

## Chapter 65: Grandad is Really Quite Unwell

At the beginning of August 1955, while mum was away on holiday in Perranporth, in Cornwall, grandad experienced pain between his shoulder blades. He was seen by the doctor who diagnosed pneumonia. He continued to be very unwell and had the doctor visit three times in one day. He started on penicillin injections and appeared to improve although he continued to report feeling unwell. Towards the end of August, his condition worsened and, on the 27<sup>th</sup>, he was seen by Dr [Twort](#)<sup>1</sup> who advised that he should be in hospital to be seen by a surgeon as he had a lump on the right side. On the 29<sup>th</sup>, he went by ambulance to Nottingham City Hospital<sup>2</sup> accompanied by grandma and Irene Hill. He improved and the pneumonia appeared to have resolved. However, it seems that the doctors still wanted to investigate the cause of his pain. So, he had a series of investigations including chest and abdominal X-rays, a “*bowel X-ray*” and a “*kidney X-ray*”, which he had to have twice as the first time, it was not a success. On 19 September, mum noted that grandad had an X-ray under anaesthetic. Grandad referred to this as a bladder and kidney examination.<sup>3</sup> He came out of hospital on 24 September having been admitted for almost a month.



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*Some views of Nottingham City Hospital  
Left – North Entrance Right – Sherwood Building*

Although visiting hours were very limited while grandad was in hospital – one hour three times per week plus two hours on Sunday – grandad received quite a number of visitors including grandma, mum, dad, Auntie Bertha, Eva, John Smith, Jim & Renie, Phyllis Attwood, Mr Carnill<sup>4</sup>, Mr & Mrs Deakin, Arthur Hill, Ken & Pearl Hodges, Annie Holmes, Mr & Mrs Maltby, Mr & Mrs Marshall, Mr Searson and Mr Shipman.

On discharge, grandad noted that Mr Field<sup>5</sup>, the surgeon, told him that he could go home for three months and would then need to return for a further X-ray. However, on 27 September, only three days after having been discharged, grandad was notified that he should go for a further X-ray on 10 and 11 October. It is not clear if grandad had misunderstood the time frame he was given when

<sup>1</sup> Dr Reginald Joseph [Twort](#) was born in 1911 and he died in 1971. After the second world war, he was appointed physician to Nottingham City and [General](#) Hospitals and also Mansfield General Hospital. He was a general physician with an interest in cardiology.

<sup>2</sup> This is one of Nottingham's current [hospitals](#). It had its origins in the workhouse but became the City Infirmary in 1930 and the City Hospital in 1937. An extensive history of the hospital is available on the Nottingham Hospitals History [website](#).

<sup>3</sup> Presumably cystoscopy, ureteroscopy and retrograde pyelogram.

<sup>4</sup> I am not entirely sure who this is. The diaries do refer to John Carnill. I have found a John Carnill, in the 1939 Register, who lived in Bingham and was recorded as being a Representative of Leather and Boot Factors. I wonder if grandad knew him through running his shop.

<sup>5</sup> According to the [history](#) of Nottingham General Hospital – see Mr Tommy B Field was one of the surgeons there in 1955. He was known for his half eye spectacles and bow tie.

discharged or if things were accelerated because he remained unwell. Regardless, on both 10 and 11 October, grandad went to City Hospital for “gallbladder X-rays”.<sup>6</sup> He returned home on both days. Rev Howells took him on both days in the Parkins’ car. He was later told by his GP, Dr Farquharson that his X-ray was “OK”. He attempted to return to work on 24 October but was unable to because of dizziness. He tried again the next day but he was dizzy again and Dr Farquharson saw him at the shop and gave him some tablets for the dizziness. On the 27<sup>th</sup>, he was able to work at the shop and noted that he was much better.

However, on the evening of 6 November 1955, grandad experienced abdominal pain. Dr Farquharson saw him the next day and arranged for him to go back to City Hospital. Rev Howells took him in his car.<sup>7</sup> On the 9<sup>th</sup>, when mum visited grandad with grandma, Eva and Phyllis Attwood, grandad told them that Mr Field, the surgeon, had told him that he had a diseased gallbladder.<sup>8</sup> On the 10<sup>th</sup>, he described having a “chill” and that he went for a chest X-ray. On the 15<sup>th</sup>, he had surgery to remove his gallbladder. Mum noted that he was gone from the ward for almost three hours, from 11.30am to 2.10pm. For the first three days following surgery, he was not very well with nausea and vomiting. On the 18<sup>th</sup>, he had a tube inserted into his stomach through his nose but this was removed the next day. He gradually improved and got out of bed on the 21<sup>st</sup> although he describes suffering from hiccups for more than 24 hours around this period. He had four stitches out on the 22<sup>nd</sup> and four more on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Mum noted that this left “the three main ones” remaining. He had two of these out on the 27<sup>th</sup>. Mum noted that this left one remaining but neither grandad nor mum noted when this was removed. He was discharged from hospital on 1<sup>st</sup> December 1955, his birthday. Initially, the district nurse came every day to dress his wound. From 4-5 December, both grandad and dad had “bad colds” but grandad recovered quite quickly from his. On 28 December, mum drove grandad to Nottingham General Hospital, presumably for a post-op check. Mum noted he was “going on very well” and was to return in two weeks. On 9 January, grandad managed to fall in the yard and he badly grazed his nose. On 11<sup>th</sup>, he saw Mr Field at the hospital and was asked to return in three months. He was due to see Dr Twort in two weeks.

Following surgery, grandad wore an abdominal belt, presumably to control some form of hernia. He was initially measured for this on 25 November while still in hospital. Grandma collected this from Grey & Bull<sup>9</sup> of Nottingham on 14 December. In September 1956, he paid £1 for a new belt and he collected this on 15 October. In November 1956, a year after his surgery, he went to Nottingham General Hospital so that Mr Field could see the new abdominal belt.

On 15 January 1956, grandad noted that he had a heart attack at 10.40am. It is not clear what symptoms he had or how the condition was diagnosed but he was seen by Dr Farquharson who advised perfect rest and quiet for ten days. To achieve this, the family brought a bed



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*Gray and Bull are an opticians in Nottingham. I am not sure if this is where grandad got his abdominal belt*

<sup>6</sup> Presumably an [oral cholecystogram](#).

<sup>7</sup> This was the day mum and dad got back from Hastings having attended Peter Cirket’s wedding, and they had the Parkins’ car with them.

<sup>8</sup> Despite having been told by the GP that the X-ray had been OK

<sup>9</sup> I have not managed to identify them definitively. There is a [Gray and Bull](#) in Nottingham but they seem to be exclusively an optician.

down into the dining room and grandma slept on the settee. He gradually improved but on the 23<sup>rd</sup> he had another “slight attack”. On 4 February, he got up for half an hour and then gradually increased the length of time he was up. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, he resumed sleeping upstairs.

However, at the beginning of March 1956, he had a further attack of “flu” and they moved the bed back downstairs again. He gradually improved and by the 7<sup>th</sup> the bed was taken back upstairs again. On 4 April, mum took him in the car to Nottingham to see Mr Field. He also had an X-ray for Dr Twort to examine. Over the next few days, he was unwell with “heart pains”. Dr Farquharson saw him and gave him a slip for some tablets. But, he remained unwell experiencing chest pain. He referred to taking “16-17 chocolate<sup>10</sup> tablets each day to relieve pain”. Throughout April, he remained in bed although he was gradually improving. On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, he was



Photo of grandad taken in July 1959

due to go to see Dr Twort but he did not go because he was ill in bed. He remained in bed unwell throughout May and into June. On 21 June, grandad noted that Dr Farquharson had told him that he was “too heavy”. So, he started a diet which involved giving up sweets and having “less sugar” in his tea. “By this stage, he was feeling better and, on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, he got dressed. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, he walked to the top of the garden and, the next day, to the Shipmans<sup>11</sup> with the paper.



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Nottingham General Hospital – this hospital opened in 1781 and was closed in 1982

He had been very unwell for the best part of a year, from August 1955 to June 1956. During this time, mum’s 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party, in September 1955, had had to be cancelled because he was in hospital.<sup>12</sup> Also, in June 1956, grandad had missed mum and dad’s wedding because he was unwell.<sup>13</sup>

From June 1956, he was better but remained restricted in what he could do. In September 1956, Rev Howells took grandad in the Parkins’ car to see Mr Field at Nottingham General Hospital.<sup>14</sup> In January 1957, he had a couple of days where he felt unwell. On the 13<sup>th</sup>, he had three hours on the settee. In April 1957, grandad went to the shop to open the safe with a hammer and chisel!<sup>15</sup> He walked home, a distance of

<sup>10</sup> Initially, I was sceptical that these were actually chocolate and assumed they were chocolate-coloured. However, apparently there was quite a lot of use of chocolate to coat tablets including in the Victorian era to [coat strychnine](#)! I came across a 1952 study which looked at the use of dioxyline phosphate to treat angina and this refers to [chocolate-coated](#) dioxyline phosphate tablets.

<sup>11</sup> William James and Florence Shipman lived next door but one at 100 Welbeck Street.

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 66.

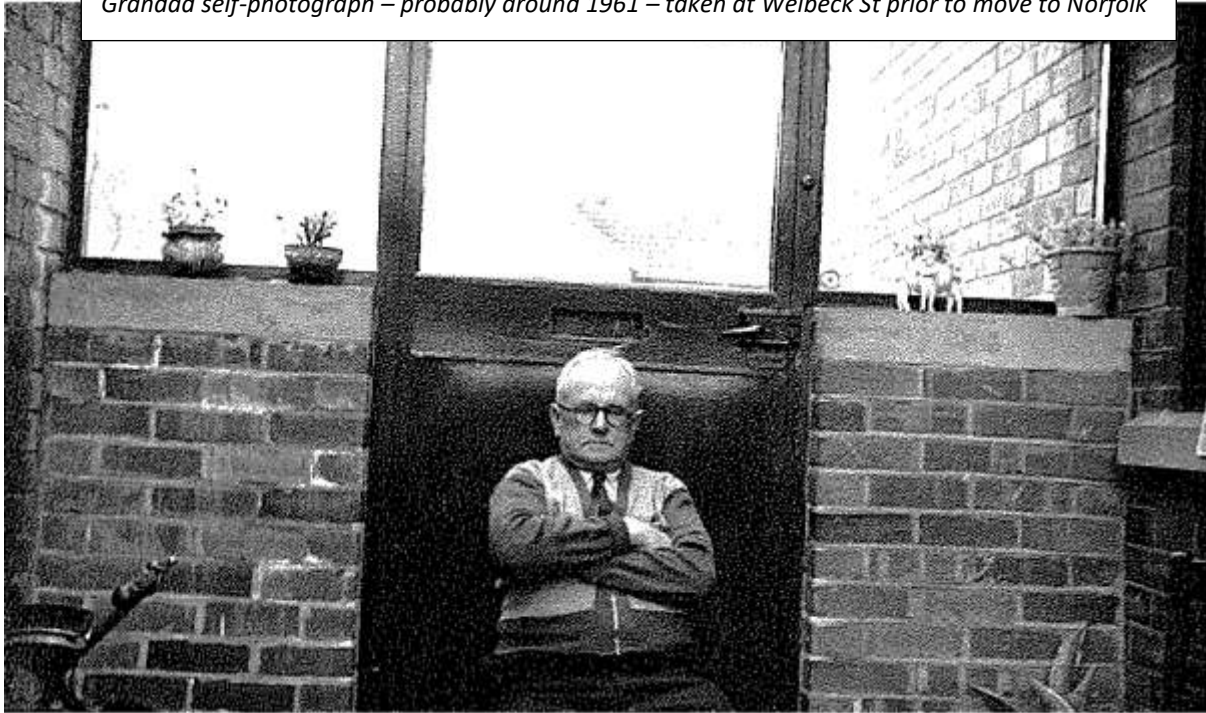
<sup>13</sup> See Chapter 62.

<sup>14</sup> [Nottingham General Hospital](#) was a major [hospital](#) in Nottingham. It was [founded](#) in 1781 and closed in 1992.

<sup>15</sup> Not sure why, presumably the key had been lost?

around half a mile<sup>16</sup>, and had to rest five times. Nevertheless, that same month, Dr Farquharson told granddad that he could start working at the shop part-time. But, on the first day back at work, he had a “*slight attack*” and mum had to go and collect the car to bring him home. He did improve but it is not clear that he ever fully returned to work following that. From 1957 to 1959, he continued to have episodes of ill-health which included breathing difficulties/breathlessness, chest pain, cough and dizziness.

Grandad self-photograph – probably around 1961 – taken at Welbeck St prior to move to Norfolk



Grandma, mum and dad all had a variety of coughs and colds across this period. In addition, in October 1955, grandma was seen at the [Eye Infirmary](#)<sup>17</sup> because she was having problems with her eyes but they were unable to find anything wrong. In November 1956, she had abdominal pains and Dr Rutter<sup>18</sup> thought it was a kidney stone. She went to King’s Mill Hospital<sup>19</sup> for an X-ray. In October 1957, grandma had a frozen shoulder. Towards the end of 1958, she was generally unwell. On 20 December, mum noted that Dr Rutter came to see her. He said she was run down and he gave her a tonic. In May 1956, granddad wrote that Sheila had “*sinosglus*”. Perhaps he meant sinusitis but this is not mentioned at all in mum’s diary. In September 1956, mum got some coal in her eye. She went to the local surgery but found it closed. The next day, her birthday, her eye seemed better but it was bad when she got home and she saw Dr Rutter at 9.30pm. She saw him again the next morning and then went to the Eye Infirmary where they “*cut a piece of coal out*”. Following this, her eye quickly recovered although she continued to attend the Eye Infirmary until the middle of October. In early November 1957, dad had a migraine so he went to bed at grandma and granddad’s house. He had migraine attacks periodically including in February 1958. In November 1957, he had pharyngitis and then sinusitis. In January 1959, he cricked his neck.

<sup>16</sup> Google describes the route as “*mostly flat*”

<sup>17</sup> There is a brief history of the Eye Dispensary, with a photograph, in the book “*Nottingham Hospitals*” by J R A Mitchell – see end of Chapter 6. There are more detailed histories on the [Nottingham Hospitals History](#) and [University of Nottingham](#) websites. The Eye Dispensary was first established in Nottingham on Park Row in 1859. In 1866, it moved to St James’ Street and became the Nottingham and Midland Eye Infirmary. In 1912, it moved again to a purpose-built Eye Hospital on the Ropewalk. In 1959, it became the Nottingham Eye Hospital. It closed in 1983 when eye services moved to the new University Hospital. The Ropewalk building became the headquarters of the Nottinghamshire Family Practitioner Committee. I have found the building on [Google Streetview](#) as it still says Nottm & Midland Eye Infirmary on the front. It appears that the building may have been converted to flats.

<sup>18</sup> Dr Rutter was a [GP](#) in Kirkby. It also seems that there was a Dr Rutter in Norwich.

<sup>19</sup> See Chapter 50

The family had various dental problems with mum and dad having various extractions. In May 1955, following an extraction that dad had had, the socket continued to bleed requiring packing by the dentist. In August 1957, grandad broke his top set of teeth. These appear to have been repaired and he got them back from Robinsons<sup>20</sup>, the dentist, within two days. In January 1958, mum had three more teeth out at the top. She noted that all the top teeth were to come out and two at the bottom later on. In April 1958, she had her (false) teeth modelled and, at the end of May, she had them remodelled. At the beginning of June, she had her new teeth in at a cost of £4 5s. In July 1959, dad had another tooth out. According to mum, it was the one next to the one he had trouble with. It bled a lot in the night so he plugged it but was able to go to work in the morning. In April 1955, mum had her eyes tested and was told that she needed to have glasses for work. She bought these for £2 15s.

Mum and grandad recorded various types and severity of illness among friends and family. In June 1955, grandma (dad's mum) fell at work and broke her nose and probably her chin. Over the next few days, mum took her food at lunch-time. In September 1955, mum noted that Sylvia Bust was not very well and that she had a TB gland. In February 1956, Hazel Munns had flu. In June 1956, Irene Hill went to King's Mill Hospital<sup>19</sup> "to have her womb taken out". Mum took her into hospital in the Parkins' car. She had surgery on 3 July and came home on the 21st. In June 1959, mum took her to Chesterfield to see her sister Hetty in hospital.<sup>21</sup> In August 1959, she was again in hospital, this time in Mansfield. Grandma took her father, Mr Vaughan, her son, David, and her sister, Hetty to visit her. In October 1959, mum took her to hospital. At the end of October 1958, grandma and grandad visited Arthur Hill as he had been in hospital.



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*The former Royal Hospital in Chesterfield circa 2014. The building is now used as offices.*

In October 1956, Mrs Shipman went to Nottingham Eye Infirmary and was there for four days. In August 1957, grandma and grandad took her to Mansfield Nursing Home<sup>22</sup> but grandad does not specify why. He did note that she came home that same day by ambulance. However, later that month, she went back, this time by ambulance. Grandad noted that she was "not too well". After about three weeks, she came home by ambulance but she remained unwell. In August 1958, mum and grandma cut Mr Shipman's lawns as he was not too well. In April 1958, John Smith came to visit Arthur and Ella Lofthouse who were visiting Kirkby and were staying with the Parkins. He was not very well and his son, Len, had to pick him up in their car. In September 1957, Auntie Bertha was very unwell. Grandma went there and grandad phoned her son Bert in Driffield. He came with his wife, Edie and their younger daughter, Jennifer. The following day, they had a specialist to see her and, within a few days, she was feeling better. In June 1958, she was not too well. On 27 June, grandma visited Auntie Bertha but grandad and mum recorded different reasons. Grandad said she was "a little better" while mum said she was "ill again". In October 1958, Olive Holland was not too well, so grandma, mum, Tricia and Minnie took Eva home. Eva had been staying with the Parkins for a few days.

<sup>20</sup> I have found details of a current dentist called Robinsons but they are in [Worksop](#).

<sup>21</sup> I assume this was [Royal Chesterfield Hospital](#). The original hospital operated from 1860 to 1984 when it was replaced by a new modern hospital.

<sup>22</sup> Might this be referring to the community hospital?

At the end of October 1958, Dick Clover came to see granddad to collect his will and the deeds of his house. He had had an accident to his toe at work. In January 1959, Bert, grandma's brother, was taken into hospital in Hastings. The next day, grandma phoned and heard that he was a bit better. In March 1959, Arthur Lofthouse went into hospital. In June 1959, Ella Lofthouse was not very well with angina. In April 1959, Carole Holland had flu so, when Eva and Alf came to the Parkins for tea, Olive and Carole stayed home. In June 1959, Mr Osborne was ill and Ron Rowe asked dad to take the Sunday service in his place. During a visit to Hastings in July and August 1959, a number of family members were sick including Adrian, mum, Doris, dad, Bertie, Edie, Rita and Peter. On 23 August 1959, Reg Edwards went into hospital for piles. He came out on 2 September. In September 1959, Adrian Cirket went into hospital for an operation on his eye.

The diaries record a number of deaths during this period. On 15 January 1955, Amy Wilson's mother Sarah Steggles died, aged 90. Grandma attended the funeral. On 21 January 1955, Fred Hutton died aged 62. He ran a grocer's shop near granddad's shop at 50 Station Street.<sup>23</sup> In January 1956, mum noted receiving news that Ken Blott<sup>24</sup> had died from a car accident in Africa. On 9 September 1956, granddad noted that Mr Mawdsley had died and that he was Phyllis Atwood's father. In October 1956, Annie's mother, Mary Aldridge, died. Granddad noted that she would have been 96 in November.<sup>25</sup> In December 1956, granddad noted that Mr Burton died in Mansfield General Hospital.<sup>26</sup> In January 1957, Mrs Bowmar died.<sup>27</sup> In September that year, a Charles Stuart Bowmar died aged 61.<sup>28</sup>

In February 1957, Mrs Gent of Golden Valley died. According to granddad, she died on the 17<sup>th</sup> and her funeral was on the 20<sup>th</sup>. However, mum has her funeral on the 6<sup>th</sup>. Mum and grandma attended her funeral along with Annie Holmes and a Mr Shermer. In March, grandma and granddad went to Golden Valley to collect a radio and carpet that had belonged to Mrs Gent and was being given to Annie Holmes. On 10 May 1957, Miss Lowe, who had been living in a house granddad owned, 160 Victoria Road, died. Granddad commented that he got the key back on the 20<sup>th</sup>.<sup>29</sup> In November 1958, granddad noted that "*Walter Nightingale died while chopping down a tree in his garden aged 77*". On 20 December 1958, granddad noted that "*a [blank] was burnt to death in a house fire at North St, Mutton Hill*". In April 1959, Ernest Coleman died aged 76. On 1 September 1959, one of the family's doctors, Dr Arthur Beaumont Waller, died aged 82. According to mum, he died at West Bridgford Nursing Home and, according to granddad, at Newstead Nursing Home. The first mention of Dr Waller in granddad's diaries is in February 1934 when he examined grandma when she was expecting mum. He continued to treat the family until 1955, when he must have been 78, so he had been one of the family's doctors for more than 20 years.

On 20 February 1957, granddad noted that his father died at 10pm, aged 95. There was a short piece in the Free Press about his life and death. This recognised that he was Kirkby's oldest male resident and it gave some biographical details. It described him as "*an ardent Methodist*" but yet his



<sup>23</sup> According to electoral registers, Fred Hutton lived and/or worked at 50 Station Street which is now home to [A Wass Funeral Directors](#). Based on the 1939 Register, it appears that Fred Hutton was running a grocery business and I found [confirmation of this](#) on the Kirkby Living Memory Facebook Group.

<sup>24</sup> See Chapter 63

<sup>25</sup> However, I am not sure this is correct. According to the 1939 Register, she was born on 13 November 1862 which would have meant that she would have been 94 in November 1956. It is possible that the date in the register is incorrect.

<sup>26</sup> For more details of Mansfield General Hospital, see Chapter 50. From FreeBMD, it appears that this was George Burton and he was 89 when he died. He was also a train driver and he was granddad's neighbour at 94 Welbeck Street.

<sup>27</sup> According to FreeBMD, this was Annie Bowmar and she was 92.

<sup>28</sup> The Bowmars ran a wheelwright business at 40 Station Street.

<sup>29</sup> According to FreeBMD, her name was Kate Lowe and she was 70 when she died.

funeral service was at an Anglican church. Grandad had little, if any, contact with his father in later years. He did not attend his funeral although this could have been, in part, due to ill-health. Other family members did attend. On 24 February, grandma, mum, dad and Auntie Bertha all went to Grantham to collect Eva for the funeral. On the day of the funeral, mum noted that she went to her grandad's funeral at St Wilfrid's. She noted that Cyril and Eva attended. No mention is made of his second wife<sup>30</sup> who presumably survived him. On 21 December 1958, grandad noted that he, mum and Tricia "took two wreaths to the cemetery, one for each of our parents (mum & Ethel's)". So, it seems that grandad's father was not included in these particular wreaths.



Above – this photograph was in an album of mum's and was labelled as showing the graves of Sarah and Henry Parkin. This appears to be the case for the grave on the right. The grave on the left appears to be for Alice Olive, presumably grandad's sister.

Below – part of the Cirket family tree showing Bill and Ruth Cirket and their children, William, Frank and Maude. Although the date is not shown, they married in 1891.

In March 1958, grandma went by train to attend the funeral of her Aunt Ruth, which took place on the 20<sup>th</sup>.<sup>31</sup> According to the family tree I have, she was born Ruth Emily Stapleton in Elstow on 26 August 1868. She married William (Bill) Arthur Cirket at Bunyan Meeting House in Bedford. Bill Cirket was a bricklayer and builder. He was also Elstow's parish clerk and older brother of Charles Cirket, grandma's father. According to the family tree, she died on 14 March 1958.



<sup>30</sup> See Chapter 47

<sup>31</sup> According to FreeBMD, she was 89 when she died.

Arthur Evans, grandad's brother-in-law, died on 6 March 1959. He died at around 4pm and, according to grandad, he died at his son's house ("Roy & Kath's"). On the 8<sup>th</sup>, Eva, Olive, Alf and Carole came to the Parkins for tea. After tea, grandma went with Eva to Roy's. Mum took them there and went back to pick them up. Arthur was buried on the 10<sup>th</sup> and grandad noted that "Ethel, Eva, Roy & Kath were all the followers". On the 12<sup>th</sup>, grandad and mum took Eva back to Grantham. Grandma did not go because Tricia was not well so she stayed with her. I don't know if there had been some kind of estrangement within the Evans' household and/or between Arthur and the Parkins. Arthur was little-mentioned in the diaries in the years prior to his death. In December 1956, Arthur and Eva moved to Grantham, presumably to be close to their daughter<sup>32</sup> Olive and her family. They took on the pub, The [Golden Fleece](#) in Grantham. Mum, dad, grandma and grandad all went to visit them in February 1957. However, in March 1957, when they visited Grantham again, grandad noted "did not call at Arthur's but Eva was at Olive's". This is the last time grandad mentioned Arthur in his diary prior to his death in 1959. It is striking that Arthur was at Roy's when he died and that Eva was not there. However, she did go to Roy's following Arthur's death and she did attend the funeral. There is no mention of Olive, Roy's sister, doing either. Grandad's note about the funeral could mean that only grandma, Eva, Roy and Kath attended but could it mean something else?



*Above – grandma with Uncle Frank in 1956 when mum and dad got married  
Right – earlier photo of Uncle Frank with Auntie Bertha, mum and grandma*

On 20 September 1959, Uncle Frank was rushed into Mansfield hospital at 6am. Jim, his son, phoned grandad with the news around 8am. That afternoon, grandma drove Auntie Bertha to the hospital to see Uncle Frank. The next day, mum took Auntie Bertha, Jim and Renie to visit him. Grandad described him as very ill. He died the following morning around 6am. He was 77. The funeral and cremation were held three days later. Mum, dad, grandma and grandad all attended. Winnie, grandma's sister-in-law, travelled with them from Auntie Bertha's.



On 7 June 1957, grandad noted, "went to KUDC<sup>33</sup> accepting their offer of 18/- for grave space in Kingsway Cemetery". However, it is not clear if they were buying or selling.

<sup>32</sup> Eva's daughter and Arthur's step-daughter

<sup>33</sup> Kirkby in Ashfield Urban and District Council