

Chapter 37: The Parkin Family After the War

Births

As well as a number of births recorded in the diaries for this period, there was also a family birth the previous year, in 1945, which, for some reason, grandad did not record. Carole Holland, grandad's great niece, was born in Grantham on 24 May 1945.¹ I don't know why grandad did not mention her birth. Perhaps it was because she was born relatively faraway, in Grantham. It does not appear that there was any rift with her parents as Olive, in particular, features frequently in the diaries. It may just have been that grandad was more interested in other things. Indeed, he does not mention Carole by name at all in his diaries for this period although mum mentions her frequently, often alongside her cousins, Lynne Evans² and Michael Ian Smith.³ There were other cousins of around the same age, Simon and Peter Parkin⁴, but they are not mentioned at all in either of the diaries for this period.



Very early in her diaries, in January 1946, mum noted that Marilyn came to stay because she had had a sister, Jennifer.⁵ That same month, Jack and Eileen Fawthrop⁶ had a son, John Michael. He is mentioned, not only in mum's diary, but also in grandad's. In August 1948, the Parkins' close friends, Irene and Arthur Hill had a baby. David John. Over the next two years, mum took him out frequently and also recorded some of his significant milestones, e.g. his first tooth.



Far left - David Hill
Left - Ian, David Hill and mum

¹ Her mother was Olive Holland, nee Evans, and her grandmother was Eva, grandad's sister.

² Lynne was Carole's first cousin. Her father, Roy, was Olive Holland's brother and Eva was also Lynne's grandmother. Lynne was born in February 1944 – see [Chapter 29](#).

³ Michael Ian was second cousin to both Lynne and Carole. His grandmother, Olive and Eva (Lynne and Carole's grandmother) were grandad's two sisters. He was born in January 1942 – see [Chapter 29](#). From now on, I refer to him as Ian which is what mum called him

⁴ Simon was second cousin to Lynne, Carole and Ian. His grandfather was Cyril, grandad's brother. He was born in December 1943 – see [Chapter 29](#). His brother, Peter was born in Q2 1946 but he is not mentioned in either diary. He is recorded in the family tree mum constructed.

⁵ Like Marilyn, Jennifer was mum's second cousin. Her grandmother (Auntie Bertha) and (my) grandma's mother were sisters. Presumably because of the age gap, mum was much closer to Marilyn than to Jennifer over the years.

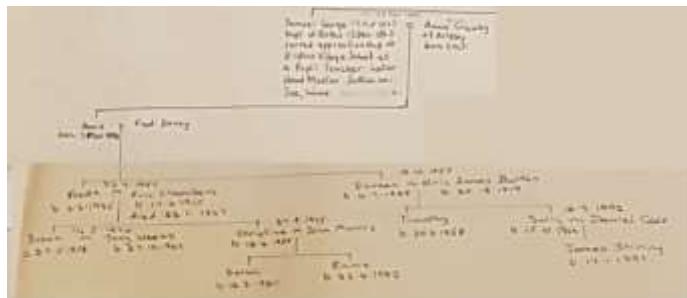
⁶ The soldier and his wife who had stayed with the Parkins during the war – see [Chapter 34](#).

Weddings

Although there were no close family weddings during this period, mum did attend Ruby Booler's wedding in September 1949. It seems that the Boolers and the Parkins were friends through chapel although Ruby was some ten years older than mum. Her brother, Harold, was among mum's circle of friends and Mrs Booler, her mother, was involved in making mum's bridal and bridesmaids' dresses when she got married.⁷

Deaths

There were several deaths of family and friends in this period. Two relatives of grandma's, Aunt Pat⁸ and Uncle Jack⁹, died but I have been unable to identify exactly who they were. In February 1949, Aunt Annie, the widow of Samuel Cirket, grandma's paternal uncle, died. She visited the Parkins after her husband's death, for holidays, in both 1946 and 1947. Grandma had visited her in Doncaster at the end of January 1949, presumably because she was unwell. Grandma attended her funeral in Doncaster.



Relevant part of Cirket family tree showing Samuel and Annie and their descendants

WELL-KNOWN METHODIST

DEATH OF MR. J. L. PARKIN

Formerly in business in New Ollerton and an active Methodist, the death occurred on Tuesday evening at his home, 65, Cardale Road, Mansfield, of Mr. John Leonard Parkin. He was 60 and leaves a widow.

Mr. Parkin, who was a native of Kirkby-in-Ashfield, was in the boot and shoe business at New Ollerton for a number of years. He retired 18 months ago and came to Mansfield.

He was a former choirmaster at Ollerton Methodist Church and was recently appointed a steward at Nottingham Methodist Church.

In April 1949, grandad's older brother, Leonard, died in Mansfield, aged 60. Grandad noted that Cyril had come over and brought him the news about Len. He also noted that Len was cremated in Sheffield but, as far as I know, grandad did not attend. Grandad made no mention of this brother since the early 1930s.¹⁰ At the time of Len's death, mum and grandma were away in [Eston](#) visiting the Lofthouses. I was interested that Len was cremated as this was the first time that someone in the family was cremated, at least based on entries in grandad's diaries.

News cutting related to grandad's brother's death.

⁷ According to FreeBMD, Ruby Booler married Sydney R Price. She was the daughter of Annie Vincent and Harold Booler who were married in Basford in Q2 1918. Annie and Harold had eight children – Iris M (b1920), Gladys A (b1922), Ruby M (b1924), Beryl J (b1926), Mavis (b1928), Clifford V, (b1931), Harold (b1932) and Jessie (b1935).

⁸ Aunt Pat is mentioned in grandad's diaries from January 1943. She appears to have been living with Auntie Bertha in Mansfield and this made me wonder if she was another of grandma's maternal aunts. She also spent time staying with the Parkins over the years. Her health was not good and she died on 24 October 1946 at "Elstow" in Mansfield. However, I am not sure if her official name was either Pat or Patricia as I have been unable to find anyone by that name who died in Mansfield during that period. Grandma went for Aunt Pat's funeral on 28 October 1946 but there is no record of her having been buried in any of Mansfield's cemeteries at that time. It may be that she was actually buried in Bedfordshire. Initially, when grandad said "Ethel went to Elstow for Aunt Pat's funeral", I thought he was referring to the house in Mansfield which bore that name. But, it seems he was referring to the Bedfordshire village, from which the name is derived, as grandma was away for three days at this time.

⁹ Again, I am not precisely sure who this is but, given that he is not mentioned in the extensive family tree we have available on the Cirket, i.e. grandma's father's side, it seems more likely that he might have been a relative on grandma's mother's side. However, I wonder if he was perhaps an uncle by marriage as I was unable to find a Bowler who died in that quarter.

¹⁰ It is not clear when the last reference was as some of the references to "Len" from 1931 to 1935 might have been to grandad's nephew.

Cremation in the UK

According to the [Cremation Society](#), the first official cremation in the UK took place in Woking in 1885 and the number of cremations rose rapidly during the second world war from 16,312 in 1933 to 50,000 in 1946. The number exceeded 100,000 in 1951, 200,000 in 1960, 300,000 in 1968 and 400,000 in 1976. In 2019, 472,302 cremations were carried out, which was 78% of all funerals, as compared to less than 10% in 1946. The number of crematoria rose from only 58 in 1946 to more than 300 currently.

Harold Green had been a friend of grandad's since the early 1930s. They were neighbours until Harold moved to Clipstone in 1944. In the 1930s, Harry had a Morgan with which grandad seemed suitably enamoured. They did odd jobs for each other. Grandad first noted that Harold was ill in June 1948. He gradually got thinner and weaker and died in November 1949 at the age of 62. Grandad heard the news from Cliff Green, Harold's son. When he heard the news, he closed the shop and he and grandma "*went over*". Although mum and grandma attended the funeral, it seems that grandad did not although grandad was involved in Harold's will and probate.

House moves and purchases

In June 1948, grandma's younger brother, Bert moved with his family to St Leonards-on-Sea, near Hastings.¹¹ It seems that this related to his work but the diaries do not provide details. This meant that both grandma's brothers were now living away – one in Bedford and the other near Hastings. In addition, grandad's niece, Olive and her family, were living in Grantham.



During this period, the Parkins continued to live at the shop in Station Street. It appears that they, or others in the family, may still have owned the property at 96 Welbeck Street as they collected apples from there in August and September 1949. In September 1947, grandad purchased three houses in Victoria Road for £630¹² through an auction held at the Nag's Head. He bought these through G A Wyles¹³ and then rented the houses out. Mum noted that, on occasions, she collected rents for grandad including on New Year's Eve 1949.

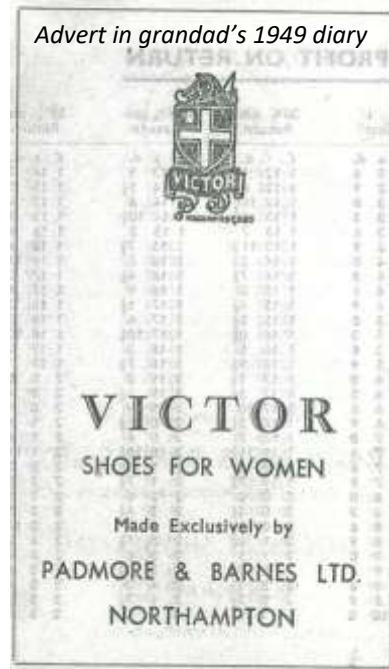
¹¹ Grandma and grandad helped Bert financially at the time of his move. In July 1948, grandad noted that he had a bank overdraft of £1,675 to pay for Bert's house in Hastings to enable Bert to get the house. Presumably, grandad was able to borrow the money more quickly than Bert could. Later, that month, following the sale of Bert's house in Forest Town, on the outskirts of Mansfield, part of the overdraft was repaid (£991 7s 6d). The remaining amount was repaid in September that year along with an amount of £9 3s 6d in charges and interest.

¹² Equivalent to around £18,500 today. I believe these were 158, 160 and 162 Victoria Road. If so, according to [Zoopla](#), the combined value today is around £320,000.

¹³ Who appear to have been a firm of solicitors that grandad used for various house purchases over the years.

The shoe shop

Grandad continued to run the shoe business during this period and grandma worked with him. Together they attended a number of shoe exhibitions in Nottingham, including [Pococks](#), from which he sometimes bought stock. Throughout this period, he used his own practical skills to improve the shop and also sometimes got others, such as Albert Robinson and Dick Clover, to help. He noted that business surged in May 1948 when the number of coupons needed to buy shoes was halved and no coupons were needed for children's shoes. This meant that the shop had the "*best week's business ever done*". In July 1948, he noted that boots and shoes came off coupons entirely. In March 1948, both mum and grandad noted that the shop window had been cracked by a stone thrown up by a Trent Bus. Grandad noted that it was the plate glass window in the ladies department. At times, mum helped in the shop including dressing the display windows and sometimes helping to tidy the shop. She did this from 1946 when she would have only been 11. Mum also sometimes helped in the shop itself particularly when it was busy.



Pets

During this period, the Parkins had a cat called Nibs. Neither of the diaries note when they got him but, in August 1948, both mum and grandad noted that he had broken his leg and had to be "*put to sleep*" (mum) or "*destroyed*" (grandad). That same year, in November, grandad noted that Frank's¹⁴ Alsatian dog died.

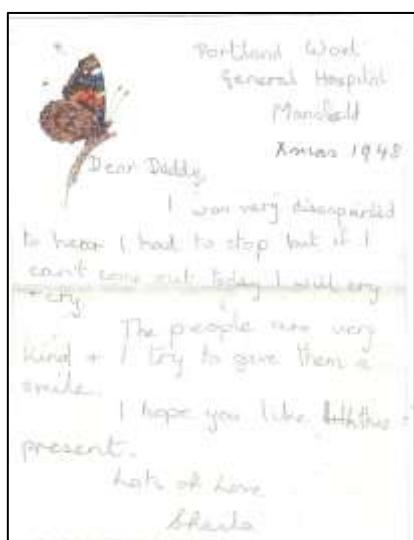
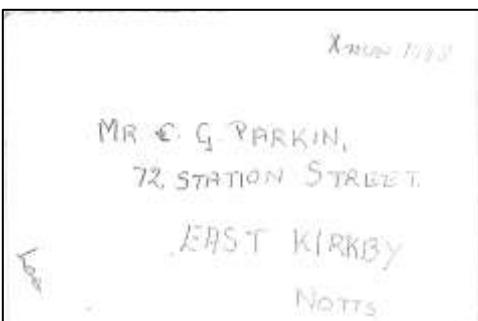
Illness

There were some significant family illnesses during this period, particularly affecting grandma and mum. From March to May 1947, grandma was quite unwell but, apart from a high temperature, I don't know what was wrong with her. In November and December 1948, mum developed an abscess which required penicillin¹⁵ injections and admission to hospital. On 23 December, the abscess was drained and she was discharged on Christmas Eve. She did not specify where the abscess was but in January 1949 when she went to chapel she "*took a cushion with me*" which may give a clue as to where the abscess had been! She continued to go, by ambulance, to hospital each day – including Christmas Day – for her penicillin injections and to have her wound dressing changed. In her 1949 diary, she noted that she had had 28 injections of Penicillin the previous year. She was only discharged from hospital on 1 February and she was only able to finally leave the dressing off in March 1949. She started school on 14 February, mornings only initially. However, she had resumed church and other activities from 8 January. I don't fully understand this discrepancy, especially given my own childhood experience of having to be at death's door before being allowed to stay off school! Perhaps the fact that the school was in Nottingham was a factor. Perhaps also, mum resolved to be tougher on us than her own parents had been with her. It does seem this was a significant illness which required considerable time to recover but it seems odd that mum was well enough to do quite a wide range of church activities but was too ill to go to school.

¹⁴ I am not sure which Frank grandad is referring to. Given that "*Uncle Jim*" definitely had dogs later, I wonder if it was him.

¹⁵ Although Penicillin was discovered in 1929, it only became widely used in the 1940s.

Among mum's papers was a letter from her to grandad at that time, dated "Xmas 1948". It is written from Mansfield General Hospital¹⁶ so was presumably written in the run-up to Christmas as she was discharged on Christmas Eve. It is not clear if she ever sent or gave it to grandad. It certainly was not posted. It has an interesting sketch of the ward she was in on the back.



Top Left – envelope addressed to grandad

Above – diagram of Portland Ward with key. It is annotated "I'm sorry it is not a very good drawing".

Left – letter to grandad. It reads, "Dear Daddy, I was very disappointed to hear I had to stop but if I can't come out today I will cry & cry. The people are very kind & I try to give them a smile. I hope you like this present. Lots of love Sheila."

In addition, there were a range of minor illnesses and injuries during this period. The family continued to have significant dental problems and, in March 1946, grandad was modelled for a full set of teeth.¹⁷ Specific illnesses documented during this period included John¹⁸ and Ian having measles. However, in most cases of illness, no specific diagnosis was given.

Items purchased

During this period, both mum and grandad noted things that they bought. Mum noted more often buying clothes than grandad did. In May 1947, mum noted buying a white "airtex"¹⁹ shirt in Nottingham. In March 1948, mum bought a new costume²⁰ and socks in Nottingham and, the same month, she went into Mansfield with Olive and Carole and bought some more new socks. In April 1948, mum went to Nottingham to buy "stuff"²¹ for a new dress. In August 1948, mum and grandma went into Nottingham where they bought a shawl for David Hill²² and also ordered a pram. In January 1949, grandad went to Burtons in Nottingham to have his suit altered. In February 1949, mum noted

¹⁶ See [Chapter 50](#).

¹⁷ He got these back in April for which he paid £14 10 0.

¹⁸ Not sure which John

¹⁹ This is how mum spelled it but I think she may have been referring to [Aertex](#). The firm was first established in 1888 and, by the sixties, Aertex was widely-used in school and sports clothing.

²⁰ I am not sure what the costume was for.

²¹ I assume this means material

²² This was a few days after he was born.

that she bought a scarf and she also bought two books about "Worrals"²³. Also, that month, mum met grandma and grandad in Nottingham and bought more socks and she also ordered a belt from Griffins.²⁴ In March 1949, mum went and bought four pairs of socks from Griffins with a gift voucher Shirley Sadler had sent her for Christmas.²⁵ In April 1949, in Redcar, mum bought a new scarf and also, in that month, in Nottingham, she bought a new mac²⁶ and some material for summer dresses. In June 1949, mum fetched gloves from Mansfield and, in July 1949, she went to Mansfield for grandad to get him some tennis shoes

Mum always loved bags, particularly handbags, and at the time of her death had an impressive collection of Cath Kidston bags. In October 1948, mum bought a shopping basket from Evans²⁷ for 17/6. In August 1949, mum went to Mansfield to "get the things"²⁸ for her bag. In September 1949, mum went with grandma and grandad to Nottingham and they bought her a case for her birthday. In October 1949, mum met grandma in Nottingham and bought a purse.



Example of one of the Worrals books dated 1949



One of mum's Cath Kidston bags that she used on a day-to-day basis

During this period, grandad bought a number of items that he used in his role as a practical handyman²⁹, including a variety of tools.³⁰ In April 1946, grandad noted that Olive³¹ fetched him a pair of barrow wheels from Blake and Beeley's³² for 21 shillings. In December 1946, grandad bought a GEC transformer³³ for 15/5. In March 1948, he went to Mansfield and had a chuck³⁴ made by S Reddish³⁵ for a 10" saw for mime and six. That same month, grandma, grandad and mum went to a showroom in Nottingham and bought a circular saw for 11 shillings. In April 1948, Mr Reddish brought grandad a new spindle

²³ I think this refers to [Flight Officer Joan Worrallson](#), a fictional character created by WE Johns, who also wrote the Biggles books. There were 11 books written between 1941 and 1950. There is a [website](#) dedicated to the Worrals stories.

²⁴ Presumably Griffin and Spalding, see [Chapter 52](#).

²⁵ I don't know why she didn't use this voucher on her earlier visit to Griffin and Spalding in February.

²⁶ Which she noted was "Burbury". I presume she was referring to [Burberry](#).

²⁷ I am not entirely sure what business or shop is being referred to here.

²⁸ I don't know what these were.

²⁹ See [Chapter 43](#).

³⁰ For details of his efforts to buy a rip saw in Mansfield see [Chapter 43](#).

³¹ I think this was his sister and not his niece.

³² See [Chapter 85](#).

³³ [Transformers](#) transfer electric current from one circuit to another increasing or reducing voltage. I think GEC refers to [General Electric Company](#) who were a major company from 1886 to the late 1990s. Transformers were made at the Witton works until the plant was sold off in 1969

³⁴ At least I think that is what it says.

³⁵ I don't have details of who this was. Initially, I thought it was Reddick but I think it is probably Reddish. A Mr Reddish also installed electricity at 158 Victoria Road for grandad in 1957 (see [Chapter 70](#)).

and pulley for his circular saw. The cost of this including drilling the six inch saw³⁶ was 35 shillings. In January 1949, grandad bought a bench drill from [Challans](#)³⁷ for £6 but he later returned the thrust wheel and spindle as the spindle was bent and would not work. A week later, he got the drill wheel back but he considered it still not straight enough to work. It was not until 7 February that he got the wheel back from Challans and was happy with it. Also, in February 1949, he went to Mansfield to get two pulleys turned³⁸ for making a sander but had no luck. In March 1949, he went to Nottingham to buy a small power plane but he did not. He decided to send to John Steel's³⁹ in Bingley for the price of a cutterhead to make one. Later that month, he sent for the cutterhead. The price was £4, plus 14/10 for the knives and postage of one shilling. The cutterhead came on 1 April 1949. Grandad went to Nuttalls in Mansfield for what looks like two ball races⁴⁰ and a pulley. He left the pulley to be drilled. The next day, Olive brought his pulley from Mansfield. In May 1949, grandad went to Needhams⁴¹ in Sutton for a quarter inch stock and die⁴² which both cost 11/11.

CHALLANS

27 Station Street, Kirkby-in-Ashfield

Telephone: Kirkby-in-Ashfield 3128

ESTABLISHED OVER 40 YEARS

Renowned for quality, we still offer the very best in personal service.

Our extensive range of goods covers, ironmongery, hardware and tools.

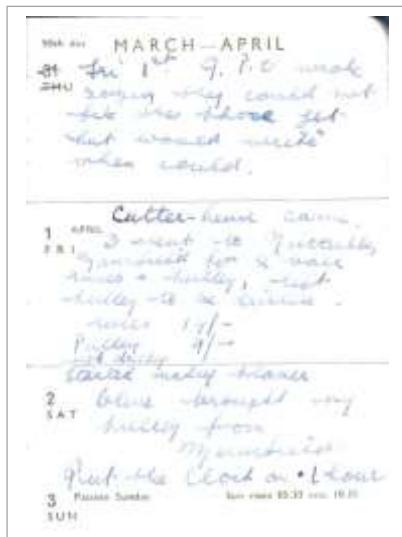
Always new designs in glassware and pottery, also lovely china, brass and copperware.

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Giving a free delivery service.

We welcome all customers old and new.

Our aim is to please all of you.



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Top right – advert for Challans from the 1969 Kirkby Directory

Above – grandad's diary entries for 1 and 2 April 1949

Right – Needham's ironmongers in Market Place, Sutton in 1900

(top), 1937 (middle) and 1962 (bottom). The image of 1937 is a photo of a watercolour by Charles Jenkins

³⁶ I think this is what it says but I am not sure what it means.

³⁷ Challans is a very longstanding business located at [27 Station Street](#). John T Challans was running an ironmonger's business there in 1942 and, in 1969, their advert stated that they had been in business for forty years.

³⁸ The word is not very clear but I think this is what it says.

³⁹ I have found quite a number of adverts for this company from the 1940s and it seems they were based at Clyde Mills in Bingley. I also found an [article](#) from 1946 in which an employee was convicted of stealing tools and electrical goods from them.

⁴⁰ I did not find the text clear and I have struggled elsewhere with these - see [Chapter 93](#). They cost 19 shillings and the pulley cost nine shillings with drilling.

⁴¹ According to the 1941 Kelly's Directory, Needham Brothers were ironmongers in Market Place Sutton. It seems that this may have been a longstanding business as, in [1887](#), there was a [fire](#) at the premises of a Mrs W Needham, an ironmonger in the old Market Place. Indeed a Mrs William Needham is listed in the 1899 Kelly's Directory but, by 1928, the listing is for Needham Brothers. Based on the photos I found, the business started in 1837 and closed in 1964.

⁴² I think that is what it says.

Grandma and grandad also bought various things for in and around the home. In December 1946, they went into Nottingham and bought an electric clock for £3 13 2. The following week, they bought an electric clock for the Sunday School at the same price. In October 1948, grandad bought an electric clock for the glasshouse from Mr Reddish for 61 shillings. In September 1949, grandad bought a Belling⁴³ electric cooker for £12 guineas including plugs and wire. In November 1949, grandma and grandad went into Nottingham to get some stair carpeting but they were not successful. In December, they were more successful and bought some that was 23/8 per yard. They also bought mum a globe for Christmas for forty shillings. That same month, mum noted getting a book worth eight and six from Santa when she just paid one shilling.

In June 1946, grandad noted selling mum's bike and basket to Dolly⁴⁴ for £5 10 0. In July 1947, grandad bought two cyclometers for six and six each. In July 1947, grandad bought mum a Raleigh green cycle from Standard Gramophone Co.⁴⁵ He paid £20 cash for it when he collected it but noted that he did not get a receipt. In July 1949, mum went to Mansfield and bought grandad a Smiths' cycle speedometer⁴⁶ for 35 shillings.



Top right – cutting of advert for Belling cooker
Above – advert for Standard Gramophone Company from the Kirkby official guide 1950
Right – example of Smiths' motorcycle speedometer circa 1960s



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⁴³ [Belling](#) are a well-known maker of cookers that still produce them.

⁴⁴ I assume grandad was referring to Dorothy (Dolly) Smith, his nephew's (Leonard's) wife.

⁴⁵ Mark Ashfield describes this shop in "Christmas Pigs and a Summer Donkey" (p20). He noted that it sold things other than gramophones and it is of interest that he bought his first bike there.

⁴⁶ [Smiths](#) continues as a company today and is most known for its motorcycle speedometers.

In March 1948, grandad got a gunsight⁴⁷ from a firm in London. It cost thirty five shillings plus one and six postage. But, in May, he sent it back in exchange for a telescope for which he paid an extra £3 1 0. It arrived at the end of May. Mum noted going round the forest with grandad to try it out and grandad noted that it was not as powerful as he had expected. The next day, he went for a bike ride to test it out but, in early June, he sent it back. He asked for his money back and this came on the 19th. A few days later, grandma and grandad went into Nottingham and he bought a pair of secondhand Zeiss binoculars for £12 10 0. On the same trip, they also bought mum a hammock for a guinea.⁴⁸ I am not sure if grandad was completely satisfied with the binoculars as, at the end of June, he went to Nottingham to see about getting better binoculars but decided to keep the ones he had as he considered that they could not be bettered for the price.

FEBRUARY 1947
Went by 8:20 MON.
Bus to Notts for 3
a new pulley for motor
to Greggs for a
ranger £8.10 0

During this period, grandad bought and sold various items related to the shoe shop⁴⁹ he was running. In January 1947, he noted selling the press and knives to Albert Robinson for £15. In February 1947, he went by bus to Nottingham to buy a new pulley for seventeen shillings and to Greggs⁵⁰ for a ranger⁵¹ for £8 10 0.



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Above – example of Zeiss binoculars

Below left – grandad's diary entry for 3 February 1947

Below – example of a ranger



⁴⁷ I have no idea why grandad ordered this. As far as I know, he never owned a gun and I would be very surprised if he had. I can only assume he was trying it as a cheap alternative to buying a telescope.

⁴⁸ See [Chapter 40](#).

⁴⁹ See p4.

⁵⁰ See [Chapter 52](#).

⁵¹ Initially, I was not sure what this was but I found one for sale and bought it from [Ilias Little Shoebox](#). They kindly explained to me what it was for saying, “the machine basically works as an old [skiving machine](#), it dents the sole leather to make it more tactile for gluing and shaves off the underside to make it thinner for various uses. It has a few screws to alter the blade table which you make higher or lower depending upon the thickness of the leather and how much you wish to remove for the work you’re undertaking.”

Also, during this period, mum and grandad bought a number of other items. In August 1947, mum and grandad went to collect Olive's ticket for West Hartlepool.⁵² The cost was 30/9. In July 1947, mum noted getting a new watch and, in November 1948, she noted having the watch cleaned and getting a new strap. In August 1947, grandad bought a rollball⁵³ pen from Reginald Edwards for 33 shillings. In January 1949, mum bought a Biro Minor.⁵⁴ In December 1947, grandma and grandad bought a Remington standard typewriter for £23. In March 1946, mum bought grandma a glass photo frame for ten shillings and, in August 1946, in Trusthorpe, she bought her a brooch for seven and six. In April 1947, mum went to Sutton to get tennis balls. In October 1947, mum bought a hockey bag from the Guide shop⁵⁵ in Nottingham. In August 1946, mum went with Mrs Hill and grandma into Nottingham. She noted having five ice creams and spending two shillings on these.⁵⁶



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*Top right – advert for Biro Minor
Above – example of Remington Standard typewriter*

⁵² To visit the Lofthouses.

⁵³ I assume he was referring to a [rollerball pen](#) although he appeared to spell this "rolball".

⁵⁴ The [Retrowow](#) website has an interesting history of the Biro. It seems that the Biro Minor model was introduced in 1948.

⁵⁵ There is [still](#) such a shop in the city. I could not, however, find details of the shop in the 1941 Kelly's Directory.

⁵⁶ I don't quite follow this, whether she meant she had five ice creams herself or between them.