

## Chapter 18: Travelling Further Afield

One of the most striking differences in this period compared to the war years was the ability to travel further afield. Then, grandad, his family and friends had been limited to where they could walk or cycle but now, with access to cars and motorcycles, in particular, a whole new world opened up to them.

The first family members to buy a motorcycle were grandad's sister Olive and her husband John (Smith). In November 1919, they bought a motorcycle and sidecar in Sheffield for £85. The following year, in February 1920, grandad's other brother-in-law, Arthur Evans, bought a [Matchless Combination](#) for £120. In May 1920, John sold his first motorbike for £90, that is £5 more than he first paid for it. He then bought two more motorcycles, the first cost £175 and the second, a Norton, £185.<sup>1</sup> In February 1921, grandad's brother Len bought a motorbike for £100 and, in January 1924, Leonard<sup>2</sup> had a Matchless motorbike. Grandad recorded going places on their motorbikes/sidecars with John, Arthur and Len

including Basford, Kilburn, Papplewick and Pinxton. It seems that the motorbikes were not that reliable as there were multiple stories of them breaking down and being towed home!

In July 1920, grandad noted that he drove both John's and Arthur's motorbikes. That same month, he received his driving licence although he only took a motorcycle test in December 1921. He also noted that both he and grandma drove various family vehicles throughout the 1920s.

It was some time after John, Arthur and Len got their bikes that grandad got a motorbike himself. In 1920, he was still relying mostly on his bicycle. However, in November 1921, he bought an [Alldays Allon](#) motorcycle for £60. He modified it by adding a speedometer, lamps and an "exhaust whistle". It seems that it had a sidecar as grandad noted making a box for this.

Matchless H Combination 1922



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Advertising booklet for Alldays Allon motorcycle. I am not entirely sure of the date of the booklet but it may be later than 1921 as the price given is £85 manually annotated to £75.

<sup>1</sup> Although it looks like £685

<sup>2</sup> I am not entirely sure if this is grandad's brother replacing his motorbike or his nephew buying one.

In September 1921, grandad's father bought a Ford Char-a-banc which elsewhere grandad described as a "bus". Apparently, such vehicles were [widely used](#) in Northern England to provide workers with days out before annual holidays became the norm in the late 1960s. Grandad's father and family may have had other vehicles with the diaries referring to a caravan, a "[Thornycroft](#)" and a car.<sup>3</sup> It appears that the family may have had at least two buses<sup>4</sup> as, in August 1929, grandad noted that he went with Len in the bus to



*Postcard showing charabanc bus trip and passengers circa 1910-1920*

meet "*the other bus for Matlock*". It seems that the bus(es) had some reliability issues. Grandad noted various trips to recover vehicles when they had broken down. On one occasion, he went after midnight, with Arthur, to tow the bus in from Sutton and they did not get home until 3am.

Grandad was involved in maintaining and repairing these vehicles, and the family also constructed various structures to house their vehicles. Over these years, grandad, and his family and friends, explored all around Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, sometimes venturing further. They frequently went to Mansfield and Nottingham. Other places they visited included Annesley, Bakewell, Basford, Beeston, Belper, Belvoir Castle, Berry Hill, Bilsthorpe, Blackwell, Bleasby, Blidworth, Bolsover (including Bolsover Castle), Budby, Bulwell, Burton Joyce, Buxton, Calverton, Chatsworth, Chesterfield, Chilwell, Clipstone, Colwick (for the Nottinghamshire Show in 1922), Creswell (including Creswell Crag), Crich, Cromford, Daybrook, Derby, Dovedale, the Dukeries, Eastwood, Edwinstowe (including to the Major Oak), Fulwood, Golden Valley, Gunthorpe Bridge, Haddon Hall, Hardwick Hall, Heanor, Hoveringham Ferry, Hucknall (including Titchfield Park), Ilkeston, Keyworth, Kilburn, Linby, Long Eaton, Lowdham, Mansfield Woodhouse, Mapperley, Matlock, Moorgreen (including to the reservoir), Newark, Newstead (including Newstead Abbey), Nuthall, Ollerton, Papplewick, Pinxton, Pleasley Vale, Plumtree, Radcliffe (on Trent), Redhill, Retford, Ripley, Rudyard Lake, Selston, Seven Mile House, Shirebrook, South Normanton, Southwell, Stoke Ferry, Sutton, Underwood, Welbeck, the White Post, Wirksworth, Wollaton Park<sup>5</sup> and Worksop (including Worksop Priory). Having motorbikes meant they could visit more places and could travel further afield than was possible with bikes, commonly exploring places within a 25-mile radius. They did go even further, into the Peak District and beyond including to Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Bedford (including to Elstow), Burton upon Trent, Cleethorpes, Coalville, Dinnington in South Yorkshire, Doncaster (including the races), Gorleston, Great Yarmouth, Leicester, Lichfield, Lincoln, Loughborough, Lytham St Anne's, Scarborough, Sheffield, Skegness ("*Skeggy*"), Stratford-on-Avon, Sutton-on-Sea (where Samuel Cirket was a headmaster) and York. In 1928, grandma and grandad had a week's holiday in Lytham St Anne's.

<sup>3</sup> Which may have belonged to grandad's brother-in-law, John Smith.

<sup>4</sup> According to the 1939 register, Arthur Evans' occupation is given as Haulage Contractor, Owner. In the same register, both John and Leonard Smith are listed as Motor Haulage Contractor Bus Proprietor.

<sup>5</sup> In her book(let) "*I Remember*", Edith Searson noted that she and her family went to the [Royal Show](#) in Wollaton Park in 1928. This is different from the times grandad went as those were in 1926.



Postcards of places visited

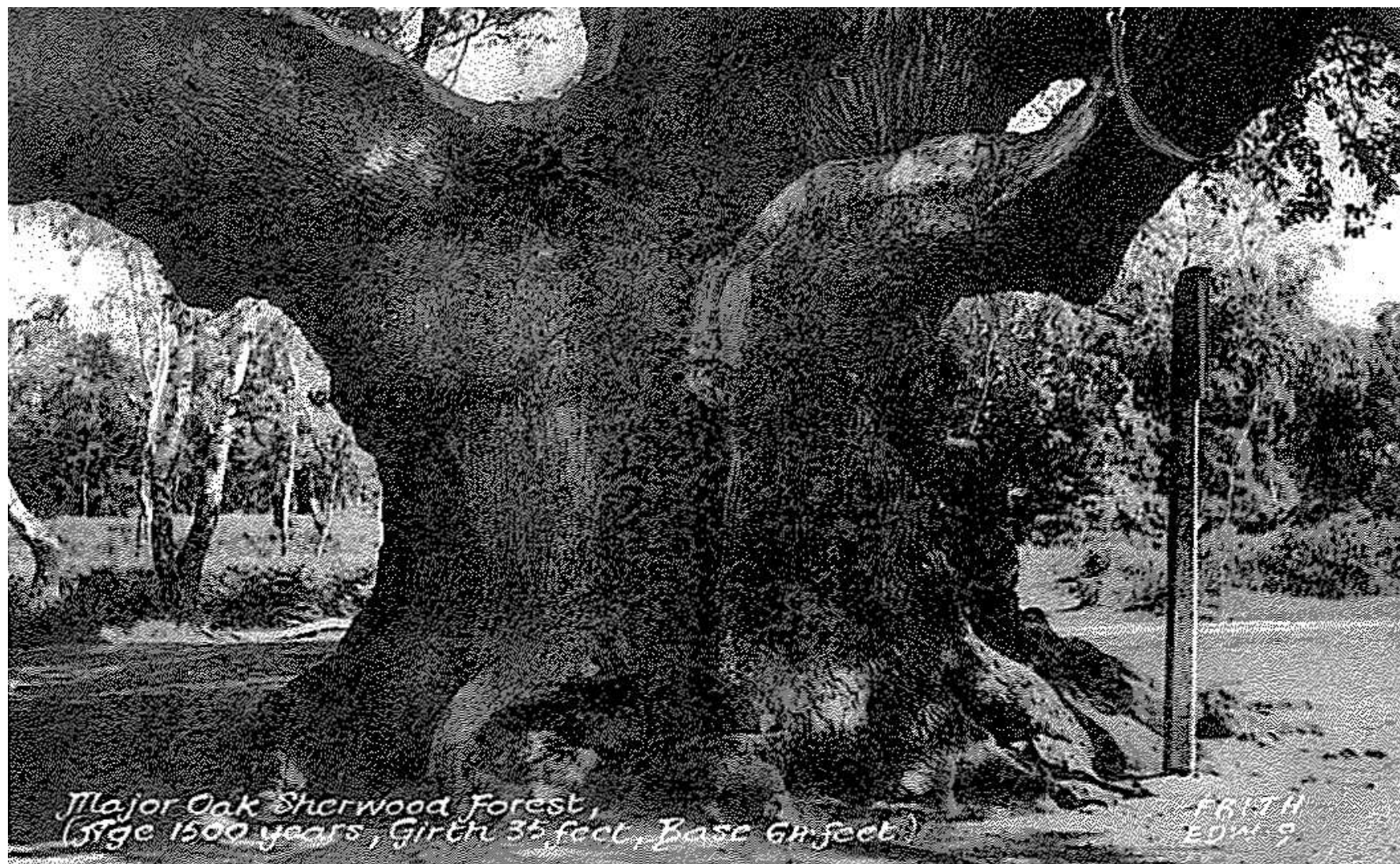
Top left – Belvoir Castle posted 1922 Top right – Bolsover castle

Second row left – Chatsworth House posted 1904 Second row right – Haddon Hall posted 1903 with writing spilling over to the front

Third row left – Major Oak posted 1904 Third row right – Pleasley Vale perhaps posted 1919

Above left – Wollaton Park Above right – interior of Worksop Priory





Postcard of the Major Oak which was in the back of one of mum's albums

Sadly, this increased mobility came at a cost. There were a number of accidents. One of the most serious was in July 1936 when Arthur was involved in an accident where a woman was injured and a child was killed. This resulted in a court case in August 1936 but, according to grandad, Arthur was “*exonerated from all blame*”.

In May 1925, grandad noted that John had an accident at Blidworth. Initially, I assumed this was an accident at work, that is a mining accident. In February 1926, grandad wrote a note saying “*John case came off at Notts assizes £500 & costs*”. I didn’t know exactly what this was but it was presumably a court case involving John and I initially wondered if it could have been compensation for his accident. Anyway, I managed to find details of the case from a newspaper article the next day. This showed that the accident had been a charabanc accident when John was driving a party from Bourne Methodist Church to Lincoln. It had been a serious accident and a Mrs Gascoigne had been killed. Apparently, a settlement was agreed during an interval in proceedings.

This incident is recorded by Edith Searson in her book(let) “*I Remember*”. She noted, “*in 1925, a char-a-banc party of women from the Bourne Church, went for a day’s outing in Lincoln. My mother was one of the party, The coach was proceeding along Rickett’s Lane. When it arrived near Blidworth Church, still on the lane, it overturned, and all the passengers were tipped onto the side of the lane. This was a long drop down. One of the party, Mary, was killed instantly and several were injured. My mother along with others walked home to Kirkby, 4 miles, with slight injuries but in considerable shock. There would not be many ambulances in the 20s*”.

There was still some use of bicycles. In May 1922, grandad and his sister, Olive, went to Nottingham to buy her son, Leonard a bike. Grandad still used his bike from time to time. Sometimes, grandad used other forms of transport, such as trains, particularly to go to Mansfield and Nottingham.<sup>6</sup> On a number of occasions, grandad went to London.<sup>7</sup> I assume these trips were by train. He specified that this was the case for one trip in April 1928. He also visited Cleethorpes by train. In July 1927, grandad was part of a party going to Blackpool by train but they only got as far as Chinley before the train broke down. In June 1928, when on holiday in Lytham St Anne’s, grandma and grandad went to Liverpool by tram to see the liner “*Cedric*”.<sup>8</sup> He also sometimes travelled by bus, particularly for outings, such as to Matlock and Rudyard Lake in 1938. Grandad was interested in different forms of transport and noted when, in 1919, the British airship [R34](#) became the first aircraft to make an east to west transatlantic crossing. He noted that it started from Scotland, at 2.15 am on 2 July, to make the journey to New York.

Image Source: [Find My Past](#)



Partial extract from the Nottingham Journal for 12 February 1926 about John’s court case in Nottingham

<sup>6</sup> In her book(let) “*I Remember*” (p37), Edith Searson describes using trains to go to Blackpool and to Matlock via Pye Bridge.

<sup>7</sup> Three of these trips took place between June and July 1924 and I think one or more of these was to visit the British Empire Exhibition (see [Chapter 59](#)).

<sup>8</sup> Apparently, her last journey was in 1931 and she was scrapped the following year.



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Above – RMS Cedric at sea during the 1910s  
Right – R34 airship



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In 1931, grandad sold his motorbike and sidecar for £10 10 0d. He does not explain why. Both grandma and he had been in poor health at that time so this could be the reason. He seems to have had problems maintaining and repairing the motorbike so this could also have been a factor. He seems to have gone back to mostly walking and cycling although he also noted when he got lifts with other people in their cars. He appeared to be impressed, in 1932, when his friend, Harry Green, took him “for a spin” in his Morgan! The family also benefited from lifts from people who had cars including grandma’s two brothers Bert and Ray. The two photos on this page have been annotated by mum to say that the Parkins did not have a car but Uncle Bert did and he used to take her and grandma out. She noted that Uncle Ray used to do the same.



Above – Bert, Peter, Doris, mum and grandma

Right – Winnie, Kenneth, Ray, mum and grandma

