

Chapter 37: The Parkin Family After the War

Births

As well as a number of births recorded in the diaries for this period, there was also a family birth the previous year, in 1945, which, for some reason, grandad did not record. Carole Holland, grandad's great niece, was born in Grantham on 24 May 1945.¹ I don't know why grandad did not mention her birth. Perhaps it was because she was born relatively faraway, in Grantham. It does not appear that there was any rift with her parents as Olive, in particular, features frequently in the diaries. It may just have been that grandad was more interested in other things. Indeed, he does not mention Carole by name at all in his diaries for this period although mum mentions her frequently, often alongside her cousins, Lynne Evans² and Michael Ian Smith.³ There were other cousins of around the same age, Simon and Peter Parkin⁴, but they are not mentioned at all in either of the diaries for this period.



*Carole and
Lynne in 1948*



Ian in 1948

Very early in her diaries, in January 1946, mum noted that Marilyn came to stay because she had had a sister, Jennifer.⁵ That same month, Jack and Eileen Fawthrop⁶ had a son, John Michael. He is mentioned, not only in mum's diary, but also in grandad's. In August 1948, the Parkins' close friends, Irene and Arthur Hill had a baby. David John. Over the next two years, mum took him out frequently and also recorded some of his significant milestones, e.g. his first tooth.



*Far left - David
Hill
Left - Ian,
David Hill and
mum*

¹ Her mother was Olive Holland, nee Evans, and her grandmother was Eva, grandad's sister.

² Lynne was Carole's first cousin. Her father, Roy, was Olive Holland's brother and Eva was also Lynne's grandmother. Lynne was born in February 1944 – see Chapter 29.

³ Michael Ian was second cousin to both Lynne and Carole. His grandmother, Olive and Eva (Lynne and Carole's grandmother) were grandad's two sisters. He was born in January 1942 – see Chapter 29. From now on, I refer to him as Ian which is what mum called him

⁴ Simon was second cousin to Lynne, Carole and Ian. His grandfather was Cyril, grandad's brother. He was born in December 1943 – see Chapter 29. His brother, Peter was born in Q2 1946 but he is not mentioned in either diary. He is recorded in the family tree mum constructed.

⁵ Like Marilyn, Jennifer was mum's second cousin. Her grandmother (Auntie Bertha) and (my) grandma's mother were sisters. Presumably because of the age gap, mum was much closer to Marilyn than to Jennifer over the years.

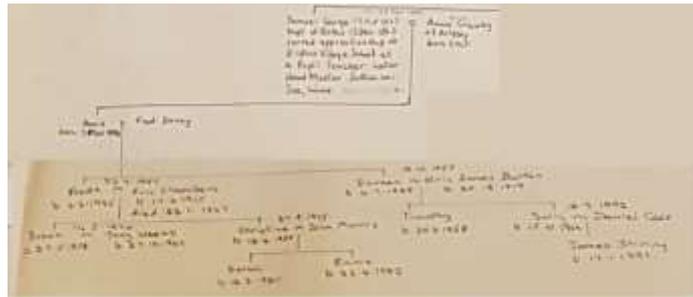
⁶ The soldier and his wife who had stayed with the Parkins during the war – see Chapter 34

Weddings

Although there were no close family weddings during this period, mum did attend Ruby Booler's wedding in September 1949. It seems that the Boolers and the Parkins were friends through chapel although Ruby was some ten years older than mum. Her brother, Harold, was among mum's circle of friends and Mrs Booler, her mother, was involved in making mum's bridal and bridesmaids' dresses when she got married.⁷

Deaths

There were several deaths of family and friends in this period. Two relatives of grandma's, Aunt Pat⁸ and Uncle Jack⁹, died but I have been unable to identify exactly who they were. In February 1949, Aunt Annie, the widow of Samuel Cirket, grandma's paternal uncle, died. She visited the Parkins after her husband's death, for holidays, in both 1946 and 1947. Grandma had visited her in Doncaster at the end of January 1949, presumably because she was unwell. Grandma attended her funeral in Doncaster.



Relevant part of Cirket family tree showing Samuel and Annie and their descendants



In April 1949, grandad's older brother, Leonard, died in Mansfield, aged 60. Grandad noted that Cyril had come over and brought him the news about Len. He also noted that Len was cremated in Sheffield but, as far as I know, grandad did not attend. Grandad made no mention of this brother since the early 1930s.¹⁰ At the time of Len's death, mum and grandma were away in Eston visiting the Lofthouses. I was interested that Len was cremated as this was the first time that someone in the family was cremated, at least based on entries in grandad's diaries.

News cutting related to grandad's brother's death.

⁷ According to FreeBMD, Ruby Booler married Sydney R Price. She was the daughter of Annie Vincent and Harold Booler who were married in Basford in Q2 1918. Annie and Harold had eight children – Iris M (b1920), Gladys A (b1922), Ruby M (b1924), Beryl J (b1926), Mavis (b1928), Clifford V, (b1931), Harold (b1932) and Jessie (b1935).

⁸ Aunt Pat is mentioned in grandad's diaries from January 1943. She appears to have been living with Auntie Bertha in Mansfield and this made me wonder if she was another of grandma's maternal aunts. She also spent time staying with the Parkins over the years. Her health was not good and she died on 24 October 1946 at "Elstow" in Mansfield. However, I am not sure if her official name was either Pat or Patricia as I have been unable to find anyone by that name who died in Mansfield during that period. Grandma went for Aunt Pat's funeral on 28 October 1946 but there is no record of her having been buried in any of Mansfield's cemeteries at that time. It may be that she was actually buried in Bedfordshire. Initially, when grandad said "Ethel went to Elstow for Aunt Pat's funeral", I thought he was referring to the house in Mansfield which bore that name. But, it seems he was referring to the Bedfordshire village, from which the name is derived, as grandma was away for three days at this time.

⁹ Again, I am not precisely sure who this is but, given that he is not mentioned in the extensive family tree we have available on the Cirket, i.e. grandma's father's side, it seems more likely that he might have been a relative on grandma's mother's side. However, I wonder if he was perhaps an uncle by marriage as I was unable to find a Bowler who died in that quarter.

¹⁰ It is not clear when the last reference was as some of the references to "Len" from 1931 to 1935 might have been to grandad's nephew.

Cremation in the UK

According to the [Cremation Society](#), the first official cremation in the UK took place in Woking in 1885 and the number of cremations rose rapidly during the second world war from 16,312 in 1933 to 50,000 in 1946. The number exceeded 100,000 in 1951, 200,000 in 1960, 300,000 in 1968 and 400,000 in 1976. In 2019, 472,302 cremations were carried out, which was 78% of all funerals, as compared to less than 10% in 1946. The number of crematoria rose from only 58 in 1946 to more than 300 currently.

Harold Green had been a friend of grandad's since the early 1930s. They were neighbours until Harold moved to Clipstone in 1944. In the 1930s, Harry had a Morgan with which grandad seemed suitably enamoured. They did odd jobs for each other. Grandad first noted that Harold was ill in June 1948. He gradually got thinner and weaker and died in November 1949 at the age of 62. Grandad heard the news from Cliff Green, Harold's son. When he heard the news, he closed the shop and he and grandma "went over". Although mum and grandma attended the funeral, it seems that grandad did not although grandad was involved in Harold's will and probate.

House moves and purchases

In June 1948, grandma's younger brother, Bert moved with his family to St Leonards-on-Sea, near Hastings.¹¹ It seems that this related to his work but the diaries do not provide details. This meant that both grandma's brothers were now living away – one in Bedford and the other near Hastings. In addition, grandad's niece, Olive and her family, were living in Grantham.



1950 visit to St Leonards
Far left – group photo with mum, Doris and Bert circled
Left – mum outside Bert's house

During this period, the Parkins continued to live at the shop in Station Street. It appears that they, or others in the family, may still have owned the property at 96 Welbeck Street as they collected apples from there in August and September 1949. In September 1946, grandad purchased three houses in Victoria Road for £630¹² through an auction held at the Nag's Head. He bought these through G A Wyles¹³ and then rented the houses out. Mum noted that, on occasions, she collected rents for grandad including on New Year's Eve 1949.

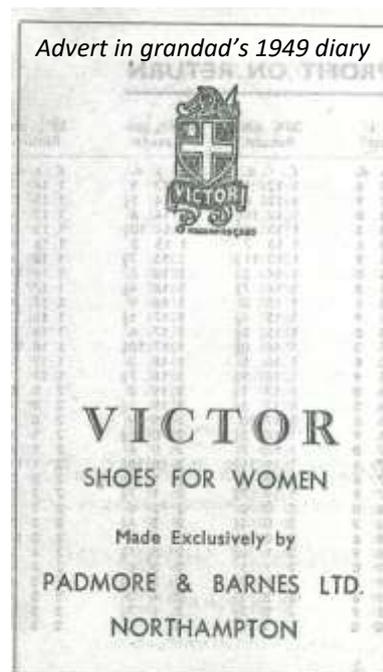
¹¹ Grandma and grandad helped Bert financially at the time of his move. In July 1948, grandad noted that he had a bank overdraft of £1,675 to pay for Bert's house in Hastings to enable Bert to get the house. Presumably, grandad was able to borrow the money more quickly than Bert could. Later, that month, following the sale of Bert's house in Forest Town, on the outskirts of Mansfield, part of the overdraft was repaid (£991 7s 6d). The remaining amount was repaid in September that year along with an amount of £9 3s 6d in charges and interest.

¹² Equivalent to around [£18,500](#) today. I believe these were 158, 160 and 162 Victoria Road. If so, according to [Zoopla](#), the combined value today is around £320,000.

¹³ Who appear to have been a firm of solicitors that grandad used for various house purchases over the years.

The shoe shop

Grandad continued to run the shoe business during this period and grandma worked with him. Together they attended a number of shoe exhibitions in Nottingham, including [Pococks](#),¹⁴ from which he sometimes bought stock. Throughout this period, he used his own practical skills to improve the shop and also sometimes got others, such as Albert Robinson and Dick Clover, to help. He noted that business surged in May 1948 when the number of coupons needed to buy shoes was halved and no coupons were needed for children's shoes. This meant that the shop had the "*best week's business ever done*". In July 1948, he noted that boots and shoes came off coupons entirely. In March 1948, both mum and grandad noted that the shop window had been cracked by a stone thrown up by a Trent Bus. Grandad noted that it was the plate glass window in the ladies department. At times, mum helped in the shop including dressing the display windows and sometimes helping to tidy the shop. She did this from 1946 when she would have only been 11. Mum also sometimes helped in the shop itself particularly when it was busy.



Pets

During this period, the Parkins had a cat called Nibs. Neither of the diaries note when they got him but, in August 1948, both mum and grandad noted that he had broken his leg and had to be "*put to sleep*" (mum) or "*destroyed*" (grandad). That same year, in November, grandad noted that Frank's¹⁵ Alsatian dog died.

Illness

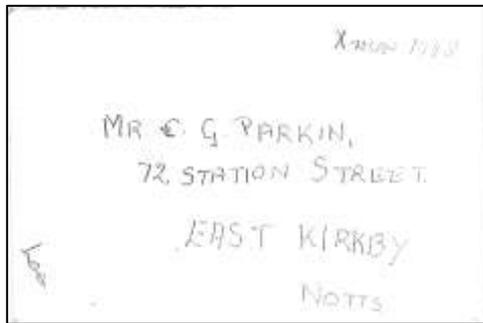
There were some significant family illnesses during this period, particularly affecting grandma and mum. From March to May 1947, grandma was quite unwell but, apart from a high temperature, I don't know what was wrong with her. In November and December 1948, mum developed an abscess which required penicillin¹⁶ injections and admission to hospital. On 23 December, the abscess was drained and she was discharged on Christmas Eve. She did not specify where the abscess was but in January 1949 when she went to chapel she "*took a cushion with me*" which may give a clue as to where the abscess had been! She continued to go, by ambulance, to hospital each day – including Christmas Day – for her penicillin injections and to have her wound dressing changed. In her 1949 diary, she noted that she had had 28 injections of Penicillin the previous year. She was only discharged from hospital on 1 February and she was only able to finally leave the dressing off in March 1949. She started school on 14 February, mornings only initially. However, she had resumed church and other activities from 8 January. I don't fully understand this discrepancy, especially given my own childhood experience of having to be at death's door before being allowed to stay off school! Perhaps the fact that the school was in Nottingham was a factor. Perhaps also, mum resolved to be tougher on us than her own parents had been with her. It does seem this was a significant illness which required considerable time to recover but it seems odd that mum was well enough to do quite a wide range of church activities but was too ill to go to school.

¹⁴ See

¹⁵ I am not sure which Frank grandad is referring to. Given that "*Uncle Jim*" definitely had dogs later, I wonder if it was him.

¹⁶ Although Penicillin was discovered in 1929, it only became widely used in the 1940s.

Among mum's papers was a letter from her to grandad at that time, dated "Xmas 1948". It is written from Mansfield General Hospital¹⁷ so was presumably written in the run-up to Christmas as she was discharged on Christmas Eve. It is not clear if she ever sent or gave it to grandad. It certainly was not posted. It has an interesting sketch of the ward she was in on the back.



Top Left – envelope addressed to grandad
Above – diagram of Portland Ward with key. It is annotated "I'm sorry it is not a very good drawing".
Left – letter to grandad. It reads, "Dear Daddy, I was very disappointed to hear I had to stop but if I can't come out today I will cry & cry. The people are very kind & I try to give them a smile. I hope you like this present. Lots of love Sheila."

In addition, there were a range of minor illnesses and injuries during this period. The family continued to have significant dental problems and, in March 1946, grandad was modelled for a full set of teeth. Specific illnesses documented during this period included John¹⁸ and Ian having measles. However, in most cases of illness, no specific diagnosis was given.

¹⁷ See Chapter 50.
¹⁸ Not sure which John