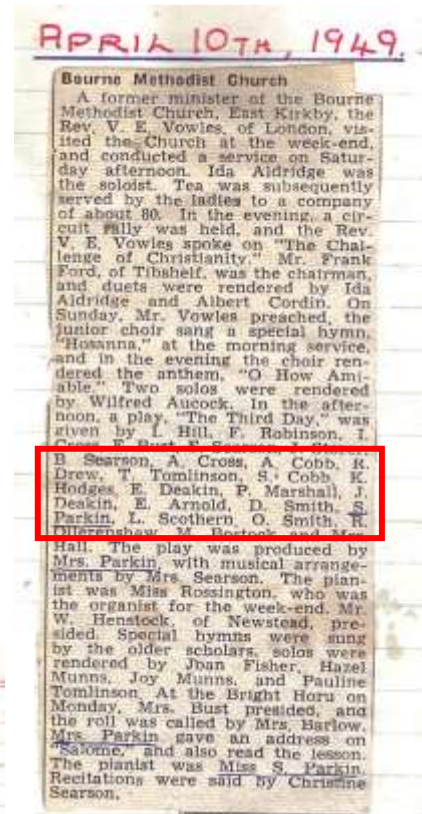
The first inkling of a possible romance between mum and dad comes in mum's diaries in late 1952. In November, after the Young People's Fellowship, mum went for a walk with dad and

Joan Storer. Three days later, in early December, Barbara<sup>1</sup> told mum that she thought dad liked her. Mum noted that she had wondered about this and, after a great deal of thought, had agreed that it might be possible! Four days later, again after Young People's Fellowship, mum walked home with Joan Storer, dad and Ron Rowe.

One feature of mum's diary from this point on was that some of the entries were in Pitman shorthand.<sup>3</sup> Of course, this meant that I could not read them! However, I managed to find someone who translates from Pitman shorthand. So, where I quote something written in shorthand it is in *red italics*. I do not know why mum wrote some things in shorthand. Maybe it was faster or more convenient? However, there are few entries and they were mainly about dad so perhaps it was to keep them more private!<sup>4</sup> However, there is nothing particularly intimate in them (at least by today's standards)! The first such entry was written after chapel on 7 December 1952. It reads "*I decided I like Roy*".

*Far right* - news cutting from 1949 which includes dad's name among the cast list for the play "The Third Day" that mum was also in.

*Right* - note from mum's diary December 1952



<sup>1</sup> I am not sure if this is Barbara Coupe or Barbara Spencer who subsequently married Ron Rowe. There is similar confusion around other references to Barbara at this time. In her diary, mum referred to Barbara Coupe as B Coupe until June 1949 but then just as Barbara. Sometimes, it is clear that it is Barbara Coupe that is being referred to as mum also refers to her parents and her sister, Margaret but the last time she did that was in October 1951. In September 1952, mum had a number of her friends to tea and they included both Barbara C and Barbara S. Barbara Coupe's address does feature in mum's 1952 and 1953 diaries. Barbara Spencer first appears in mum's diary as B Spencer in May 1952. In September 1953, mum simply refers to Barbara attending her party but it is clear that this is Barbara Spencer as she was mentioned alongside Ron Rowe and there is a photo in which I recognise her. This was the last reference to Barbara in mum's diaries for this period. It seems likely that some of the references to just Barbara between May 1952 and September 1953 could have been to Barbara Spencer.

<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 38.

<sup>3</sup> See also Chapter 54.

<sup>4</sup> In September 1953, there were several shorthand entries which read "*mummy still at shop*". Presumably, there was no reason to conceal this entry? Perhaps there was also a novelty element, that is shorthand was something she had just learned.

Over the next few months, mum and dad did things together and with a group of common friends including Barbara<sup>1</sup>, Michael Booth, Margaret Bostock, Joan Fisher, Betty Longden, Hazel Munns, Joy Munns, Robert Ollerenshaw, John Overfield, Ken Roome, Ron Rowe, Joan Storer and Margaret Varnam. Activities included those associated with chapel, such as young people's fellowship, Rainbow Follies, helping with junior youth club and Sunday School and carol singing, and a wider range of activities including going to the cinema, going to an ice pantomime, dancing, walking and visiting friends for meals. While it seems likely that a romance was developing, they were not actually "going out" at this point and there were also setbacks. Mum was jealous of any involvement dad had with other girls, particularly with mum's friend Hazel Munns, and it seems that dad may have been wary of mum's feelings towards another boy, John Overfield. There was also a fairly major bust-up over plans for a summer holiday in the Channel Islands!



*Mum's friends at her birthday party in 1953*  
Back – Ken Roome, Alan Jones, Joe  
Middle – Ron Rowe, Barbara Spencer, Margaret Varnam, Joy Munns, Kathleen Stanley, Betty Longden, Hazel Munns, Robert Ollerenshaw  
Front – Margaret Bostock, dad, Trevor Scothern, Joan Storer, John Overfield, Joyce Elliot, mum



*Mum circa 1952/3*

In December 1952, the young people went carol singing and mum was disappointed that dad had spent all his time with (a group that included) Hazel Munns. The following night there was more carol singing and dad went with (a group that included) Joy Munns. On the third night of carol singing, mum noted that dad had walked with the group she was with and she had been glad. On New Year's Eve, mum went to the Senior Sunday School party and watchnight service. She noted that it was very nice except that Hazel was there! On 22 January 1953, mum noted that John Overfield came to see her to ask her to go to the pictures with him but he did not dare ask her.<sup>5</sup> Two days later, mum went on a Rainbow Follies trip to give a concert in Annesley. She noted that dad sat with Hazel Munns on the bus. She also noted that dad teased her about John Overfield and he thought she was "mad".<sup>6</sup> She noted that he hardly spoke to her over the next couple of days and that she did not know how to put things right. She thought (and hoped) that this had been the reason why dad had sat with Hazel on the bus. On 1 February 1953, mum noted that a group of seven had gone for a walk at night and they had included dad, Margaret Varnam, Hazel Munns, Joy

<sup>5</sup> However, it is not clear how mum knew his intentions if he had not dared to ask her! Perhaps one of her friends told her? Perhaps dad did?

<sup>6</sup> Assuming dad said this, it is not clear whether he meant "crazy" or "angry".

Munns, Ken Roome, Alan Jones and John Overfield.<sup>7</sup> She noted that she did not know who the odd one out was and that, although she hoped it was dad, she doubted it.<sup>8</sup> The next day, at Junior Youth Club, mum noted that she and dad had “*had a smashing time playing shop*”! She also noted that John Overfield had walked up with her and wanted to ask her to go out with him. Mum said she knew this because dad had told her (!) and that she did not listen to John as a result. The next day, neither dad nor John Overfield attended the Young People’s Fellowship Committee Meeting and mum supposed that they had gone to the pictures. At the beginning of March 1953, mum said she heard dad, Margaret Varnam and Ken Roome asking Hazel Munns if she wanted to go for a walk but mum thought she did not want to go. Mum decided she liked dad “*a bit now*”.

In January 1953, after the primary party, a few of the young people discussed holidays.<sup>9</sup> That included dad, Ken Roome, Margaret Varnam, Joan Storer, Betty Longden, Barbara<sup>1</sup> and Joy Munns. Two days later, at chapel, there were further holiday discussions. Dad and Ron Rowe said they were going to Jersey for a fortnight and anyone who wanted to could go with them. Mum wanted to go but was frustrated that she did not know when it would be. On 24 January, Ron Rowe told mum that he and dad were going to Jersey the last week of July and the first week in August and she and Joan could go with them if they wished. The next day, grandma gave mum permission<sup>10</sup> to go to Jersey with Ron Rowe, dad and Joan Storer. But, it seems that at the same time mum was exploring the possibility of a holiday in Guernsey. On Saturday 16 February, mum noted that she had had a reply from Guernsey and Ron Rowe had said he would go if dad would but dad said he wouldn’t! The next day, dad said he definitely was not going to Guernsey. Mum was furious. She wrote, “*I do not like Roy as I think he has let us down, especially Ron*”. On the Sunday, mum was at Mrs Scothern’s and Ron phoned her there. According to mum, “*he sounded annoyed because Roy wouldn’t go. He said he would try to get someone else to go*”. She then wrote something in shorthand which said, “*I spoke to him he said hello love. I like Ron*”. The following day, mum noted “*I dislike Roy more than ever*”!! On 23 February 1953, dad tried to speak to mum but she “*would not have it*”.



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*Views of the Channel Islands – plans for a holiday here in 1953 appears to have caused conflict between mum and dad*

<sup>7</sup> I don’t know why mum did not go.

<sup>8</sup> Given that Ken Roome and Margaret Varnam and Alan Jones and Joy Munns were couples, this left dad, Hazel Munns and John Overfield.

<sup>9</sup> See also Chapter 52.

<sup>10</sup> Mum was 18 at this point but still apparently needed or wanted her parents’ permission for this trip.



So, during this period, things were very up and down between mum and dad. Mum was uncertain of how dad felt towards her and how she felt about him. At times, things were very strained between them. For example, on 16 January 1953, mum noted that dad went home early from a Rainbow Follies practice. The next day, mum met up with some of her friends but noted that dad had gone to a party in Nottingham. She thought something was wrong<sup>11</sup> and she decided to try to forget dad but she found that she could not when she saw him. Two days later mum asked dad if it<sup>12</sup> was all planned for Monday. Apparently, he did not answer and mum thought he was annoyed. On 5 February 1953, mum noted that she sent a message to Roy that she was sorry about what she had said the previous night. She hoped he would forgive her. It seems that mum had sent the message with Joan Storer because, the next day (the 7<sup>th</sup>), Joan told mum that she had not given dad the message because he was in a bad mood. Apparently, Joan thought that dad thought (!) that mum hadn't gone to Rainbow Follies practice because of [the argument on] Thursday night! On the 10<sup>th</sup>, mum went to choir practice and to Rainbow Follies Concert Party but dad hardly spoke to her, On the 12<sup>th</sup>, she went to anniversary practice and scripture practice but, again, dad hardly spoke to her. The next day, she went to Rainbow Follies Concert party and dad "never spoke".

But, sometimes things were more positive. For example, on 26 January 1953, after Junior Youth Club, dad walked down with mum, Margaret Varnam and John Overfield. A shorthand note records that they<sup>13</sup> walked *arm in arm*. On the 29<sup>th</sup>, mum and dad and some of their friends went for a walk round the forest and mum noted that she thought dad liked her a bit. Towards the end of February, mum's anger over the Channel Islands holiday incident seemed to be subsiding. On the 25<sup>th</sup>, she went to the pictures with Joan Storer but wished she had gone with dad. On the 27<sup>th</sup>, she confessed that she could not make her mind up about him. On 19 March, mum went to a dance at the Church Hall with Margaret Varnam, Ken Roome, Betty Longden and Hazel Munns. Dad walked mum home and she described the evening as "smashing".

JANUARY, 1953

26 MONDAY Went to F & B.  
Went to S.V.C. Social. I went with Joan Fisher with the little girls. Roy came & tried to persuade me to go & play "shop" with them but I did not go because John was there. Roy walked down with us. (m & n) H. Varnam & 30.

Note from mum's diary for 26 January 1953

By May 1953, it was beginning to look as if a romance might be back on the cards. On the 3<sup>rd</sup>, mum went for a walk at night with dad, John Overfield, Ken Roome, Margaret Varnam, Hazel Munns, Betty Longden and Joan Storer. Dad walked with mum and Hazel Munns with mum noting, "I don't (I hope) think I was playing gooseberry". Further walks followed. While on some of these walks mum noted that dad walked with "us", by the end of May, she was emphasising with underlining that "Roy walked home with me".

JUNE, 1953

1 MONDAY Went to F & B.  
Went to play table tennis at chapel then a service at 9 o'clock. Then we went to the Albert Hall for a service (United) at 11.30. I sat on the back row with Roy, Margaret & Ken. Had a smashing time coming home. / John & A

Note from mum's diary for 1 June 1953

On 1 June 1953, there was a united service at the Albert Hall<sup>14</sup> and mum went there with Margaret Varnam, Ken Roome and dad. They sat on the back row and mum said she had a "smashing time coming home". There was a shorthand notation which reads, "*Roy put his arm round me and held my hand*".

<sup>11</sup> It is possible that mum misjudged the situation. On 19 January, she saw dad at Junior Youth Club and noted that he was very talkative.

<sup>12</sup> Not sure what "it" was but it could have been Junior Youth Club

<sup>13</sup> From the note, I am not completely sure if just mum and dad were arm in arm or they all were.

<sup>14</sup> See Chapter 54.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup>, dad asked mum to go out with him on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> and they went to the Regent<sup>15</sup> to see "[The Big Sky](#)" and went for a walk over Coxmoor afterwards. Over the next few days, they did various things together and with friends including Harold Booter, Betty Longden, Hazel Munns, John Overfield, Ken Roome, Joan Storer and Margaret Varnam. Things they did included visiting friends' houses<sup>16</sup>, going to the cinema<sup>17</sup>, going to the wakes<sup>18</sup>, dancing<sup>19</sup>, walking<sup>20</sup> and going to the park. On 13 June, mum and dad went to Cleethorpes with a group from chapel. Mum noted that she went on the Big Dipper three times with dad.<sup>21</sup> On dad's birthday (17<sup>th</sup>), mum and dad went to the cinema<sup>22</sup> but mum was unwell from the next day and this meant that she was unable to go to dad's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup>. According to Joan Storer, dad had been upset that mum had not been able to go.

All was not plain sailing. On Monday 8 June, dad went to Skegness for the day with work. Mum's jealous and suspicious nature surfaced again as she noted that dad said he had a nice time in Skegness but "*would not tell us who he had been with – I hope it was not a girl anyway. I will wait until Sat & see what happens then.*"



15 WEDNESDAY Went to F+B. Went to see Clark Gable & Vivien Leigh in "Gone with the Wind" at the Star W.G. Went with Roy, Margaret & Ken. So  
P.L. 1.0. K. 1.0. T.V.

Went to Scarbro' with F+B. Roy went Had smashing time. Got home at 11.45. Joan stayed at our house because her mother & father went away for a while.

Nevertheless, from July 1953, it appears that mum and dad were established together as a couple. They regularly went to the pictures together. Sometimes others went with them including Ken Roome and Margaret Varnam. They also went for walks with friends including Betty Longden, John Overfield, Ken Roome and Margaret Varnam. On 15 July 1953, mum, dad, Ken and Margaret went to see "*Gone with the Wind*". In shorthand, mum commented, "*had a smashing time. Kissed me goodnight.*" Three days later, after the Fordham and Burton trip to Scarborough, mum noted, again in shorthand, that dad kissed her goodnight.



Left top – mum and dad in Cleethorpes in June 1953 with Ken Roome and Margaret Varnam – and Lynne Evans  
Left centre and bottom – mum's diary entries for 15 and 18 July 1953  
Right – mum and dad on a trip to Scarborough in July 1953

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 21.

<sup>16</sup> On 28 June, a group went to Betty Longden's and they played "*Postman's Knock*" there which mum described as "*smashing*".

<sup>17</sup> Including to the Regent to see David Tomlinson and Petula Clark in "[Made in Heaven](#)" – see. Apparently, the plot revolves around the Dunmow Flicht trials – see Chapter 19.

<sup>18</sup> See Chapter 4.

<sup>19</sup> Including at the Festival Hall – see Chapter 59.

<sup>20</sup> Often dad walked home with mum during this period.

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter 52.

<sup>22</sup> They saw Anthony Steel and Patricia Roc in "[Something Money Can't Buy](#)".

Over the period that followed, they did a wide range of things together as a couple including helping run grandad's shop; participating in chapel activities<sup>23</sup>; going for walks; going to friends' houses; visiting friends who were unwell<sup>24</sup>; babysitting; bike rides; watching television; going shopping<sup>25</sup>; going to the cinema, dances<sup>26</sup>, the Milk Bar<sup>27</sup> and Adams Chip Shop<sup>28</sup>; going to sporting activities<sup>29</sup>; going to the wakes<sup>30</sup>; sticking photos in albums; baking; gardening; painting and decorating; playing board games<sup>31</sup> and card games<sup>32</sup>; watching dad play table tennis and cricket; and playing tennis and table tennis.



Mum, dad and Ken Roome on chapel trip to Blackpool in October 1953

When they were apart, for example, when mum was in Guernsey with Joan Storer, they kept in touch by letter and dad met mum in Nottingham when she got back. Sometimes, they did things with friends, particularly with another couple, Margaret Varnam and Ken Roome, but also with other couples such as Joy Munns and Alan Jones and Ken and Pearl Hodges, and other friends including Margaret Bostock, Harold Booter, Edna Bust, Betty Longden, Hazel Munns, Robert Ollerenshaw, John Overfield and Joan Storer.

Came home. left SUNDAY 25  
5.20 arrived home at 9.40  
Had a lovely time in bus  
Went to chapel in am  
morning very nice  
5.10 (9) - 10.10

Mum's diary entry for 25 October 1953

However, they continued to have their ups and downs as a couple. In September 1953, mum noted "*Roy mad with me (he never even said goodnight to me) because I said I wouldn't go with him to Sutton on Wed*". This appears to have related to a table tennis match that presumably dad was involved in the next day at Victoria Street Baptist in Sutton in Ashfield. The next day, mum phoned dad up and said she would go and she did.<sup>33</sup> There were highs too. On 25 October 1953, mum noted, after the chapel trip to Blackpool that, "*Roy told me he was in love while we were coming home*".

But old jealousies and suspicions were still there and they came to a head in November 1953. On the 22<sup>nd</sup>, some of the young people<sup>34</sup> from chapel came to mum's house after chapel. According to mum, dad "*fooled around with H all night*". Mum decided she would confront him about this and would ask him if he still wanted to go out with Hazel. Dad told mum that he would not see her until Wednesday but mum hoped to see him at the youth club on Monday. On Monday, mum said she was miserable all day. At night, dad did come to youth club and, going home, mum asked him about Hazel. "*He said that he wouldn't give me up, it would be me that would give him up & he said that he didn't like Hazel any more than I liked John.*" Mum said that she was glad she had asked him "*as I know where I stand*".

<sup>23</sup> Including Sunday School, the Youth Fellowship, the choir, Rainbow Follies, collecting for National Children's Home and Orphanage, helping to run the Junior Youth Club, taking services and going on chapel trips and outings. In October 1953, they were part of a group from chapel that went to Blackpool for the weekend – see Chapter 52. See Chapter 54 for other details.

<sup>24</sup> Including in hospital.

<sup>25</sup> Including in Nottingham.

<sup>26</sup> In December 1953, mum went to the Annesley Tennis Club Dance with Margaret Varnam but she wished dad had gone too.

<sup>27</sup> See Chapter 52

<sup>28</sup> See Chapter 54.

<sup>29</sup> Such as ice hockey. They also went to the ice stadium in February 1954 for the ice pantomime "*Cinderella*". They took Geoffrey Cross and dad's nephew Terry – see Chapter 52.

<sup>30</sup> In October 1953, dad won mum a coconut at the wakes.

<sup>31</sup> Such as Monopoly.

<sup>32</sup> Such as Muggins, Happy Families and 500 up.

<sup>33</sup> The chapel team won 6-4.

<sup>34</sup> Dad, John Overfield, Hazel Munns and Betty Longden.

now". On the 26<sup>th</sup>, mum and dad went to the Regent to see Jack Hawkins in "[The Cruel Sea](#)". Mum said that they had a lovely time and that dad told her "that he would not want to give me up ever. He said he had wished he had asked me to go out with him last Christmas". This seems to confirm the story in mum's diary that dad came close to asking her out in December 1952 but that, following that, things cooled between them perhaps because of the argument over holidays, and he only finally asked her out six months later.

Jack Hawkins in the film "The Cruel Sea" in 1953



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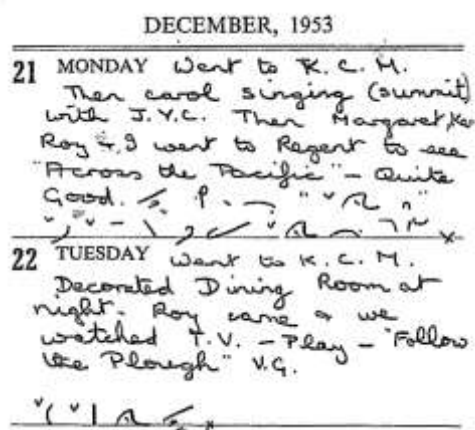
In December 1953, mum mentioned dad's mother for the first time.<sup>35</sup> Granddad's first mention of dad in his diary was in June 1954 when mum and dad went to Yarmouth together.<sup>36</sup> Mum also noted doing things with dad and her family, including her parents and she also started doing things with his family.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> Mum went to hear "Elijah" at Hill Methodist chapel. She went with dad, Ken Hodges and my other grandmother (Grandma Drew). Three days later, mum went to see "Roy's mother" but she was not in so, the next day, she sent her a birthday card. Mum missed going to grandma's on her birthday that year as she was unwell but she went a few days later with dad.

<sup>36</sup> He mentioned him again, in September 1954, when mum and dad went to visit the Lofthouses and, again in November 1954, when grandma and dad visited mum in hospital. In December 1954, granddad noted that mum, dad and grandma attended the watchnight service at Bourne chapel.

<sup>37</sup> For example, on Boxing Day 1953, dad and some of their friends joined the Parkin family for a party. Friends included Ken Roome, Margaret Varnam and Joan Storer. Family included Marilyn, Jennifer, Bert and Edie, and probably Jim and Renie. The next day, mum, Margaret Varnam and Ken Roome all went to dad's for tea. Later that day, after chapel, dad, Ken Roome, Margaret Varnam, Joan Storer and John Overfield went to mum's house. In January 1954, mum, grandma and dad went to "Uncle Frank's" and, in March 1954, mum and dad went to Jim and Renie's with Margaret Varnam and Ken Roome. In April 1954, Mum, dad and some of their friends (Sheila Cobb and Joan Storer) went to Uncle Frank's where they played snooker. Mum and dad paired up with Uncle Frank against Jim, Joan and Sheila with mum and dad's team winning 2-1. Also, that month, dad helped granddad to pull down the glasshouse. In August 1954, dad accompanied mum to visit grandma in hospital on a number of occasions.





Mum's diary entry for 21 and 22 December 1953

By Christmas 1953, it seems dad was certain of his feelings for mum but she was less sure. On 21 December, mum noted that “*Roy said to me “I love you” I wish I could be sure whether I love him or not.*” The next day, mum noted “*I think I do love Roy.*” They had already begun to talk about a longer-term commitment but, on New Year’s Eve 1953, mum noted that dad said that he could not afford to get married for a long while yet. Mum said that she did not mind waiting. It also appears that mum had become more sure of her feelings. On 3 January 1954, mum noted “*I realised I do love Roy very much.*”<sup>38</sup>

After Junior Choir Practice on 7<sup>th</sup> January, mum noted that dad read her diaries for 1952 and part of 1953. He finished reading the 1953 diary on 12<sup>th</sup> January. I am intrigued to know what dad thought of them and whether he asked about the shorthand entries!

In January 1954, it seems that dad was already thinking of moving away from Kirkby. On the 19<sup>th</sup>, mum noted that she, dad, Ken Roome and Margaret Varnam stood talking for ages about dad going away to work. Mum was not keen on this and wished that he could get a better job nearer to home. Later that month, dad was received into chapel membership but mum noted that she was acting oddly<sup>39</sup> that day. Margaret Varnam and Ken Roome went to Pearl Hodges’ but dad went to mum’s house. Mum noted that she did not know what was the matter but she did not want to remain (“stop”) at Pearl’s. She thought this was because she wanted to be on her own with dad. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, mum noted that dad had gone for a new job at the Norwich Union. I confess I did not know where dad was working prior to this.<sup>40</sup>

On 8 February 1954, mum made quite a long diary entry which reads, “*I bought Roy a Valentine card but I wonder whether I dare send it. I do love him but I am shy at sending this card for all to see.*” Anyway, she did pluck up the courage to send the card as, on the 12<sup>th</sup>, she noted “*sent Roy Valentine card. I hope he is not mad with me.*” I don’t think she needed to have worried as the next day, “*had a Valentine card from Roy!*”

However, there were some further conflicts between them, not least because of very different approaches to timekeeping.<sup>41</sup> On 20 February, dad was<sup>42</sup> 1hr 20 minutes late. She noted, “*I was mad at first but soon forgot it... I thought Roy wasn’t coming in aft but I am glad he did. I don’t know what I would have done if he hadn’t.*”



Mum's diary entries for 8, 12 and 13 February 1954

<sup>38</sup> Although it appears she might have loved him more if he stopped smoking which he subsequently did -see Chapter 88.  
<sup>39</sup> I am not exactly sure what she meant by this!  
<sup>40</sup> However, from an [obituary](#) at the time of dad’s death, it seems he trained as a clerk at Nottinghamshire County Council’s treasurer’s department before joining the Norwich Union in 1954.  
<sup>41</sup> I recall this being an issue later. Mum was extremely particular about punctuality (see Chapter 31) while dad was much more relaxed about this.  
<sup>42</sup> According to mum!



1954 MARCH  
 Paid 10d to money  
 5 FRIDAY Went to Ros Harrison, Deaf Stockwell  
 K.C.M. Mr Sealbrook came  
 back. Went to P.C. + R.F.  
 Practice. Then we went  
 home + watched T.V. Then  
 we came out + stood talking  
 I don't know what was a matter  
 with me but I told Roy I wasn't sure  
 6 SATURDAY Went to Lou Costello, Barry Jones  
 quarter Day at Brook St. Then  
 went to chapel at night. I  
 rang Roy up + told him I was  
 sure I don't know what I wasn't  
 sure last night I am now. After  
 chapel Roy came up + we watched  
 T.V.

Mum's diary entries for 5 and 6 March 1954

Whether this incident was a factor or not, I am not sure but, in early March 1954, mum was having some doubts about their relationship. On 5 March, mum went to preparation class and Rainbow Follies and then she and dad stood talking. Something was wrong and mum noted, "I don't know what was a matter with me but I told Roy I wasn't sure". Initially, I wasn't sure what mum wasn't sure about. Getting married perhaps? It was only when I got the shorthand translated that the translator told me that the text in the entry for 9<sup>th</sup> March (but separated by a line) probably belonged to the 5<sup>th</sup> March as it reads "*whether I love him or not*". I can only imagine the effect of being told this on dad. However, the next

day, mum was trying to repair any damage caused. She rang dad and told him that she was now sure and that she did not know why she hadn't been sure the previous day but that she was now.

By the end of March, the pendulum of mum's feelings towards dad had indeed swung back fully the other way. On the 28<sup>th</sup>, she wrote, "*I love Roy very much. I wish we could be married.*" On 19 April 1954, mum and dad went to Skegness for the day. Mum said it was a lovely day and the best she had ever had with dad. She noted in shorthand, "*I love Roy very much*". In June 1954, mum and dad spent the week together in Yarmouth.<sup>43</sup> After spending so much time together, mum noted that she "*missed Roy very much*" when she got back.

On 30 June, things were again a little rocky. The entry reads, "*I was mad at first but I got over it (I think) before I went in.*" Clearly, mum was cross about something but it is hard to know what without the shorthand entry although it is clear it was something dad told her. This makes me wonder if mum wanted to maximise intrigue by writing some in longhand but concealing the details.<sup>44</sup> What mum noted was that dad told "*me he had more or less promised not to get married for 2 years when he started work at the NU [Norwich Union].*" This seems odd and I wonder if dad did promise the Norwich Union this and/or if this is what he told mum. It seems peculiar that someone would have such a conversation with a potential employer but I guess they were different times.

28 SUNDAY Went to Dixie Burgess, Flora Robson  
 chapel 3 times Roy didn't  
 come to chapel in am. I went  
 down for tea. Then we watched  
 T.V. after chapel Costa - V.G. Mr Reebok  
 from South Normanton - preacher  
 V.G. 12/3/54

APRIL 1954

19 MONDAY  
 Roy + I went to Skegness for  
 the day. Roy won the pots in  
 the morning + evening. Got home  
 11.40. Had lovely day. Best ever  
 and with Roy.

30 WEDNESDAY Susan Hayward, Lena Horne  
 Went to K.C.M. Went to  
 see Mrs. Deakin at night. Roy  
 told me I was mad at first but I got  
 over it (I think) before I went in.  
 7.11.54

Mum's diary entries for 28 March, 19 April and 30 June 1954

In August 1954, mum noted that dad spent most of one day with her and just went home to sleep. The previous night, he had slept at mum's house because they were leaving early to go to Bridlington. In shorthand, mum noted, "*I wish he did not have to go*". He also stayed quite a bit later that month when both grandma and grandad were ill and grandma was in hospital. On the 19<sup>th</sup>, after dad had returned to his house, mum noted "*I missed Roy a lot*".

<sup>43</sup> See Chapter 52.  
<sup>44</sup> Also, it seems unlikely to me that she was truly over it given the "I think" comment.

On 8 September 1954, mum and dad asked grandma and grandad “if they minded if we got engaged on the 15<sup>th</sup>. They said it was OK.” On the 11<sup>th</sup>, mum and dad went to Nottingham and bought an engagement ring from Gibbs<sup>45</sup> in Mansfield Road. This ring was passed to Tricia when mum died. On mum’s birthday, the 15<sup>th</sup>, mum and dad got engaged. Mum was at work that day and, in the evening, they went to the cinema.<sup>46</sup>

Mum’s engagement ring



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<sup>45</sup> [Gibbs](#) of Goosegate was established in 1860. It was [sold](#) to Grenville Price and Barrie Hill in 1974.

<sup>46</sup> They went to the Regent and saw “[The Long, Long Trailer](#)” (see) and “[The Affairs of Dobie Gillis](#)”.