

## Chapter 49: A Handy Family

Grandad continued to use his practical skills both at work and at home. After the family moved to Welbeck Street in 1951, he made a drop leaf table for the kitchen out of a 100-year-old table that belonged to his grandfather and “a meat safe under the thrall”.<sup>1</sup> From July 1952, he built a glasshouse in the yard.<sup>2</sup> At the house in Welbeck Street, grandad had a “cabin” which he used as a workshop. I am not sure if he built this or if he modified an existing structure. In 1953, he and Frank Howlett altered the roof of the cabin and grandad converted part of the cabin for use as a coalhouse. In 1954, grandad and Frank Howlett did further work on the roof and grandad made good the floor of the cabin upstairs. In September 1954, grandad and Tom Bust converted the cabin into a garage in preparation for buying a car.<sup>3</sup>



Grandad's “cabin” at 96 Welbeck Street which included a coalhouse, washhouse and a workshop. At the end of 1954, it was converted into a garage



Moormand has released this into the public domain

Traditional homemade cold frame

Grandad also made things for family members, including particularly for mum. He also helped his next-door neighbour, Annie Holmes, both in her home and in her garden. This included digging over the garden, repairing lattice work and a gate, building a stone wall, pulling down a hut, laying slabs and making a [cold frame](#). Grandma helped with some of these tasks as did Annie's other next-door neighbour, Mr Shipman.<sup>4</sup>

Grandad also sometimes used his skills to benefit the chapel, including drilling holes to allow a light to be fitted to the pulpit<sup>5</sup>, laying lino, fixing a pot which held glasses for

<sup>1</sup> Apparently meat safes were used to keep food cool pre-refrigeration. They are now sold as trendy (shabby chic!) [cupboards](#). By thrall, he probably means “[thrall](#)” which was a term used, mainly in Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Yorkshire, for a stone slab or shelf used to keep food cool in a larder or pantry.

<sup>2</sup> In March 1952, grandma and grandad pulled down a greenhouse and, in July 1952, grandad started work on a new glasshouse in the yard. He had wood delivered for it but sent it back as it had wormholes. It is not clear if someone told him that he needed permission to build a glasshouse but, in mid-July 1952, he noted that grandma had gone to the council offices to seek permission for the glasshouse. An assistant surveyor visited and requested plans which grandad got drawn up. He noted that he was charged £2 for these and gave the person £2 3s. However, he had already started work on the glasshouse having got the go ahead to do so from the surveyor, a Mr Bostock. In November, he noted that he “*put the last pane of glass in the glasshouse as I had word that it had been passed*”. Frank Howlett helped him with this work, by building the brick walls that formed part of the structure. Grandad and Frank Howlett worked together on the floor of the glasshouse. The glass itself was delivered from Sheffield. In September 1952, grandad and Frank Howlett glazed the roof of the glasshouse and grandad made a front door for it. In April 1954, mum recorded that grandad pulled the glasshouse down including taking the roof off. Would he really have pulled this down after having only built it a couple of years earlier? Perhaps it was another old one? It seems unlikely that he had permanently demolished the glasshouse as, in April 1954, he noted that he began fixing its roof! In May 1954, grandma and grandad put all the glass they had into the glasshouse roof. At the end of May, more glass and hardboard came. Frank Howlett and grandad then finished the glasshouse roof and grandma and grandad fitted the hardboard. About ten days later, mum and dad painted the inside of the glasshouse.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 63.

<sup>4</sup> Who lived at 100 Welbeck Street

<sup>5</sup> This was in 1950 and is also recalled in Edith Searson's book(let). She notes, “*in the 1950s, a new minister came. He remarked to Ben that he had been used to a pulpit light to throw more light on the Bible when reading lessons. So, a ‘special’ was arranged and, with the proceeds, a suitable light was purchased and fixed on the reading table. It was a great help to various preachers during services. It remained so right to the closure of Bourne. I don't know what became of it.*”

communion, converting an organ stool into a piano stool with cupboard and repairing locks and seats. Grandad also sometimes did work with others, e.g. Dick Clover, and he also sometimes used paid trades people. These included Mr Vaughan<sup>6</sup>, H Parker<sup>7</sup>, W Egglestone<sup>8</sup>, Vardys<sup>9</sup>, Frank Howlett<sup>10</sup> and Clarkes in Sutton.<sup>11</sup>

Grandad had a passion for his tools and spent time and money improving and enhancing these, including a sander, bench drill, circular saw, wood lathe and planing machine. He also installed electric light in the cabin. Grandma and mum were also practically-minded. In June 1950, grandma acquired a rug machine but grandad did not think much of it. He made a stand for it but was happy when, the following week, she replaced it for a cheaper one. Mum sometimes helped grandad with a range of practical tasks, including making a shed door, knocking down a partition, sawing wood, making a cupboard, putting up curtain rails, laying lino and building a stone wall. However, this “helping” was not always uneventful! In October 1951, grandad noted that mum used the hedge trimmer for the first time and she cut the cable! Unsurprisingly, mum does not record this incident in her diary!

Mum also developed her own interests. In 1950, she attended a leather class at chapel. She was involved in catering for various events. For the bazaar, in March 1954, she made 26 trifles! Both mum and dad baked<sup>12</sup> and, ahead of the bazaar, dad made a competition cake. The diaries give no further details but mum had a photo labelled “Winners of the McDougalls Cake Competition, 1954” and it appears that dad won that particular competition.



*McDougalls Cake Competition 1954 – left to right – Mrs Munns (third prize), dad (first prize), Trevor Munns (chairman), Margaret Varnam (second prize), Mrs Ricketts (who opened the bazaar).*

<sup>6</sup> For wallpapering

<sup>7</sup> For work on a boiler

<sup>8</sup> For glazing and tiling. There was also a Dick Egglestone who did some work on the bathroom

<sup>9</sup> For painting

<sup>10</sup> For building work

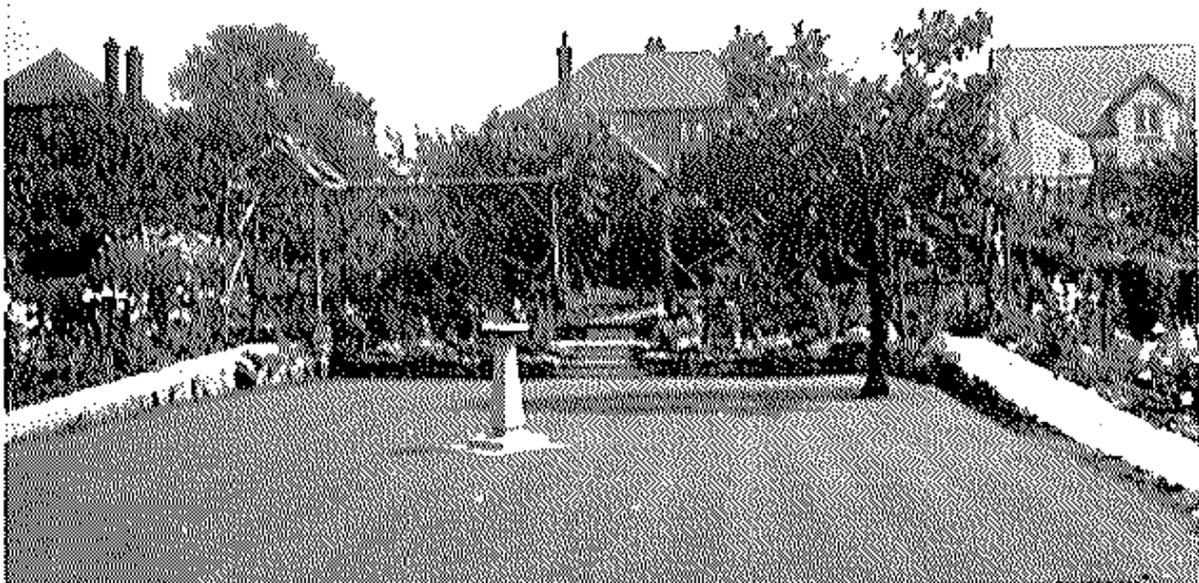
<sup>11</sup> To reupholster a dining suite

<sup>12</sup> In April 1954, mum iced a cake for Sylvia Bust, presumably for her seventh birthday. In June 1954, dad made another cake and some [barm bread](#). A few days later, mum put almond paste on dad's cake and, a few days after that, he iced it. In October 1954, dad made another cake, this time for one of his mother's friends. Mum then put almond paste on the cake and iced it.

Both mum and grandma were keen knitters and mum's diary recorded things they knitted included [twinsets](#) and cardigans. She often recorded the amount of time it took her to knit a particular item. She also did embroidery and, in September 1954, she enrolled for an embroidery course at Kingsway night school with Joan Storer and Margaret Varnam.<sup>13</sup> Mum also sewed and she recorded making and altering several items including an apron, coal gloves, frocks/dresses<sup>14</sup>, a dressing gown and a sun suit. She and Joan Storer also made skirts as part of costumes for Rainbow Follies.<sup>15</sup>

All the family were active gardeners, particularly once they had moved to Welbeck Street. In April 1952, grandad started major work on the garden which involved taking up the path laid by grandma's father with the help of Mr Shipman. They then laid slabs around different parts of the garden creating paths with central lawns.<sup>16</sup> Grandad then concreted the slab corners. It appears that the garden at Welbeck Street may have been on a hill as, in June 1952, grandad and Frank Howlett started making steps in the garden. In August 1953, grandad and Frank Howlett fixed the sundial pedestal which was a central feature on the lawn.<sup>17</sup> Cutting the grass was a job requiring regular attention and various people did it including grandma, grandad, mum and dad.

*Photo taken in September 1953 showing garden of 96 Welbeck Street including sundial and steps*



In September 1953, grandad, his nephew, Len, and Frank Howlett pulled down the front hedge and the Howletts<sup>18</sup> laid the foundation for a new wall. The Howletts and grandad built the front wall over a period of two to three weeks. Grandad noted that he paid the Howletts £66 10s for the wall. Coping stones came later, in November 1953, and grandad and Frank Howlett fixed them on. Following this, mum and dad set a lawn at the front of the house in May 1954.

<sup>13</sup> Edna Bust enrolled for a leather course.

<sup>14</sup> Including evening dresses

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter 54.

<sup>16</sup> This seemed to have been a garden layout which grandad favoured as I recall this also being the layout used for their back garden when they moved to Norfolk. I recall it being great for doing "laps" on go-karts or bikes!

<sup>17</sup> The current owner, Timothy Curtis informs me that they still have the sundial in the garden.

<sup>18</sup> Frank and his father – W Howlett