

## Chapter 67: Doing Things Yourself and Other Practical Tasks

Grandad continued to do a variety of practical tasks, although perhaps not to the extent he had previously, because of ill-health. He also perhaps had more help from other people including Tom Bust<sup>1</sup>, Dick Egglestone<sup>1</sup>, Ken Hodges<sup>2</sup>, Mr Vaughan<sup>3</sup>, Bill Shipman<sup>4</sup>, Mr Walker<sup>5</sup>, Cyril<sup>6</sup>, Mr Carter<sup>7</sup>, Walter Maltby<sup>8</sup> and Bill Howlett.<sup>9</sup> Many of the jobs related to the shop or where they were living, e.g. in Welbeck Street. There was quite a lot of re-decorating when mum and dad moved in behind the shop in Station Street and again when they moved to Diamond Avenue.<sup>10</sup> Family and friends who helped with such tasks included Eva, Jim, grandma, Uncle Frank, mum, dad and Edna Bust. Mum seemed especially proud when she got a new carpet from Crowe's<sup>11</sup> and laid it herself. Sometimes, grandad brought in external firms for specific tasks, e.g. Meggitt<sup>12</sup> and the Electricity Board<sup>13</sup> to wire up and connect the cooker and a chimney sweep to clean the dining room chimney.

Nevertheless, grandad did continue to do some tasks himself. This included making a doormat and rug for mum; two garden seats; a wooden cabinet for the radio he had taken out of the television; a stand for mum's knitting machine; a six-inch sander; a bed warmer heated by a lamp; a stand for a radiator; a fire screen for the front bedroom<sup>14</sup>; a small bookcase<sup>15</sup>, a stand for the paraffin drum and one for the "Warmas"<sup>16</sup> and three hardboard pelmets for the bedroom windows. Perhaps one of grandad's grandest projects was, in 1959, converting an old Ferranti television into a radiogram despite being told that it could not be done!<sup>17</sup> He also put a power circuit in his cabin; fixed in place the ITV convertor for the TV<sup>17</sup>; put an electric clock on the chimney wall<sup>18</sup>; put an electric light over the clock in their bedroom; put a table leaf in the washhouse in place of the drawer he had given to



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*The area electricity boards in the UK post-1947. Area 8 corresponds to the East Midlands Electricity Board.*

<sup>1</sup> In January 1955, Tom Bust and Dick Egglestone helped grandad when the boiler leaked. They replaced the boiler in March 1955. Tom Bust also helped grandad with other things from time to time. In April 1955, Tom and grandad straightened a wall pillar. In April 1959, Dick Egglestone replaced a pane of glass in the kitchen door. In November 1956, grandad and Tom Bust made a new part to the glasshouse at grandma and grandad's house.

<sup>2</sup> In April 1955, Ken helped grandad fix the centre lights in the shop window ready for fluorescent lights.

<sup>3</sup> Painting and decorating.

<sup>4</sup> Who helped grandad put glass in the glasshouse at Station Street. He also painted it. Grandad noted "*bought Mrs Shipman a Smiths tinner (???) (32/6) for Mr S doing work at Station Street*". In August 1959, Bill Shipman laid some concrete slabs for grandma and grandad, making a small path to the top of their garden.

<sup>5</sup> Painting and decorating.

<sup>6</sup> In September 1959, Cyril creosoted their rustic work.

<sup>7</sup> Who did the electrics at 41 Diamond Avenue

<sup>8</sup> In August 1956, dad and Walter Maltby cut about a third of an inch off the bottom of each garage door. I am sure this is the sort of thing grandad would have done himself had he been well enough. In February 1959, Walter Maltby helped grandad with some soldering on a radiogram he was making.

<sup>9</sup> In October 1957, Bill Howlett also put sylglas on the roof of the glasshouse and grandad helped a little.

<sup>10</sup> In March 1958, after they had bought 41 Diamond Avenue, but before mum and dad moved in, grandad went with someone from the Coal Board to inspect the ceilings. When they got there, they found the house full of water because a pipe had frozen and had then burst.

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter 52

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 53

<sup>13</sup> [East Midlands Electricity Board](#) – one of 12 area electricity boards in England, established in 1947. [They](#) were responsible for distribution and supply of electricity to consumers until privatisation in the 1990s.

<sup>14</sup> In which he placed a picture of grandma's grandmother.

<sup>15</sup> To stand next to the piano. In April 1959, mum covered this with Fablon (see Chapter 64).

<sup>16</sup> [Warmas](#) was a particular brand of paraffin heater made by [W H Paul Ltd](#).

<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 64

<sup>18</sup> He also repaired the hall clock.



*Instruction booklet for Paul Warma paraffin stove*

mum; put some "*stygias*"<sup>19</sup> on the cabin roof near the glasshouse; pulled the front of the fireplace off a grate, perhaps in the kitchen; put a piece of iron on the front of the kitchen gate; put a piece of hardboard in the back bedroom fireplace; and he put some new wire into the electric motor of grandma's sewing machine.

Grandma also helped out with practical tasks. For example, in July 1957, she whitewashed grandad's cabin, in August 1958, she whitened the walls of the washhouse and, in April 1959, she painted their kitchen.

Grandad continued to invest in tools during this period. For example, in July 1959 he bought a jig-saw from Nottingham. He sometimes exchanged tools or equipment with others. For example, in July 1958, grandad exchanged a ladder, that Cliff Green had made for him at Station Street, with Reg Edwards for a stepladder.<sup>20</sup> Grandad also sometimes helped others with practical tasks including Bourne chapel<sup>21</sup>, Auntie Bertha<sup>22</sup>, Reg Edwards<sup>23</sup>, Annie Holmes<sup>24</sup>, and Graham and Joan Hardy.<sup>25</sup>

All the family were active in the garden. They also helped their neighbours in Welbeck Street and received help in return. At the end of April 1955, grandad laid slabs in the top garden through to Annie's. In April 1957, he cut a bit of lawn at the top of Annie's garden but the lawn mower belt broke and needed replacing. In the end, grandad bought a new mower. Both mum and grandad often noted gardening activities such as digging, cutting and fertilising lawns and collecting apples. In 1958, grandad commented that they had a good crop of plums. In December 1956, Bill Shipman helped by pruning grandma and grandad's apple trees. In April 1957, grandad re-laid the stone at the side of the path on the lawn. In August 1958, mum and grandma also cut Mr Shipman's lawns as he was not well. In September 1959, grandma cut hedges for Auntie Bertha.

<sup>19</sup> I am not sure what this is perhaps *stygias*. According to their [website](#), *Stygias* were established in 1958. But grandad was using this in October 1957 and I found an [advert](#) for this from May 1957.

<sup>20</sup> Grandad then made them into two pairs of steps, one of which he gave to mum.

<sup>21</sup> In February 1955, he repaired a desk at chapel.

<sup>22</sup> In May 1957, he and Uncle Frank made a small cupboard for Auntie Bertha.

<sup>23</sup> In June 1957, he made a garden seat for Reg Edwards who had found the wood to be used.

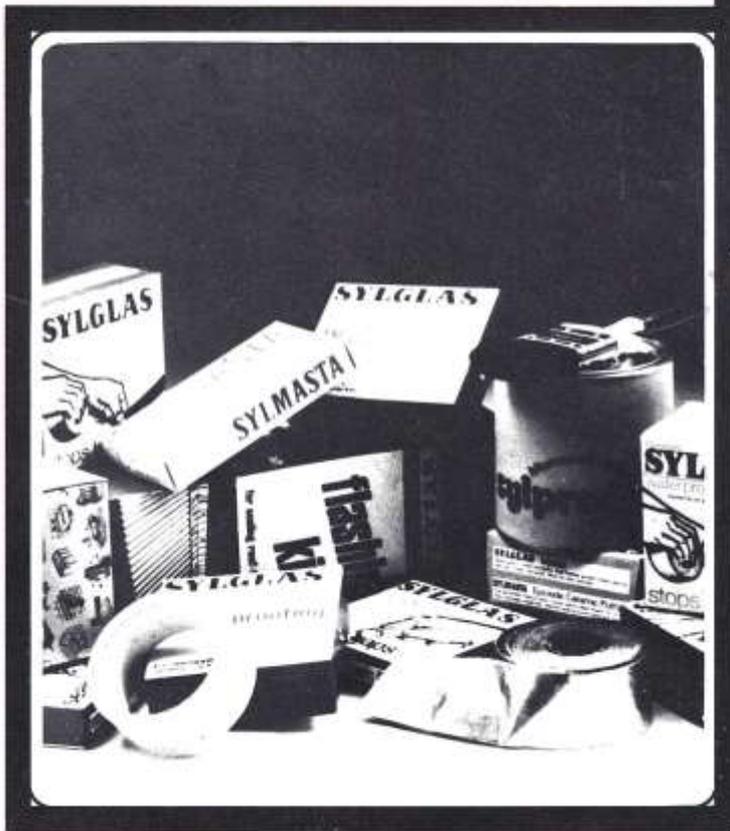
<sup>24</sup> In July 1957, when Annie moved to a new flat, grandad fixed up a wall clock for her. In May 1959, grandad helped Annie with some work on her radio.

<sup>25</sup> Following Annie's move from 98 Welbeck Street, grandad did a number of jobs there for Joan and Graham moving in. This included pulling down the covering woodwork on the sink, pulling down another small cupboard, making a new wooden stand for the sink, reversing the toilet door, boxing in the pipes and making a cabinet for the electric meter. Grandad got Bill and Frank Howlett to do some of the work but he helped them, for example, with fixing the coalhouse.

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Mum was a keen knitter. During this period, items she knitted included two quick-knit cardigans; a fairisle pullover for dad; another cardigan/pullover for dad; a coat for Rita's baby, Adrian; and a coat for a friend of Mrs Kemp's. In March 1957, mum got a Knitmaster knitting machine<sup>26</sup> at a cost of £27 17s 6d. In January 1959, mum noted that she made Tricia a cardigan using the knitting machine. She also made a matinee coat for Dorothy's baby. In February, she knitted Tricia some red and white mitts and a bonnet and, in May, she bought some red wool for a cardigan.



*Above – although he is slightly out of shot, I think this is dad wearing the cardigan mum made for him in August 1956*  
*Right – I think this is the sun dress mum made in August 1956*

Mum also did sewing and embroidery, particularly when dad was studying. Things she made included a ballerina-length pink dress; a taffeta skirt and underskirt; shorts; a black waistcoat; two or more nightdresses; a sundress; a blue and white blouse; a lumber jacket; a blue dress; a smock; a red dress; a red two-piece; a black skirt; a blue [paisley](#) dress; another blouse; a sundress, a blue and

white [viyella](#) dress, a coat and overalls for Tricia; pyjamas for dad; a cover for "Susie"<sup>27</sup>; a cover for the tape recorder; two rugs; cushion covers<sup>28</sup>; covers for the three-piece suite in the dining room; some curtains and some white lace curtains. She made quite a lot of things for her wedding including her hat and bridesmaids' dresses. I think she may have made her dress. She also altered curtains and clothes including, for example, her grey dress. She patched things, including some of Tricia's thicker dresses.

Mum also did a lot of domestic tasks including washing (including washing suite covers and curtains), ironing, cleaning (including spring cleaning), baking and cooking. Sometimes, after Tricia was born, mum took washing to do at grandma and grandad's. In November 1958, she noted that she cleaned grandma's oven and, in December, she did her own.

<sup>26</sup> I do not know which of the many models she got. The [Knitting Machine Museum](#) website has details, examples and pictures.

<sup>27</sup> Not sure who or what this is. A doll perhaps?

<sup>28</sup> In mid-January 1955, she started new cushion covers that had been given to her for Christmas 1954 by the Stubbs family.