

Chapter 56: An Interest in Boys

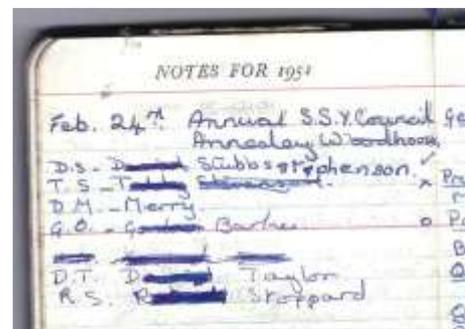


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"Back to the Future"

At the back of mum's 1950 diary is an intriguing list of boys' names.¹ It is not clear why mum crossed out first names or what the tick, cross and circle mean! It is pretty clear from mum's diaries that, at the start of 1950, mum liked David Stubbs (DS) and not Gordon Barker (GB). As far as I can make out Teddy Stephenson (TS) was Barbara Coupe's boyfriend on and off for some of this period.

In March and April 1950, mum noted doing a number of activities with Barbara Coupe and Teddy Stephenson including going for walks, playing tennis and going to the pictures. However, on occasions, she noted that she felt like an intruder or the odd one out. But, any relationship between the two was on and off with various periods where one of them had "*chucked*" or "*finished*" with the other. In December 1950, mum noted that Barbara was once again going out with Teddy Stephenson.



List of boys' names at the back of mum's diary 1950



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Poster for "Little Women"

Throughout 1950, mum had a crush on David Stubbs. She often described her interactions with him. For example, sometimes David walked with her to her music lessons and she often described where she had seen him. On occasions, mum's designs on David were thwarted by the presence of his sister, and her friend, Ina. In April 1950, mum noted that she had a super time at night. She noted that Barbara Coupe, Teddy Stephenson and David Stubbs were there as was Ina. Mum denotes Ina's presence "*WL*", that is "*worst luck*"! Mum also described when and where she had seen David, e.g. on the park or at the Post Office. In April 1950, it seemed as if their relationship might have been coming to something as David paid for mum to go to the cinema to see "*Little Women*"² and mum noted that they sat on the back row with Barbara

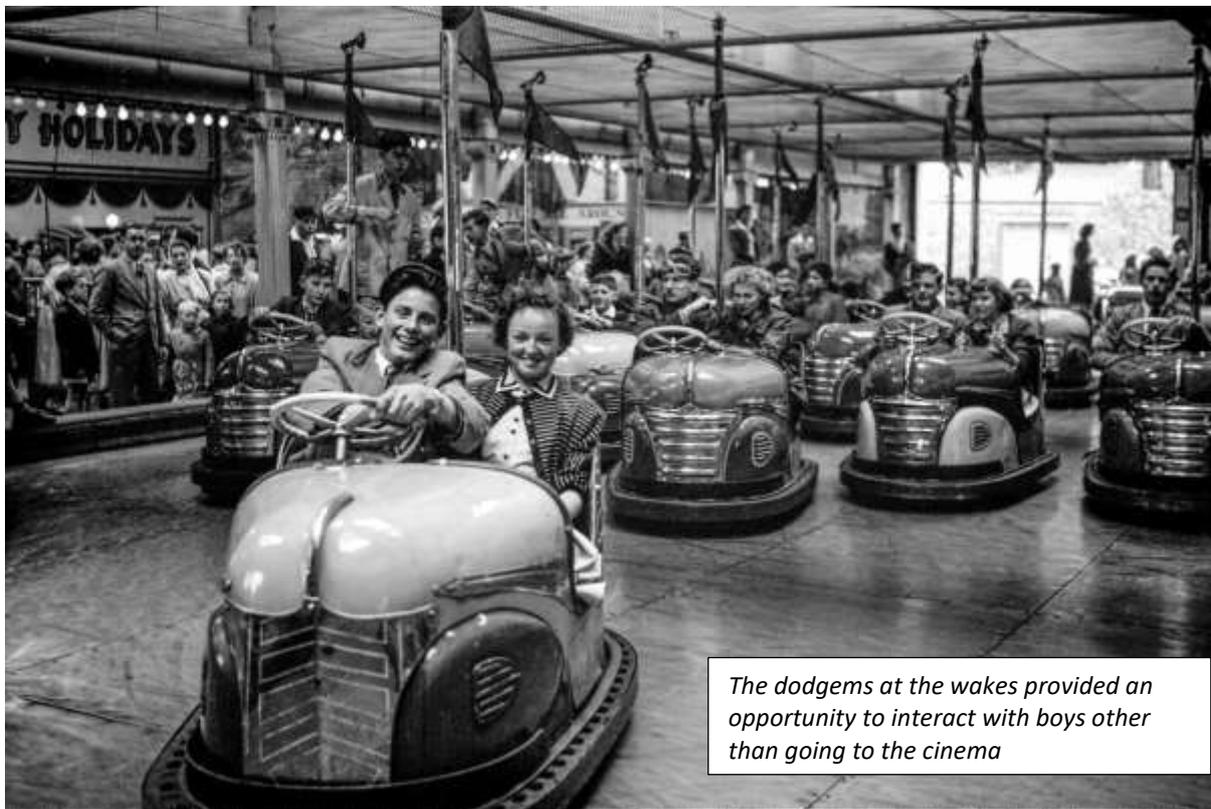
¹ It is unclear why this is headed Feb 24th Annual SS Y Council Annesley Woodhouse. I can find no record of any such meeting in either 1950 or 1951. It could be that mum noted this date and it either changed or mum did not go. There was a Youth Council meeting at New Cross on 18 February 1950. Of course, the title might have been to disguise the true purpose of the list but that would seem rather elaborate and pretty ineffective.

² Presumably the [1949 version](#).

and Teddy. But, it seems that David Stubbs might have been involved with someone else at this time, Maureen Normanton. Mum noted that David received a letter and a Valentine's card from her.³

In May 1950, at the primary anniversary, mum noted talking to David Stubbs on her own for ages. From July 1950, she not only noted when she saw him but also when she did not.⁴ However, in December 1950, she noted that she had decided that she would only mention David when she saw him which she did a couple of times over that Christmas period.

Mum mentioned other boys during this period. In April 1950, she saw David Merry (DM) but he did not see her. In December that year, she noted that she still liked him⁵ but not as much as she liked David Stubbs. She also mentioned Gordon Barker and, in April 1950, went for a walk and to the cinema with him. However, by August, her feelings towards him were negative. She noted that she did not see David Stubbs but that she received a card from Gordon and both of these were annotated "WL"! She also noted that she had seen Gordon at the cinema with another girl and had felt glad. In May 1950, during a break in the relationship between Barbara Coupe and Teddy Stephenson, mum noted that she went on the dodgems at the wakes⁶ with David Taylor (DT) and Barbara went with Richard Stoppard (RS).⁷



The dodgems at the wakes provided an opportunity to interact with boys other than going to the cinema

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As with 1950, mum's 1951 diary also had a list of boys' names and initials in it. It seems that 1951 started with Barbara Coupe and Teddy Stephenson together as a couple. In January 1951, mum went to the pictures with Teddy, Barbara and Margaret.⁸ However, at some point over the next few months,

³ But, whatever relationship there was, it seems it did not last as, at the primary anniversary, at the end of May 1951, mum noted that Maureen Normanton came and that she wanted David Stubbs back. Again mum denotes this "WL", that is "worst luck".

⁴ And she added the annotation "WL" that is "worst luck".

⁵ See Chapter 40.

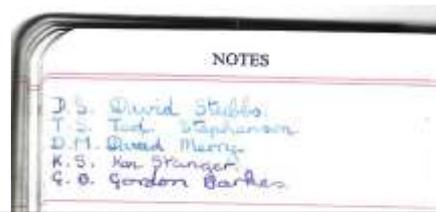
⁶ See Chapter 4.

⁷ But they are only mentioned that once.

⁸ Perhaps Barbara's sister, Margaret Coupe.

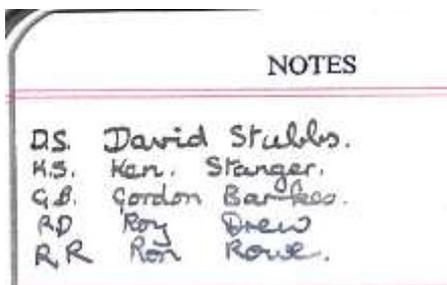
it seems that things cooled between Barbara and Teddy. In April 1951, when mum went with Barbara to the cinema, she noted that Teddy sat two rows in front of them.

Mum did not quite manage to stick to her decision only to mention David Stubbs when she saw him. In January 1951, mum noted that she had not seen him all week and, in March, mum noted that he had not been at chapel. However, she continued to see him at chapel events⁹ and, in January 1951, both mum and David Stubbs were selected for the Youth Club committee. She clearly still had a crush on him as, in January 1951, she wrote "*I wish I went out with him*". However, also in early 1951, mum began to mention another boy. At the beginning of February, mum went to her cousin Ian's ninth birthday party. A friend of the family, Ken Stanger (KS), was there and he came home with mum. The next day, when mum took Olive home from chapel when she was unwell, grandma had gone to Jim and Renie's but mum did not want to go as Ken Stanger was at Olive's. In December 1951, mum noted that Ken Stanger came to the intermediate party and that she had a lovely time. Ken Stanger spent Christmas Day 1951 with the Parkins. That night, mum said she only got to bed at 2am and then lay talking to Marilyn about Ken Stanger until around 3am!



List of boys' names at the back of mum's diary 1951

In addition, during 1951, mum's feelings towards Gordon Barker may have changed. She interacted with him in various ways including sitting with him at the cinema. By May, she noted that she liked GB better than DS but she added the rider "*I think*".¹⁰



List of boys' names at the back of mum's diary 1952

As with the two previous years, mum's 1952 diary contains a list of boys names and some new names appear. They include Ron Rowe (RR) and dad (RD).¹¹ At the start of 1952, mum continued to have feelings for David Stubbs, Gordon Barker and Ken Stanger. At the end of January 1952, mum noted that she had seen Gordon Barker in "*Candy Stores*"¹² doorway with a girl. Two days later, mum went to Ian's party and Ken Stanger took her home. Also, at the end of January 1952, David Stubbs went away but he wrote to mum thanking her for his birthday present and he came back towards the end of February. In March and April, mum saw David Stubbs and Gordon Barker by themselves at the cinema on a number of occasions. Sometimes, they sat close to mum and her friends. In May 1952, Gordon Barker walked up the avenue with mum and her friends but David Stubbs went home. Mum decided that she liked them both.¹³

⁹ Such as the choir annual meeting in January 1951. In February 1951, David brought mum a book to get some quiz questions from and, that same month, when mum went to hear The Messiah at the Festival Hall, she noted that David Stubbs was there and that he came over to speak to her and Barbara in the interval. On 18 March 1951, mum noted that David Stubbs had spoken to her for ages. He also spoke to mum the next day while she was waiting for Barbara. At the end of August 1951, mum went up to 96 Welbeck Street but was not able to do much because it was raining. However, when she came back, David Stubbs walked with her pushing his bike.

¹⁰ I am not sure if Gordon Barker was at boarding school but mum noted that, on 17th May, he went back to school. She then switched to noting whether or not she saw Gordon Barker although not every day. On 19 August 1951, mum went on the park with Barbara Coupe, Gordon Barker and Harold Booter.

¹¹ See Chapter 57

¹² It seems this was a [sweet shop](#) on the Lowmoor Road near the Nag's Head.

¹³ Following this, mum noted when she saw either Gordon Barker or David Stubbs and sometimes she noted when she did not see them, e.g. at the cinema. On 3 June 1952, she saw both David Stubbs and Gordon Barker going out at 9pm and wondered where they were going! On 29 June 1952, after evening service, mum spoke to David Stubbs by herself for ages.