

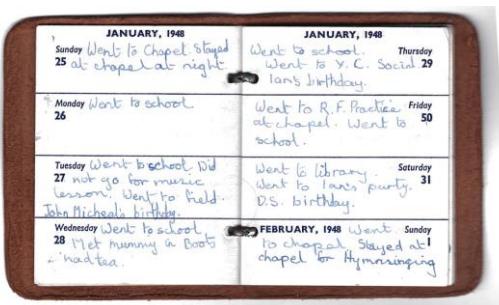
PART 4: THE POST-WAR FORTIES (1946-1949)

Chapter 36: The Second Diary Starts

Mum started to keep a diary from 1946. Originally, when I first read her diaries I thought that this was when she was 15. However, I had got my figures wrong! When I re-calculated, I found that, in fact, when she started her diaries, on 1 January 1946, she was only 11 years old. I don't know what inspired her to start keeping a diary then. Perhaps she knew about grandad's diaries. I guess many of us have kept a diary at some point in our lives, perhaps as teenagers. What strikes me as remarkable about grandad's and mum's diaries are that they kept them for so long and that so many of them survived. In general, mum used similar small diaries to those used by grandad.¹ One exception was the loose-leaf ring binder that she used in 1948 (see below).²



Mum's and grandad's diaries 1946-49

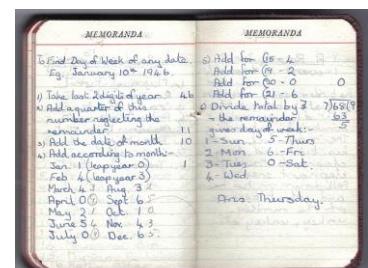


Above - mum's 1948 diary – a loose-leaf ring binder. Note the printing error for 30 January.

Right – abbreviations in 1948 and 1949 diaries
Below right – how to calculate day of week for any date

The diaries also bear various annotations at the front and the back, including mum's name and address.⁵ The diaries contain lists of abbreviations used. Some of the diaries contain names of friends and family and their telephone numbers and addresses. The 1948 and 1949 diaries contain details of people attending mum's birthday party. The 1948 diary has a simple code (A for T, B for U etc.) but I am not sure what this was for or if mum used this in her diaries at all. The 1949 diary contains very complex instructions for how to calculate the day of the week for any date.

Mum's diaries for this period were Christmas presents from family and friends. Her 1946 diary was "from Lynne", presumably her cousin Lynne Evans.³ Mum's 1947 diary was from a friend, Shirley Moulton. This is a poignant gift as Shirley died aged 14 in December 1946.⁴ Both mum's 1948 and 1949 diaries were Christmas gifts from Annie Holmes, the widow of Tom Holmes, who died in 1943.



¹ Grandad had two Universal diaries, one Legible diary and one from the shoemaker [Padmore and Barnes](#). Mum had one Pepys diary and two from Seendar plus the loose-leaf one.

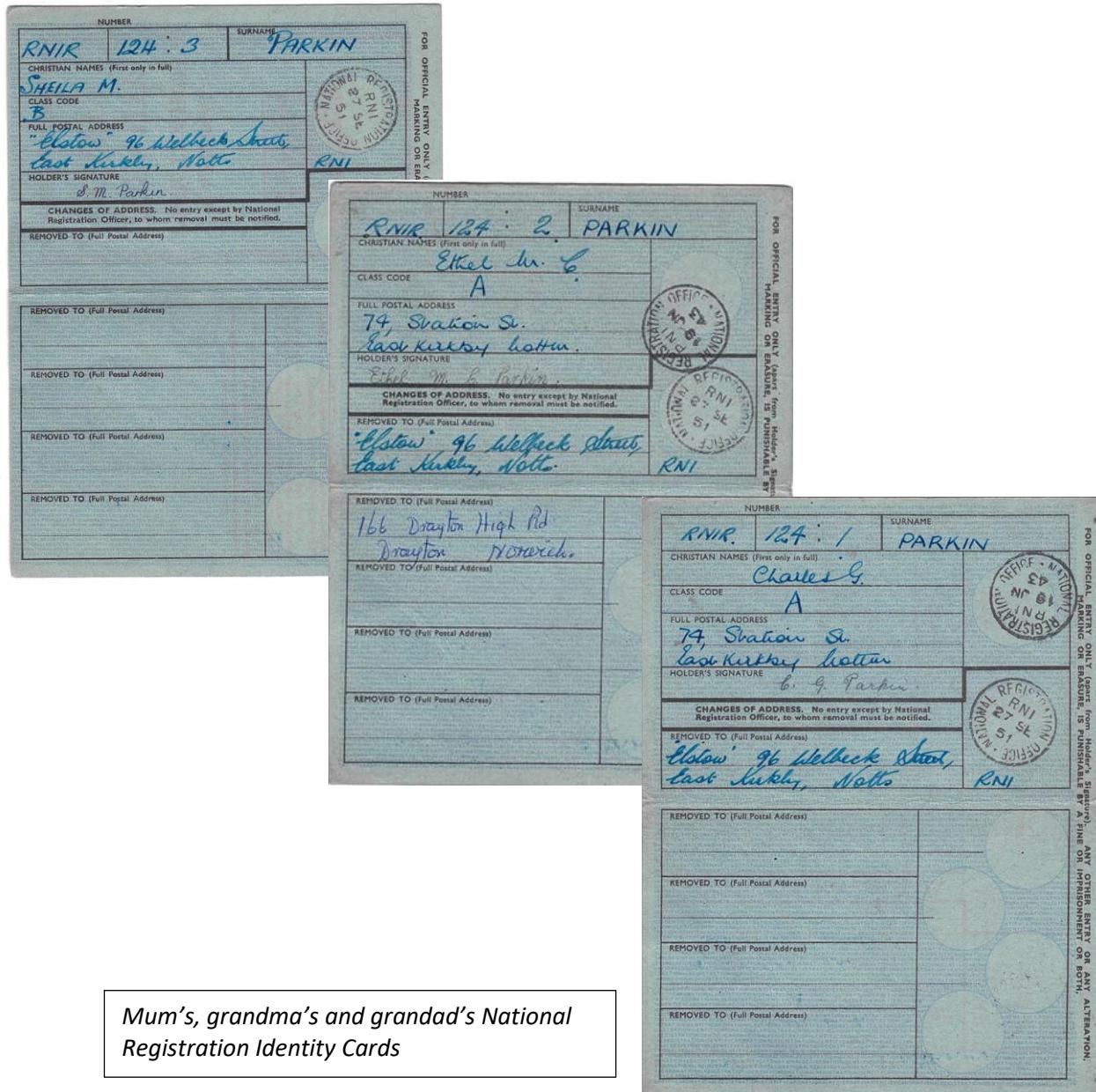
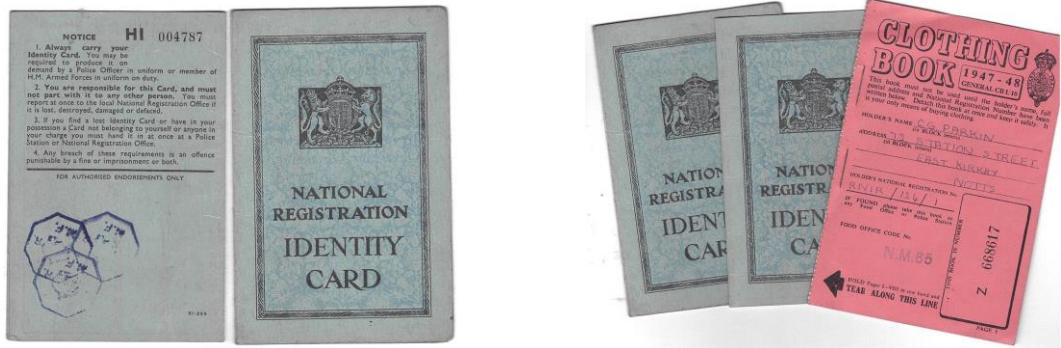
² While I associate the [Filofax](#) with the 1980s, apparently the product was first named in 1921.

³ As Lynne was only two at this time, I assume it was bought for mum on her behalf either by her parents, Roy and Kath Evans, or by her grandmother, Eva.

⁴ According to grandad, Shirley died on 20 December while mum records her date of death as 18 or 19 December. Neither note whether Shirley died of an illness or an accident. Mum's diary for 1946 has no entries after 2 October.

⁵ Which at that time was 72 Station Street, East Kirkby.

Two diaries include mum's registration number - RNIR 124/3. Mum's, grandad's and grandma's National Registration Identity Cards were among mum's papers when she died. The registration numbers also appear on the "clothing books" which contain vouchers for the clothing ration. Grandma and grandad both had the same ID number as mum but with different suffixes. Grandma's and grandad's cards have stamps for 1943 and 1951 and 1951. Mum's card is stamped 1951 only.



National registration in the UK

I found these cards intriguing. While I was aware of [debate](#) in recent years about identity cards, I was not aware that the UK had had identity cards during the second world war and that these continued to be used for some years in peacetime. [Apparently](#), the system of identity cards was introduced in September 1939. The reasons for this included complete manpower control and planning to maximise the efficiency of the war economy, to collect population statistics in the absence of a national census and to allow for rationing. Although the original cards were brown, blue cards were widely introduced in 1943 which explains that year's date stamp on grandma's card. The cards' class codes show that grandma (class A) was over 21 and that mum (class B) was aged 16-21. Mum got her own card in 1951 as she had turned 16 the previous year. From 21 February 1952, it was no longer necessary to carry an identity card, and, in May 1952, the legislation was repealed.

The cards were unpopular as they were seen to be representative of fussy bureaucracy and officialdom. In 1950, a Liberal party member, [Harry Willcock](#) was [prosecuted](#) for refusing to produce his ID Card to the police. He was given an absolute discharge and one of the appeal judges commented, *"This Act was passed for security purposes; it was never passed for the purposes for which it is now apparently being used. To use Acts of Parliament passed for particular purposes in wartime when the war is a thing of the past... tends to turn law-abiding subjects into lawbreakers, which is a most undesirable state of affairs. Further, in this country we have always prided ourselves on the good feeling that exists between the police and the public, and such action tends to make the people resentful of the acts of the police, and inclines them to obstruct the police instead of assisting them. For these reasons I hope that if a similar case comes before any other bench of justices, they will... grant the defendant an absolute discharge, except, of course, where there is a real reason for demanding sight of the registration card."*

Although grandad's and mum's diaries cover the same period, they often cover different activities and events, reflecting different perspectives and interests. Sometimes, they do cover the same events. Sometimes, the accounts contradict.⁶ However, most often, when describing a particular event, the diaries agree about the key facts but share different perspectives. For example, in April 1947, grandad explained, in some detail, how he had moved some switches from the kitchen to the shop and that, to do this, he had closed the shop all day. Mum described this as *"daddy messed about changing switches into shop"!* In May 1948, grandad noted that he and mum had had a bike ride after tea. Mum noted, however, that they had gone on a bike ride intending to go to Jubilee Hill and Pinxton but had *"landed at Underwood"!*

Perhaps one of the best examples of differences in perspective comes from the descriptions of Christmas 1947.⁷ As was usual, mum and grandma spent Christmas with grandma's Auntie Bertha, in Mansfield. Mum notes that they went there on both the 23rd and Christmas Eve, in the morning, to take things for Christmas. On Christmas Day itself, mum noted that they had dinner at Marilyn's, tea at Auntie Bertha's and that they *"played games after tea. Marilyn & everybody, Peter & everybody came"*. Similarly, on Boxing Day, they went to Jim & Renie's for dinner and to Auntie Doris' for tea. Again, they played games and mum noted that there were 30 people there. Grandad, in contrast, spent that festive season struggling with a circular saw! He noted that he had built a frame for this on 22 December. On Christmas Day, he noted that mum and grandma went to Auntie Bertha's for Christmas and that, after tea, he went to his workshop *"to make my circular saw!"* By Boxing Day, he had got the saw cutting but did not consider it to be a success. He noted that, on the 27th, mum and

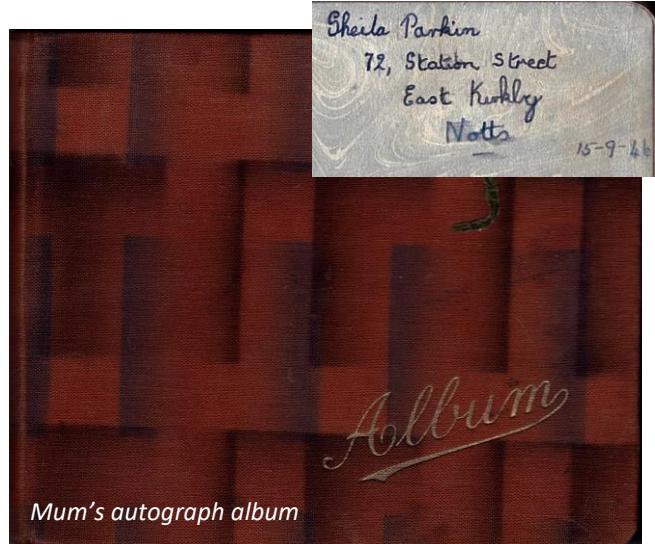
⁶ For example, in January 1946, grandma's maternal uncle Frank had an operation. According to grandad, he was discharged on 26 January but, according to mum, this was on 2 February. Presumably, the date is wrong in one of the diaries.

⁷ There are a couple of odd things related to Christmas from these diaries. First, in her diaries, mum frequently refers to Christmas as "Xmas" something she never did in later life and for which we would be castigated! Second, there is an entry in her diary for 25 January 1949 which reads, *"took Xmas tree down"*. I am not sure if the Parkins usually took down their tree this late or if this was unusual because mum had been unwell that year. My recollection is that mum was fastidious in insisting that the Christmas tree should come down on 6th January each year.

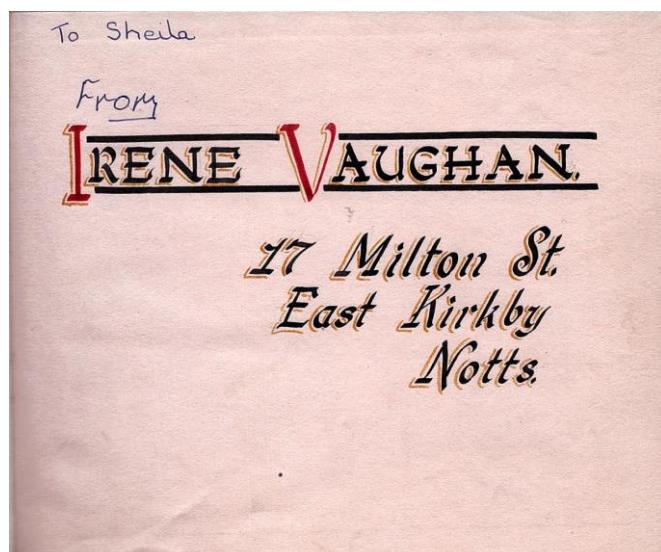
grandma went to Ilkeston to see Cyril and Minnie but that he, on the 28th, went to see Dick Clover “about my saw”. He got some ball bearings for it on the 30th and worked further on it on New Year’s Eve. He continued to struggle with it in January. As of the 10th, the saw was working but was not yet completed. Finally, he declared that he had finished work on the saw on 24 January 1948. However, in March 1948, he noted that he “bought a circular saw 11/-”. Does this mean he was not happy with the one he had made?

In addition, mum also had an autograph album from that period. It appears she may have been given it for her 12th birthday on 15 September 1946. However, some of the notes and drawings precede that date so perhaps grandma and grandad got it for her after she was born and gave it to her when she turned 12.

The first entry was from Irene Vaughan⁸ of 17 Milton Street. In addition to the calligraphy, she also included a poem which reads, “I stood on a bridge at midnight⁹ when a thought came into my head. What a fool I was to be standing there when I might have been in bed”.¹⁰



Above right – mum’s autograph album with name, address and date inset
Right – entry by Irene Vaughan



Other “poems” included, from grandad in 1948, “he who takes what isn’t his’n breaks the law and ends in prison”.¹¹ That same year, grandma noted the tongue twister “Whether the weather be fine or whether the weather be hot, whether the weather be cold or whether the weather be not, we’ll weather the weather whatever the weather, whether we like it or not”. On a different page, grandad wrote, “The Farmer gazed on his sheep and wondered whether the wether¹² would weather the weather or whether the weather the wether would kill”. On the last page, Ella Lofthouse has written “by hook or by crook I’ll be last in this book”.

⁸ A close friend of grandma’s – her married name was Hill.

⁹ This may be a parody of the poem “The Bridge” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow which opens “I stood on the bridge at midnight”.

¹⁰ This entry is dated 3.6.86 which I do not understand.

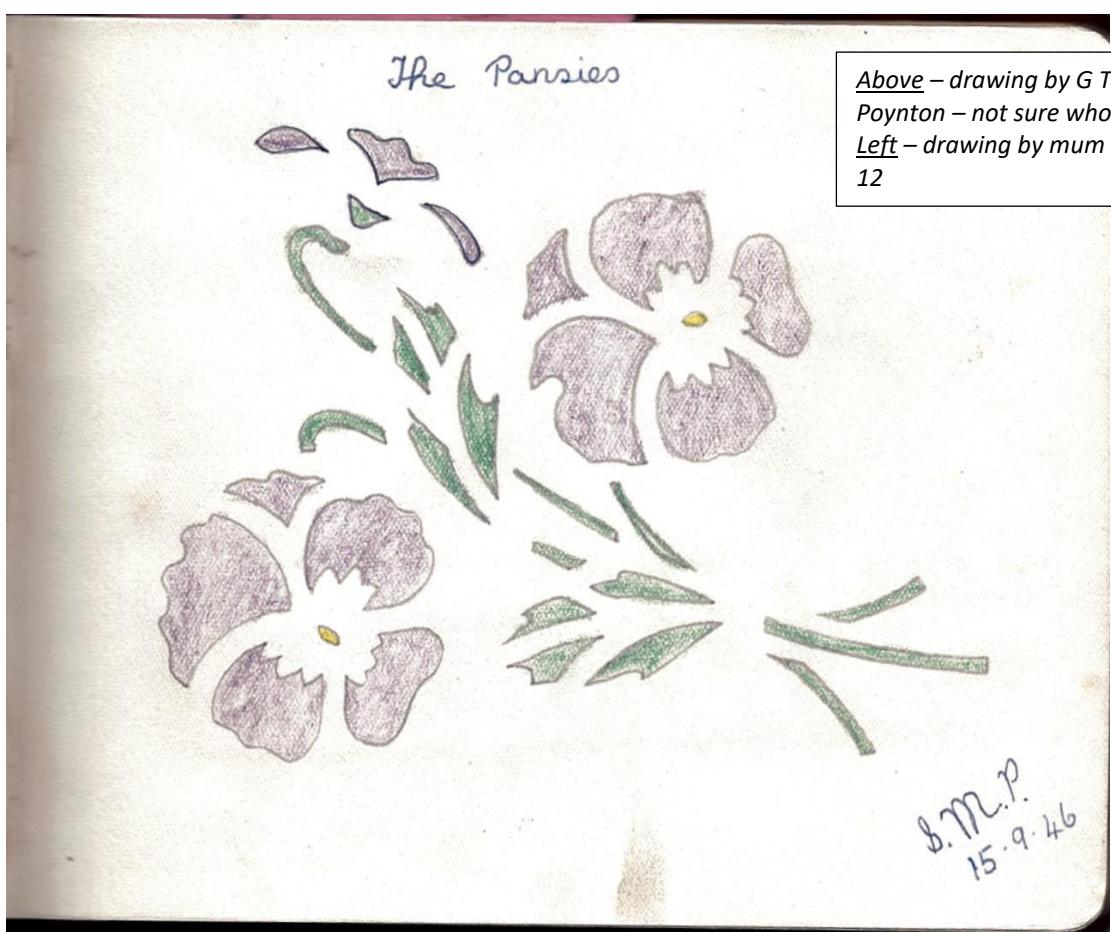
¹¹ Which is a slight misquote of a quotation by [Daniel Drew](#) (!) related to short selling.

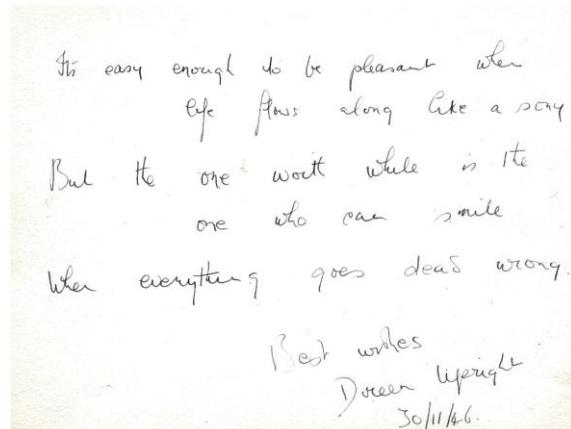
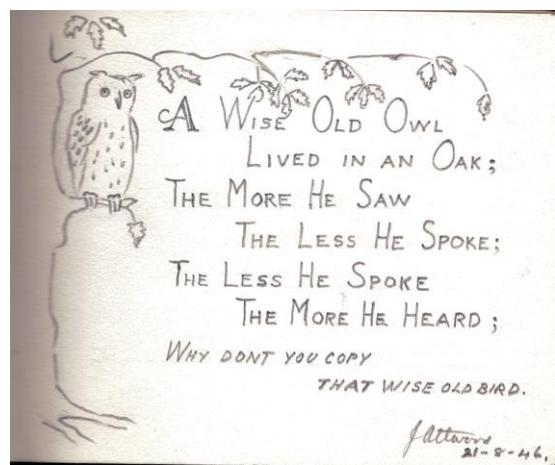
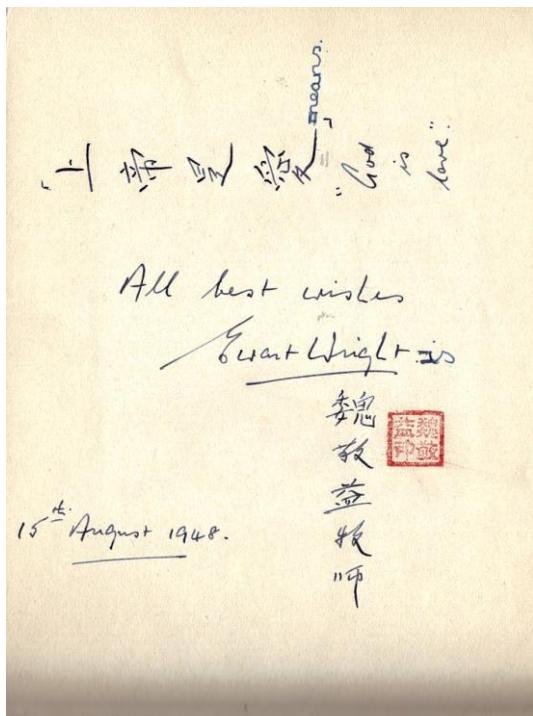
¹² Apparently a castrated ram.



The Pansies

Above – drawing by G T
Poynton – not sure who this is
Left – drawing by mum aged
12





Entries in mum's autograph book

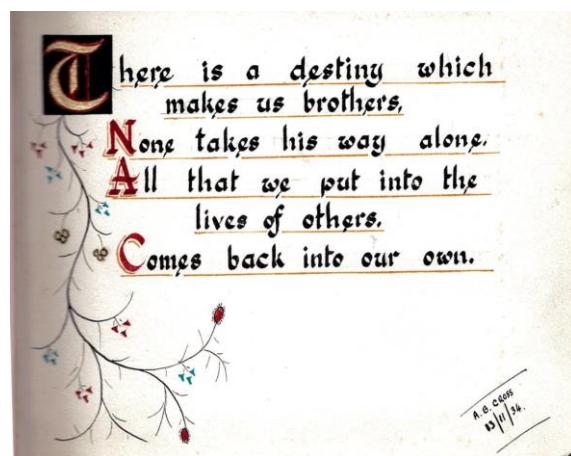
Top left – Rev E Wright on the occasion of speaking at Bourne chapel – 1948

Above – a butterfly drawn by mum aged 12

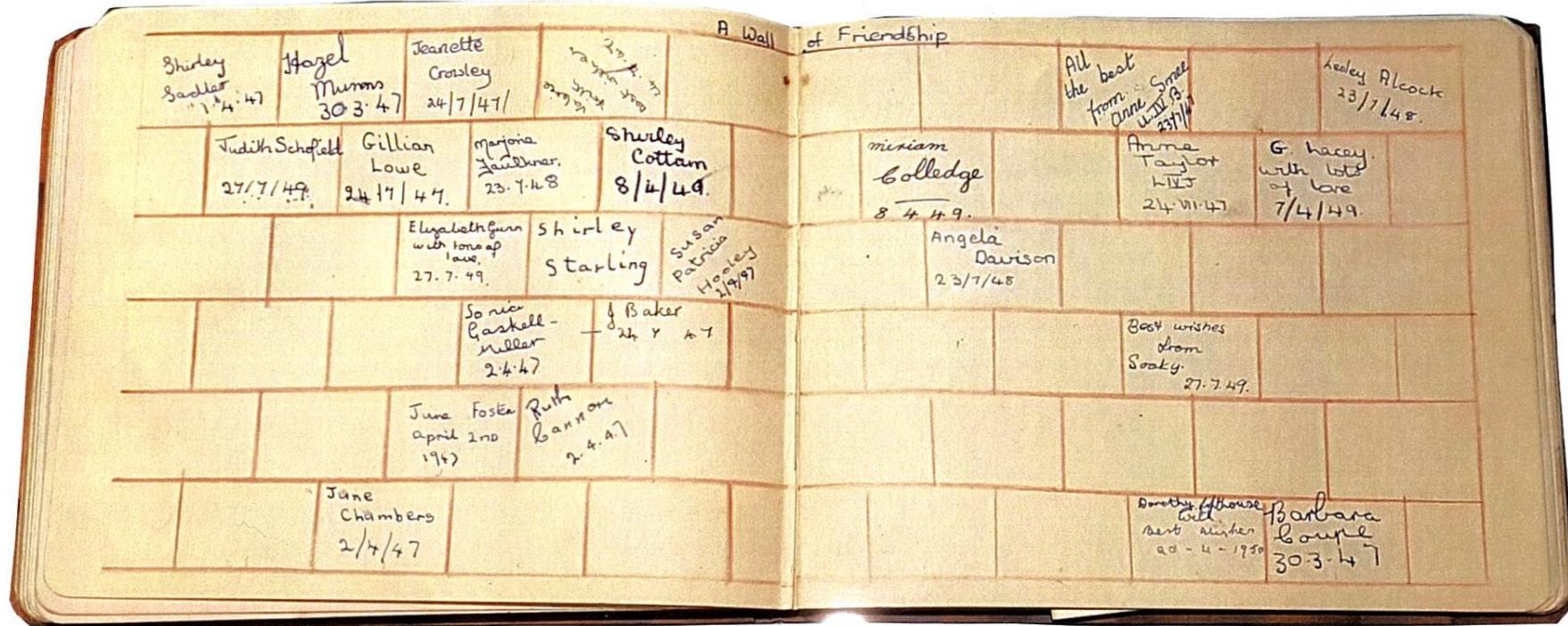
Top right – A note from Jack Attwood, a family friend, in 1946 which is a slight variation of a traditional [nursery rhyme](#)

Centre right – a note from Doreen Upright, a speaker at Bourne chapel, in 1946 quoting a [poem](#) by [Ella Wheeler Wilcox](#)

Bottom right – a note from Arthur Cross¹³, family friend and member of Bourne chapel, in 1934 [quoting Edwin Markham](#)



¹³ Arthur Cross also noted a limerick – in less fancy writing – *There was an old woman of Leeds who once ate a pound of grass seeds in a week poor lass she was covered in grass and couldn't sit down for the weeds*. This seems to be a variation of a traditional nursery rhyme in which the first line ends [good deeds](#). There are numerous variations of the "seeds" option – many of which are quite rude!



Wall of friendship in mum's autograph book. Initially, I thought this was just school friends, e.g. Shirley Sadler, Jeanette Crowley, Anne Taylor but there are also friends from Kirkby such as Barbara Coupe and Hazel Munns.