

Chapter 30: The Family Shoe Trade Continues

During the war, grandad, grandma and mum lived at the shop in Station Street. Both grandma and mum helped out in the shop. According to grandad, mum served her first customer when she was still only ten, in August 1945. He noted that she sold them some plimsolls.

In 1939, grandad joined a newly-formed society – the Kirkby in Ashfield Boot Repairers Association.¹ He went to a number of their meetings and, in 1941, bought bonds through them.

Grandad's practical skills benefit the business

Grandad continued to use his practical skills in the business. In April 1939, he made a trap-door for the little room in the workshop and, in October, he blacked out the shop. That same month, he made a cupboard for the workshop to hold shop books and papers. The following month, he made an electric "OPEN" sign for the shop, made a glass case for the shop and put up a shelf in the workshop.

In February 1940, he and Dick Clover pulled out the workshop fireplace and they fixed his stove in the workshop. In June that year, grandad bought a stove for the shop for 30 shillings and, the following month, he fixed a chimney to it. In August, he made another cupboard and, the following month, he made a "coal shoot"² for the workshop. In October, he modified the shop stove by adding a four inch flue pipe as the three inch pipe smoked. In November, he bought a new stove for the shop, from Nottingham, for £3 8s 9d which he fixed in the shop.

In October 1941, he cut the shop gate into two pieces. The following month, he made a letter box for the shop gate. However, also that month, the gate fell and broke the glass in the show case. Sometimes, he brought in contractors for jobs he could not do himself. So, in May 1942, he noted that "Mr Lee whitened the shop ceiling". In February 1943, grandad made another cupboard for the workshop. The next month, he made a case for the battery clock in the workshop. In April 1945, he helped to clear the drains after he had closed the workshop.

Apart from having to black out the shop, grandad noted other ways in which the war affected his work. Perhaps the most obvious was the introduction of [clothes rationing](#) in June 1941 which also applied to boots and shoes. Grandad noted this by saying that they needed to "draw coupons" whenever selling boots and shoes. In August 1943, he noted that the number of coupons needed increased to nine for men's shoes and to seven for ladies'. Grandad noted other wartime regulations. In November 1941, an order was passed prohibiting the use of wrapping paper except for food items and this prompted grandad to remove the roll of wrapping paper from his shop counter. In January 1943, he noted regulations covering shoe repairs, namely "repairs not to be coloured on the bottom & toppieces longer than 1¼ to be in one or two pieces".



Mum's clothing coupons from the second world war

¹ Perhaps unsurprisingly, I have not found any record of this specific association but I did find the [Society of Master Shoe Repairers](#). Apparently, this organisation was formed in 1963 as the St Crispin's Boot Trade Association [St Crispin is the patron saint of shoemakers!] by amalgamating the St Crispin's Society of Shoemen and the National Boot Trades Association. The current name was adopted in 1984 and, in 1997, incorporated former members of the British Shoe Repair Association. Also, I found details of other Boot Repairers' Associations including Lincoln and District (1913), Mansfield and District (1915-1921), Newark (1920), Northampton (1917), Nottingham and District (1918-1947) and Sutton and District (1921). Intriguingly I found a [report](#) of a bowls match between Mansfield and District and Sutton and District Associations in 1921. Please note that the dates in brackets refer to the articles I found and not necessarily the dates between which particular associations existed. Many of the articles relate to rise in prices of the cost of repairing boots.

² I confess to not knowing what this was. Apparently, a [coal shoot](#) (or chute) is a way of getting coal from outside a building to where it is stored, e.g. in a basement.