

Chapter 40: Mum and Her Friends Entertain Themselves

As mum started school at Nottingham Girls' High School, she expanded her circle of friends beyond people she knew from where she lived or the chapel she attended. So, her friends no longer only lived around Kirkby and Mansfield but in other areas around Nottingham. She also had friends and family living further afield who had once lived in Kirkby but had subsequently moved.¹



Mum with friends in Upper VG at Nottingham Girls' High School in 1950

As a result of this wider circle of friends mum frequently attended birthday parties. Friends whose parties she attended during this period include Margaret Bird², June Chambers³, Barbara Coupe⁴, Jeanette Crowley⁵, Marjorie Faulkner⁶, Joy Godfrey⁷, Susan Hooler⁸, Gillian Lacey⁹, Brenda Lee¹⁰, Hazel Munns¹¹, Joy Munns¹², Barbara Purvis¹³, Shirley Sadler¹⁴, Christine Searson¹⁵, Marilyn Seville¹⁶ and Ina

¹ Also, in January 1948, one of her friends, Hazel Munns, introduced mum to a penfriend from whom she heard during 1948 and 1949. Mum does not specify the identity of this penfriend but her 1949 diary refers to a P Fleury in Massachusetts in the United States, so I suspect this is them.

² A longstanding friend in Kirkby. Mum attended Margaret's party in December 1947 but then did not document any contact after that. In mum's diary for 1949, she lists people who she asked to her party and ticked those who accepted. While Margaret's name is on the list, it is not ticked.

³ A friend from school. She was one of the first school friends to visit mum at home – with Shirley Sadler in March 1946. According to mum's and grandad's diary, she lived in Woodthorpe (on the outskirts of Nottingham). I am not sure how good friends they were as it appears mum only attended June's party once. June does appear (as J Chambers) in the NGHS magazine for 1949/50 alongside mum. She passed her school certificate and scored very good in one subject.

⁴ A close friend of mum's from Kirkby mentioned frequently in these and diaries for other time periods.

⁵ One of mum's closest school friends.

⁶ I am not sure who she is. She is only mentioned once in the diaries in September 1946. She also signed mum's wall of friendship in her autograph book.

⁷ Mum attended her birthday party in 1946, 1947 and 1948. She is listed among people at mum's party in 1948. It is difficult to know if she is mentioned elsewhere as mum's friend Hazel Munns had a sister called Joy and most of the mentions of "Joy" appear to relate to her. I am not sure if this Joy [Godfrey] was a friend of mum's from chapel or school. She did attend mum's party in 1946 as the photo of that is labelled to show both Joy G and Joy M.

⁸ Only mentioned once in relation to a birthday party in January 1947. She also signed mum's wall of friendship in her autograph book.

⁹ I assume a schoolfriend. Mum twice went to her party. In 1947, it was held in Gilbert's tea rooms and, in 1948, in Gedling.

¹⁰ A friend from chapel. She is also mentioned in July 1948 as she played doubles tennis with mum against Hazel Munns and Betty Otter. It appears Brenda's parents may have been family friends. Mum records their phone number in her diaries for the years 1947 to 1949. She also noted that Mrs Lee was one of the people who gave her money for Methodist Missions.

¹¹ A close friend from church. Hazel's birthday was two days before mum's. Hazel had a younger sister, Joy, who mum was also friendly with. Hazel's parents were involved in the chapel. For example, they celebrated their silver wedding there in October 1949.

¹² Hazel Munns' younger sister.

¹³ She may have been a friend from chapel. She is only mentioned once in March 1947. She may have been related to Bill Purvis who was active in the chapel and may have led the Youth Club until the end of November 1947. He gave a talk on Billy Bray in August 1947.

¹⁴ One of mum's closest school friends.

¹⁵ The Searsons attended Bourne Chapel. For example, Mr Searson spoke at the Youth Club in October 1948 and mum noted going to the Searsons after chapel in February 1947. Mum attended Christine Searson's party in 1946, 1947 and 1948. On the last two occasions, the party was held at chapel.

¹⁶ While Marilyn [Rankin nee Seville] and mum were related (second cousins), they were also good friends. Marilyn's grandmother and grandma's mother were sisters.

Stubbs¹⁷. Mum also attended parties of family members. She attended a number of parties for younger children including for her cousins, Carole¹⁸, Ian¹⁹, Jennifer²⁰ and Lynne²¹. She also attended birthday parties for adult family members including Auntie Bertha²² and Uncle Frank.²³ There were also parties for reasons other than birthdays, for example, at chapel and, of course, for Christmas.²⁴

Parties sometimes took place at people's homes, sometimes at chapel and sometimes elsewhere. One place that was popular for parties was the [Gilbert's tearoom](#) in Mapperley.²⁵ During this period mum attended parties there held by June Chambers, Susan Hooler and Shirley Sadler. Whenever mum went to a party at Gilbert's, grandad would meet her in Nottingham. Occasionally, for some parties, mum stayed overnight, e.g. for parties held by Marilyn and Jeanette in 1948.

Mum sometimes went for tea with grandma when they were in Nottingham. Favourite haunts included Boots and [Marsden's](#). Sometimes these trips included other people, e.g. grandad's sister, Olive.



Photos of Marsden's café from a 1929 news cutting. This shows before (above) and after (right) the new Imperial Front was installed. Left – advert from April 1950 Notts County programme



¹⁷ A friend from chapel. Mum went to her party in 1947, 1948 and 1949. She is mentioned as attending mum's party in both 1948 and 1949. The Stubbs' family appear to have been involved in Bourne Chapel. She had a brother, David, who features in later diaries, and there is mention of an Ina and David coming for tea in December 1948.

¹⁸ Carole Holland was mum's first cousin once removed. Her mother, Olive, was the daughter of Eva, grandad's sister. Carole was eleven years' younger than mum. She turned one in May 1946. During this time, she was living in Grantham. In 1948, Carole had a party at Bourne Chapel, presumably on a visit.

¹⁹ [Michael] Ian [Smith] was mum's first cousin once removed. His father, Len, was the son of Olive, grandad's sister. At the start of her diaries, mum refers to him as Michael or M. Smith. In April 1946, on a trip to Mablethorpe, she refers to him as "Michael Ian" and from February 1947, she refers to him as Ian. Ian was seven years younger than mum. He turned four in February 1946.

²⁰ Jennifer Seville – Marilyn's sister and mum's second cousin. When mum attended her birthday party in January 1948, Jennifer would have been two and mum would have been 12.

²¹ Lynne Evans was mum's first cousin once removed. Her father, Roy, was the son of Eva, grandad's sister. Lynne was ten years' younger than mum. She turned two in February 1946. Her birthday and Ian's were a week apart in February.

²² Grandma's maternal aunt

²³ Frank Seville was mum's great uncle by marriage to Aunt Bertha. In February 1946, in relation to Uncle Frank's birthday party, mum notes "had the table moving". I am not sure precisely what this means but presumably it means it was a good party! She uses the same expression for a party at home in June 1946. Grandad notes for the same party, "had a table rocking party after tea".

²⁴ Because mum missed most of the 1948 Christmas celebrations due to illness, it seems that she had a "small party" on 5 January 1949.

²⁵ Apparently, "the Gilbert family ran the beautiful [Mapperley Tea Gardens](#), a popular place to hold wedding receptions and family celebrations. It had a wooden pavilion, an orchard, an aviary and visitors could sit on a huge oak from Wollaton Park blown down in a storm. It stretched from Plains Road to Haywood Road and the site is now occupied by the Co-op supermarket and its large car park."

Of course mum had her own parties. There is a labelled photograph in one of her albums for her party in 1946. Based on that, it seems that the following people came to her party that year, Bernice²⁶, Marjorie²⁷, Valerie Frith²⁸, Shirley²⁹, Jennifer Smith³⁰, Hazel Munns, Barbara Coupe, Margaret Bird, Joy Godfrey, Marilyn Seville and Joy Munns.



In both 1947 and 1948, mum had two birthday parties. One was for girls of her own age while the other was for younger children. In 1948, mum had 12 friends at her party and noted who they were at the start of the diary. They were Anne Chance³¹, Barbara Coupe, Jeanette Crowley, Angela Davison³², Valerie Frith, Joy Godfrey, Hazel Munns, Joy Munns, Shirley Sadler³³, Jennifer Smith, Ina Stubbs and Patricia Wooley.³⁴ In 1949, mum noted that she invited 16 girls to her party. Of those, 14 accepted³⁵ - Anne Chance, Sheila Cobb³⁶, Miriam Colledge³⁷, Barbara Coupe, Jeanette Crowley, Angela

²⁶ I do not know who this is. Bernice was mentioned regarding a trip to Mablethorpe and Skegness in April 1946 and as a tennis partner in June 1948. Might she have been Bernice Wright who was carnival queen in 1951?

²⁷ I think this might be Marjorie Faulkner. She signed mum's autograph book and mum noted attending M Faulkner's party in September 1946.

²⁸ A friend from school. In March 1947, mum noted that, in the severe snow, Valerie had only got home at 5.45 am the next morning. She attended mum's party in 1948 and mum's 1949 diary notes her phone number. She also attended Jeanette Crowley's party in September 1949. Mum also went with her to see three one act plays at Bentinck Institute in May 1946.

²⁹ I think this might be Shirley Moulton who died in December 1946 and who gave mum her 1947 diary. But, it could be Shirley Sadler.

³⁰ Presumably a school friend. She attended mum's party in both 1948 and 1949, and also visited mum in January 1949. In March 1948, mum noted, "went to Jenny's party". This could possibly refer to her. Mum had two NGHS magazines for 1949/1950 among her papers and a J Smith is mentioned in each of them as having gained a school certificate with matriculation exemption. She could be one of these.

³¹ According to mum's 1949 diary, she lived on Kingsway, East Kirkby. She appears to have come to mum's party in both 1948 and 1949. She also played on the park with mum including tennis with mum and Hazel Munns

³² A friend from school. She was listed as attending mum's party in both 1948 and 1949. She is mentioned twice in the diaries in October 1947 where mum noted that she was ill and away from school.

³³ Who stayed overnight.

³⁴ Only mentioned here and as "Pat Woolley Hucknall" in mum's 1947 diary.

³⁵ Marked with ticks!

³⁶ A friend from chapel who taught Sunday school with mum and who attended the same Methodist Preparation Class.

³⁷ Only mentioned here. She also signed mum's wall of friendship in her autograph book.

Davison, Hazel Munns, Joy Munns, Betty Otter³⁸, Shirley Sadler, Jennifer Smith, Joan Storer³⁹, Ina Stubbs and Anne Taylor⁴⁰ - while two did not - Betty Adams⁴¹ and Margaret Bird.

Mum's party was not always held on her birthday itself. From 1946 to 1948, it was held on a Wednesday. I had thought that this was because the party was held where they lived, i.e. at the shop and they closed for a half day on Wednesday, making it easier to have a party that day. However, in 1949, mum had her party on Monday 12 September!

They played games at these parties and mum listed some of these in her 1949 diary. It seems that she played similar games with her family at Christmas.

MEMORANDA	NOTES FOR 1950
<p>Advertisements for Xmas</p> <p>1. Paragon Prams.</p> <p>2. Quick Ink.</p> <p>3. Videl Electric.</p> <p>4. Chappie</p> <p>5. Silver Lining</p> <p>6. Philips</p>	<p>Games To play.</p> <p>1. Musical Parade</p> <p>2. Railway Riot.</p> <p>3. Crazy Post</p> <p>4. Advertisements</p> <p>5. Observation Test.</p> <p>6. Drawing.</p> <p>7. Charades</p> <p>8. Treasure Hunt.</p>

Party games as noted in mum's 1949 diary



Jeanette Crowley with mum, her brother Anthony and her sister Ruth

Mum sometimes had her school friends visit and she sometimes went to stay with them. June Chambers was one of the first to visit in March 1946 with Shirley Sadler. Over the next few years, both Shirley and Jeanette Crowley visited frequently and mum visited them. On one occasion, in 1948, Jeanette visited with her brother Anthony. In January 1949, when mum was recovering from illness and was still off school, she was visited by Jeanette and Shirley and also by Jennifer Smith.

³⁸ Mentioned here and as someone with whom mum played tennis.

³⁹ A close friend from chapel. They taught Sunday School and were in Rainbow Follies together. They also were in a Methodist Preparation Class together. Joan may have been a few years older than mum. I have found two Joan Storers born in Basford – in 1927 and 1931. So, Joan could have been three to seven years older than mum. Mum noted having tea at Joan's on occasions, e.g. in April 1949, and she went with Joan to Christine Searson's party at chapel in May 1949.

⁴⁰ A school friend. Mum noted sitting next to her in April 1947. She features in the NGHS magazine for 1949/50 as someone who gained their school certificate with a "very good" in one subject.

⁴¹ Only mentioned here.

Mum often played with her friends on “*the field*” and had her own abbreviation for this, “*WTTF*”, i.e. “*went to the field*”.⁴² She frequently played games on the field, including tennis, rounders and occasionally golf. She often played tennis with Hazel Munns or Barbara Coupe and sometimes recorded scores. Others she played tennis with included Kathleen Hawberry⁴³, Bernice, Lynne’s⁴⁴ cousin Freda, Jeanette Crowley, Betty Otter and Brenda Lee. She also sometimes played tennis at school and with the chapel Youth Club. On occasions she played rounders in Forest Street on which the Munns lived.



Playing tennis
in 1952 in
Shropshire

© Geoff Charles and licensed for reuse under this [Creative Commons Licence](#)

Mum sometimes went to fairs or the “*wakes*”⁴⁵ with family members and particularly with friends. In May 1947, she referred to going “*on Pond-holes*”⁴⁶ with a family group.⁴⁷ Friends she went to the wakes with included Hazel Munns, Barbara Coupe, Jeanette Crowley and Shirley Sadler.⁴⁸ It appears that there may have been wakes twice per year, in April/May and then again in October.⁴⁹

Mum was also involved in a number of outings and excursions, principally with chapel and/or family including, for example, to Papplewick lido. For example, in August 1947, she went there with grandma and Hazel and Joy Munns, and mum noted that grandad came in the evening, presumably after work. Mum also went there on two days in August 1949, first with grandma and Lynne, and then with Barbara.

⁴² Or WF. Thankfully, although she sometimes wrote “*went to field*”, she did not abbreviate this (!) except on one occasion as WToF. I am not sure exactly where this field was. It could be that she was referring to Kingsway Park (which grandad referred to as “*the acre*”) but she also referred to “*the park*” so it seems they were different places. According to Mark Ashfield’s book “*Horses, Herbs and a Cockatoo*” (pp36-37) and Gerald Lee’s book “*Kirkby-in-Ashfield: Yesterday Remembered*” (p89), “*the field*” referred to Titchfield Park.

⁴³ I am not sure who this is. Reference is made to “*Kathleen*” in relation to a visit to Bentinck sports in September 1947 but I do not know for sure if this is the same person.

⁴⁴ I am not convinced this is Lynne Evans but it could be

⁴⁵ See Chapter 4. Mum sometimes wrote this as “*waxes*”

⁴⁶ This may refer to the wakes being held on Pond Street as described in Chapter 11 of Gerald Lee’s book “*Kirkby-in-Ashfield: Yesterday Remembered*”.

⁴⁷ Including Kath, Lynne, Ian, Dolly, Len, Auntie Eva and Mrs Kemp. Eva was grandad’s sister. Kath was married to Roy, Eva’s son, and Lynne was her daughter. Len was son of Olive, grandad’s other sister. Dolly was his wife and Ian their son. Mrs Kemp was Kath’s mother.

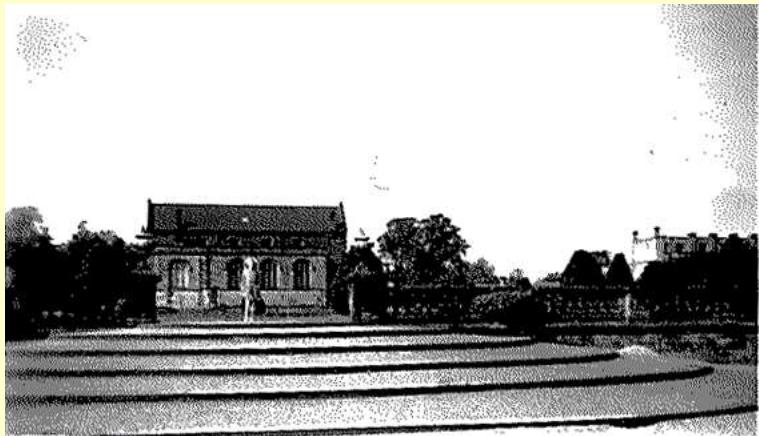
⁴⁸ In April 1948, mum noted that she “*went on wakes on rec with Hazel [Munns], Barbara [Coupe], Gordon Barker & D*”. This is an interesting note as it is one of the first references to activities with a mixed group, i.e. boys and girls. At this point, mum was 13. It is also interesting that she refers to one of the group just by an initial “D”. As far as I can see, this was the only time she mentioned Gordon Barker in this set of diaries. She mentions D, DM and DS on several other occasions, including another trip to the wakes that week. This is a topic to which I will return!

⁴⁹ While this issue is not addressed directly in Gerald Lee’s book, he does refer to an autumn visit of the wakes six months earlier (see p51) which would fit with the two visits described above.

Trips and outings

When the weather was nice, mum went for picnics, particularly with people from chapel. In April 1946, mum went on a day trip to Mablethorpe and Skegness with Dolly, Len, Bernice, Trevor⁵⁰ and Michael Ian. In June 1946, on Victory Day, mum, grandma and grandad went to Matlock, up the Heights of Abraham and to the old lead cavern. In March 1947, mum, Hazel and Joy Munns went “bluebelling” on their bikes. In May 1947, mum went to a marionette show at the YMCA in Nottingham after school and, in June 1947, to a fete and gala at Annesley and Bentinck with family friends, Mr and Mrs Hill.

In August 1947, mum went with the Ladies’ Bright Hour from chapel to Trentham Gardens. Mum noted that Hazel and Joy Munns went too, as did Beryl⁵¹, and that they went to the bathing pool. In October 1947, mum went to a music festival in Sutton with Hazel Munns. In May 1948, mum and Hazel Munns went with grandma and Olive to Derby. Mum noted that they went to see parks and that she and Hazel rowed on the River Derwent.



© Alan Murray-Rust and licensed for reuse under this [Creative Commons Licence](#)

In June 1948, mum noted that Marilyn came and they went to [Annesley Hall](#) for a fete and gala. In April 1949, mum, grandma, Marilyn and her family went to a Mansfield Prudential ‘do’ at the [Swan Hotel](#).

In July 1949, mum went to another fete and gala at Annesley this time with Joan Storer. In August 1949, mum noted that she and grandma went to Skegness by train. What is more remarkable about this trip is that grandad went too! Mum mentioned that they went to Uncle Cyril’s. So, it is not very clear to me if Cyril and his family were just staying there for a holiday or if they had moved there. Mum noted that she went in the sea twice and that they came home by bus.

Above – Trentham Gardens in 1947
Left – Swan Hotel Mansfield

⁵⁰ Not sure who this is

⁵¹ I don’t know who this is but she is mentioned again, in April 1948, when she and the Munns girls went with mum to the wakes.

When the weather was nice, mum had a hammock which she could put up in their back yard. Grandad noted buying this in Nottingham in June 1948 for 21 shillings.



In mum's hammock in 1948
Far left – Lynne
Left – mum and Lynne
Above – Michael Lee⁵²

Mum did have family holidays during this period and these were usually taken with grandma only. As a rule, grandad did not go. I don't know why! It seems most likely that he had to keep the shop and business open. It is also possible that he preferred to work in his workshop rather than socialising with family and friends! At this point, I don't think his health was an issue although this was the case later.

Usually, these holidays involved family and friends. In August 1946, mum and grandma took a week's holiday in Trusthorpe, Lincolnshire, with Bert, Doris and Peter.⁵³ [Trusthorpe](#) is close to Sutton-on-Sea, where grandma's paternal uncle, Samuel Cirket, had been headmaster. Samuel had died in 1939 and, during the holiday, mum noted that they went to see Uncle Sam's grave. On one day, she saw four people being carried away by the tide. Her cousin, Peter, who would have been 13 at the time, went for help and went on the boat that rescued them. Grandad visited for one day with Ruth⁵⁴, Michael, Dolly and Len.⁵⁵ While grandad did record the trip, he simply noted that he went to [Tattershall Castle](#) and Trusthorpe with Len in the car. There was no mention of his wife and daughter, or any other of the women and children on the trip!



Trip to Trusthorpe in 1946
Left – Len, Dolly, grandma, Ruth, Olive (back row) Ian, mum (front)
Below – house in which they stayed – [Glen Ilson](#)



⁵² This is the name on the back of the photo – not sure who this is.

⁵³ Bert was grandma's brother, Doris his wife and Peter their son.

⁵⁴ I am not entirely sure who this is. However, based on the photo of that day, and that the group came in "Mrs Chapman's car", I wonder if Ruth and Mrs Chapman are the same person.

⁵⁵ This reference is to the Smiths. Len was grandad's nephew and Dolly was his wife. Mum referred to Auntie Dolly and Len. I am not sure why mum referred to Dolly as Auntie but did not use uncle for Len, particularly as both were mum's cousins! Perhaps it reflected how familiar she was with the two people? She does just refer to Dolly elsewhere in her diaries.

Several of these holidays involved trips to or from Dorothy Lofthouse and her family, which occurred annually during this period.⁵⁶ Dorothy's father, Arthur, had been Methodist Minister in Kirkby⁵⁷, and the families kept in touch after the Lofthouses moved away, initially to West Hartlepool and then to Eston. While the Lofthouses were in Kirkby, they visited various places including Matlock, Newstead Abbey, Stratford upon Avon, Sheffield and Derby. They also went to see Carroll Levis⁵⁸ Discovery at the Portland Theatre⁵⁹ in Sutton in Ashfield. While visiting Dorothy, mum visited [Brotton](#)⁶⁰, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Saltburn.



Top – Trip to Matlock in August 1946

Top left – Dorothy and mum

Top right – Mr and Mrs Hill, Dorothy, Arthur, Mum, Ella, grandma

Left – Newstead Abbey July 1948 – Ella, Dorothy, Arthur, mum, grandma

Above left – Dorothy, Ella, mum

Above right – mum and Dorothy

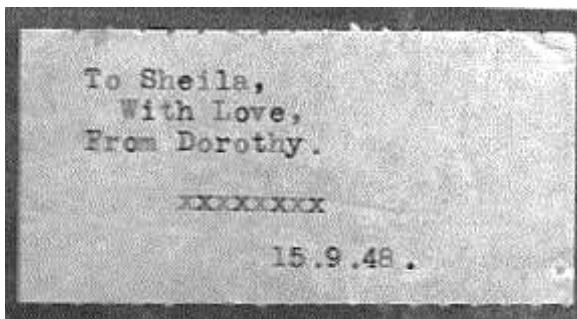
⁵⁶ The first was in August 1946 when Dorothy and her parents came to Kirkby for a visit. At the end of that visit, mum went with the Lofthouses back to Hartlepool for a few days. Grandad noted that he and grandma went to Grantham in Bert's car and then grandma proceeded from there to Hartlepool to collect mum who was 13 at the time. In October 1947, mum again went to Dorothy's in Eston for a few days. In July 1948, the Lofthouses, including Dorothy, came to Kirkby for two weeks. In April 1949, mum and grandma visited the Lofthouses again. This time, Marilyn went with them "to Redcar" – although I am not sure why Marilyn was visiting Redcar. They went by train and mum noted that they changed at Sheffield, York, Northallerton and Middlesbrough.

⁵⁷ See [Chapter 31](#).

⁵⁸ A comedian and stage hypnotist most known for "discovering" local talent.

⁵⁹ See [Chapter 21](#).

⁶⁰ Where Dorothy's grandmother lived.



Mum had a photo album from 1948 that was given to her by Dorothy Lofthouse for her 14th birthday. These photos which are in that album look earlier than that.

Top left – Dorothy & mum

Top right – Arthur Lofthouse

Above – inscription in photo album

Right – Ella, Dorothy, Arthur, mum, grandma



CARROLL LEVIS.

Carroll Levis

Above – postcard featuring signed photograph of Carroll Levis
Right – newspaper cutting concerning 14-year old Gillian Arnold who was “discovered” by Carroll Levis

LEICESTER MERCURY, SATURDAY, AUGUST 3, 1937 5

14, Hopes For Stage Career

FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD Gillian Arnold is following in the footsteps of her mother and father by choosing the stage as her career. And her big chance has come at last.

Gillian, who lives at 15 Earl Howe Street, Leicester, noticed that Carroll Levis was auditioning in Leicester, and told her mother "I'm going to have a try."

Mrs. Arnold, stage name Mitze Mite, "47 inches of glamour" – wished her well and was the first to offer congratulations when Gillian was successful.

Does Not Know

Mr. Arnold, at present supplying the comedy in a Bognor Regis concert party has not yet received the news that Gillian will be appearing at Leicester Palace Theatre on August 12. She hopes to qualify for the final on August 16.

Gillian – like mother – is impressionist-comedienne. Her specialities are Hylda Baker, Beryl Reid, and Eartha Kitt.

When Gillian has finished her studies at the Gateway School she hopes to qualify for the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.



GILLIAN ARNOLD

Other holidays

In August 1947, mum and grandma went for a few days' holiday to visit Jack and Eileen Fawthrop⁶¹ in Bradford. They visited various places including [Lister Park](#) and [Shipley Glen](#). That same month, mum went to Scarborough with grandma and Mr & Mrs Hill. They spent time on the beach and also visited the [Italian Gardens](#) and went to the [North \[Bay\] Bathing Pool](#).⁶² They went to open air theatres at night and saw "Hiawatha"⁶³ and also attended a Gala Night. They also went to see "Music Box" at [Scarborough Spa](#).⁶⁴



Postcard of North Bay Bathing Pool, Scarborough

In March 1948, mum and grandma went to Bedford to visit family. They stayed with "Auntie Louis".⁶⁵ During that visit, they visited family in Elstow and also visited Ray, grandma's brother. They went to see a play "[When We are Married](#)".⁶⁶ In August 1948, mum and grandma went to Blackpool with a group from chapel.⁶⁷



Joan, Betty, grandma and Freda in St Leonards-on-Sea in 1949

In February 1949, mum went for the weekend to [Chapel St Leonards](#), near Skegness, with Minnie and Cyril. This was just after mum had been discharged from hospital, so perhaps it was seen as further recuperation before resuming school. In July 1949, mum and grandma went to [St Leonards-on-Sea](#), near Hastings, to visit grandma's brother Bert and his family. Mum kept a separate book related to this but this has since been lost. However, mum had a lot of photos of this trip and these capture some details. It appears that they went with Joan Storer and another friend, Betty.⁶⁸ Someone called Freda⁶⁹ features in the photos. During their stay, they visited Bottle Alley, Hastings Pier and the Hastings Light Ship, Royal Sovereign.

⁶¹ Eileen stayed with the Parkins during the war when visiting her future husband, Jack, who was a soldier (see [Chapter 34](#)). The Fawthrops and the Parkins became friends. As was the convention at the time, mum referred to them as Uncle Jack and Auntie Eileen.

⁶² Which became Waterscene, [Water Splash World](#) and then Atlantis.

⁶³ Presumably based on Longfellow's Song of [Hiawatha](#). However, the play I could find by this title by [Michael Bogdanov](#) is later.

⁶⁴ I am not sure if "Music Box" was a specific play or a musical review perhaps.

⁶⁵ According to the Cirket family tree, her name was Lois Louisa. She was grandma's aunt, that is grandma's father's sister. Lois' daughter Dorothy was known to us as children as Auntie Dolly. She was grandma's first cousin. So she was mum's first cousin once removed and my first cousin twice removed.

⁶⁶ Mum noted that "it was acted" which I think means it was a play rather than the film.

⁶⁷ See [Chapter 38](#).

⁶⁸ I am not entirely sure who this is. It could be Betty Adams or Betty Otter or someone else.

⁶⁹ According to the Cirket family tree, mum had two cousins called Freda. Freda Davey was the granddaughter of Samuel Cirket and Freda Pestell was the granddaughter of William Cirket. I am not sure if this Freda was one of these and, if so, which one.

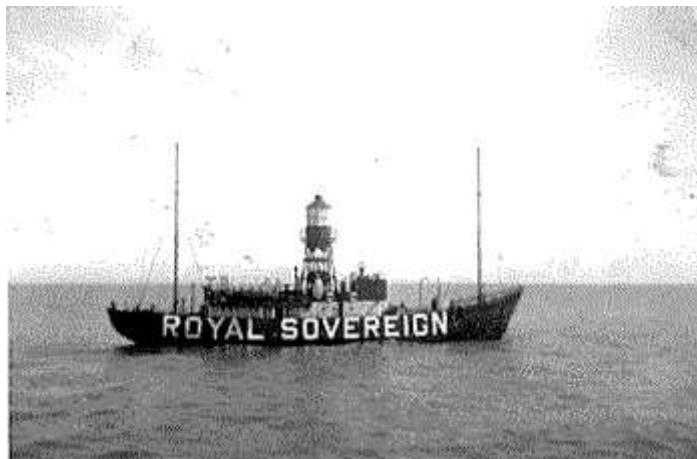
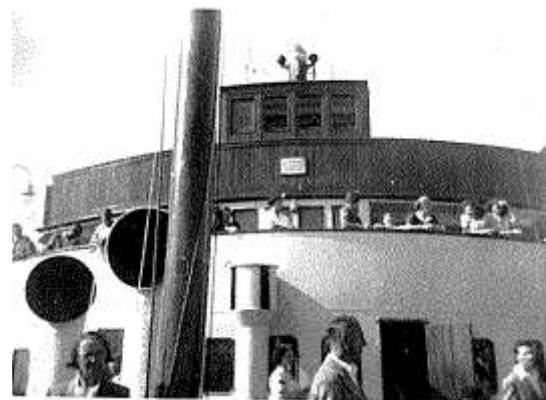
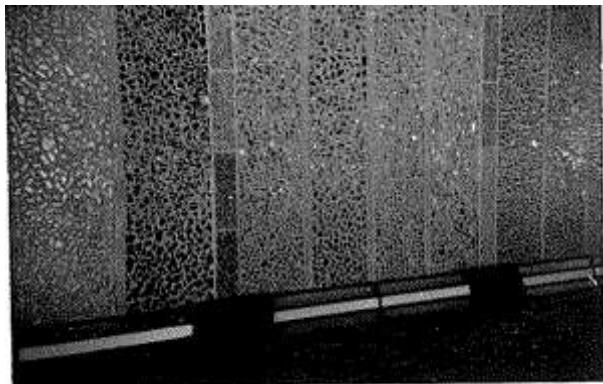


St Leonards-on-Sea 1949

*Top – outside Bert's house showing
mum (left), Joan (centre) and Bert's
car Right)*

*Left – Betty, Freda, grandma and Joan
Below – Freda, Betty, grandma and
Joan*





Hastings 1949
[Top left – Bottle Alley](#)
[Top right – view of Hastings](#)
[Above left - Hastings Pier](#)
[Above right – boat to the Royal Sovereign light ship](#)
[Left – Royal Sovereign Light Ship](#)⁷⁰

Mum usually attended pantomimes around Christmas time up to four in a year. Places she saw these included at the Grand in Mansfield⁷¹, the Portland, in Sutton⁷¹ and the Theatre Royal⁷² and Little Theatre⁷² in Nottingham. Pantomimes she saw included “*Babes in the Wood*”, “*Cinderella*”, “*Dick Whittington*”, “*Humpty Dumpty*”, “*Little Red Riding Hood*”, “*Mother Goose*” and “*Robinson Crusoe*”. In January 1949, because of her ill-health mum noted that she had been given twelve and six instead of going to the pantomime. Nevertheless, in March 1949, she did go to see “*Dick Whittington*” with Olive in Nottingham.

⁷⁰ This was replaced by a tower in 1971.

⁷¹ See [Chapter 21](#).

⁷² See [Chapter 31](#).



THEATRE ROYAL THE QUADRANT
COMMENCING WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24th at 6.30 p.m.
OPEN XMAS DAY at 6.30 THEREAFTER 1.30 — TWICE DAILY — 6.30

— REDUCED PRICES —
FOR CHILDREN AT
ALL PERFORMANCES
FROM MONDAY
JANUARY 5th - 1942

TOM ARNOLD (For Julian Wyb Production, Ltd.) presents **THE MAGNIFICENT PANTOMIME**
BABES IN THE WOOD

WITH A GREAT CAST INCLUDING

ETHEL REVNELL & WEST as "THE BABES"

RICHARD NELLER as "FRIAR TUCK"

MANLEY & AUSTIN as "THE ROBBERS"

BERT PLATT as "THE BARON"

FULL CHORUS & BALLET 12 BETTY HOBBS' GIRLS KIRBY'S FLYING BALLET

JEANNE D'ARCY JOAN COWLEY

FRED WYNNE as "JACK O' THE GREEN"

JOAN ALEXIS as "MAID MARIAN"

SID PLUMMER as "THE NURSE"

CLARICE CLARE as "ROBIN HOOD"

PARTY BOOKINGS FOR PARTIES OF 10 OR OVER ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24th AND AS FROM MONDAY,
JANUARY 5th AT A SPECIAL CONCESSION IN PRICES + For further particulars apply to the Manager

Flyer for the pantomime "Babes in the Wood" which was held at Nottingham's Theatre Royal in 1941/2

Other plays

Besides pantomimes, mum and grandma attended a number of other plays during this period. In March 1946, grandma went to see “[The Desert Song](#)” in Mansfield and, in May, mum went with Valerie Frith to see three one act plays at [Bentinck Institute](#).⁷³ In July 1946, mum saw “[The Winter's Tale](#)” at school. In March 1947, mum had been due to go to see “[Just William](#)” at the Theatre Royal in Nottingham but they had to cancel the trip because of heavy snow. In May 1947, mum saw “[Jane Steps Out](#)”⁷⁴ at the Bentinck Institute.

In February 1948, mum went to “[Empire Variety](#)” with Shirley Sadler. When mum was in Bedford, in March 1948, she went to see the play “[When We Are Married](#)”.⁶⁶ In April 1948, mum went with Hazel and Joy Munns to see “[Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs](#)” at Bentinck. In August 1948, when Arthur, Ella and Dorothy Lofthouse were visiting, mum, grandma and grandad went with them to the Portland in Sutton to see Caroll Levis Discovery.⁵⁸ In July 1949, grandad noted that mum and grandma went to Nottingham Ice Stadium but mum makes no mention of this. In September 1949, mum went to the Theatre Royal to see “[Waltzes from Vienna](#)” which she considered to be “*very good*”. In December 1949, mum went to the Grand to see an ice show.

Grandad, in particular, went frequently to the cinema during this period, especially to the Regent⁷⁵, but also to Kings.⁷⁶ He did not always note what he saw but on occasions he did and sometimes he gave a rating. During that period, he rated two films as “*good*”, “[Master of Lassie](#)” and “[Whisky Galore](#)”. I have seen “[Whisky Galore](#)”, both the [original](#) and the [remake](#). I really like that film, partly because it was filmed on the Scottish island of Barra⁷⁷, which we have visited, and partly because the whole film, and particularly one of the characters, Captain Waggett⁷⁸, reminds me of “[Dads' Army](#)”, in general and Captain Mainwaring, in particular!

“[Whisky Galore](#)” 1949



Image licenced for re-use from Alamy

⁷³ Bentinck Colliery Miners' Welfare Institute – now known as [The Bentinck](#). There are pictures of this in David Ottewell's book “*Kirkby-in-Ashfield and Annesley on Old Picture Postcards*” (#29) and in “*Kirkby & District: A Second Selection*” by Frank Ashley, Sylvia Sinfield and Gerald Lee (p50).

⁷⁴ I had assumed this was a play but it could have been the film they went to see.

⁷⁵ See [Chapter 21](#).

⁷⁶ See [Chapter 4](#).

⁷⁷ The original was. The remake was filmed in Portsoy in Aberdeenshire

⁷⁸ Played by Basil Radford in the original and Eddie Izzard in the remake.

Mum sometimes also went to the cinema including, on occasion, with grandad. She noted seeing two George Formby films⁷⁹ with grandad and also “*Just William*”.⁸⁰ She also went to the cinema with Mrs Hill and, particularly latterly, with friends including Joan Storer and Barbara Coupe.

Mum enjoyed doing jigsaws and played various games with her family and friends including Monopoly, chess and cards, including a game she referred to as “*500 up*”.⁸¹ She also noted playing snooker at Uncle Frank’s. She particularly played games and did jigsaw puzzles in January 1949 while recovering from illness. Unsurprisingly, when playing games, mum often noted who won and what the score was!



Above - mum with Joan Storer in 1949
Right – UK Monopoly set from the early 1960s

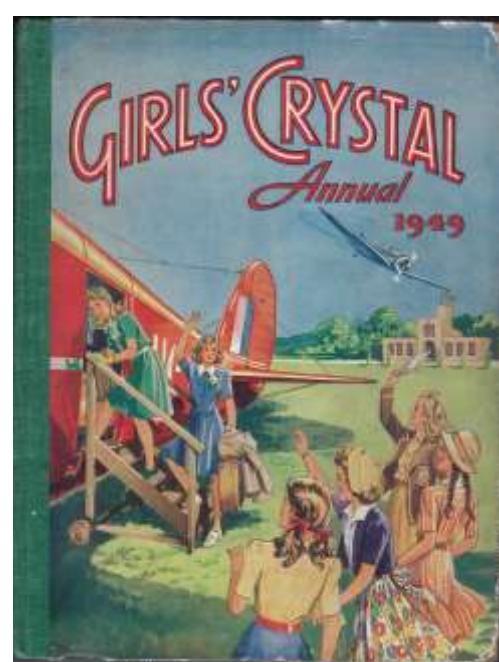
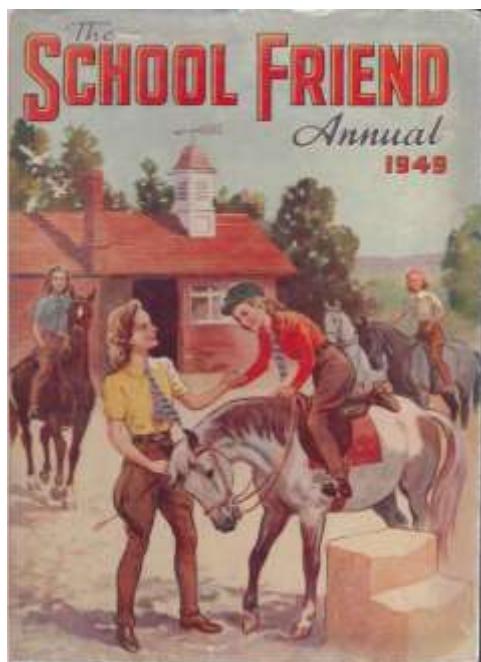
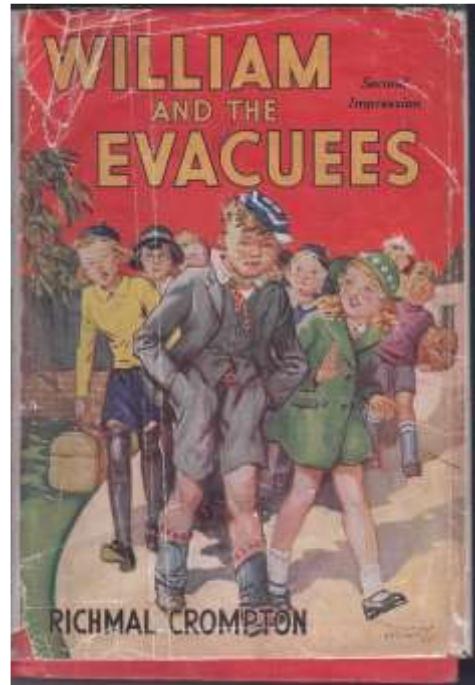
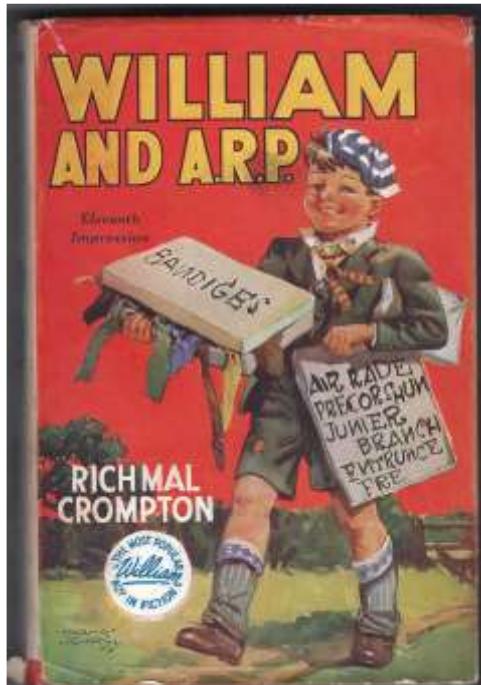


⁷⁹ “*Turned Out Nice Again*” and “*Feather Your Nest*”. Indeed, several of the films she saw featured George Formby including “*George in Civvy Street*” and “*He Snoops to Conquer*”.

⁸⁰ This was in June 1948 at the Regent in Kirkby and was perhaps to compensate for not being able to see “*Just William*” at the Theatre Royal the previous year because of bad weather.

⁸¹ This may be the card game “*500*”.

Mum was an avid reader but she did not note in detail the books she read. In April 1947, she got three Just William books which she noted as “*William and Air Raid Precautions (ARP)*”, “*William the Detective*” and “*William and the Evacuees*”. From January 1948, she did note going to the library every Saturday. When she was ill in January 1949, Hazel and Joy Munns went to the library for her and both Barbara Coupe and Joan Storer also brought her books. In January 1949, mum bought “*the School Friend Annual*” and, the same month, noted reading “*Girls' Crystal*”. Also that month, she received Enid Blyton’s *Island of Adventure* as a Sunday School prize.⁸²



Top left – *William and the ARP* from 1949 Top right – *William and the Evacuees* from 1940
Above left – *School Friend Annual 1949* Above right – *Girls' Crystal Annual 1949*

⁸² See [Chapter 38](#).

There are some intriguing mentions of boys and possible relationships with them in these diaries.⁸³ In March 1948, mum noted attending a concert at chapel and sitting on the back row with "DS". She seems to have had some sort of crush on him but her feelings about him seemed to fluctuate quite wildly. On 4 April 1948, she noted that she had given him up only to note two days later that she had changed her mind. Shortly after this, she noted that she went with him twice to the wakes in April. Things went quiet on this front until November 1949 when she saw "DM" at youth club and, a week later, he asked her to go to the pictures. She did not say if she went! At the end of this set of diaries, mum was still only 15 and we return to this topic with the next set of diaries.⁸⁴



*Mum after she
first had her hair
permmed in 1949*

⁸³ What complicates matters is that she refers to them as "D" or "DM" or "DS". I have assumed that "DM" refers to David Merry and "DS" to David Stubbs.

⁸⁴ See [Chapter 56](#).