

## Chapter 63: Grandad Buys a Car

Although, between 1921 and 1931, grandad did have a motorcycle<sup>1</sup>, the family did not own a car before 1955. They relied mainly on walking and cycling for local travel and on public transport and lifts, from family and friends, for longer journeys. In October 1954<sup>2</sup>, grandad had ordered a Morris Minor from W J Cresswell.<sup>3</sup> In January 1955, he rang him but they could not give him a date for delivery so he said he would try elsewhere. Two days later, he went to [Kennings](#) in [Clay Cross](#) and ordered a Morris Minor De-Luxe. It arrived at the end of March 1955. Grandad noted that he paid cash, £614.15.<sup>4</sup>



Mum and grandma in car – May 1955. Note the L plate!

All family members drove the car, particularly initially grandad and mum. Grandma first drove the car only after around three weeks. Initially, all the family were supervised by others including Rev Howells, and Tom Wilson.<sup>5</sup> Places they practiced included Alfreton, Belper, Crich, Hucknall, Kilburn, Linby, Mansfield and Papplewick. They practiced specific things, including reversing and often recorded the distance travelled, commonly 20-40 miles. Mum may have been a more confident driver than grandma. In June 1955 when they drove to Belper and Kilburn, mum noted that she drove through the towns although grandma drove a bit in the country.

DRIVING TEST  
Ref. No. 5409894  
(To be quoted in all correspondence)Date as Postmark  
Tel. No. Nottingham 44971 Ext. 8

1. The receipt of your remittance value —  
Ten shillings — 10/- is acknowledged.  
Two shillings and sixpence — 2/6 is acknowledged.

2. Arrangements have been made for you to be tested on  
August 8 at 8.30  
25 ST. JOHN'S STREET  
MANSFIELD

3. IT WILL BE ASSUMED THAT YOU ACCEPT THIS APPOINTMENT UNLESS WE HEAR FROM YOU WITHIN 3 DAYS THAT YOU CANNOT KEEP IT IN WHICH CASE PLEASE QUOTE THE ABOVE REFERENCE NUMBER AND REFER TO THE DATE AND PLACE OF THE APPOINTMENT OFFERED. FAILURE TO ATTEND MAY MEAN A LONG WAIT FOR ANOTHER APPOINTMENT.

4. (a) You must provide a suitable vehicle bearing a current Licence.  
(b) You must be covered against Third Party Risks.  
5. If you have a Provisional Licence, the vehicle must carry "L" plates.  
6. PLEASE BE PUNCTUAL.  
7. You should bring with you this card together with your current Driving Licence and Insurance Certificate. (Note: If either is out of date, even by one day, the test cannot be conducted.)  
8. In the case of Page, Lee, or Snow please telephone.

Remarks —  
**FIRST AVAILABLE DATE**

W1 45064/8917 30M 10/31—MVC & Co Ltd—4-1122 (447)

FULL INSURANCE  
PARTICULARS AND RATES ON APPLICATION

**KIRKBY-IN-ASHFIELD**  
**SCHOOL OF MOTORING**  
Proprietor: A. E. Shaw

DRIVING LESSONS  
M.O.T. AND ADVANCED STANDARDS  
DUAL CONTROL CARS

TUITION GIVEN BY  
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT QUALIFIED INSTRUCTORS  
ONLY

**Be a Better Driver**  
WITH AN  
**R.A.C. REGISTERED**  
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27 WHEATLEY AVENUE,  
KIRKBY-IN-ASHFIELD, NOTTINGHAM  
Telephone: Kirkby-in-Ashfield 3327

In April 1955, both mum and grandma received provisional driving licences. Both had a small number of driving lessons with a Mr Shaw.<sup>6</sup> In June 1955, following a lesson with Mr Shaw, mum applied for her driving test. A few days later, grandma applied for a full licence as she had apparently held one in 1926 so did not need to sit a test.<sup>7</sup> Mum was initially asked to attend for a test on 8 August. However, she had booked to be on holiday then so she phoned them and they said they would let her know. Among mum's papers was the notification of the original test date. Mum has annotated this to say that they would let her have another card soon as

*Left* – card asking mum to come for driving test on 8 August 1955

*Right* – advert for Kirkby's School of Motoring in the 1969 Directory

<sup>1</sup> See [Chapter 18](#).

<sup>2</sup> See [Chapter 51](#).

<sup>3</sup> I have not managed to find a motor dealer by this name in Nottinghamshire. [Cresswells](#) are an electrical contractor in Nottingham but this is probably not relevant. [Cresswell](#) is a village in Derbyshire but again probably not relevant – and the spelling is different. Perhaps more relevant is that the Cresswells appear to have been a prominent family in Kirkby including in Bourne Methodist Chapel. They are mentioned in both grandad's and mum's diaries. Specifically, Willis J Cresswell is mentioned in the diaries and he may be relevant to this firm.

<sup>4</sup> Presumably this refers to 15 shillings

<sup>5</sup> Who we knew as children as Uncle Tom

<sup>6</sup> According to a [thread](#) on Kirkby Living Memory, Eric Shaw started what is now Kirkby in Ashfield School of Motoring in 1952.

<sup>7</sup> Prior to 1934, there was no driving test. After that, anyone needed to [pass a test](#) before receiving a full licence.

they were not booking as far ahead as she wanted to. She took and passed her test on 29 August 1955 at 9.15am. She noted that her examiner had been Mr Blenkinsop.

When grandad originally ordered the car, he converted his workshop/cabin into a garage with the help of Tom Bust.<sup>8</sup> In April 1955, when trying to drive the car into the garage, grandad hit a gate post bending the bumper and breaking the headlamp. Mum noted that he was upset as they had done so well before that.<sup>9</sup> The next day, Rev Howells took the car to Kennings to have the lamp replaced. The bumper was fixed later that month.



*View of 96 Welbeck Street in 1961 showing the garage conversion carried out by grandad.*

In August 1956, dad and Walter Maltby made some adjustments to the garage doors, by taking around one third of an inch off the bottom.<sup>10</sup> That same month, grandad noted that mum caught the front mudguard while driving the car into the garage.<sup>11</sup> This meant the car had to be taken to Mr Horberry<sup>12</sup> for repair.<sup>13</sup>



*Grandma and grandad in their car on run to Ollerton in May 1955*

The car revolutionised life for the Parkins and provided them much more freedom to travel. They used the car for local journeys, including to chapel and Sunday School. They were often able to provide lifts, to and from chapel, to friends, including Mrs Bust, Mr & Mrs Deakin and Mr & Mrs Marshall. The Parkins also used the car to visit friends and family members, including Annie<sup>14</sup>, Auntie Bertha & Uncle Frank, Cyril & Minnie, Jim & Renie and Roy & Kath. Mum and dad also used the car to attend Shirley Sadler's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party in Nottingham in September 1955. In October 1958, grandma and grandad went in the car to visit Arthur Hill in hospital. They also used the car between where grandma and grandad were living (Welbeck Street) and where mum and dad were living (Station Street and then Diamond Avenue).<sup>15</sup>

When family and friends visited them, the Parkins also used the car to pick them up and take them home. Sometimes, this involved relatively long distances, e.g. taking Eva back to Grantham on several occasions.

<sup>8</sup> In March 1955, while grandad was waiting for the new car to arrive, he allowed L Maycock to store a new van in the garage for two weeks.

<sup>9</sup> Although they had only had the car a few days.

<sup>10</sup> The reason for this is not clear. Perhaps the door was sticking?

<sup>11</sup> Mum does not mention this incident!

<sup>12</sup> He appears to have been a mechanic in Kirkby. I cannot find a listing for him in the 1941 Kelly's Directory. This may be because the reference is to John Edward Horberry who was born in 1930 in Mansfield and who died in Newark in 1993. I found an [advert](#) for them from 1963 and also a later 1995 [advert](#) for MOTs. They were based at Kingsway Garage which I think may have been located [here](#). I don't think they are in operation anymore although there are lots of references [online](#) which imply that they are.

<sup>13</sup> Grandad noted that the repairs cost 15 shillings.

<sup>14</sup> And her new flat.

<sup>15</sup> See [Chapter 70](#).

The family also used the car to attend other social activities. In September 1955, mum and dad went with Ken and Pearl Hodges for dinner at Grange Farm in Toton<sup>16</sup> before then going onto the Playhouse in Nottingham.<sup>17</sup> In November that year, a group including mum, dad, grandma, Renie and Sylvia Bust went to see the Ice Pantomime “*Dick Whittington*” in Nottingham.<sup>18</sup> In June 1957, mum and dad took Joan and Graham Hardy in the car to the Rainbow Follies outing to Nottingham for dinner at the Flying Horse<sup>19</sup> and then to the Theatre Royal.<sup>17</sup>

Sometimes, mum took the car into Nottingham to meet dad from work. Mum and grandma<sup>20</sup> also sometimes went shopping in Carlton, Mansfield or Nottingham in the car. Occasionally, shopping trips took them further afield. In March 1957, mum, grandma, Renie and Auntie Bertha went to Crowes<sup>21</sup> in Leeds in the car. The family, particularly grandad, also used the car for work- and business-related matters, including visiting his accountant, his solicitor, the bank and the Post Office. In October 1959, grandma and grandad went in the car to vote.

The family also sometimes just went for drives or “*runs*” going to similar places that grandad had been to between the wars including to Alton Towers, Annesley Woodhouse, Ashbourne, Belper, Bilsthorpe, Bolsover (including for the illuminations<sup>18</sup>), Bull Farm Park, Buxton, Calverton (including for the [lido](#)), Chesterfield, Clowne, Clumber Park, Crich, Dovedale, Edwinstowe, Farnsfield, Golden Valley, Gunthorpe Bridge, Hazelford Ferry, Hoveringham (including the Ferry), Hucknall, Ladybower Dam, Mansfield (including Mansfield Park), Matlock, Moorgreen, Newark, Newstead (including the abbey), Nottingham (including Trent Bridge), Old Kirkby, Ollerton, Oxtun water splash, Pleasley, Riddings, Sheffield, Southwell, Sutton, Thoresby Hall, Trentham Gardens and Worksop. These places were generally within 25 miles of Kirkby but some were further afield including Alton Towers, Buxton, Dovedale, Ladybower Reservoir and Trentham Gardens. Some of these trips included other people, such as Edna Bust, Anne & Lynne Evans, Eva, Ken & Pearl Hodges, Carole Holland, Annie Holmes, Arthur & Ella Lofthouse, Cyril & Minnie Parkin, Bertha & Frank Seville and Jim & Renie Seville.



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*Above* – Ladybower reservoir circa 2012 featuring one of the “*plugholes*” – these have been [attracting photographers](#) recently  
*Top right* – Alton Towers circa 1960  
*Right* – Thoresby Hall circa 2018



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<sup>16</sup> See [Chapter 66](#).

<sup>17</sup> See [Chapter 31](#).

<sup>18</sup> See [Chapter 66](#).

<sup>19</sup> See [Chapter 69](#).

<sup>20</sup> And rarely grandad

<sup>21</sup> See [Chapter 52](#).

Some trips were to quite distant places. For example, in August 1955, they went to Anderby Creek in Lincolnshire.<sup>18</sup> Mum noted driving all the way there and back, nearly 200 miles.<sup>22</sup> The next year, in August 1956, the family went to Sutton-on-Sea for the day. Mum noted that grandma drove nearly to Newark and mum drove the rest of the way. In August 1957, when Arthur and Ella Lofthouse visited, grandma and grandad used the car to visit various places, including [Cliff College](#)<sup>23</sup>, Epworth, Gunthorpe and Matlock. In July 1959, mum, dad, grandma, grandad and Tricia went in the car for the day to Sutton-on-Sea and Mablethorpe.



*Above - mum and dad in front of car on a run to Ollerton on Whit Sunday in May 1955.  
Right - Dad, grandad and grandma with their car.  
This photo is not labelled but it appears to have been taken between June and December 1956. It may have been taken in August 1956 on the day trip to Sutton-on-Sea*



Mum and dad also sometimes used the car to go to other chapels to take services, for concerts or for practices, e.g. in Annesley Woodhouse<sup>24</sup>, Huthwaite<sup>24 25</sup>, Newstead<sup>24</sup> and Stanton Hill.<sup>24</sup> Grandma used the car to attend a number of religious events beyond Bourne chapel itself. These included quarter days, e.g. at New Cross<sup>24</sup>, anniversaries, e.g. at Old Kirkby<sup>26</sup> and missionary meetings in Annesley Woodhouse<sup>24</sup>, Newstead<sup>24</sup>, Sutton<sup>24</sup> and Willersley Castle in Cromford.<sup>27</sup>

The family also used the car to visit family and friends who lived at some distance from Kirkby.<sup>28</sup> This included Olive Holland and her family in Grantham, Bert Cirket and his family in Hastings, Marilyn Seville and her family in Driffield, the Lofthouses in Stokesley, and Dorothy, Alf and Heather Taylor in Baldersby. When family members were travelling between Grantham and Kirkby, they sometimes arranged to meet in Gunthorpe Bridge.

The Parkins also used the car to attend family and other events, such as weddings<sup>29</sup> and funerals.<sup>30</sup> In July 1955, grandma, grandad and grandad's sister Eva went to a wedding in Stanton Hill in the car. In February 1957, mum and grandma went to Mrs Gent's funeral in Golden Valley. They took Annie and Mr Shermer with them. That same month, grandad noted that mum took Cyril and Eva to his father's

<sup>22</sup> According to Google, around 81 miles one way.

<sup>23</sup> Cliff College provides theological education and training with a focus on mission and evangelism. Historically, it was a Methodist Lay Training College. It is the place mum went to when she attended Bible School in later life.

<sup>24</sup> See [Chapter 54](#).

<sup>25</sup> This trip was combined with grandma and grandad visiting Roy and Kath (Evans).

<sup>26</sup> See [Chapter 17](#).

<sup>27</sup> See [Chapter 69](#).

<sup>28</sup> See [Chapter 66](#).

<sup>29</sup> See [Chapter 62](#).

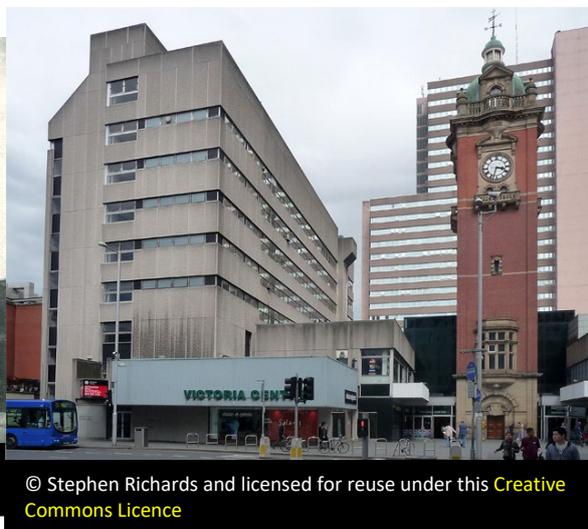
<sup>30</sup> See [Chapter 65](#).

funeral which was held at St Wilfred's church. In March 1959, grandma and Eva went in the car to Arthur Evans' (Eva's husband's) funeral and, in September 1959, mum drove to Uncle Frank's funeral and his cremation at Wilford Hill.

When mum and dad got married in June 1956, they used the car to travel to their honeymoon in Torquay.<sup>31</sup> This meant they were able to stay in Kenilworth the first night and were able to visit more places while in Devon. Places they visited included Dartmouth, Kingsbridge, Torcross and Totnes. On their return journey, mum noted that they picked up an RAF man (who was presumably hitchhiking) and they brought him from Cirencester to Nottingham. In January 1957, when dad had to go to a course in Norwich, mum said that she and grandad took him in the car. However, from grandad's diary, it appears that they took him to Nottingham in the car and presumably he took the train from there. When mum went to visit him in Norwich, she went by train. Dad was away for a seven-week course but he came home most weekends by train. He also went to Norwich for a week in November 1959. When he came back, mum met him at Nottingham Victoria station.<sup>32</sup>



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*The Victoria Station Clock Tower*

*Left – as part of the station in 1903 Right – currently as part of Victoria Shopping Centre*

The car also proved useful for taking people to and picking them up from hospital, for other medical appointments and, when mum was pregnant, for taking medical samples to hospital. While this was particularly done for family members, such as grandad, they also helped friends in this way, e.g. Irene Hill and Reg Edwards. In April 1957, when grandad became unwell while trying to work at the shop, mum picked him up in the car to take him home. On other occasions, grandma and grandad did go to the shop in the car, particularly if something needed to be collected quickly such as when someone from the Coal Board came to inspect the deeds of 98 Welbeck Street and grandad had to go to the shop to collect them. They also used the car for taking wreaths to the cemetery and for transporting bulky items, e.g. the family's reel-to-reel tape recorder and, in particular, for collecting coal from dad's parents' house. They also sometimes used the car for grandad to go to have his hair cut, although on other occasions he went on the bus. When Annie Holmes was considering moving from her house to a council flat, grandma and grandad took her to see it in the car. They also used the car to go to look at houses when mum and dad were thinking of moving from the shop and when initially carrying out work at 41 Diamond Avenue before and after mum and dad moved there. The family also used the

<sup>31</sup> See [Chapter 62](#).

<sup>32</sup> This station was opened in 1900 but was closed in 1967. It was completely demolished apart from the [clock tower](#) which was incorporated into Victoria shopping centre. There are pictures (#35 and #36) of both the inside and outside of Victoria Station in Brian Lund's book "Nottinghamshire Railway Stations in Old Picture Postcards".

car, along with others, to distribute gifts received at chapel for Harvest Festival. In May 1959, mum and Mrs Howells, the minister's wife, went in the car to Heanor to Edna Bust's to help her with cleaning. Mum's diary is not completely clear on this but it appears that the Busts may have moved from Kirkby to Heanor around this time.

The car required considerable time, effort and expense to maintain. Both mum and grandad noted when the car was cleaned. In September 1957, grandad noted that mum and dad put polish on the car for the first time. In July 1955, grandad noted having the car serviced at [Greensmiths](#).<sup>33</sup> In May 1956, the car was serviced again but this time by H Cawkhill.<sup>34</sup> In March 1957, they had to take the car back to Kennings as small spots had appeared on the body and they resprayed it in June 1957. In October 1959, grandad could not start the car with the starter so had to get a new battery.<sup>35</sup> Of course, it was not only the Parkins who had trouble with their car. In November 1958, grandad noted that, his sister, Eva and family had been coming from Grantham for tea but at Bottesford the lights went wrong so they returned home. In December 1959, when Alf, Olive and Carole were bringing Eva to stay, they had a puncture, again near Bottesford.

Naturally, with greater use of cars, there were a growing number of road accidents, some of which had serious consequences. In January 1956, mum noted that Ken Blott had been killed in a car accident



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Example of 1950s coal lorry

*Motorsists' Supplies at . . .*

## GREENSMITH & CO.

45 LOW MOOR ROAD, EAST KIRKBY

*Greensmith's advert in the 1953 Carnival programme*

in Africa.<sup>36</sup> As a result of this, she phoned Dorothy Lofthouse. This could mean that Ken Blott had a connection with the Lofhouses and perhaps was the Ken mentioned in Arthur Lofthouse's letter accepting to officiate at mum and dad's wedding.<sup>37</sup> In July 1956, Dr Lunn of Codnor<sup>38</sup> bumped into the Parkins' car in Carrington Street and dented the mudguard which required repairs by Mr Horberry.<sup>39</sup> On 23 April 1958, grandad was driving to Sutton in Ashfield via Kirkby Cross. He had grandma in the car along with Arthur and Ella Lofthouse, who were visiting for the week. At Kirkby Cross, the car was struck at the front by a [coal lorry](#). Mum noted that no-one was hurt but the car was badly damaged. Grandad

<sup>33</sup> The business, Greensmith Garages of 113-121 Lowmoor Road was [liquidated](#) in 1980. There is a [thread](#) about it with a photo on the Kirkby Living Memory Facebook Group. There [appears](#) to be a private house at 113 and the remaining site appears to be open ground. There is a [hand car wash](#) operating at 115 Lowmoor Road.

<sup>34</sup> I have not managed to find a business or individual by this name. However, I found Horace Cawkill who was born on 23 July 1910 and, in 1939, was listed as a driver mechanic (lorry) living in Balfour Street.

<sup>35</sup> He bought a rebuilt battery for £6 7 6 (net) with the old one given in exchange. He noted that the battery was guaranteed for two years. He did not note whether the car started but presumably it did!

<sup>36</sup> I have found some details of a Ken Blott who was in the armed forces and was killed in Kabale (in Uganda?) in 1956. It seems he was 22, had been born in Middlesbrough and his mother's maiden name was Mothersdale. I have not managed to establish any connection to the Lofhouses but perhaps he and Dorothy were in some kind of relationship?

<sup>37</sup> See [Chapter 62](#).

<sup>38</sup> Apparently, [Dr G R Lunn](#) was a doctor in Codnor from 1945 to 1975. He was an ex-naval officer.

<sup>39</sup> The repairs had cost 23 shillings. However, grandad went to see Mr Horberry and he adjusted his bill to 28 shillings. It is not clear if one of these figures is a mistake or if grandad really did ask for the bill to be increased, and if so, why? Could it be that Dr Lunn was paying and grandad wanted to bump up the price? I guess it is possible but it would be out of character for what I knew of grandad.

noted that they all had to go to Kennings in Clay Cross. Someone from Kennings brought them back home in the car, which was still driveable, before then taking the car back to Kennings for repair. The car stayed at Kennings for around a week. On 30 April, someone from Kennings brought the car back. Grandma and grandad then took him back to Clay Cross before grandma drove them home.

It is perhaps surprising that no-one was injured given that the car probably did not have seatbelts and had [very few safety features](#). While we are now used to wearing seatbelts whenever we travel in a car, many old cars did not (and do not) have seatbelts. From 1965, it became [compulsory](#) to have anchorage points for seatbelts at the front of all new cars and, from 1968, all new cars had to have front seatbelts. However, it only became compulsory to use them in 1983. Fitting rear seat belts to new cars became compulsory in 1986 and it became compulsory to use them in 1991. During the 1970s, there were high profile TV [advertising campaigns](#) aimed at getting people to use seatbelts.



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*Example of 1960s car seat*

On 29 May 1957, grandad noted that mum had taken Dorothy Lofthouse and Alf Taylor into Nottingham. She was told by a policeman that he was reporting her for having parked too long in the street. In mum's account, she acknowledged that she had [parked](#) on [Granby Street](#) from 12noon to 3.45pm but she also noted that there was no notice of any parking restrictions. However, she did not appeal the decision and when her case came to court, at the end of June, she was fined £3. Grandad noted that she did not attend court. Her case was reported with others in the local press. The fine she received was the highest of the batch reported but no reason for this was given.

There were particular issues regarding the safety of children in cars with most just being carried unrestrained sitting on someone's knee. Although [car seats](#) had first appeared as early as the [1930s](#), these were only focused on restraining the child for the convenience of the parent and not on the child's safety. The [1940s](#) saw some adaptations so children could see out the window. But, it was only in [1962](#) that designs began to emerge which used seat belts and started to consider safety. Only in 2006 did it become compulsory for all children under the age of 12 (unless taller than 135cm) to use an appropriate car seat. In September 1958, when Tricia was around four months old, grandma bought her a car seat.

Tom Meadows Brassington, of Wear-dale-road, Nottingham, was fined 30s. at Nottingham Summons Court to-day for causing an obstruction with a motor-car in the city. Others fined for similar offences were: Sheila May Drew, of Kirkby-in-Ashfield (£3); James Henry Pearson, of Mansfield (30s.); Eric Alexander Odams, of Olton-avenue, Nottingham (£2); and Maurice James Adams, of Portland-road, Nottingham (30s.).

*Notice of mum's parking fine in 1957*

Weather also sometimes affected driving. In August 1958, after grandma had attended Dorothy Lofthouse's wedding in Shildon, she was picked up in Derby by grandad, mum and Tricia. Grandad noted that there had been a thunderstorm and "we had to run through 4"-5" of water to get to the garage".

Grandad noted when friends or family bought cars. In July 1955, he noted that Frank Lee had a new [Ford Consul convertible](#). In July 1956, Walter Maltby bought a two-door 1953 Morris Minor for £415. In October 1956, Mr Howells borrowed the Parkins' car to go and look at another car having already sold his. In September 1957, grandad noted, when they visited for tea with Eva and Carole, that Alf and Olive Holland had bought a car. In May 1959, Reg Edwards came up to the house and took grandma and grandad for a run in his car. Presumably, this was a new car but grandad does not say so explicitly. In October 1959, Olive and Alf got a different car, a 1956 [Ford Prefect](#).



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The family also used other forms of transport during this period, particularly when larger groups were involved. Buses were hired for a number of chapel activities and outings including a concert in Swanwick in April 1955, the Sunday School outing to Wicksteed Park in June 1955, an outing to Tissington well dressings in May 1959 and a trip to Bridlington in August 1959.<sup>40</sup>

*Top right – Ford Prefect  
Above – Ford Consul Convertible  
Right – chapel bus trip to Tissington well dressings with dad, Tricia, grandma and mum highlighted*



Dad also usually used the bus to get to work in Nottingham. Sometimes, in winter, when the weather was bad, he would go by train instead. In July 1957, grandad noted that there was a bus strike and that dad had had to go to work on the train. During that same bus strike, while mum and dad were away on holiday, Renie came to help grandma in the shop. She came by train and grandma took her home in the car. Grandad noted that the bus strike started on 20 July and ended at 12 midnight on Sunday the 28<sup>th</sup>. In September 1957, grandad noted that buses and cars had had to come along Welbeck Street because of a "cave in" on Low Moor Road. He also noted, in February 1958, that the [Midland General](#)<sup>41</sup> Buses stopped running along Welbeck Street. In October 1957, grandma and

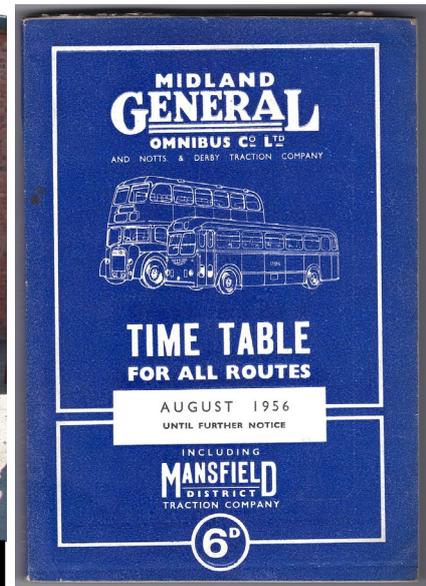
<sup>40</sup> See [Chapter 69](#)

<sup>41</sup> [Midland General Buses](#) were established by Balfour Beatty in 1920 and operated until 1969 when they became part of the National Bus Company and, in 1972, they were merged with Trent Buses and the Midland General name was no longer used. Details of the Midland services operating in 1969 are included in the Kirkby Directory of that year (p55).

grandad went in the car one morning to Larch Farm to collect Ken and Pearl Hodges as their bus from Nottingham had broken down.



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*Left* – Midland General bus at Ruddington Transport Heritage Centre in 2015. The B2 service ran between Ripley and Nottingham  
*Right* – Midland General timetable from August 1956

Trains were also used for longer journeys including to Skegness including for the illuminations<sup>42</sup>, to Stokesley to visit the Lofthouses including for their silver wedding anniversary<sup>42</sup>, to Cleethorpes for a ladies' trip from chapel<sup>43</sup>, to Bedford to attend a funeral<sup>44</sup> and to Hastings to visit grandma's brother Bert and his family.<sup>42</sup>

At this time, Kirkby had [three railway stations](#)<sup>45</sup> – Kirkby Bentinck<sup>46</sup>, Kirkby in Ashfield Central<sup>47</sup> and Kirkby in Ashfield East<sup>48</sup>. They all closed between 1962 and 1964. A new station opened at a different location in the 1990s.

When mum and dad went to Guernsey for two weeks' holiday in July 1957, they flew from London. They went on at least one bus tour while there and, on one occasion, came back from Fermain Bay by boat.<sup>42</sup>

The car was helpful even when making a journey using other means of transport. For example, in August 1955, when mum and dad went on holiday to Perranporth in Cornwall by train, grandad took

<sup>42</sup> See [Chapter 66](#).

<sup>43</sup> See [Chapter 69](#).

<sup>44</sup> See [Chapter 65](#).

<sup>45</sup> These are described in detail by Mark Ashfield in his book "Christmas Pigs and a Summer Donkey", which pre-dates the opening of a new railway station in Kirkby, in a chapter entitled "We were once a three line town" (pp27-32). There is also a brief description of how railways developed to support mining in Bill Clay-Dove's book "Kirkby-in-Ashfield: An Interesting Township" (pp46-47).

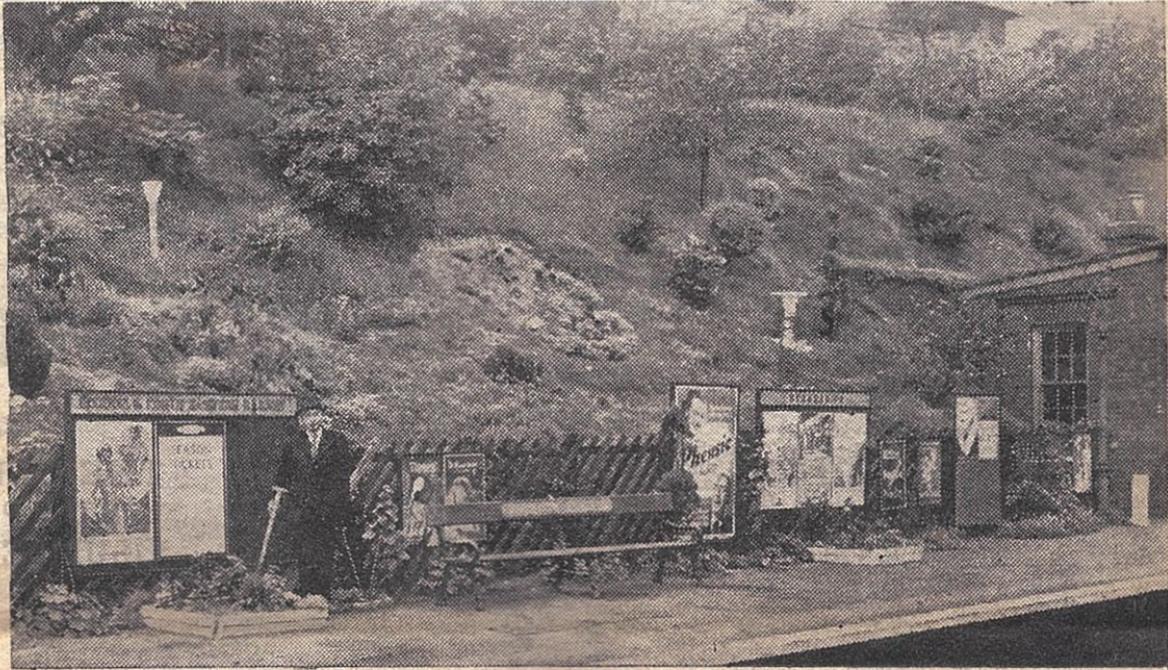
<sup>46</sup> There are photographs of this station in the book "Kirkby & District from Old Photographs" by Frank Ashley, Sylvia Sinfield and Gerald Lee (p55) and in "Christmas Pigs and a Summer Donkey" by Mark Ashfield. There is a photograph in the book "Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Annesley in Old Picture Postcards" by David Ottewell (#33) which is said to be of Kirkby Central station in 1910. However, this seems to be of Kirkby Bentinck. Passenger services started at the station from 1893 and, until 1925, the station was called Kirkby and Pinxton. The station closed in 1963.

<sup>47</sup> There are pictures of the station and its garden in the book "Kirkby & District from Old Photographs" by Frank Ashley, Sylvia Sinfield and Gerald Lee (p54) and in their second book "Kirkby & District: A Second Selection" (p99). It opened in 1917 and closed for regular services in 1956 with excursions continuing for a few more years. Mum had a news cutting and photo of the station garden winning a prize in 1949.

<sup>48</sup> Also known as Kirkby Midland.

AUGUST 26TH, 1949.

## Kirkby Central Station Garden Awarded First Prize



Photo—Maltby & Griffiths

THE photograph shows part of the Kirkby-in-Ashfield Central Station, which has been awarded first prize in the British Railways, Eastern Region, Station Gardens Competition for the third year in succession. Mr. W. Brownhill, booking clerk, of 30, Orchard Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield, is mainly responsible for the attractiveness of the station.

There is no compulsion for the railway staff to join this competition, consequently Mr. Brownhill's work is all the more praiseworthy; he has provided hundreds of passengers who use and pass through the station with a picture of beauty to take with them on their travels.

The competition was inaugurated many years ago, but it was not until 1939 that Mr. Brownhill decided to interest himself in

making a station garden. When war broke out later the same year, the competition was suspended.

During the war, when there was not much work in the travel section of the office, and during his long hours of A.R.P. duty, Mr. Brownhill toiled at the garden. During double summer time he even worked until midnight, and he tells how on moonlight nights he carried stones for the rockeries.

The steep banks of the station are of rock, and holes had to be hewn out of the rock with a crowbar and pick, and thousands of buckets and barrow loads of soil have had to be put into the holes in order that trees and plants could be set. Several truck loads of soil have been sent by the Railway Company, but most of

the soil has been transported by hand.

Mr. Brownhill is constantly working in the garden, which is now his hobby. He says that keeping the grass trimmed is one of the greatest jobs, and he spends many, many hours on this alone. When he started the garden he had many gifts of flowers, etc., but now he usually buys all his own trees, shrubs and plants. His ambition is to obtain hanging baskets and bigger beds of flowers, but the price limits his displays.

The station staff are now wondering if they have won a prize in the Tidy Station Competition, in which they were awarded second prize for the past two years. This competition is compulsory, and marks are awarded periodically for the smartness of the station in general.

News article and photo that was in mum's book of news cuttings. It describes how Bill Brownhill developed the garden. This is also described in some detail in Mark Ashfield's book "Christmas Pigs and a Summer Donkey" in the chapter on the stations which is entitled "We were once a three line town". Bill's story is on pages 29 and 30. He was the clerk and ticket collector. Mark Ashfield notes that he only had one arm and the story was that he had lost his arm in a railway goods yard but Bill himself did not talk about this. He did voluntary work for the hospitals including raising money at the carnivals. He had travelled widely including to Spain and Russia at a time when such travelling was most unusual. But, it was as the gardener at Kirkby Central station that he was most well-known.



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*Above* – Kirkby Bentinck station in 1960  
*Right* – Kirkby Central signal box in 1960  
*Below* – Kirkby Central station in 1955





*Station sign at the Museum of Making in Derby. It seems to be an old LMS station sign and may have come from either East Kirkby or Kirkby Bentinck station*

their luggage to the station in the car.<sup>42</sup> They quite often collected friends and family from various railway stations, including from Chesterfield<sup>49</sup>, Derby<sup>50</sup>, Kirkby Bentinck<sup>46</sup>, Nottingham Midland<sup>51</sup> and Nottingham Victoria<sup>52</sup>. Such visitors included Carole Holland, Dorothy Lofthouse & her fiancé Alf Taylor, and Arthur & Ella Lofthouse.

Sometimes, when multiple people were involved, some would go one way in the car and then make the other journey in another way, e.g. by bus. On one occasion, at least, grandma travelled on the bus because Tricia wanted to! In September 1959, mum, grandma and Tricia went to the Church of Christ on Mutton Hill<sup>53</sup> where grandma was the speaker. After the service, grandma and Tricia came back on the bus as “*Patricia wanted a ride in a bus*” and mum brought the car back. Sometimes, alternative methods of transport were used without explaining the reason. Throughout this period, family members continued to make some journeys by bus, e.g. into Nottingham and to visit family members including, Auntie Bertha, Jim and Renie.



MIDLAND RAILWAY STATION, CHESTERFIELD.

*Above – postcard of Chesterfield Midland Station*  
*Right – Nottingham Midland railway station circa 2000*



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<sup>49</sup> At this time, it seems there were [three stations](#) in Chesterfield. The original Midland station was replaced in 1870. It was demolished and rebuilt in 1963 and again in the 1990s. The station that was rebuilt in the nineties is the current Chesterfield station. The [Grand Central station](#) was built in 1893, closed in 1963 and was demolished in 1973. There was also a station near Market Place but this closed to passengers in 1951. So, it seems likely that the station being referred to was either the Midland or Grand Central one.

<sup>50</sup> [Derby Station](#) started life in 1840 as the Tripartite or Tri Junct station as it served as the station for three railways. In 1858, the station was extended and, in 1892, the frontage and offices were rebuilt. Further rebuilding was carried out between 1952 and 1954. In 1985, much of the building was demolished including the station entrance and booking hall. The entrance’s original clock was moved to the north end of the car park.

<sup>51</sup> This is now just known as [Nottingham](#) station. Nottingham’s first station (Carrington Street) was opened in 1839. This was replaced by a station on the current site in 1848. This was extensively rebuilt in 1904 and the station was further remodelled between 2009 and 2014. There is a picture (#1) of the inside of the station circa 1905 in the book “*Nottinghamshire Railway Stations on Old Picture Postcards*” by Brian Lund.

<sup>52</sup> See footnote 32.

<sup>53</sup> See [Chapter 69](#).

There were still some occasions when family members would get a lift with someone else in their car. For example, in July 1957, grandad went by bus to get his hair cut and a Mr Hodgkinson<sup>54</sup> brought him back in his car. Something similar happened later that same month when grandad went to the shop on the bus and Frank Lee gave him a lift home. In August 1957, grandad went with Bill Howlett in his car to Pinxton but does not explain why. Similarly, in April 1958, Walter Maltby took grandad to mum and dad's in his car but no specific reason is given although this was the time when grandad's car was at Kennings being repaired after being hit by the coal lorry. In July 1958, while Bert and Doris were visiting from Hastings, grandma and grandad went with them to visit Auntie Bertha in Bert's car. In September 1959, Walter Maltby took grandma in his car to see Uncle Frank and she came back by bus. In October 1959, grandma went with Mrs Rowe in her car to Nottingham to choose Sunday School prizes.

In April 1958, John Smith, grandad's brother-in-law, came to visit grandma and grandad while the Lofthouses were staying with them. Unfortunately, he did not feel well so his son, Len, came to collect him with his car.

With having the car, the use of bicycles appeared to decline. Grandad did refer to cycling to the shop in December 1955. Similarly, the family seemed to walk less although grandad did refer to some walks particularly when recovering from illness. Nevertheless, the diaries make very little reference to walking or cycling during this period.

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<sup>54</sup> The name is hard to read. It could be Hoddinson or Hodkinson