

## Chapter 70 Houses

At the start of this period, mum was living with her parents at 96 Welbeck Street and dad was living with his at 29 Alexandra Street, an end-terrace<sup>1</sup> [house](#) in a colliery row close to Summit colliery.<sup>2</sup> At the end of December 1955, grandad told mum and dad that they could live at 96 Welbeck Street when they were married if they liked, presumably with grandma and grandad, but mum noted that they would rather buy a house.

So, they started to look around for a suitable house for mum and dad to purchase. I am not sure precisely what they were looking for although they did look mainly in Kirkby and were presumably looking for something that could accommodate a family.



96 Welbeck Street to the right and 98 to the left

At the end of 1955, grandma and mum went to see how much Mr Oldham wanted for his mother's house, although mum did not specify where this was. Apparently, he wanted £1,200<sup>3</sup> and mum was going to return with dad the next day to have a look. However, they did not go that day as mum noted that they would not be able to get a mortgage on a house built before 1918 and that one was built in 1906. Nevertheless, mum noted that they did go to see the house a couple of days later but concluded that it is *"not what we want"*.<sup>4</sup>

Just after Christmas, mum and dad went to see a house in Bulwer Road. They liked it and the asking price was £1,850.<sup>5</sup> They went back to see it again on New Year's Eve but decided that it was not in as good a condition as they had thought<sup>6</sup> so they decided to leave it.

On 3 January 1956, mum noted that *"mummy said she thought she had made our house too cheap. Roy & I were mad & decided to spend ½ our time at Roy's"*. I confess I do not understand this comment. One possibility was that grandma and grandad were selling them a house but this does not appear to be the case, although they did own several houses at this time.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps, grandma and grandad were lending them the money and grandma thought the repayment terms too generous? Whatever the meaning, it caused significant friction. Five days later, mum noted that dad did not come for dinner and she went to his for tea. However, mum wrote, *"Roy said he would try & forget Tuesday because he was hurting me"*.

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<sup>1</sup> I always understood this house was part of a terrace but [Zoopla](#) describe it as semi-detached and this does seem to be the case in [photos](#).

<sup>2</sup> This housing was built by the Butterley Company in the late 1890s. In 1947, the National Coal Board took over the running of around 140,000 such houses including those at the Summit. From the 1980s, the houses were [sold](#) off to miners and housing associations. According to [Zoopla](#), this house is currently valued at £136,000. It was sold in 2004 for £65,000, in 2007 for £88,000, in 2012 for £94,000 and, in 2015, for £105,000. It is listed as a freehold, semi-detached house.

<sup>3</sup> Around £22,000 [today](#).

<sup>4</sup> I am not sure why they changed their minds. Could there have been different views between mum and dad? Might there have been some discussion about how they would pay for the house with options being a commercial mortgage or borrowing some or all of the money from grandad? From later discussion and actions, it seems that they decided to go down the route of getting the money from grandad, at least initially.

<sup>5</sup> Around £34,000 [today](#).

<sup>6</sup> Why did they change their view? Did grandad perhaps raise concerns about the condition?

<sup>7</sup> They owned 96 Welbeck Street and the house next door (98) which was occupied by Annie Holmes. They also owned three houses in Victoria Road (158, 160 and 162).

A few days later, they went to look at [58 Welbeck Street](#)<sup>8</sup> but decided it was too big and too damp. I am not sure why but things went quiet on the house hunting front after that.

In August 1956, Pearl and Ken Hodges, who had been living at 72 Station Street<sup>9</sup>, decided to leave to buy and build a house in Nottingham. It was therefore decided that mum and dad would move to “*behind the shop*” in November 1956. Presumably, up until then, they had been living at grandma and grandad’s. After about a month, Pearl and Ken got their mortgage through. Grandad also agreed to lend them £250<sup>10</sup> @ 4% per annum interest. In December 1956, mum noted that she went to look round Ken and Pearl’s new house.



Mum’s china cabinet

From September 1956, mum was making preparations to move. This included measuring up at the shop and buying a three-piece suite, a china cabinet<sup>11</sup>, four chairs and a bed. On 3 November 1956, Ken and Pearl moved out of 72 Station Street. Mum and dad had possession of the house. They did a lot of redecorating. Some they did themselves, with help from family, and they also had Mr Vaughan do some of it, especially wallpapering. They also had to have an electrician do some wiring. On the 21<sup>st</sup>, mum and dad moved in. In mum’s case, it was a question of moving back in! They did some further decorating once they were in.

In January 1958, they resumed looking for properties. I don’t know why they started again. Perhaps, they were spurred on by the fact that they were expecting Tricia. On New Year’s Day in 1958, grandma and grandad went to look at a house in “*the avenue*”. After tea, they went back with mum and dad but they decided it was too big. Over the next few days, they looked at a house in Clumber Street (“*nice*”) and one in Beulah Road (“*in bad condition*”). At the end of January, mum went to look at

houses nearer to Nottingham.<sup>12</sup> In February, they decided on a house in Clumber Street only to find out that it had already been sold. At the end of February, they became aware that a [house was for sale on Diamond Avenue \(41\)](#).<sup>13</sup> They went to see it and, the next day, grandad paid the deposit. The price was £1,450<sup>14</sup> and the deposit was £145.<sup>15</sup> The next day they all went to check the house and, the following day, mum decided to write to the Coal Board.<sup>16</sup> Three days later, grandad signed the conveyance for the house with his solicitor. In mid-March, grandad drew out the money to pay for the house (£1,304).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Presumably this house is next-door-but-one to where grandad lived with his family from 1915 (No. 54)

<sup>9</sup> The living accommodation behind grandad’s shop. My understanding is that grandma and grandad were renting both the shop and the living accommodation from the Greens. So, effectively, they were sub-letting the living accommodation to Pearl and Ken at this time.

<sup>10</sup> Around £4,500 [today](#).

<sup>11</sup> Which I think we have. We certainly were given a china cabinet by mum and I think this is the one.

<sup>12</sup> Presumably to be nearer dad’s work. Interesting that they (well at least dad!) were considering the possibility of leaving Kirkby.

<sup>13</sup> From the front window, the view is up Crocus Street. On Google StreetView, a white plaque is visible but I am not entirely sure what it says. There are similar plaques on the two blocks of houses to the right. It looks something like Birchdale Villas and the numbers below could be a date.

<sup>14</sup> Around £27,000 [today](#). According to [Zoopla](#), this house sold for £30,000 in 1997 and for £78,000 in 2006. It sold twice in 2016 – for £91,500 in July and for £80,000 in November. The current price estimate is £112,000. It is described as a freehold, semi-detached house with three bedrooms and one bathroom.

<sup>15</sup> Around £2,700 [today](#).

<sup>16</sup> This presumably relates to the risk of subsidence in areas affected by coal mining. It is discussed in more detail later in this chapter.

<sup>17</sup> Around £24,000 [today](#). This seems to support the idea that grandad, at least initially, lent mum and dad the money to buy this house.

On 11 March 1958, grandad went with someone from the Coal Board to inspect the ceilings at 41 Diamond Avenue.<sup>16</sup> When they got there, they found the bath full of water as the waste pipe was frozen. Grandma and grandad went back and siphoned<sup>18</sup> the water out. At the end of March, he met the plumber at the property and also arranged for some electrical wiring.

11 Man came from Coal Board to inspect ceilings at 41. Tues. I went with him & we found the bath full of water the waste pipe having frozen. E & I went and syfoned it out.

41 Diamond Avenue



Tricia  
and  
Roger  
born  
here

Mum bought various things for the new house including fireplaces, a lavatory and a draining board for the sink. There were also many practical things to be done ahead of moving not least decorating, laying carpets etc. In the end, mum and dad moved to 41 Diamond Avenue on 18 April 1958 just around a month before Tricia was born. They still had further decorating to do once they had moved in.

*Above – this is a photo in one of mum’s albums. I decided to retain the annotation and the (rather annoying) border cut with pinking shears. I don’t know when it was taken but from the dates of the photos before and after I would estimate around 1999.*  
*Above left – grandad’s diary entry for 11 March 1958. It appears to read, “Man came from Coal Board to inspect ceilings at 41. I went with him & we found the bath full of water the waste pipe having frozen. E & I went and syfoned (sic) it out”.*

Throughout this period, grandma and grandad lived at 96 Welbeck Street, the house they owned and which was named “Elstow”. In July 1956, grandad and Mr Shipman<sup>19</sup> measured the area of the land of grandma and grandad’s house (750 sq yds) and Annie’s (450 sq yds). I don’t know why they did this. Grandma and grandad also owned the house in which Annie Holmes lived and she presumably rented this from them. In 1957, Annie decided to move to a council flat. I am not sure why but assume it was because of advancing years and because the house was too big for her. She was offered a flat in May 1957 and she visited this with grandma and grandad but it was considered “not satisfactory”. In July 1957, Annie was offered a different flat and she moved in.

When Annie moved out, mum’s friend, Joan Hardy (nee Storer) and her husband Graham planned to move into 98 Welbeck Street. Some decorating was needed, a new kitchen was installed and a new light. At the end of August 1957, Graham and Joan moved in. In March 1958, Annie moved from her flat in Manor Road to a new one in Morven Road. In September 1959, Joan Hardy told grandma that they were thinking of building a house and they had bought the land to do so. In November, grandma and grandad must have been thinking about selling 98 Welbeck Street as grandad’s solicitor advised asking £1,850 for it.

<sup>18</sup> Although it looks like “syfoned” in grandad’s diary.

<sup>19</sup> Who lived at 100 Welbeck Street.

As with presumably most of the houses in Kirkby, the houses owned by grandma and grandad were at risk of subsidence because of coal mining.<sup>20</sup> In August 1957, someone came from the Coal Board to inspect the deeds of 98 Welbeck Street. They came back later that month to examine the ceilings. As a result of these visits, the Coal Board offered the sum of £40 related to subsidence. In the end, they agreed to pay the cost of ceiling repairs which was £45 12s and this work was carried out in October 1957. In February 1959, mum and grandad went to look at a wall at 158 Victoria Road.<sup>21</sup> In May 1959, someone from the Coal Board came to examine the deeds of grandma and grandad's house. They agreed to replace all the ceilings except in the dining room and landing which they would do later if faults developed. In August 1959, men came from the Coal Board to "*point up on a few cracks outside*". They did the work on the ceilings in September and October through a contractor (Bains and Son for the main work and Walkers of Clumber Street for the papering). Following this, grandma and grandad had someone ("*Mr Coleman from across the street*") come and wallpaper their front room.

In addition to the properties in Welbeck Street, grandad owned at least two properties in Victoria Road ([158 and 160](#)) which he rented.<sup>22</sup> In May 1957, Miss Lowe, one of grandad's tenants died. He got the key back some ten days later. He then visited the house (160 Victoria Road) with grandma and his solicitor to decide what price to ask for it "*vacant possession*". Grandad agreed to sell the house for a price of £640.<sup>23</sup> Grandad invested the money from this sale in [defence bonds](#). In August 1957, he installed electricity in the neighbouring house (158) and the tenant, Mr Beach, agreed to pay an additional 8% rent.

Grandma and grandad helped a number of family and friends financially. They usually charged interest on such loans and although this might seem harsh, interest rates were much higher then than they are now. So, loaning people money interest-free then would have carried a higher cost than it would now. In June 1957, grandma and grandad agreed to lend Peter Cirket £100 (@ 5% per annum interest) to help buy a house. In November 1958, he paid it back plus interest. When Pearl and Ken Hodges bought their house, grandma and grandad loaned them £250<sup>24</sup> @ 4% per annum interest. In addition to helping people with loans, grandad also helped some people by storing important documents such as house deeds and wills, as he had a safe at the shop. In October 1958, Dick Clover collected his house deeds and will that grandad had been storing for him. I am not sure what prompted Dick to collect these documents but perhaps grandad retiring from the shop was a factor.

In December 1956, Eva and Arthur left Kirkby to live in Grantham to be close to their daughter Olive and her family. They took on the Golden Fleece pub in Grantham.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> This is common across the UK given the extent of [historic mining activities](#). Responsibility for this currently rests with the [Coal Authority](#).

<sup>21</sup> I don't know if this wall had been affected by subsidence or some other issue.

<sup>22</sup> From later diaries, it also seems he owned 162 Victoria Road and rented this to a Mr March.

<sup>23</sup> Around £12,000 [today](#). According to [Zoopla](#), this house sold for £20,500 in 1999, for £45,000 in 2003 and for £78,000 in 2005. It was listed for sale in 2012 for £79,950. The current price estimate is £98,000. It is described as a freehold, terraced house.

<sup>24</sup> Around £4,500 [today](#).

<sup>25</sup> See Chapter 65.