



Chapter 116: Grandad's Death

My grandfather, Charles Gordon Parkin, died on 13 November 1975. He was 77. He would have turned 78 on 1 December. I was 15. He was my second grandparent to die. My paternal grandfather Charles Arthur Drew had died just over five years earlier in March 1970 when I was nine.¹ He was 69.

D. Cert. R.B.D.		 CERTIFIED COPY Pursuant to the Births and		OF AN ENTRY Deaths Registration Act 1953	
DEATH				Entry No.	150
Registration district	NORWICH OUTER		Administrative area		
Sub-district	NORWICH OUTER		COUNTY OF NORFOLK		
1. Date and place of death					
Thirteenth November 1975 166 High Road Drayton Norwich Norfolk.					
2. Name and surname				3. Sex	
Charles Gordon PARKIN				Male	
				4. Maiden surname of woman who has married	
				-	
3. Date and place of birth					
1st December 1897 Kirkby in ashfield Notts.					
6. Occupation and usual address					
A Boot and Shoe Retailer 166 High Road Drayton, Norwich, Norfolk.					
7. (a) Name and surname of informant				(b) Qualification	
Sheila May DREW				Daughter	
(c) Usual address					
192 College Road Norwich Norfolk.					
8. Cause of death					
a Uraemia b Prostate Hypertrophy c Cerebral vascular accident Certified by J.H. Gale MB					
9. I certify that the particulars given by me above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.					
Sheila M. Drew					Signature of informant
10. Date of registration				11. Signature of registrar	
Fourteenth November 1975				D.R. Lincoln Registrar	

IN 582775

Certified to be a true copy of an entry in a register in my custody.

 Registrar 14.11.1975 Date

Certified copy of my grandfather's death certificate. His death was certified by GP Dr Gale and registered by mum the following day. The cause of death was uraemia as a result of prostatic hypertrophy and cerebrovascular accident

¹ See [Chapter 100](#).

Grandad had been unwell in the early seventies and remained unwell throughout 1975. He had had surgery for an enlarged prostate the previous year in January 1974.² However, he continued to have urinary symptoms although he had good days and bad days. Things came to a head at the end of June 1975 when he was no longer able to pass urine. He was seen by his GP Dr Gale³ and referred to hospital. He was admitted to Ward 7 under the care of Mr Ashken⁴. Mr Ashken did not think his symptoms were prostate-related but that they might be eased by stretching the bladder neck. This procedure was carried out on 2 July 1975. However, it did not have the desired effect and efforts to remove the catheter were unsuccessful. He was discharged home⁵ with the catheter in place on 9 July 1975. The plan was that he would keep the catheter in place for three weeks. At home, he was visited by a number of his GPs, including Dr Sladden⁶, Dr Leeming⁷ and Dr Gale, and by different male nurses, including Mr Baker and Mr Pearce⁸. Grandad remained weak spending most of his time in bed⁹ although he was able to get up for short periods. Grandma got a wheelchair for him.¹⁰ On 23 July 1975, Mr Ashken told mum that they intended to keep grandad's catheter indefinitely. He would only attend hospital to have the catheter

1975 129
July 1 - 8th

July 1 Not very well - told I was to have an OP on Wed
E + S came yesterday they brought my watch
and new slippers £.49 - watch £1.50.
mum asked what they were going to do.

July 2 Had my OP about 10.30. Mr Ashken says that
to say it all went according to plan.
No visiting

July 3 E came at 1 o'clock. I was fair - eating
nothing - trying to drink a bit. Sheila came to
E came at night

FRI 4 E + S + Roger came to see me. I was fair but
not eating. Two nurses tried to get the ca.
out but failed so left it.

Sat 5 I was up after dinner. E came + I shaved
Roger + Ashken came to see me. I was doing OK
and Elizabeth came in the aft.

Sun 6 Had a bad night + worse morning. They took
the ca. out but had to put another in.
E came early - Sheila + Roger came + took
her for tea. Roger + E came in the evening
I was very poorly. Rev Hayman came.

MON 7 A little better but OP not very successful. One
nurse said he was sorry but would try something else
E came also + Sheila

Tue 8 No rain for weeks but just a shower tonight
E came + saw Sheila. I am going home
tomorrow. Sheila had a bit of trouble with
the car so E said we had no transport. I
shall go home by ambulance.

Grandad's diary entries from 1-8 July 1975.
Grandad was in hospital at this time and I think
grandma was keeping his diary for him

² See [Chapter 100](#).

³ Dr John Gale was in fact [the second Dr Gale](#) to work as a GP in Drayton. His father, James Newlyn Gale, bought the practice in 1938 and worked until his retirement in 1957. John joined him as partner in 1952. He himself retired in April 1983.

⁴ Michael Ralph Handley Ashken was Consultant Urologist at the Norfolk and Norwich from 1968 to 1996, see [Chapter 100](#). He had first seen grandad as early as December 1970 and carried out his surgery in 1974. At the time grandad was admitted on this occasion, mum had just started to work for him as part-time secretary for his private practice, see [Chapter 121](#). She noted that Mr Ashken talked to her about grandad.

⁵ Grandad had various visitors while he was in hospital including grandmaf, mum, me, Alan, Liz, the Elsegoods, Irene Bell and Rev Hayman. Various people visited him at home after he was discharged. These included mum, me, Liz, Arthur Elsegood, Mr and Mrs Hinchley, Mrs Winspear, Mr Barnes, Barbara Carpenter, Clarence Hodgson and Mr Newsome. People helped by bringing food, such as strawberries, lettuce and blackcurrant jam; helping with shopping; and/or sitting with grandad so that grandma could do jobs.

⁶ Dr David Sladden [joined the Drayton Practice](#) in 1956. I believe he [died in 2021](#) aged 96.

⁷ I have not yet found out much about Dr Leeming except that he was [one of the doctors](#) at the Drayton practice in 1983 and again in 1987.

⁸ Or Pierce.

⁹ I am not sure if grandad's urinary problems fully explained how poor his health was at this time. On 24 July 1975, although he had been improving, grandma noted that he had a bad night with "heart pains".

¹⁰ Initially, grandma got one from the Red Cross but, apparently, this was the wrong kind. On 22 August 1975, one came from the NHS and grandad was very pleased with it. By this time, grandad was more active. On the 24th, he lowered the footrests and spent time tidying his cabin. On 8 September 1975, mum took the Red Cross wheelchair back.

changed.¹¹ Over time, he improved and, by 31 July 1975¹², he was able to walk with a stick. However, he still had some bad days and grandma cancelled her plans to go on a women's outing to Lowestoft on 14 August¹³. On the 24th, he lowered the footrests on the wheelchair and spent time tidying his cabin. He was able to get out a bit in the wheelchair. On the 25th, mum and Tricia took him to the gala in the park¹⁴ and, on the 28th, grandma pushed him to see their next-door-but-one neighbour, Irene Bell.



On 25 August 1975, mum and Tricia took grandad in a wheelchair to what grandma referred to as the gala in the park. This news cutting from the Eastern Daily Press of 26 August 1975 refers to this as Drayton Carnival. I believe it was held in the park opposite grandma and grandad's house. Actress [Jennifer Wilson](#) opened the Carnival

In September 1975, Dr Leeming saw grandad because his legs were swollen and he doubled his "water tablets". From mid-September, Mr Ashken discussed and agreed with mum that the district nurses could change grandad's catheter at home. This proceeded largely without incident except on 28 September 1975 when grandad called Mr Baker at 1am because he had "trouble with my water". At the beginning of October, he had trouble with his right foot¹⁵ and this meant he was still using the wheelchair.¹⁶

Despite some gradual improvement, grandad was quite unwell on 21 and 22 October 1975. On the 23rd, grandma phoned mum to say he had had a stroke, possibly on the 21st. From then he was very

¹¹ Mum took him for this to be done on 2 August 1975. There were some issues with the type of bags he was supplied. The hospital gave him bags for use in bed but he wanted/needed "leg bags". He got some from Mr Pearce and on prescription through Dr Leeming. He also got some from Mr Newsome, a friend.

¹² This date coincided with when he resumed making diary entries.

¹³ See Chapter 124.

¹⁴ Attended by 13,000 people.

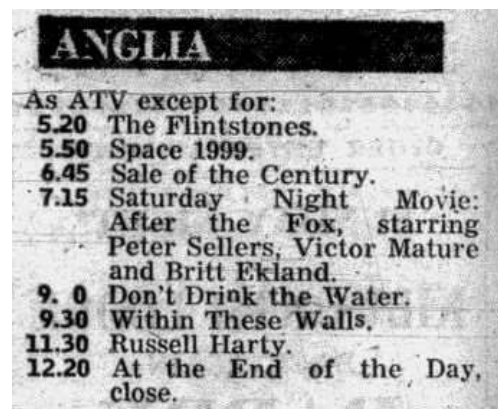
¹⁵ I am not sure exactly what trouble he was having. It is possible it was gout as he had suffered with this from at least 1962, see Chapter 78.

¹⁶ On 4 October 1975, grandad bought a night commode from Miss Cooke, grandma's friend, for £2. Grandad noted it was a good one, better than the one he had made in Kirkby, see Chapter 31.

unwell spending his time largely in bed.¹⁷ On the 30th, mum visited him¹⁸ and found him asleep so she went back in the evening. She noted he was ill but the doctor said he had got over the “coronary”.¹⁹ On 1 November 1975, grandma noted that he listened to “[Sale of the Century](#)”.²⁰ The next day, we went to grandma and grandad’s for tea. Mum noted that she was “afraid” to be with him.²¹ On the 7th, twin beds came.²² On the 11th, the doctor told mum that grandad had had another “heart attack”. All tablets except for four had been stopped and he was told to drink plenty.²³ On the 12th, grandma phoned to say he was in a coma. Mum phoned Dr Leeming who said there was nothing that could be done and it was only a matter of time. I went to stay the night. The doctor came three times. According to grandma, grandad was ill but chatted quietly to grandma. On the 13th, grandma wrote²⁴ for grandad “I was weak but talked nicely at 1.30am. Then I went to sleep never to wake in this world at 9.30. Mr Pearce & Ethel were with me”.

Nov 8 - 147

Sat 8	I was not too well. Nellie, Clarrie, Florrie & Arthur came to see me in the AM. Irene came at night.
Sun 9	E did not go out - I was so tired Dr Leeming came. S. & fam came for tea. The male nurse came & gave me a bath (a bed)
Mon 10	I was still so weary I slept most of the day. Dr Leeming came & altered my tablets.
Tues 11	The nurse came & made me comfortable. The Doctor came. E never left me. S. came each day, twice some days.
Wed 12	The Doctor came 3 times. I was ill but chatted quietly to E. Roger stayed the night.
Thurs 13	I was very weak but talked nicely at 1.30 AM. Then I went to sleep never to wake in this world at 9.30. Mr Pearce & Ethel were with me.



Above – Anglia TV Guide for 1 November 1975 from Leicester Daily Mercury obtained through paid subscription to [Find My Past](#). Grandma noted that grandad listened to “Sale of the Century” [Left](#) – final entries in grandad’s diary from 8-13 November 1975. Based on content and handwriting, it seems grandma completed his diary from 21 October 1975

¹⁷ Dr Gale came on the 23rd and said grandad could get up to watch wrestling on the 25th but he did not feel well enough to do so. Dr Leeming came and said he would come again on Monday. On Sunday, his friend Arthur Elsegood gave him a shave. On Monday 27th, grandad was determined to get up but felt really ill. Dr Leeming came and wanted him back in bed. On the 28th, he was too ill to get up but Dr Leeming said his pulse was stronger. Grandma phoned mum to say that grandad had been very poorly the previous day, his heart was irregular and his pulse was not too good.

¹⁸ People who visited him in November 1975 included Barbara Carpenter, Mrs L (Lefever?), Rose Elsegood, Nellie, Clarrie, Florrie and Arthur and Irene Bell. In addition various people phoned including Uncle Jim (Frank Seville), Olive Holland and Irene Bell. Dr Gale and Dr Leeming each visited during November and nurses came with them.

¹⁹ I am not completely sure if he had had a coronary (myocardial infarction) or a stroke (cerebrovascular accident). From the certification on the death certificate, it seems it was the latter.

²⁰ Grandma noted this as SoC. I checked and “Sale of the Century” was [on that evening](#).

²¹ I am not quite sure why. Was she afraid he might die while she was there?

²² Mum had ordered these the previous day. I assume this was so that grandma and grandad could have separate beds, possibly using both their bedrooms. However, I am not sure why that was not possible with the existing (two double?) beds. Possibly, they wanted to have two single beds in the same room.

²³ Not [Lucozade!](#)

²⁴ Based on handwriting, it seems that grandad’s last entry was 20 October 1975.

Grandad died at 9.30am on 13 November 1975. Mum arrived about ten minutes later and stayed until around 2pm. She then “made arrangements” and phoned relatives. On the 14th, she went to see the funeral director, Peter Taylor²⁵, and she also registered the death. Grandad’s funeral was on 17 November 1975. We went to school in the morning. Mum met us at 12 noon and we went to Drayton. The cremation was at 3pm at St Faith’s²⁶. There was no church service²⁷ but a nice service at the crematorium.²⁸ Mum noted that the service was led by Rev Graham Eddy²⁹ and Rev Arthur Lofthouse³⁰ spoke³¹. Two days after the funeral, she noted that grandma was OK. She commented that she missed



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St Faith’s crematorium and memorial chapel in 2016

²⁵ There is still a funeral director by this name at [85 Unthank Road](#). It seems to be part of the Coop. Nicholas Taylor has produced quite a [detailed biography](#) of his father Peter Taylor who I think founded the company. He was born in 1915 and he died in 2000. In the 1971/2 Kelly’s Tradefinder. Peter Taylor is listed as a Funeral Director at 133 Unthank Road where [Hair For Men](#) is based now.

²⁶ [St Faith’s crematorium](#) opened in 1937 on the site of a former workhouse which was destroyed by fire in 1923. The large red and mauve brick chapel was finished in 1936.

²⁷ Frankly, I am surprised by this given how fervent churchgoers grandma and mum were. I suspect grandma decided pragmatically that because grandad did not attend church services he probably would not have wanted a church service for his funeral. I don’t know what mum would have thought. I do know that when Alan died, she was quite insistent on having a Methodist service for him even though Alan did not attend church and both his widow and son had strong feelings against having a church/religious service although they went along with it given mum’s strength of feeling on this.

²⁸ People who attended included Ray and Kenneth Cirket, Dorothy Rose (Auntie Dolly), Olive and Alf Holland and their daughter Carole Pacey, and a large number of women, presumably from the Drayton women’s group to which grandma belonged. There were about 40 for tea. Mum noted that my younger sister Liz was very upset. Various people also wrote to mum. These included John Overfield and Sue Banning, the latter on behalf of the Young Wives Group to which mum belonged.

²⁹ Mum noted that the service was led by Rev Graham Eddy. Based on her CV, see [Chapter 105](#), mum worked as part-time secretary to Rev G T Eddy the Chairman of the East Anglia District of the Methodist Church from 1973 to 1977. So, initially, I thought this was the person in question particularly when I found a [reference](#) to Rev Graham Eddy being Methodist Chairman of the District in 1976. But, I wonder if there were two Rev Eddys in Norfolk at that time, see [Chapter 124](#). In September 1975, grandma went to a women’s meeting at Drayton Methodist Church. The speaker, Rev Eddy, was described as having taken the place of Rev Hayman. Rev Hayman had been Minister at Mile Cross and had his final service there in August 1975. In November 1977, mum was annoyed with “Eddy”, who she described as the Mile Cross man, as he said he was unable to visit grandma in hospital because he did not have money for petrol. Mum wrote to him and sent him 50p for transport! I doubt she would have done this if it had been the Chairman of the District for whom she worked. Also, mum referred to Rev Eddy, the Chairman of the Methodist District as either “the Chairman” or GTE. The only time she specifically referred to Graham Eddy was on this occasion. It also makes sense that the Mile Cross Minister would have led this service. However, I have struggled to find out much about Rev Graham Eddy. I did establish that he was Methodist Minister at [Stocksbridge Christian Centre](#) from 1989 to 1994. There is pretty overwhelming evidence that the District Chairman was Rev [Geoffrey Thackray Eddy](#). He was born in Prestwich Lancashire in 1915, entered the Ministry in 1936 and died in Stratford-on-Avon in 2014. It appears he became Chairman of the East Anglia District in [1972](#) having previously held the [same post in Lincoln](#).

³⁰ George Arthur Lofthouse was a close family friend having been Minister at Bourne Methodist Chapel in Kirkby from 1938 to 1942, see [Chapter 31](#).

³¹ Mum thought he spoke “beautifully”.

166 High Road
Drayton
Norwich
NR8 6BA
December 1975

*Mrs Parkin & Sheila
wish to thank you for the
loving sympathy shown to them
It has helped tremendously.
The gifts to the Coeliac Society
in lieu of flowers amounted to £51
for which we are very grateful.*

"Lo I am with you always"
MATT. 28. 20

Message of thanks and appreciation that
grandma and mum sent out in December
1975 following grandad's death

grandad "so *very much*" and could not get used to the situation. She thought it just seemed to get worse. Mum did receive quite high levels of support from people around her.³² On 30 November 1975, when we went for tea with grandma, mum filled in probate forms. On 4 December 1975, mum went to the probate office. Apparently, grandma had sent a draft will so mum noted she would have to go back again. On the 8th, she did this and made an appointment for Thursday. On the 11th, mum took grandma there to "swear".³³

I do recall when grandad died, certainly more clearly than I remember the death of my paternal grandfather. He died when I was much younger and I did not know him so well. However, I do not recall the specifics of the funeral arrangements. I do remember staying over at grandma's the night grandad died. I don't believe I was with him in the same room when he died. I do recall how utterly exhausted grandma seemed.

In 1975, grandma's health was much better than grandad's. She used to help him by collecting his medicines when she went into Drayton village, e.g. to collect their pensions and/or to do shopping. However, she was occasionally unwell. For example,

in January 1975, she had a dizzy spell. She was also unwell in June 1975. But, by the next day, her condition was "fair" and she went with members of the women's group to Weybourne.³⁴

She did suffer from arthritis³⁵. In September 1976, she had blood tests for this. On 6 November 1976, mum took grandma to see Consultant Rheumatologist, Dr Neil Cardoe.³⁶ She was to have blood tests and xrays and to see Dr Cardoe and Mr Taylor³⁷ possibly about having an operation. On the 18th, mum

³² On 20 November 1975, mum spoke with Rev Ken Elworthy about possibly going for counselling at St Barnabas's, see [Chapter 114](#). Mum also spoke to Rev Malcolm Carter and noted that it was "*nice to be able to be honest when someone asks "How are you"?*" On the 21st, mum went to the Chairman's. While, he tried to offer support, she was somewhat sceptical about this. She noted, "*he sat me in a "comfortable chair" while we had coffee and talked about dad. I'm sure he is sincere but its just his way which makes it seem a "duty"*". On the 24th, Rev Dowson rang mum to see if she was OK. She said she needed to talk to him and he said he would ring when he could.

³³ Since 2018, you no longer need to go in person to swear an oath for probate. This has been [replaced by a written statement of truth which needs to be signed](#).

³⁴ See [Chapter 124](#).

³⁵ Based on mum's diary notes, it seems that there was some uncertainty over whether it was rheumatoid arthritis or osteoarthritis. While my diary did not say much about grandma's health, I did note in late November 1976 that grandma's elbow seemed to be giving her a lot of trouble.

³⁶ [Neil Cardoe](#) was born in 1922 and died, aged 98, in 2021. I don't know much about him except he was a Consultant Physician and Rheumatologist at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital.

³⁷ This is a reference to [John Gibson Taylor](#) who was known as Ian. He was a consultant orthopaedic surgeon at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. Born in 1918, he grew up in Fleet and studied medicine at [St Mary's Hospital](#) qualifying in 1941. He served in the Royal Naval Volunteer Reserve during the second world war. He then returned to St Mary's as a registrar to [V H Ellis](#), the orthopaedic surgeon. He passed his FRCS in 1947 and

met grandma at the hospital to go to Dr Cardoe's clinic. However, grandma did not see him. She had blood tests and xrays and was referred for occupational therapy.³⁸ Mum thought grandma was upset that more had not been done.³⁹ Mum spoke to someone called Shirley who promised to do all she could.⁴⁰ On New Year's Eve 1976, mum took grandma to see Mr Taylor about her elbows.⁴¹ He recommended an operation on the left one and would get her in under a year on the NHS. She would need to go to St Michael's in Aylsham⁴² for two weeks possibly longer. It could be done privately in March but would cost at least £800.

The former St Michael's Hospital in Aylsham in 2009



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Old postcard of St Michael's Hospital in Aylsham

However, on 20 January 1977, grandma was asked to go in on Monday at 10am to Aylsham Hospital.⁴³ So, on the 24th, mum went to Drayton for 9am and took grandma to St Michael's Hospital in Aylsham. In my diary, I noted *"this morning mum took grandma into Aylsham hospital as she is going to have an operation on her elbow to remove the pain due to her rheumatism. The op will be on Wednesday. Mum & I went to see her this evening. She seems to have settled in well, it took us 1/2 an hour to get to Aylsham as it is 15 miles."*⁴⁴ Grandma had her

became first assistant to the accident service at the [John Radcliffe Hospital](#) in Oxford. In 1954 he was appointed consultant orthopaedic surgeon in Norwich. He held joint clinics with Neil Cardoe and Gilson Wenley for rheumatoid and other arthritic problems, at first in an old workhouse, St Michael's Hospital in Aylsham. There, a stable block was converted into an operating theatre. In this unlikely setting Ian performed knee and metacarpo-phalangeal joint replacements. His wife was Fodhla Burnell, an anaesthetist. He died in 2005.

³⁸ She was told that an appointment would be sent for this.

³⁹ While this may have been the case, it is also possible that it was mum who was unhappy that more had not been done!!

⁴⁰ I am not exactly sure who this was but I assume she was another medical secretary. It is possible she was Dr Cardoe's secretary. However, mum was secretary for Mr Stephens' private practice, see Chapter 121, and I believe his NHS secretary was called Shirley. This might have been her.

⁴¹ I am not sure if this was through the NHS or privately but I suspect the latter.

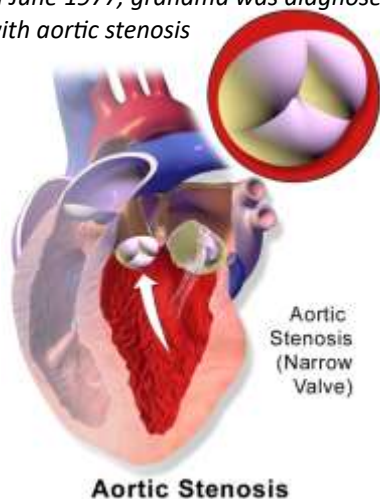
⁴² This is the former [workhouse](#) that was converted into a hospital that is referred to in footnote 37. It was built between 1848-9. It was originally known as the Aylsham Workhouse and then, in 1930, the Aylsham Public Assistance Institution. It then became St Michael's Hospital but by the early 21st century it was empty.

⁴³ I don't know if this was private or through the NHS. It was much quicker than Mr Taylor had indicated for either route. It is possible, perhaps likely, that mum used her work connections to pull strings. On the 25th, Mr Stephens, the surgeon for whom mum worked, said he would speak to Mr Taylor about grandma. So, he was clearly aware of her and Mr Taylor knew who mum worked for.

⁴⁴ Other people who visited grandma while she was in hospital included Liz, Alan and Arthur and Rose Elsegood. I assume visiting was limited to two people as mostly mum used to go with just one of us. On 2 February 1977, mum noted that the "C of E man" from Drayton, Rev Barney Broom, had gone to see her especially. I think this might be a reference to Bernard William Broom. Mum was disappointed that the

operation⁴⁵ on the 26th. On the 27th, mum noted that she seemed well but had a temperature. On the 31st, she had her plaster off and she was discharged from hospital on 10 February 1977. She stayed with us until the 16th. In early March 1977, mum took grandma back to see Mr Taylor. He said he would do the other arm in late summer but he noted it would be a bigger operation. Mum noted she would see him again on 6 May but there is no record of that appointment taking place. As far as I know grandma did not ever have the other arm operated on. She did see Dr Cardoe on 16 June 1977 but was then discharged from further follow-up.⁴⁶

In June 1977, grandma was diagnosed with aortic stenosis



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One factor in grandma not having surgery on the other arm may have been that her general health was poorer from April 1977. On the 12th, mum was called at 2.10am⁴⁷ because grandma was “not very well”. When mum got back at lunch-time, she told us that grandma had something wrong with her heart but it was not serious. Apparently, mum was told that she had not had a coronary but did have “heart strain”. This was treated with digoxin, furosemide (Lasix) and potassium chloride (Slow K). On the 14th, mum rang Dr Leeming at night. He had done an ECG and still thought she had not had a coronary. He was going to visit on Saturday and he told mum she could ring anytime.⁴⁸ At the end of April, grandma was short of breath again. Mum was told that she had a “flutter”. On 3 May 1977, mum spoke to Dr Leeming who told her that she had atrial fibrillation.⁴⁹ On 20 June

Methodist Minister from Mile Cross, who I believe was Graham Eddy, had said he could not visit because he did not have money for petrol. Mum wrote to him and sent him 50p for petrol! Tricia, who was away at University, see [Chapter 120](#), sent a card and two letters. Various people phoned including Auntie Amy (Wilson), Jim, Renie, Bert and Edie (Seville). On 25 January 1977, mum rang Mr Slater and had a conversation about grandma. I am not sure who that was. On the 26th, mum met Mr Keeble in the corridor. He had been our next-door neighbour when we lived in Hellesdon, see [Chapter 75](#).

⁴⁵ Mum noted that the sister told her it was a small one. However, they gave grandma a blood transfusion as she was anaemic.

⁴⁶ On 15 June 1977, mum went to St Michael’s Hospital to discuss chairs with Ann Mary. I have assumed these were for work, see Chapter 121, but it is possible they could have related to grandma.

⁴⁷ Auntie Dolly was staying with grandma and she called mum. Grandma was having difficulty getting her breath. Mum called the doctor. Dr Eve came and gave her an injection. Dr Julian Eve was [one of the Drayton GPs](#). He joined the practice in 1956 and retired in 1986. Mum noted that Dr Eve had said she could go but Auntie Dolly wanted her to stay so “I lay on settee - just dropped off about 7 when she woke me with cup of tea.” Dr Leeming then came twice. Mum came home from 1-3 and noted that Auntie Dolly would not let her come for longer! On the 15th, mum and Liz went to Drayton and did shopping for grandma. On the 17th, mum did grandma’s washing. Also, on the 17th, Auntie Dolly told mum that she would ring mum if grandma was unwell again and, according to mum, refused to ring the doctor. At one point, I thought grandma might come to stay with us when Auntie Dolly went back to Bedford. However, she did not. She seemed to improve and had a home help coming in. Mum noted that Dr Leeming thought it was OK for grandma to stay at home on her own.

⁴⁸ Mum thought this was because she had got Mr Ashken to see one of his patients the next day. To me, this is another example of mum seeking to use her position as a medical secretary to gain preferential treatment. Whether this was the case I am not sure.

⁴⁹ On the 21st, grandma was not too well. Mum thought this was because one of grandma’s friends, Mrs Cooper, had visited and stayed three hours. Mum noted that Dr Leeming was putting up a notice limiting visitors to 15 minutes. Also that day, I noted that grandma was not very well but apparently well enough to tell mum that she didn’t think I would pay her back for the motorbike, see [Chapter 127](#)! I noted that I would “to spite her”!

1977, mum went with grandma to see cardiologist Dr Oliver⁵⁰. He told her that she had had a faulty valve all her life. If she had been 15 years younger, he would have recommended an operation but, as she was 76, he recommended “going slow”. On the 29th, Dr Leeming told mum that grandma had a calcified valve for which nothing could be done “and will be sudden”. Mum noted that the prognosis was 2-3 years.⁵¹ After that grandma grew generally frailer and also had episodes of ill-health.

On 2 July 1977, mum went to Drayton as grandma was not too well. Grandma rang on 7 July to say she had not been very well all week. She had had Dr Leeming on Tuesday and was going to ask him to come again on Friday. On 9 July 1977, mum went to see grandma. She was slightly better. On 17 July 1978, mum went to the Norfolk and Norwich and ordered grandma a [Renray](#) seat.⁵² On 6 October 1978, mum took grandma to Tilletts⁵³ to have her ring cut off. On 7 October 1978, grandma was not very well and they called Dr Leeming. He thought it was low blood pressure. Mary Bettany was staying the night. Dr Leeming phoned mum. On the 8th, grandma was not too bad and wouldn't have the doctor again. Mary stayed the night again. On the 9th, grandma was much better. Mum went there to do lunch but grandma had almost done it. On 27 December 1979, grandma was in Bedford visiting Auntie Dolly. Auntie Dolly phoned saying grandma was not very well, she had forgotten to take her tablets, and she wanted to come home. Kenneth brought her. Mum went to see her in the evening but thought she was not too bad although she was a “bit breathless”.



Top of jewellery box from Thomas Tillet Ltd who were jewellers and silversmiths in St Giles Street in Norwich. In October 1978, grandma went there to have her ring cut off. I assume her hand had swollen because of arthritis or heart failure or both

There was a great deal in the diaries for this period concerning mum's health which appears to have been poor overall, something I was not particularly aware of at the time. She saw a wide range of doctors including particularly her GP, Dr Welch⁵⁴. While I have tried to divide mum's health issues into

⁵⁰ [Wilfrid Allen Oliver](#) (known as Bill) was born on 29 September 1913 and died on 22 January 1998. He was a physician and cardiologist at the Norfolk and Norwich from 1946 to 1978. He qualified from St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical College in 1936. He worked as a house physician for sixteen months and then spent two years studying pathology. In the first year he was junior demonstrator of bacteriology and in the second year he was appointed senior demonstrator of morbid anatomy and histology. In 1938, he gained his MD and passed the membership examination of the College. In the same year he was appointed clinical assistant to the [Hospital for Sick Children, Great Ormond Street](#). In 1939 he became chief assistant at St Bartholomew's under A E Gow and to its cardiac department under [Geoffrey Bourne](#). During the second world war, he served in the Royal Army Medical Corps. During the war, he gained experience dealing with a smallpox outbreak. In 1946 he was appointed as a physician and cardiologist to the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. He was a key figure in developing the cardiac department in Norwich. He retired in 1978. In 1947 he married Daisy Constance Cecilia (née Whatley) and they had two children. Following his first wife's death, he remarried to Pamela May Lambden. He died at his home in Lenwade, where he had moved after his retirement.

⁵¹ Grandma died on 2 June 1980. Her death certificate stated that she had aortic stenosis which is presumably what Dr Leeming was referring to.

⁵² These are chairs designed for “healthcare spaces”.

⁵³ A jewellers called Tilletts is [still in operation](#) at 17 St Giles Street, see [Chapter 92](#).

⁵⁴ Dr D M Welch was one of the GPs at the Mile End Surgery that we had belonged to since we moved to Norwich, see [Chapter 78](#). They also had a surgery in Tuckswold that mum sometimes used. This practice is now known as [Castle Partnership](#). While she mostly saw Dr Welch, she did sometimes see other doctors in the



Mile End Road Surgery in May 2025. This now forms part of the Castle Partnership

those affecting her mental health and those affecting her physical health, this distinction is rather simplistic as clearly some, if not many, of mum's physical symptoms had their origins in her poor mental health. Such physical symptoms, which she frequently complained about included general feelings of being unwell, tiredness and exhaustion⁵⁵, dizziness, fuzziness, headache⁵⁶, breathlessness, hiccups, swollen feet and a range of other aches and pains which may have had a physical cause and/or may have been contributed to by her poor mental health. Such pains included aching feet/legs⁵⁷, tummy pain/ache⁵⁸, backache/back pain⁵⁹, sinus pain⁶⁰, neck pain/stiff neck⁶¹, aches in her arms⁶², chest pain⁶³, pain in her shoulder blade, a sore mouth and an aching face.

practice. For example, in November 1977, mum saw Dr Welch and he introduced her to their GP trainee Dr Adrienne Cranefield who mum noted was married to Mrs Dowson's stepson. In August 1978, she noted seeing Dr Adrienne Hartley Booth as Dr Welch was on holiday. As noted in mum's diaries, Adrienne Cranefield was a GP trainee at the Mile End Road Surgery. She married Vernon E Hartley Booth in the third quarter of 1977. So, Cranefield was her maiden name and Booth or Hartley Booth her married name.

⁵⁵Mum often complained of feeling tired and sometimes of exhaustion. She thought there would be a physical cause for this but various investigations, at different times, failed to find one. On some occasions, but not always, these feelings related to poor sleep or physical activity. She was given a range of treatments including iron supplements (Ferrogradumet) and a mixture of thiamine hydrochloride (Vitamin B1), calcium glycerophosphate, potassium glycerophosphate, sodium glycerophosphate and manganese glycerophosphate ([Metatone](#)).

⁵⁶Mum experienced headaches from time to time and wondered if these related to extra work or tensions, e.g. at church, see [Chapter 124](#).

⁵⁷ Between December 1977 and July 1978, mum experienced symptoms in her legs and feet including pains, aches, tingling and bruising. She spoke to the nursing sister at work and also saw Dr Welch. Initially, he thought it was a pulled muscle and gave her pentazocine (Fortral) and a crepe bandage. Her symptoms continued and she was given various treatments including a combination of paracetamol and pentazocine (Fortagesic), quinine sulfate, phenylbutazone (Paroven) and multivitamins (Multivite). In April 1978, she raised the issue at an appointment with Mr Green. He advised vitamin B but if there was no improvement to see a "surgeon", although the type of surgeon is not specified! This is a bit odd as Mr Green was himself a surgeon!! In May 1978, mum had her leg xrayed but this was normal. In July 1978, Dr Welch told mum that her legs were nothing to worry about. He advised her to walk and have a good holiday. She bought support tights.

⁵⁸ On occasions, this was eased by antacids.

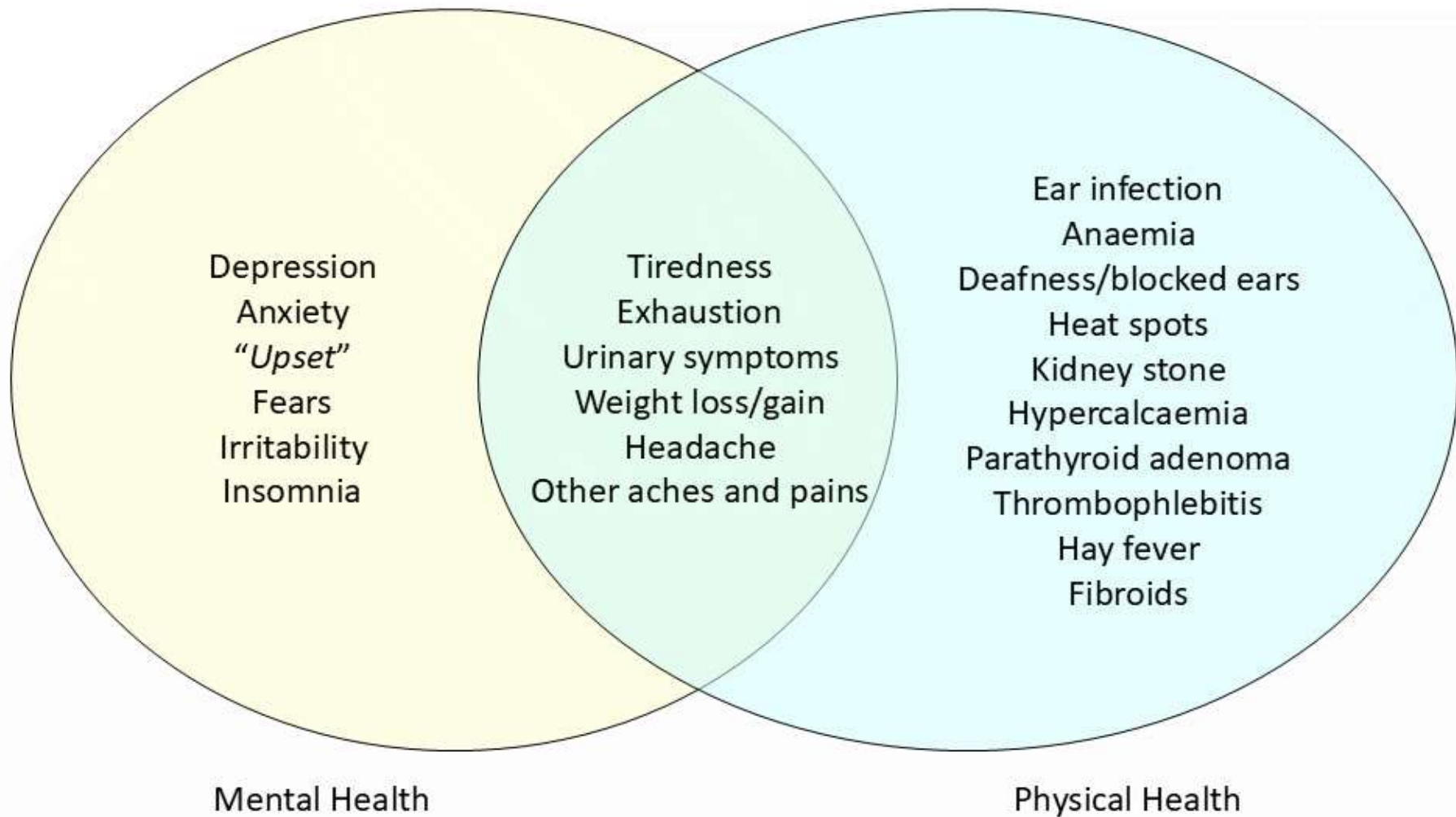
⁵⁹ From time to time, she had backache and related this either to a particular physical activity, such as sweeping leaves or collating church documents, or constipation.

⁶⁰ For which Dr Welch prescribed a combination of bromelain, rutoside and trypsin (Triogesic).

⁶¹ Between April and May 1975, mum experienced neck pain. She spoke to several of the GPs at her practice including Dr Carver, Dr Welch and Dr Bennett. She thought it might be a stiff neck or a boil. The doctors mentioned a pulled ligament, a slipped disc and a fibrous nodule. She was advised to take painkillers and was given coproxamol (Distalgesic), a mixture of aspirin and methocarbamol (Robaxial Forte) and a mixture of paracetamol and dihydrocodeine (Paramol 118). Dr Bennett told her there was nothing wrong really. Dr Welch gave her [clomethiazole](#) (Heminevrin) to help her sleep. Dr P H Carver was one of the GPs at the Mile End Road practice. I don't know any more details.

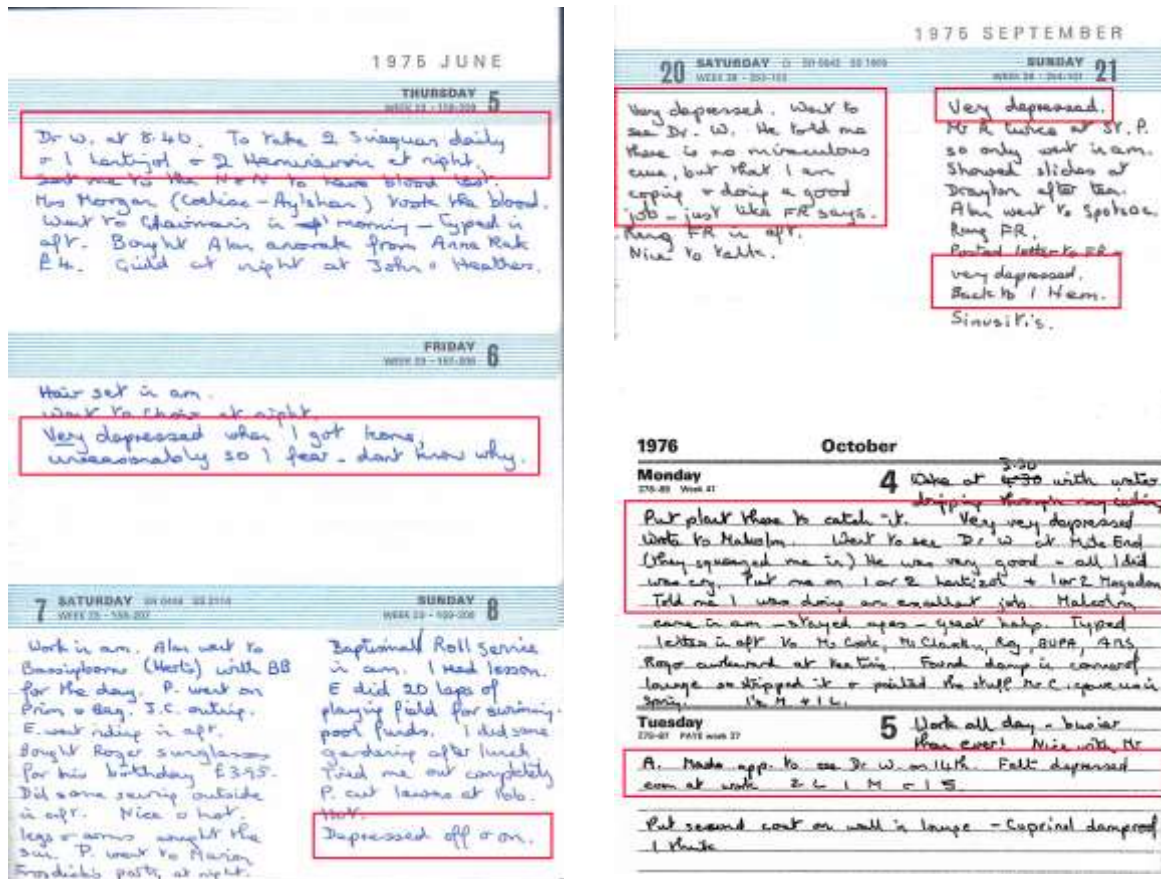
⁶² On one occasion, she noted taking Anadin for pains in her right arm. Mum wondered if it was arthritis.

⁶³ In December 1978, mum woke at 4am with pain in her chest and wondered if it was indigestion. She also had it twice during the evening. Three days later, she saw Dr Welch at Tuckswood. He told her the pain in the chest was a bruise.



Diagrammatic representation of mum's symptoms and illnesses showing those that were mostly related to mental health, those related mainly to physical health and those where the two aspects of health overlapped

Mum continued to suffer poor mental health during this period.⁶⁴ She complained frequently of feeling depressed, particularly in 1975 and 1976.⁶⁵ I find this a little surprising as depression was not something I ever recall her talking about or acknowledging. I guess her diary was a safe place to acknowledge her feelings at a time when it was uncommon to talk openly about mental health and illness.⁶⁶



Extracts from mum's diaries concerning feelings of depression.
Above left – extract from 5-8 June 1975. Mum noted feeling very depressed on the 6th. She did not know why but recognised this was unreasonable. On the 8th, she felt depressed off and on. On the 5th, she saw Dr Welch and noted the medications she was taking.
Top right – extract from 20-21 September 1975. She noted being very depressed and also seeing Dr Welch. He tried to encourage her by saying she was coping and doing a good job
Above right – extract from 4-5 October 1976. Mum noted being very, very depressed even at work. She saw Dr Welch but just cried while there. He told her she was doing an excellent job. She was on Lentizol (L) and Mogadon (M)

⁶⁴ Indeed, there is more about mum's mental health in the diaries of this period than in previous periods. This may be because mum had more mental health issues during this period but this is unlikely to be the main explanation. Mum was not keeping a diary in the early seventies and grandad did not talk about mental health issues even in his diaries. In the late sixties, mum had severe mental health issues and was treated with antidepressants and ECT, see [Chapter 88](#). However, her diary entries were sporadic at that time so those diaries are not as clear about mum's mental health issues as they might be.

⁶⁵ I counted over 100 references to being depressed in these two years including 14 references in a single month. This compares to only nine references across the other three years, 1977-1979. In September 1977, when she saw Dr Welch, he was pleased that she was not feeling depressed at that time. Sometimes, she abbreviated depressed to "d", e.g. "very lonely & d" on 20 July 1975. She also referred to feelings of depression in different ways, e.g. feeling "down", feeling "up and down", feeling "dejected", feeling "low", feeling "distressed" and seeing her future as "black".

⁶⁶ Mum tried actively to hide her symptoms of depression. For example, on 1 June 1976, she wrote that she was "very depressed but trying to hide it".

From the diaries, it is clear that certain things contributed to her feelings of depression and anxiety⁶⁷, upset⁶⁸, fear⁶⁹ and irritability⁷⁰. These included loneliness and “longings”; poor experience of church and church activities; issues relating to us her children; her relationship to dad and his visits; slow progress on getting a divorce; poor health; staying up late; problems with money; problems with the car; problems related to holidays; actions of her friends; and grandma’s advancing age and declining health.⁷¹ However, at times, mum felt depressed and did not know why. Similarly, there were times when mum felt better but did not know why. However, sometimes, mum could identify things that made her feel better. In particular, this included talking with friends and confidants such as Rev Dowson, Malcolm Carter and Dr Welch⁷². She also often felt better when at work⁷³. She clearly enjoyed her work and it



Mum felt less depressed when talking to a confidant, such as her former Minister Rev Dowson, see [Chapter 114](#). This is a still image from a [YouTube video](#) showing (at 0.42) my mother talking to Rev Dowson at an event to celebrate fifty years of St Peter’s Park Lane

⁶⁷ Clearly, mum suffered from anxiety but noted this less frequently than feeling depressed. Often, there were specific things that triggered her to worry including not knowing where one or other of us was; anxieties over one or more of our relationships; not having heard from someone, particularly Rev Dowson; anxieties over her health; anxieties over our health; concerns over her weight being too high or low; and money worries. I am not sure about my other siblings but I was more aware of mum’s anxieties than I was her depression. I think this was because her anxieties affected me directly. If I was even a few minutes later than she thought I should be, she would worry and would then be upset and angry when I did get in. Mum’s tendency to worry meant that I would avoid telling her things that I thought would worry her. For example, in May 1977, when I felt sick and had earache, I did not tell mum as I knew she would worry. One of the things mum complained about in her diary was that I did not talk to her about things that were worrying me. To be honest, mum would have been one of the last people I would have talked to about worries because I knew that she would not be reassuring or supportive but I was likely to trigger a level of anxiety in her that far outweighed any worries I had!

⁶⁸ Mum sometimes talked about being “upset”. By this, I think she probably meant what I would describe as “tears” and “tantrums” which I often experienced from her. These were almost always triggered by something which might seem minor to others but which would elicit a furious emotional response from mum. Examples include a church working party setting a date for their next meeting that Tricia would be unable to attend; me telling her that Tricia and I were not getting along; Alan telling her that he was bored with Boys’ Brigade; Mr Hunter, the ophthalmologist, telling her that it didn’t matter which of Alan’s eyes he operated on; and noticing that some of her stamps were missing.

⁶⁹ Mum also spoke about “fears” which seem to be closely related to worries and anxieties and were triggered by similar things. For example, she spoke of “fears” when Alan asked if he could go with three other boys to How Hill on Saturday and back Sunday; when it was very windy and she thought the house was shaking; and when she thought she might have parathyroid cancer.

⁷⁰ Sometimes, mum complained of being irritable and this included losing her temper. Often, this was directed at me and I confess that at that age I found her very irritable. She probably felt the same about me referring to me as “difficult”, “edgy” and “awkward”. Often this mutual irritability coincided with dad visiting, see [Chapter 114](#). At times, mum’s irritability was directed at others including my siblings and dad. Mum was usually sorry afterwards but I for one found such apologies a little hollow as the irritability etc would happen again.

⁷¹ See [Chapter 114](#).

⁷² She found that knowing she had an appointment booked with Dr Welch served as an emotional “anchor” for her. She very much appreciated him as her GP. For example, for Christmas 1975, mum took him a one pound box of chocolates to thank him for his help and patience.

⁷³ However, her GP, [Dr Welch](#) was concerned that work-related stresses were contributing to mum’s mental health problems. In April 1977, he wondered if the headaches mum was experiencing were due to tension as she had started getting them after she started working for Mr Ashken and Mr Stephens. Dr Welch also advised her to take things easy after she had been ill, and particularly after she had had surgery. This was advice she found more difficult to take. In August 1978, Dr Welch thought that she was overworking and that she would

gave a sense of fulfilment and of being valued. She fairly often talked in her diaries about fighting against or struggling with depression.



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Antidepressants

During this period, mum took a variety of medicines to try to improve her mental health. These included antidepressants such as amitryptiline (Tryptizol and Lentizol⁷⁴) and doxepin (Sinequan) and sleeping tablets⁷⁵ such as nitrazepam⁷⁶ (Mogadon), clomethiazole (Heminevrin), chlorpromazine⁷⁷ (Largactil), chloral hydrate⁷⁸ (Welldorm)⁷⁹ and flurazepam (Dalmane). In May 1978, she took dizepam (Valium) but I am not sure entirely why it was prescribed. It could have been for anxiety, insomnia or for the leg symptoms she was experiencing at the time. In July 1978, Dr Welch offered her chlordiazepoxide (Librium).⁸⁰

Mum sometimes referred to other people being depressed or anxious. For example, in January 1976, mum thought that Alan was depressed about his O level options and, in June 1976, she thought Malcolm Carter was very worried about Tricia's relationship with Andrew Wright and suggested mum spoke to Andrew about it.

Throughout this period, mum experienced urinary symptoms, including frequency, dysuria, abdominal ache and incontinence. These were thoroughly investigated by the GP, e.g. to rule out urinary infection.

be better when she had a rest in hospital. Dr Welch frequently advised her to take a holiday. This was advice mum was mostly happy to take, see [Chapter 114](#). However, the kinds of holidays she took, see [Chapter 122](#), at Methodist/Christian Guild properties, sometimes seemed to make her mental health worse because she felt that most, if not all, the people on such holidays were couples and this emphasised her own loneliness and poor mood. Sometimes, she did not feel a holiday or break would help. In May 1975, mum saw Dr Welch in the morning. He wanted her to get away for a break by herself. However, mum felt that she just needed to talk and share problems.

⁷⁴ Mum did not seem to take these tablets regularly and often commented if she had or had not taken them. On some occasions, she took a tablet to avoid or treat withdrawal symptoms particularly nausea.

⁷⁵ Mum did have trouble sleeping, including difficulties in getting off to sleep and sometimes waking early. Sometimes, Dr Welch suggested alternatives to sleeping tablets though such as staying up later before going to bed.

⁷⁶ Mum thought that nitrazepam made her restless and increased the activity of her thoughts and caused her to dream/have nightmares.

⁷⁷ Mum thought this was given to her to help her sleep. In July 1975, she saw Dr Welch because she was not sleeping well. He suggested stopping clomethiazole and starting chlorpromazine. I don't think mum's experience of taking chlorpromazine was positive as she felt it caused her thoughts to race.

⁷⁸ Also known as cloral betaine.

⁷⁹ One of the reasons mum tried these different medicines was to try to find the one that best suited her in terms of helping her to sleep. I think mum felt that clomethiazole (Heminevrin) was most effective for her. However, she assumed that Dr Welch did not want her to have these regularly or over a long period because of cost. Also, I think she wanted to avoid taking any sleeping tablets if possible. For example, in September 1975, she noted that she was trying to cope without Heminevrin. But, she ended up taking one at quarter to 11 as she had a very active mind.

⁸⁰ Again, the precise reason for this was not clear. Mum did not seem happy about this and wondered if she should see someone else.

No physical cause could be found and she took potassium citrate and cetipin to try to treat the symptoms. However, Dr Welch did suggest to her that the symptoms might be due to “*tension*” and this was when he started her on another antidepressant doxepin (Sinequan).

During this period, mum had concerns about her weight. In May 1975, she noted that she weighed 10st 1lb (64kg). Her feet were also swollen. In June 1975, mum noted she was going to cut down on biscuits as she was unable to wear summer dresses. However, in June 1976, mum was concerned that she only weighed 9s 3lbs (58.5kg). She wondered if this was due to lack of food or a combination of tiredness, depression and worry. In February 1977, she described herself as hungry for sweet things all day. In June 1977, Malcolm Carter noted that mum had put on weight. She weighed herself and recorded it as 9st 14.⁸¹ She again resolved to cut down on sweets and biscuits.



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Bathroom scales – in the late seventies, mum was concerned about her weight

Mum had a number of minor ailments which these days we would be encouraged to self-medicate or to see a health professional other than a doctor. For example in August 1975. Mum saw Dr Bennett⁸² and had her left ear syringed as she was deaf.⁸³ Also, in August 1975, Dr Welch prescribed her an antihistamine chlorpheniramine (Piriton)⁸⁴ for her heat spots. In June 1976, Dr Welch prescribed her a mixture of vitamins and minerals for tiredness.⁸⁵

Mum had her ears pierced at Tilletts in Tombland⁸⁶ on 10 January 1975. Four days later, her left ear was swollen. She phoned Mr Tillettt who told her to get some penicillin from her doctor. However, Dr Welch wanted to see her first. So, she went in the next day. He gave her some Ampicillin (Penbritin). On the 30th, she noted that her left ear was irritating.⁸⁷

⁸¹ Which would be 10st or 63.5kg.

⁸² Dr John F Bennett was one of the GPs at the Mile End Road Surgery. According to the [Castle Partnership website](#), he owned the Mile End Road premises and sold them to the practice in 1976.

⁸³ Our [GP surgery](#) no longer offers this service on the NHS but a private service is available there through a company called Ear View.

⁸⁴ As this is an over-the-counter medicine, I think people would nowadays be encouraged to get this themselves. I have done this for antihistamines for hay fever for quite a number of years now. In August 1976, mum took Piriton again for spots. She did not say whether she bought or was prescribed this.

⁸⁵ See footnote 55. These days, I think most practices would expect people to buy their own medicines of this nature given that they are available over the counter. In October 1976, mum did buy Boots vitamin tablets, 30 for her and 30 for Tricia.

⁸⁶ I was aware of optician L L Tillettt and jeweller Thomas Tillettt. However, both of these operated in St Giles Street and mum emphasised that this was Tilletts in Tombland. I found a 1982 [advert](#) for James and Ann Tillettt, jewellers located at 13 Tombland. Based on [Google Streetview](#), this is now occupied by [Blue Bear Coffee Company](#). However, Tombland Jewellers and Silversmiths were there until at least August 2016.

⁸⁷ The way this is written made me think she was referring to the other ear. However, on all occasions when she mentions which ear it is, she always refers to the left.

In July 1976, while on holiday with Alan and Liz at the Methodist Guild property in Dunoon⁸⁸, mum became unwell with pain in her left side⁸⁹ and blood in her urine. On the 24th, the day they were due to come home, mum had to call the GP at 2.30am and was told she either had a stone or infection in the kidney.⁹⁰ The next day, she was no better and was admitted to Dunoon Hospital.⁹¹ ⁹² Over the next couple of days, the pain eased slightly. I noted that mum wanted to go privately and fly home. However, she was persuaded to stay. Nevertheless, they did leave on the 28th. Mum's friend Cecil drove them to Glasgow but the car then broke down. Mum, Alan and Liz went by first class train to Edinburgh and they stayed overnight at the Royal Scot Hotel.⁹³ On the 29th, they flew to Norwich via Leeds. Malcolm Carter picked them up from the airport.⁹⁴



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Above – photo of Cowal Community Hospital in Dunoon in 2019. Mum was admitted here in July 1976

Right – advert for the Royal Scot Hotel which was to open in July 1973. This appeared in the West Lothian Courier of 23 February 1973 obtained through paid subscription to [Find My Past](#)

THE ROYAL SCOT HOTEL
NORTH GYLE
Opening July



EDINBURGH'S NEWEST LUXURY HOTEL
150 bedrooms, 3 bars, 2 restaurants,
and extensive conference facilities
are now inviting preliminary applications
for all grades of
EXPERIENCED HOTEL STAFF

★

Apply in writing in the first instance to:
Mr I. D. Taylor
c/o MURRAYFIELD HOTEL
CORSTORPHINE ROAD
EDINBURGH EH12

⁸⁸ See [Chapter 122](#).

⁸⁹ She initially wondered if it was kidney pain or from sitting on a wall the previous day. She noted that the initial pain went after prayer.

⁹⁰ She was given pethidine by injection and tablets and stayed in bed. The GP came at 12.30 and about 7.

⁹¹ Although there has been a [hospital in Dunoon](#) since 1885, the one mum was admitted to was a purpose-built hospital that opened in 1966. It had 74 beds, mainly configured as four-bed wards. It has been known as Cowal Community Hospital since around 2008.

⁹² She was treated with four-hourly pentazocine (Fortral) injections. I noted that Alan and Liz were being looked after by people that they had met the previous year.

⁹³ Mum noted this was a lovely place which cost £19.25. I have noted adverts for this hotel covering the period 1973 to 1999. It appears that the hotel [opened in July 1973](#). In 1989, [one of the adverts](#) announced the opening of a new Swallow Leisure Club at the hotel. In [1996](#), there was a note saying the hotel was not for sale contrary to an announcement in The Scotsman. The hotel's address was 111 Glasgow Road. [Delta Hotels Edinburgh](#), a Marriott Hotel is now at the address. [Apparently](#), the name changed in June 2010.

⁹⁴ Mum noted that grandma left ours as soon as mum arrived there. I had noted that I was planning to go out as I "*did not approve*". I am not sure what I didn't approve of, possibly going privately. I also suspect I was somewhat sceptical about how ill mum actually was. For example, when she got back, I noted that she "*didn't seem too ill*". I noted I managed to get her painkillers from the chemist "*after much walking*".

Example of a kidney stone



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On Friday 30 July 1976⁹⁵, I noted that mum was going to have an operation on Sunday and that Mr Ashken, for whom mum worked, was going to carry out the surgery. On the 31st, mum was admitted to Ellingham Ward⁹⁶ of the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. She had another plain xray which showed that the stone had not moved.⁹⁷ So, she had surgery to remove the stone the following day. Everything went well. ⁹⁸ Mr Ashken described the operation as straightforward.⁹⁹ He visited her regularly while she was in hospital.¹⁰⁰ By 6 August, mum was still in hospital¹⁰¹ and was still experiencing pain in her left side. This puzzled Mr Ashken but he thought it was muscular. On the 7th, mum was still experiencing pain. While Mr Ashken still thought it was muscular, he was going to ask Dr Mark Mehta¹⁰² to review. On 9 August

⁹⁵ On the 30th, mum went by taxi to see Dr Welch at 10.30. They agreed she would be treated by Mr Ashken. I presume this was mum's wish because she worked for him. Mum phoned him but he was out. She spoke to Mrs Ashken and Mr Ashken phoned back around 3.30pm. He asked her to go straightaway to have an IVP with Dr Visick. I don't know much about Dr Visick but assume he/she was a consultant radiologist in Norwich. The IVP was done and Dr Visick told mum it was a stone. Mr Ashken rang at night and came to see mum. He said there was no need for her to go privately as he would treat her himself all the time and he would arrange a side ward. This is the kind of preferential service mum liked and grew to expect! Also, during this period in hospital, Sue, who was Mr Ashken's NHS secretary, showed mum the letter Mr Ashken had written to her GP. Again, this showed how mum was treated differently from other patients. Things are different now as I think letters to GPs are now routinely shared with the patient who is the subject of the letter. On 20 October 1976, Mr Ashken said there was no need for any money for what he had done. I don't quite follow this. If he had treated mum on the NHS, as he had suggested, there would have been no need for her to pay. I am not sure if some aspects of her care were private but, if they were, he did not charge her because she worked for him.

⁹⁶ On 26 August 1976, just under two weeks after she left hospital, mum bought three one pound boxes of Quality Street which she took for staff of Ellingham Ward that afternoon.

⁹⁷ Mum said she saw the stone which was very rough. Mr Ashken said it was unlikely to have passed on its own.

⁹⁸ I saw her in the evening after she had had surgery. I noted that "*she seemed groggy because of the pain medicine. She was not able to open her eyes properly and her speech was slurred. She was sipping water.*" After that, various people visited including grandma, Tricia, me, Alan, Liz, Malcolm Carter, Sue Banning, Dorothy, Sue, Ken Elworthy, Nancy, Mrs Elsegood, Mrs Papworth, John and Heather Ferguson, Mr and Mrs Munday, Christine Carter, Rev Eddy, Mrs Ashken, Andrew Wright, Mr Ream, Janet Bennett, Daphne (new secretary at 41), Barbara Williams, Amy Wilson, Miss Griffiths, Margaret Culley, Mr Stephens and Jack and Janet Howard. At one point, I described the stream of her visitors as "*endless*". Generally, she seemed to appreciate people visiting her but she noted that although the senior minister from Park Lane, Rev Ream, see [Chapter 124](#), visited twice, he did not stay for more than five minutes on the first occasion and only for ten minutes the second time. She received flowers from the church, Dorothy, Mr Stephens' secretary, grandma (via Mrs Elsegood), Rev Eddy, Sue Banning, Mrs Ashken, Janet Bennett and Barbara Williams. Other gifts included perfume from Christine Carter, Ribena from the Fergusons, fruit from the Mundays, fruit pastilles and pears from Nancy and plant and chocolates from Miss Griffiths. People also phoned to see how she was including grandma, dad, John and Heather Ferguson and Miss Garrod. Mum also received some letters including one from Cecil.

⁹⁹ Mum noted she had 14 stitches and a drip and a drain. She could not remember much about it. On 6 August 1976, I noted that the drain was out, the dressing was off the wound and I could count 14 stitches.

¹⁰⁰ Mum noted that he was more talkative when he came on his own rather than with a nurse.

¹⁰¹ That day, I took some duplicating to a Mrs Brake to do as mum was unable to do it. I don't know any more about her. As far as I know, this was the only time she was mentioned in the diaries.

¹⁰² I came across a short [biography](#) co-written by Mr Ashken. Mark Mehta was a consultant in anaesthesia and pain relief at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital from 1966-86. He was born in India in 1924 and he qualified from St Bartholomew's in 1947. From 1958-66, he was a consultant in King's Lynn. Later, he developed a pain relief clinic in Norwich. In 1973, he produced his first book on intractable pain. He was president of the

1976, mum noted that fasting bloods had been taken for calcium levels. They repeated these on the 10th.

On 11 August 1976, Mr Ashken told her that her blood calcium levels were high. He would ask physician, Dr Pryor¹⁰³, to see her. This also meant there would be more tests and xrays.¹⁰⁴ Mr Ashken also explained that if the tests were “*positive*” another operation would be needed. On the 12th, Dr Pryor saw her in the morning. Mum found him very nice. He got a complete history from her and “*examined all bones*”. He started her on a low calcium diet for four to five weeks. He would then review her as a private patient.¹⁰⁵ On the 13th, mum came home.¹⁰⁶ Dr Welch visited her on the 14th¹⁰⁷ and told her to be patient.¹⁰⁸ He reviewed her on the 20th. He said she was doing well and she could go to work as long as she stopped when she had had enough.¹⁰⁹ Mum received a follow-up

Causes of hypercalcaemia

- Hyperparathyroidism
- Malignancy-related
- Vitamin D-related
- Genetic disorders
- Medication-related
- Endocrine disorders
- Other

List of possible causes of high blood calcium (hypercalcaemia). One of the complications of hypercalcaemia is renal stones. So, mum's hypercalcaemia was probably the cause of her renal stone.

Intractable Pain Society from 1978 to 1980. He died after coronary artery bypass surgery on 23 June 2000 leaving a wife, Joy, two sons and two daughters.

¹⁰³ [Jack Sidney Pryor](#) was born on 4 July 1933 and he died on 21 December 1988. He was a consultant physician, with a special interest in renal diseases, at the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital, Norwich. Born in London, he received his medical training at [Charing Cross Hospital](#), where he was later to return as a senior medical registrar for a period of three years from 1966. In 1969 he was appointed senior lecturer in medicine at Charing Cross Hospital. In 1970 he was appointed head of the department of experimental therapeutics at [Sandoz](#) in Basle, Switzerland, and was responsible for designing studies in the early stages of the development of new drugs. In May 1971, he was appointed consultant physician in renal diseases at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, a post he held until his sudden death in December 1988. In 1958, Jack Pryor married Bridget Egan, a nursing sister at the [Brompton Hospital](#). They had one son, Robert.

¹⁰⁴ She had skull, spine and hand Xrays. A staff nurse said they were OK but mum wondered if that was just to calm her. Mum felt quite depressed about it all. Mum also had her blood pressure taken lying and standing.

¹⁰⁵ I am not sure how mum intended to pay for this. She worried a lot about money and it was a constant source of tension with dad, see [Chapter 114](#). As far as I know, she did not have private medical insurance. She wrote to BUPA on 31 August but she heard nothing. So, on the 14th, she phoned them. They said they had not received the letter so she wrote again.

¹⁰⁶ Liz and I were away at dad's. But, we came home the next day with dad. People who visited after she came home from hospital included Christine Carter, Rev Eddy, Andrew Wright, Connie Harvey, Nancy and Heather Ferguson. Rev Ream visited but, apparently, he came to discuss church work! A number of people brought flowers including Christine Carter who brought the flowers from Bowthorpe Road Methodist Church. Mum also received a number of cards including from Ray Tracey, Pam Ludlow and Gerald and Thelma Cooke. I phoned as, from the 16th, I was away youth hostelling in the Peak District, see Chapter 122.

¹⁰⁷ He said he would see her the following Friday.

¹⁰⁸ He advised her the same when he saw her again on 6 September 1976. I am not sure precisely sure what was meant by being patient. Was this in relation to recovery from her surgery or in relation to getting to the bottom of the high calcium level. In terms of recovering from the surgery, the very next day (15th), two days after being discharged from hospital, she went to church. She did go in dad's car and she got a lift back with Gerald Cooke. For some reason, she left during the final hymn of the first two services she attended. I am not sure why but my suspicion is that it was for dramatic effect! I am not sure it could have been because staying to the end of the service would have been too much physically for her as, on the 15th, she went to Mousehold Heath in the afternoon and, by the 22nd, she had been cleared to go back to work and had already popped in!!

¹⁰⁹ She called in to see Daphne and Mr Stephens that very day. She started back on the afternoon of the 24th. Apparently, Mr Ashken was pleased to see her as “*everything seemed in a muddle*”! On the 27th, Mr Stephens apparently told her that a high calcium could cause duodenal ulcers as well as stones. While this may well be



One of the tests mum needed was to measure directly the level of parathyroid hormone in her blood. If the cause was primary hyperparathyroidism, the level of this hormone would be high. Image licensed for re-use from Alamy

appointment from Dr Pryor for 1.50 on 15 September. On the 13 September 1976, mum had a follow-up IVP with Dr Visick. He said there were no stones but some irregularity due to the operation.¹¹⁰ On the 15th, she saw Dr Pryor who said he would refer her to Alan Green.¹¹¹ He noted there would be further blood tests but not cortisone tests.¹¹² On 21 September 1976, Mrs Black¹¹³ phoned mum to ask her to see Dr Black¹¹⁴ for a blood test on Thursday the 23rd at 2pm.¹¹⁵ The next day, the 22nd, mum phoned Mr Green and booked to see him on Friday, the 24th. On the 23rd, she saw Dr Welch. He said she was doing well and not to have another operation unless there was good reason.¹¹⁶ That afternoon, she saw

true, it may not have been the most helpful thing to say to mum as it gave her another thing to worry about. On 31 August 1976, mum noted being worried because she thought Mr Stephens had referred to a tumour of the parathyroid gland. On 17 September 1976, Mr Stephens expressed surprise that Dr Pryor was sure the problem was with the parathyroid.

¹¹⁰ Mum was concerned as to whether that was all it showed. The next day, Mr Ashken went through the xray with her. He said there were no more stones. However, the ureter was narrow where the stone had been but the kidney was working well. On 11 November 1976, mum had another IVP with Dr Visick at 11.30. He said the kidney was emptying better but mum asked if it was really perfect. On the 12th, Mr Ashken spoke to her. He told her that the kidney was draining OK but the ureter would always be narrow.

¹¹¹ I found his [obituary](#) in the EDP. In 2015, he died at the age of 87. Norman Alan Green was born on 2 July 1927 in Leicester. He studied at St Bartholomew's. He married nurse Doreen Wright in 1951. They had four children. He spent three years in Norwich from 1954. He won a Fulbright scholarship in 1958 and went to Boston Hospital and [Harvard Medical School](#). He returned to Norwich in 1961 and established the city's first urology service in 1966. He retired in 1990. After retiring, he wrote obituaries for professional journals. He was a founder member and then President of the British Association of Clinical Anatomists and an external examiner for the Royal Colleges of Surgeons in England and Edinburgh. He was a musician playing piano to a high standard. I found other biographies on the Royal College of Surgeons of England [website](#) and on the Travelling Surgical Society [website](#).

¹¹² Mr Ashken phoned mum to tell her that Alan Green was away over the whole of November. He also thought she needed time to get over her earlier operation first.

¹¹³ I believe this refers to Dr Black's wife. Her maiden name was Alison Butters. They married in Lincoln in June 1966.

¹¹⁴ Alec Black was a consultant haematologist at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. Born in March 1934, he died in September 2022 aged 88. According to his [obituary](#), he played an important role in the plans to relocate the hospital to Colney instead of earlier plans to move to Hellesdon. He trained in Cambridge completing his medical degree in 1959. He began haematology specialty training in 1964 at [St Thomas'](#). From there, he took up a new consultant post in haematology at the Norfolk and Norwich.

¹¹⁵ I struggle to see why mum, and Mr Ashken, thought it necessary for mum to see a consultant haematologist to have blood taken. I think it was somewhat typical of mum though.

¹¹⁶ Does this imply he thought she had had unnecessary surgery? Apparently, he also told her not to Hoover and asked how she would manage for money if her washer broke down (!). He said he was concerned about her health. She noted that he called her Sheila. He said she was to keep in touch but she did not need to make another appointment. She told Dr Welch that I had said she should not go back to work until she could cope fully at home. Dr Welch said this was wrong, that she had done the right thing but that she'd had a major operation and it would take another 6-8 weeks to be right. I find these entries difficult and am not sure if I and

Dr Black for blood tests.¹¹⁷ The next day, the 24th, she saw Mr Green.¹¹⁸ He agreed to explore her parathyroid.¹¹⁹ On 7 October 1976, Mr Ashken told her to pencil in the date of 2 December 1976 for her operation. Apparently, he had discussed it with Mr Green.¹²⁰ On 30 November 1976, Tricia took mum to Ellingham Ward to be admitted.¹²¹ On 1 December 1976, the anaesthetist Dr Morgan-Hughes¹²² came to see her. She had her operation the next day.¹²³ Mr Green told her that the parathyroid was considerably

Diagrammatic representation of four parathyroid glands showing normal size (left) and when one is enlarged by adenoma (right)



Dr Welch were being represented correctly. I had other, more recent experiences, of mum telling me something her doctor had apparently said to her which meant I was either wrong or had to do something differently. I always took such conversations with a large pinch of salt!! In this case, I was 16 at the time and am sure I would not have wanted whatever I had said to be put up to the GP for criticism! Clearly, I did have doubts about what mum felt unable and able to do. I suspect Dr Welch was probably answering tactfully as few people wanted to tell mum something they knew she would not be happy with! It is also probably fair to say that he recognised that mum enjoyed and valued work and, for this reason, getting back to work was probably a good thing.

¹¹⁷ She said he took 25mls of blood for parathyroid tests and urea and electrolytes.

¹¹⁸ She said he was very nice and they had a long talk.

¹¹⁹ She was to come in at the end of November/beginning of December to Ellingham Ward and she would have a single room.

¹²⁰ On the 12th, she got a letter from the hospital telling her to come in on November 30 for surgery on the morning of 2 December.

¹²¹ Mum noted that she had the same room as before. They started a 24-hour urine collection and she was seen by Mr Green and Mr Ashken. Visitors during this hospital admission included grandma, Tricia, Angus, me, Alan, Liz, Mr Ashken, Mr Stephens, Rev Elworthy, Malcolm Carter, John and Heather Ferguson, Janet Bennett, Frank Papworth, Ralph and Jean Dye, Thelma Cooke, Betty Colver, Dorothy, Sue Banning, Daphne, Dellar, Dr Batty Shaw, Ken Tickle, Joe Woodrow, Brenda Farrow, Mr and Mrs Munday, the Church of England vicar, Doreen from the bed bureau, Rev Ream, Marian Buxton, Eric Buxton and Margaret Culley. Malcolm Carter gave her communion. The free church chaplain, Rev Jones, visited her but mum noted this was "rather hurriedly". Mum thought the C of E man was called Bransby. Before and after her surgery, mum visited Nancy Papworth in Deopham Ward. Nancy had surgery the day before mum, on 1 December 1976. Eric Buxton visited her from Hethersett Ward where he was. Mum got flowers/a plant and a card from Doreen in the bed bureau; a card and letter from Coeliac Society headquarters in London; Lucozade from the Fergusons; a plant from Young Wives; church flowers from Ralph and Jean Dye; bulbs from Thelma Cooke and flowers from Bowthorpe Road Methodist Church. On the 5th, mum went to a service at the hospital chapel at 5pm. Mum was able to make some phone calls from hospital including to Malcolm Carter. On the 6th, Sally Bracewell came into the room next to mum. She was a doctor's daughter. Mum thought she was nice and that they got on well. Sally had surgery on the 9th and went home on the 11th. Mum noted that she missed her.

¹²² I have not found much information about him except for being Dr J O Morgan-Hughes, a consultant anaesthetist at the Norfolk and Norwich. I did find a John O Morgan-Hughes born in Yarmouth in 1936.

¹²³ She noted that her operation was at 9am and she got back to the ward at 12.35. Apparently, according to mum, her blood pressure dropped very low during the surgery and she had oxygen in the recovery room with her blood pressure checked every hour. Her drip and drain were taken out in the late evening. On the 3rd, mum was given co-codaprin (Codis) for pain. She also experienced pins and needles in her left arm. She was given two glasses of milk to drink which helped. Lynn, one of the staff nurses, who mum liked took her drain out. On the 4th, she was not very well and was given more milk, three pints in total. Mr Green saw her and she had some stitches out. On the 7th, she developed a streaming cold and was given throat lozenges (Bradosol) containing hexylreorcinol, an anaesthetic and antiseptic. On the 10th, Mr Green came in the evening and only saw mum and Sally Bracewell, presumably his private patients. Mr Green wanted mum to stay another week

larger than it should have been.¹²⁴ He also told her that it was benign. She was discharged on the 12th.¹²⁵

1976 **December**

In N & N. **Friday** *Poreen (Drd Boream)* **3**
338-28 *sent me flowers & card (plant)*

Very sore but got up. *Mr S. came to see me.*
 Codis given for pain. *Mum & P came in aft. A & E*
at night. Mr G told me it was about ○ *size*
should be as small as $\frac{1}{2}$ split pea. ○
It was benign & he took samples of 2 others which
were OK. Melcolan came in aft. Had "pins & needles"
in left arm - given 2 glasses of milk which helped.
Lyn (Staff Nurse) v nice to me, deep drain took
out in aft - by Lyn. She goes on holiday today I shall
miss her. 26 27 25. Had card & flowers (plant)
from Poreen in Bed
Bureau. Also
card & letter from
Colette in London office **4**

Mum's diary entry for 3 December 1976 illustrating the size of the parathyroid adenoma she had removed the previous day

In January 1977, she saw Dr Welch on the 4th and Mr Green on the 5th. The latter again told her not to do too much! She saw Mr Green on the 11th. He said she should do some exercise and see him again in 2-3 months. She was to have another blood test when convenient. She had that the next day, on the 12th.¹²⁶ On 9 March 1977, mum made an appointment to see Mr Green on the 29th. She had blood tests¹²⁷ on the 23rd. When she was seen by Mr Green, she was worried about chest pain she was

but agreed she could go home on Sunday (12th). She was to see him in the New Year. He told her he had some photos of her neck. He told her to take it very easy.. I am not sure how much she did that, see footnote 125.

¹²⁴ On 11 January 1977, he showed her slides. The gland he removed was 1¾ inches long and it should have just been like the little bit at the end.

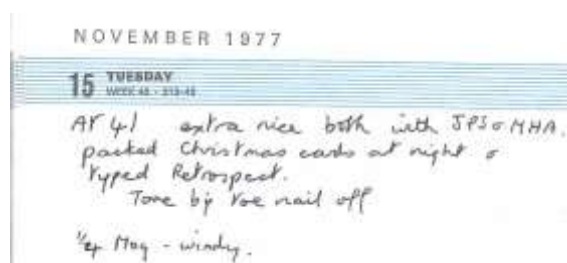
¹²⁵ On 12 December 1976, Alan dropped clothes off for mum at 2pm. He came back to pick her up at 4.30pm with Tricia and Liz. They all went to grandma's for tea. On the next day, the 13th, mum went to Alan's parents' evening at school. She also sorted out coeliac and duplicating money wven though Dr Welch signed her off work for three weeks. On the 14th, she went Christmas shopping in the city. I am not sure this is what Alan Green had in mind when he told her to take it very easy!! On the 14th, Pam Ludlow brought her a plant and card from choir. On the 15th, Tricia took Mr Green a bottle of wine and mum wrote to Mr Green about BUPA although I don't know what she said. On the 17th, mum got a letter from Mr Green thanking her for the wine. On the 19th, mum drove to Drayton but hurt her neck so Tricia drove back. She had some symptoms during this period including headache and tinglings.

¹²⁶ She continued to have various symptoms including neck pain, back pain, pain in her left side, tiredness, tinglings, feeling sick and chest pain. She saw Dr Welch several time during this period. He advised her to be patient and reassured her multiple times that she was doing very well. On one occasion, in February 1977, Dr Welch told her that he did not think the pain in her left side was a stone. But, mum thought she had perhaps not explained it properly. I imagine it would have been very difficult for any doctor to differentiate between the baseline pain and other symptoms that mum always had and anything related to the surgery or underlying condition.

¹²⁷ Calcium and phosphates.

experiencing. However, he told her there was nothing wrong with her heart.¹²⁸ She was asked to go back for review after 12 months. In May 1977, she bumped into Dr Pryor when she was in the hospital for Mr Stephens.¹²⁹ He asked her how she was and how the depression was. She noted that he seemed pleased with the answers. She had further blood tests in December 1977 and her calcium and phosphate levels were normal. She was seen by Mr Green in April 1978 and had further blood tests. He commented “corrected calcium bit low”.

On 20 May 1977, mum fell while crossing a road. She could not remember why she fell but could recall thinking “I’m falling”. She tore her trousers, grazed her left wrist and bruised her right cheek. On 15 November 1977, mum “tore big nail off”¹³⁰. On 25 November 1977, mum slipped on a slope near Sainsburys and sat down hard hurting her left buttock. The next day, she had back and side ache where she fell. On 28 December 1977, mum twisted her ankle.¹³¹ On 23 February 1979, mum dropped a knife and it cut her right middle finger.¹³² Five days later, Dr Brittain¹³³ told her it was infected.^{134 135}



Mum’s diary entry for 15 November 1977 in which she noted that she tore her big toe nail off

¹²⁸ She noted that he examined her thoroughly. However, I am not sure a general surgeon/urologist would have been best-qualified to make this judgment about her heart!

¹²⁹ [John Pendered Stephens](#) was born in Northamptonshire on 29 March 1919. He died on 11 April 2004. He was educated at Stowe School and then studied natural sciences at Cambridge. Interestingly, he represented the university at both rugby and tennis. He did his clinical training at St Bartholomew’s Hospital during the second world war. He held house appointments with J Basil Hume at [Friern Barnet](#), one of the hospitals used by Bart’s during its evacuation from London. In 1943, he joined the Royal Army Medical Corps serving in Sierra Leone, Burma and India. He passed the FRCS in 1948 and worked as a supernumerary registrar with J Basil Hume and Alan Hunt at Bart’s. In 1952, he went to Norwich as a surgical registrar. He gained his masters in surgery in 1953 and in 1955 he was appointed as a consultant general surgeon in Norwich. He retired in 1984.

¹³⁰ By accident presumably?

¹³¹ This merited three exclamation marks. The next day, she noted her ankle was OK but her leg was sore.

¹³² Given mum was right-handed I am not quite sure how she did this!

¹³³ Dr Brittain was one of the GPs in the practice for which mum worked between 1977 and 1991, see [Chapter 105](#). I believe there were two Dr Brittains, father and son. Dr Brittain Snr was a partner in the practice. I think the younger Dr Brittain worked there at some point but I don’t think this was full-time nor as a partner. His name was David Brittain and he became [a private homeopathic practitioner](#) having worked in Australia and in general practice. In a [discussion](#) on doctors on the Norwich Remembers Facebook group, several people recalled Dr Brittain. Susan Bellamy Waterfield referred to him as Dr Dripping but I am not sure why! Noreen Neal noted that he worked at a practice at 7 Newmarket Road. This surgery [still operates](#) and is part of [St Stephen’s Gate Medical Practice](#). John Mackay referred to him as old Dr Brittain and noted that he was very good with children and he was never afraid of seeing him. Noreen Neal referred to Dr David Brittain as “one of the kindest, most gentle doctors I have ever known”. June Pinching recalled Dr Brittain at Newmarket Road surgery. He delivered her daughter. She described him as a wonderful kind man. She noted that she believed his son had gone into medicine too. Caroline Sop recalled both Dr Brittain and Dr Watkins and described them as good GPs. Margaret Stone recalled Dr Watkins and Drs Brittain, father and son, on Newmarket Road. Ann Parker noted that they were her doctor and her son was seen one Christmas Day as a cracker he pulled hit him in the eye. Isabel Colegate noted that he was her doctor. Ann Parker remembered Sister Hardingham as the practice nurse. She described her as lovely, so kind and gentle.

¹³⁴ He gave her some “stuff” to put on it which mum described as like red ink. I am not sure what this was. One possibility is chlorhexidine which comes in a range of colours.

¹³⁵ I am not sure if this was the same problem but, in April 1979, mum asked Dr Welch about her finger and he told her to leave it alone.

In November and December 1978, mum had an episode of thrombophlebitis in her right leg. It started with pain in her right thigh on 7 November but, by the 11th, her right ankle was red, swollen and burning. She made an appointment to see Dr Welch but, on the 13th, the nursing sister at work¹³⁶ suggested seeing Dr Brittain. He thought it was phlebitis, gave her phenylbutazone and rang Dr Welch.¹³⁷ Two days later, she saw Dr Welch who agreed with Dr Brittain. He gave her phenylbutazone (Butazolidin¹³⁸), hydrochlorthiazide (Moduretic) and glycerine and ichthyol¹³⁹ to put on the inflammation. Her symptoms continued and she was also having headaches. Janet Bennett, one of the staff with whom mum worked, asked Dr Brittain if phenylbutazone (Butazolidin) could cause headaches. Dr Brittain said they could and that mum should stop them and see Dr Welch. She did on 6 December 1978. He commented that she looked well and put her onto trypsin chymotrypsin (Chymoral) instead of phenylbutazone. Her symptoms continued, possibly worsening. Dr Welch saw her on the 13th and told her that the thrombophlebitis had flared up again. He put her back onto phenylbutazone (BTZ Alka), pentazocine (Fortral) and glycerine and ichthyol. He also said if it did not clear up she would need to be off work.



At the end of 1978, mum suffered from thrombophlebitis in her right leg – image licensed for re-use from Alamy

¹³⁶ Mum always described the nurse she worked with at Dr Brittain and Dr Watkins' surgery as "sister". I believe this was Janet Hardingham. I know she worked at this practice and that she and mum knew each other. In March 1966, when she was a nursing sister in the Casualty Department of the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital, she spoke to mum's Young Wives group, see [Chapter 90](#). I recognised the name as there was a Janet Hardingham in mum's address book when I first started managing this in 2017. However, her name is not in the latest version I have which probably means that I was notified that she had passed away. I found some details of her working as a staff nurse in casualty during the second world war. I also found an obituary which confirmed she had indeed passed away in July 2019. From that, I learned that she was a long-time member of Surrey Chapel and that she indeed worked as a practice nurse for Drs Brittain and Watkins.

¹³⁷ The doctors she worked for seemed to have different views about whether they could treat her or not. Dr Brittain seemed willing to but Dr Watkins, see [Chapter 114](#), said he couldn't.

¹³⁸ Mum described this as Butazolidin Alpha. Perhaps she was referring to Butazolidin Alka.

¹³⁹ Mum referred to this as "ictar" but I believe this is what she was referring to.



Like me, mum suffered from hay fever. The first mention of this is in May 1979 when Dr Welch gave her chlorpheniramine¹⁴⁰ (Piriton) as she was sneezing in the morning. I wonder if some of the illnesses she thought were colds, particularly when they were very short-lived, in fact, were related to hay fever.

My cetirizine tablets that I take for hay fever. Non-drowsy antihistamines, like cetirizine, only became widely-available in the eighties

In November 1979, mum had a very funny feeling in her arm which she described as “cold & tingling”. About a week later, she saw Dr Welch who thought it was carpal tunnel syndrome. He advised her to take a diuretic for a month. He said if it did not improve after ten days she should go back. As far as I know she did not.

From May 1975, mum was troubled with problems related to her periods including heavy bleeding, and abdominal pains. She saw Dr Welch about this, in September 1976, and he tried to reassure her. However, the symptoms continued and she also complained of spotting and mid-period bleeding. She saw Dr Welch again in July 1977. He told her there was a polyp causing bleeding and this was nothing serious. He asked who she would like to see. She said she would like to see Mr Carron-Brown, who had treated her in 1966.¹⁴¹ As with other referrals, Dr Welch left mum to do this.¹⁴² She saw Mr Carron-Brown on 11 July 1979 and he removed the polyp.¹⁴³ He said he would start her on a three-month course of norethisterone (Primolut) and this was prescribed for her by Dr Welch. She continued to have symptoms, particularly period pains. She saw Mr Carron-Brown again in September 1977 and he told her that the next step would be a D&C. However, when he saw her in April 1978, he advised a hysterectomy. She told him that she could not have eight weeks off work. So, she agreed to have a D&C in May with possibly a hysterectomy in October or November. In May 1978, she was admitted to

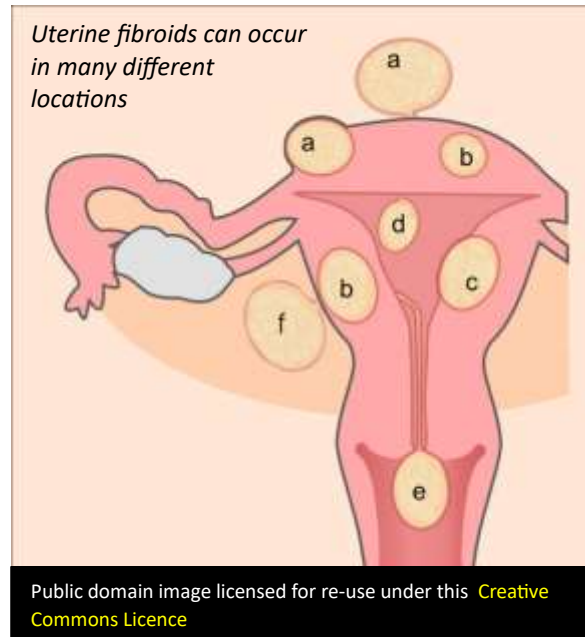
¹⁴⁰ One of the main problems with chlorpheniramine is that it causes drowsiness. Non-drowsy anti-histamines, such as cetirizine, only became widely-available in the early eighties. In July 1979, Dr Welch prescribed her Haymine. This is a formulation of chlorpheniramine which also contains the decongestant ephedrine hydrochloride.

¹⁴¹ See [Chapter 88](#).

¹⁴² Mum did but found that both Mr Carron-Brown and Madge Thompson, presumably the secretary for his private work, were both away. So, mum spoke to Mr Carron-Brown’s secretary at the Norfolk and Norwich. She said to phone Madge on Monday. Instead, mum wrote to her and Madge phoned her on Sunday night. She told mum that Mr Carron-Brown could see her the next day.

¹⁴³ He told her that it was nothing to worry about and that it had been sent for analysis. Mum wondered why it had been and wished she had asked him.

Wroxham Ward¹⁴⁴ for the D&C which she had on the 5th.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, she continued to have symptoms including heavy periods. In July 1978, Mr Carron Brown told her she was producing too much oestrogen.¹⁴⁶ He wanted her to take a combination of norethisterone acetate and ethinylestradiol (Controvar) but this had upset her before so she decided not to. Her symptoms continued and she was admitted for a hysterectomy at the end of August 1978.¹⁴⁷ She had the operation on the 30th.¹⁴⁸ The histology report showed benign fibroids. On 7 September, Mr Carron Brown said she would be able to go home on Saturday, the 9th.¹⁴⁹ She did indeed leave hospital on the 9th. Tricia and Angus picked her up. Mum said it was nice to be home¹⁵⁰ On 2 October 1978, mum



¹⁴⁴ Mum noted that it was very quiet and not as nice as Ellingham Ward. Visitors included Sally, Daphne, Malcolm Carter, Mr Ashken,

¹⁴⁵ Dr Morgan Hughes was the anaesthetist.

¹⁴⁶ This made her worry about cancer as she had heard that the oestrogen pill was linked to cancer. She was concerned about the histology report which had showed a hyperplastic pattern.

¹⁴⁷ People who visited her during her stay in hospital included Tricia, me, Alan, Liz, Muriel Yamell Margaret Prime, Janet Bennett, Mr Ashken, Peter Lemmon, Maureen Harris, Dr and Mrs Brittain, John and Heather Ferguson, Liz's friend Tracey, Janice, Gillian, Mrs Yallop, Dr Leach, Doreen, Daphne F, Muriel West, Rosemary, Daphne B, Gerald and Thelma Cooke, Margaret Culley, Paul Burgess, Sue and Dr Watkins. She received flowers from Mr Stephens, Mr and Mrs Ashken, grandma, Sue (Mr Stephens' secretary Daphne (MH), the Coeliac Society, Dr and Mrs Brittain and St Peter's Park Lane Methodist Church. She also received peaches from the Brittains, Gillian and Rosemary, Ribena from the Fergusons, pears from the Fergusons and the Cookes and books from Dr Leach and the Cookes. She got cards from Janet, Sally, Daphne (S), Gillian, Janice, Joyce (in physio), Gerald and Thelma Cooke, the Brittains, the Culleys, Auntie Dolly, Amy Wilson and the Hallers. She received a letter from Nancy Papworth.

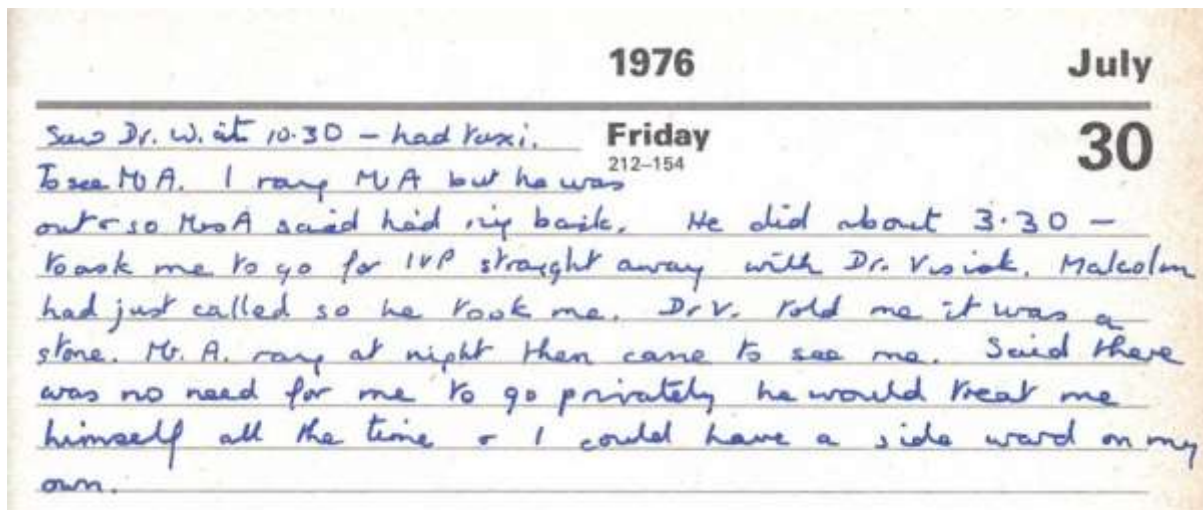
¹⁴⁸ Things went well. She had parts of the drain removed on 2 and 3 September 1978. All the drain was removed on the 4th and she had a bath. Mr Carron Brown told her to wash her hair and put her face on!! She had her stitches out on the 5th and was also given a bulk-forming laxative (Normacol) whose active ingredient is sterculia. Because of problems obtaining sterculia, Normacol has not been available in the UK since 2023. By the 6th, she noted she was more or less OK. She also noted that a woman who had had an operation that day had to be rushed back to theatre because of bleeding. She thought the operation had been done by Mr Carron Brown and was the same operation she had had. She wondered whose "fault" it was. She noted that she had had a different anaesthetist, Dr McEwen and that Dr Morgan Hughes kept patients in the recovery room till they had come round. I am not quite sure what she was saying but an anaesthetist could hardly be responsible for bleeding!!

¹⁴⁹ On 8 September 1978, mum was feeling quite depressed. Mr Carron Brown spoke to her on her own. He told her that it was 9th day post-op blues and was quite normal. Mum had apparently phoned Madge to ask if she could speak to Mr Carron Brown on his own.

¹⁵⁰ Mum noted that her bedroom was lovely and that we had bought lots of flowers too. People who came to see her at home included Rev Partner, Nancy Papworth, Sue Banning, Daphne, Thelma Cooke, Peter Lemmon and Sid Mitchell. She got cards from Mr Ashken and letters from Rev Dowson. Margaret Prime, Janet and Doreen phoned her. On the 11th, she saw Dr Welch and he signed her off work for four weeks. However, I am not sure how easily she took things. Only two days after coming out of hospital, she went to a magazine committee meeting at Chapelfield Road Methodist Church!! I took her and Tricia brought her back. Five days after being discharged from hospital, she went to a Synod meeting in King's Lynn. She was disappointed that no-one came to visit her on her ninth and tenth day out of hospital and only Janet phoned. On 6 October 1978,

saw Dr Welch. He said she could go to work and could type but should not do GP work¹⁵¹ until after she saw Mr Carron Brown. She saw him on the 16th and he told her that she had done “*bloody marvellous*”! He said there was slight granulation tissue and, if she got a yellow discharge, she should come back. He said she could do what she liked but Dr Welch added within reason. In January 1979, she started using Sultrin cream¹⁵² prescribed by Mr Carron Brown. She saw him again in March 1979 and he told her that everything was OK now.¹⁵³

One thing is clear from reading mum's diary entries about her health during this period and that is that she expected, and often did receive, preferential medical treatment because of her role as a medical secretary particularly for the private practice of Mr Ashken and Mr Stephens. One example of this is that mum received private-style treatment from Mr Ashken when she had a kidney stone in July 1976. She had a private room and was seen by Mr Ashken only. However, she was not be expected to pay for this. Presumably, he waived any fee due because she worked for him. There were also examples where Mr Ashken used his contacts with colleagues to gain special or accelerated treatment. One example of this was when Mr Green operated on mum for her hyperparathyroidism. Mum's care was discussed between Mr Green and Mr Ashken. In other cases, e.g. with Dr Pryor, Dr Visick and Dr Black, mum received private-style treatment and I am not sure if this was because of Mr Ashken's connections or because mum paid for private treatment either directly or through private health insurance.



Mum's diary entry for 30 July 1976 which notes how Mr Ashken arranged mum's treatment for her when she had a kidney stone. He explained that she would have a private room and would only see him but would not need to pay private fees

As a medical secretary, mum knew a lot of consultants and their secretaries for both their private and NHS work. Mum used these contacts to arrange and expedite her own referral and treatment. Whenever Dr Welch thought she should be referred, he consulted mum over who she would like to see and then left it to her to arrange the referral. One example of this was when mum was having trouble with her periods, she was to see Mr Carron Brown. She contacted the secretary for his private work, Madge Thompson. She phoned mum on a Sunday and mum was seen the next day. She took a

she took a parcel to Wroxham Ward. On the 25th, she gave Mr Carron Brown a bottle of wine. She noted it had cost £4.50.

¹⁵¹ I don't understand how Dr Welch would or could make this distinction, i.e. she could go back to work for Mr Ashken and Mr Stephens but not for the GPs. I suspect this was what mum wanted though as she liked her private work much more than her GP work!

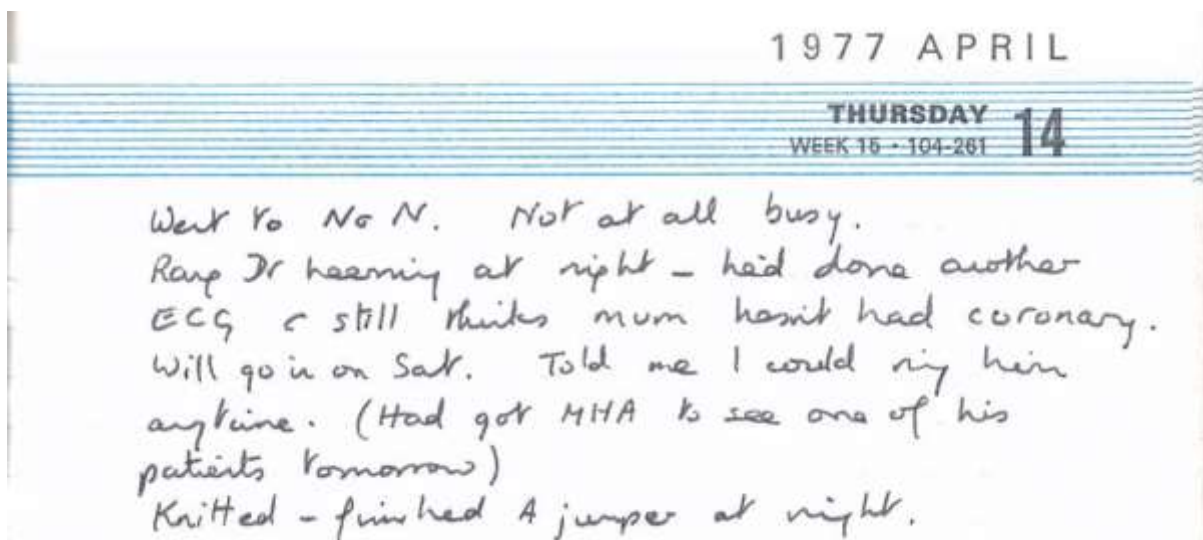
¹⁵² A topical antibacterial preparation containing sulfathiazole, sulfacetamide and sulfabenzamide.

¹⁵³ Although on the 14th, mum got a letter from Mr Carron Brown asking her to have blood tests and a plain xray. She had those in the afternoon.

similar approach to arranging xrays with Dr Visick. Another example of using her own contacts and influence was in November and December 1977 when she had had blood tests, she contacted Barbara Cullum to get her results. Presumably, this meant she got her results faster than would have been possible without these contacts.

As a medical secretary, mum had access to hospital records. She used this to read her own records in September 1975 and to read those of her father, in January 1976. Again, she was able to do this because of her role as a medical secretary. This would not have been possible for someone who was not in that, or similar, position. Times have changed in terms of individuals accessing their own medical records. I can now access my GP records through the NHS app although this does not yet cover hospital records as far as I know. I don't think accessing someone else's medical records was allowed then nor would it be allowed now unless you had permission or power of attorney. Grandad, I know, had died by the time mum looked at his notes so perhaps it is a moot point but I would have hated mum accessing my medical records! This is not because I have anything to hide but because they would have been none of her business, certainly once I had reached 18.

While in most case people mum or Mr Ashken knew simply helped facilitate or expedite mum's treatment, there was at least one case where mum thought this was done because she had done something similar for them. Clearly, mum was in a position to return a favour as she was effectively gatekeeper to Mr Ashken's and Mr Stephens' private practices.



Mum's diary entry for 14 April 1977 which notes that mum thought Dr Leeming had said she could ring him anytime because she had arranged for Mr Ashken (MHA) to see one of his patients the next day

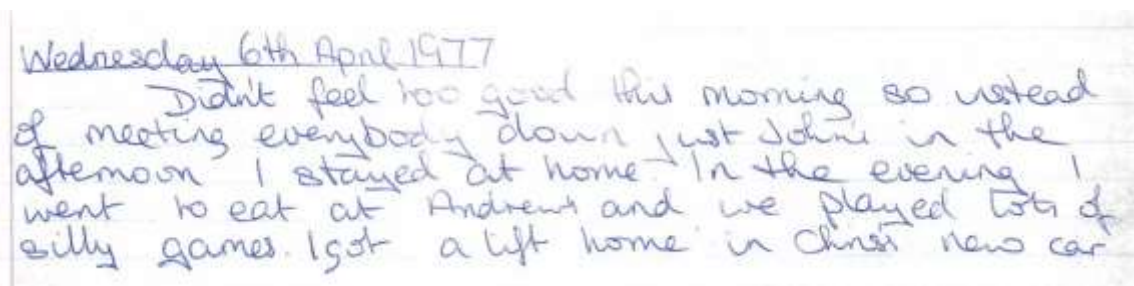
Although I was not directly involved in these issues at the time, I did come across these issues later and mum's expectations of preferential treatment did make me uncomfortable. I think I believe that the NHS should provide equal access to services for all regardless of ability to pay, status and/or family or work connections. I think I am realistic enough to know that that is not the case. But, I don't like the idea that someone thinks they should get preferential access because of their job. I know that, in private practice, consultants may carry out tasks that in the NHS would be done by others. However, some of the things mum expected seem inappropriate to me, for example, organising plain xrays through a consultant radiologist or expecting a consultant haematologist to take blood samples! Mum's expectations in this regard were a factor in the final breakdown of the relationship between her and my younger sister. Liz also worked as a medical secretary. When she was working in Cardiology, mum clearly expected Liz to use her influence to get her seen more quickly and/or by the Consultant. When Liz wouldn't or couldn't do that, mum was angry and frustrated and conflict ensued from which

the relationship never recovered. Clearly, this was not the only factor but I suspect it was the final straw!

There was a lot less information about illnesses affecting us children than there was about those affecting mum. While this is likely to be partly because the main source of information was mum's diary, it is also likely that mum experienced many more illnesses than we did.

In January 1976, my older sister Tricia went to see Dr Welch about her swollen ankle. He thought it was just bruised. She was to go back in seven to ten days if no better. I did not see any evidence that she went back so I assume she recovered. In March 1979, mum noted that Tricia had a "tummy upset".

In my case, I only had minor illnesses and injuries during this period. Often the illnesses involved were non-specific. In April 1977, I did not feel too good so instead of meeting people at Just John's¹⁵⁴ I stayed at home. In May 1977, I felt sick and had earache but did not tell mum as I thought she would worry. That same month, I felt ill after having run back to a party at Bywell's.¹⁵⁴ Gary Wood saw me home. I did sometimes have more specific illnesses. For example, in January 1979, mum thought I had tonsillitis. However, the following day, mum noted I was better. In terms of minor injuries, in August 1976, while youth hostelling¹⁵⁴, I got something in my eye. Two guys from Newark, Ross and Neil, helped me by cooking a meal. That same year, in December 1976, I got hit while playing basketball at school and sustained a black eye.¹⁵⁵ The following year, in March 1977, we made toffee apples at school to raise money and I burned myself.¹⁵⁵ Also that month, after the school sponsored walk, the backs of my legs were sore. While this was not necessarily an injury as such, I noted that they hurt quite a bit whenever I got up from resting a long time.¹⁵⁵ On my 17th birthday, 4 June 1977, I fell off my bike¹⁵⁶ outside the hospital and incurred minor injuries.



My diary entry for 6 April 1977. I did not feel too well in the morning so did not go out in the afternoon. I did go out in the evening though

I don't think any of the diaries had much, if anything, in them about my mental health. However, in November 1979, mum got a letter from me and thought I sounded a "bit down". This could have been the case but it seems more likely to me that mum misinterpreted what I wrote. I think this because if I was feeling "down", the last person I would have gone to would have been my mother!! In general, I really enjoyed my time at university, part of which was being away from home! In December 1975, mum hosted St Peter's Guild at ours.¹⁵⁷ Trevor Hughes¹⁵⁸ was the speaker. He remembered seeing me

¹⁵⁴ See [Chapter 122](#).

¹⁵⁵ See [Chapter 118](#).

¹⁵⁶ See [Chapter 127](#).

¹⁵⁷ See [Chapter 124](#).

¹⁵⁸ I think this was [Rev Henry Trevor Hughes](#). The son of [H. Maldwyn Hughes](#), he was born on 27 February 1910 in Wallasey and educated at the Perse School, Cambridge. He worked in banking before training for the ministry at [Wesley House, Cambridge](#). He gained his Cambridge MA in 1938 and Oxford MA in 1969. He was chaplain at [Culford School](#) 1935-1941 and RAF [chaplain](#) 1941-1945. Appointed Vice-Principal of [Westminster](#)

in Attleborough Hospital after I had my appendix out.¹⁵⁹ Apparently, we talked for some time. Finally, in terms of general health, I experimented with smoking during this period.¹⁶⁰ I suspect mum knew but, if she did, she never wrote about it or raised concerns about it in her diary.

In September 1978, Dr Welch wrote to mum summarising my medical history. I am not sure why he did this but I suspect this was something mum had asked for possibly linked to my going to university.¹⁶¹ I am not sure if I was involved. I don't recall. However, it is of interest that I was 18 at this point yet Dr Welch still wrote to my mother rather than to me directly.

I. C. ROBERTSON, M.A., M.B., B.A.C.H.
J. F. BENNETT, M.A., M.B., B.A.C.H.
F. C. BUTTER, M.A., M.B., B.A.C.H., D.I.B.S.T. R.C.O.S.
J. P. ENGLISH, M.A., M.B., B.A.C.H., D.I.B.S.T. R.C.O.S.
D. M. WELCH, M.A., M.B., B.A.C.H., D.I.B.S.T. R.C.O.S.
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N. R. PINDER, M.A., M.B., B.A.C.H., D.I.B.S.T. R.C.O.S.

29 MILE END ROAD
NORWICH
NR4 7QX

TELEPHONE: 54344
APPOINTMENTS: 54919

8th September, 1978.

Mrs. S. Drew,
192 College Road,
Norwich.

Dear Mrs. Drew,

Further to your letter, I hope the following points may be of help to you:

1. Intramuscular Diphtheria anti-toxin. Although later it was considered that he was only suffering from a virus infection although there were some diphtheroid organisms present.
2. Chest X-ray, December 1963. Normal.
3. Transient non-specific synovitis. Settled completely.
4. July 1974. "Minor concussion". I hardly think it is necessary to mention this in your report.

Yours sincerely,


D. M. Welch

Letter to mum from Dr Welch in 1978 detailing my medical history. It appears that this was for some kind of report mum was writing but I don't know what this was. I find the letterhead interesting as it list the doctors who were at Mile End Road Surgery at that time. I am grateful to Tony Tilford for getting in touch with me to explain that his brother Trevor was one of the doctors at this practice and that the Mile End Road and Gurney Court practices were linked.

[College](#) in 1946, he became Principal in 1953, oversaw the college's move to Oxford in 1959 and forged links with the University. He was the first Methodist to become a Select Preacher at the University. After leaving the college in 1969, he served in the Attleborough Circuit in Norfolk until retirement in 1975 and retained an active involvement in educational affairs. His books include *Prophetic Prayer* (1947), *The Piety of Jeremy Taylor* (1960) and *A Progress of Pilgrims: seven Methodists. 1914-1958* (1979). He died on 26 April 1988. He is [listed as a Wesleyan Minister](#) although he was only first ordained in 1935.

¹⁵⁹ See [Chapter 100](#).

¹⁶⁰ On 13 March 1976, I noted that I had been bored at Teens youth club, see [Chapter 122](#), so started smoking again. But, I didn't like it so sold my cigarettes to Roger Boothby and noted that I had "re-given up". On 15 March 1976, Roger Boothby bet me 50p that I could not go without a cigarette until 10.4.76. I am not sure who won that bet but I did smoke after that time. I only gave up once and for all once I went to university in 1978, see [Chapter 120](#).

¹⁶¹ See [Chapter 120](#).

Among us siblings, it seems that my younger brother Alan experienced the most illnesses of us all.¹⁶² In January 1975, mum noticed that Alan had spots on his leg. She wondered if it was a heat rash or gnat bites. The next day, she took him to see Dr Robertson¹⁶³ at 8.30am. Dr Robertson thought it could be a reaction to the antibiotic amoxicillin (Amoxil) or to his trousers. Mum wondered if she had used Comfort¹⁶⁴ on any of Alan's clothes previously. He was advised to take the antihistamine chlorpheniramine (Piriton).



My current inhalers for asthma. Although the brand names have changed, the active ingredients and the colours are the same. Brown is the preventer inhaler and blue the reliever. Alan and I had the same inhalers as each other

Alan sometimes experienced asthma symptoms during this period, for example on 20 and 21 January 1975.¹⁶⁵ On the 20th, mum commented that he still managed to go to Boys' Brigade though. On the 22nd, in the afternoon, mum spoke to Dr Welch about him. He told her to increase the beclomethasone (Becotide) inhaler and he would see him if he was no better. The very next day, mum took Alan to see Dr Welch. At this point, he was not wheezy just complaining of feeling tired. Dr Welch wondered if he was anaemic and sent him for a blood test. He had this on the 24th and, on the 29th, mum noted that it was normal. Then, in July 1975, mum noted that Alan was a bit wheezy. On 19 October 1975, Alan got back safely from a walk from Stalham to How Hill. Mum noted he was tired and wheezy but otherwise fine. On 1 June 1976, mum noted that Alan was wheezy "still".¹⁶⁶ On Christmas Eve 1979, mum took Alan to see Dr Bennett as he was wheezy. He was told to increase his salbutamol (Ventolin) and beclomethasone inhalers. On Christmas Day, Alan was very wheezy. On the 26th, he was a bit better.

In October 1975, when Alan would have been 13, he was still having problems with bedwetting. [Apparently](#), the issue is not uncommon in teenagers but I don't think I knew that as it is not something that is widely talked about even now. Mum went to see Dr Welch about this. Dr Welch said he would like to see Alan on his own and this happened about a week later. Dr Welch gave him imipramine (Tofranil) and a chart. He went back to see Dr Welch in January 1976 and was due to go back in eight weeks. Two years later, in 1978, mum spoke to Dr Welch about Alan's bedwetting. He told her to wait until he asked for help. She said she was told he had very mild spina bifida which was nothing to worry about.¹⁶⁷

The diaries contain relatively little about the management of Alan's Coeliac disease.¹⁶⁸ There are some details of things mum made for him including bread, fruit cake, "krispies"¹⁶⁹, Christmas cake,

¹⁶² I have noticed this before when reviewing the diaries but do not particularly recall that this was the case. I wonder how much of it was related to Alan having Coeliac disease, see [Chapter 78](#). Another possibility is that mum recorded illnesses that affected Alan more than the rest of us.

¹⁶³ Dr I C Robertson was one of the GPs in the Mile End Road practice.

¹⁶⁴ [Apparently](#), Comfort was the first fabric conditioner in the UK. It was launched in 1969.

¹⁶⁵ I believe I did too although mum does not seem to mention it during this period. Based on my recollections, Alan suffered more with asthma than I did.

¹⁶⁶ I noted that Alan had a cold.

¹⁶⁷ I don't think I was aware of this.

¹⁶⁸ See [Chapter 78](#).

¹⁶⁹ I believe these were [cakes](#) made with Rice Krispies and chocolate. I recall these as a child. I am pretty sure these were made with conventional Rice Krispies but my understanding is that these are not gluten free as they contain barley malt. Gluten free alternatives are available.

Christmas puddings, Eve puddings¹⁷⁰ and pastry¹⁷¹. I believe Alan got some gluten free items on prescription, such as bread and flour.¹⁷² In July 1976, I went to Robinsons¹⁷³ on Colman Road to get some bread mix but they hadn't got any. In January 1978, mum made Alan some bread and rolls with Juvela flour.¹⁷⁴ In May 1977, mum noted that she had got special communion wafers for when Alan was made a church member.¹⁷⁵ However, she noted that the senior Minister Rev Ream "messed it up" as he gave Alan the wrong bread.



This photo of the corner of Colman Road and the Avenues dates from 1933. It shows the shop format I recall. The location for Robinson's would be out of view to the right © [George Plunkett](#). I am grateful to Jonathan Plunkett for permission to use his father's photos

According to me, Alan got "slightly injured" in March 1976 when we did something with a weather vane at grandma's! Perhaps surprisingly, mum does not mention this. In May that year, she did note that Alan was not very well but she did not give any details.

During this period, Alan also had problems with his toe and I believe this was an ingrown toe nail. In June 1976, while on holiday in Dunoon¹⁷⁶, mum took Alan to see the doctor about his toe. She was advised to let the air at it. In August 1976, Dr Robertson saw Alan about his toe. He was to use a silver

¹⁷⁰ From memory, we had this [type of pudding](#) a lot. It could be made with almost any fruit and then a sponge layer on top. In November 1977, mum noted cooking separate Eve puddings for me and Alan. I am not sure why there was one for me and not for everyone! Mum noted using plain flour and baking powder for mine and she said you could not tell the difference between them. Alan said he was not hungry and mum thought this was because we could not tell which was which. I am a little surprised by this as mum was always careful to make sure Alan got gluten free versions of whatever we were having. However, it is true that I do not recall us being as worried about cross-contamination as people might be today.

¹⁷¹ In November 1979, mum made pastry for Alan using French gluten free flour that Mrs Housego had given her. I am not entirely sure who this was.

¹⁷² My understanding is that while [some gluten free items are still available](#) on prescription in some places, they are [much less available](#) on prescription now than previously. On the other hand, gluten free items are much more available generally than they were then but they tend to be much more expensive than gluten-containing counterparts.

¹⁷³ According to Kelly's Directory and Kelly's Tradefinder 1971-72, Guy C Robinson was a chemist at 143 Colman Road. This is in the shopping area on the corner of the Avenues. No 143 is right on the corner and currently houses [Lucky Wok](#). Apparently, this is known as Bunnett Square. Many people on [Facebook](#) seem to recall Robinson's being among a group of shops here. One of the things I remember about this group of shops is that the names were all in the same format with white letters on a blue background.

¹⁷⁴ [Juvela](#) is described as a versatile and reliable white gluten free flour substitute.

¹⁷⁵ See [Chapter 124](#).

¹⁷⁶ See [Chapter 122](#).

nitrate stick on it¹⁷⁷ and was not to wear nylon socks.¹⁷⁸ In September 1976, Dr Bennett saw Alan about his toe. He was to continue with the silver nitrate. However, the following year, in January 1977, Alan's toe was worse. Mum thought she might take him to see Dr Welch or Dr Bennett the next day. On the 28th, mum took Alan to see Dr Fraser¹⁷⁹ who wanted to refer Alan to Accident and Emergency to see a surgeon. However, mum told him who she worked for¹⁸⁰ and they agreed Alan would see Mr Stephens. Mum spoke to Mr Stephens and he said to take Alan to his clinic the next Monday, the 31st. Dr Fraser gave her a letter for this. Mr Stephens saw Alan as planned.¹⁸¹ Alan went for surgery in February 1977.¹⁸² He was admitted to Diss Ward for removal of the nail and nail bed. He was kept in overnight and discharged the next day.¹⁸³ I noted that he seemed very well apart from a big bandage on his foot. Following the surgery, Alan progressed well. He only got pain when he walked. He was able to resume various activities including going to church, to Boys' Brigade and to the cinema.¹⁸⁴ Ten days after surgery, on the 28th, Alan went back to the hospital. I noted that this was to have his bandages off. Mum noted that he was also reviewed by Mr Stephens.¹⁸⁵ He had the day off school following this as his toe was painful. He went back to the hospital for his toe to be dressed on 3 March 1977.¹⁸⁶ He had further reviews at the hospital. A month later, in April 1977, mum noted that Alan's middle toe on his left foot was infected. She thought the nail was plenty long enough. He had had the infection for five days. It must have persisted as, at the end of May 1977, mum took him to see Dr Welch. He advised putting silver nitrate on the toe and to go back in three weeks if no better. The following month, in June 1977, mum took Alan to see Dr Welch. He took a piece of nail off.



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Ingrown toenail on right big toe

In October 1976, I noted that Alan was back from an expedition and I thought he seemed unwell but was not sure what was wrong with him. The following day, however, I noted that he was much better and he went to Boys' Brigade. I suspect he had just been tired as he went to bed at 3pm the day he

¹⁷⁷ Silver nitrate has been [widely-used](#) in the treatment of ingrown toenails but the evidence for the effectiveness of this is fairly weak.

¹⁷⁸ I was not aware of this advice but [apparently](#) the reason is that nylon socks trap moisture and can promote infection.

¹⁷⁹ I am not sure who Dr Fraser was. I presume he was one of the doctors in the Mile End Road surgery but he is not listed on the letterhead I have.

¹⁸⁰ See [Chapter 121](#).

¹⁸¹ Mum noted that she and Alan walked there. She also commented that Mr Stephens did not see her at first but when he did he said *"Oh it's you" & was quite different.* As mentioned elsewhere, mum loved to get what I believe she saw as preferential treatment.

¹⁸² I may recall him having this surgery. I certainly recall, I think, that he did not have a nail on one of his big toes.

¹⁸³ When mum got there to collect him, the doctors were doing a ward round so mum went to see Sister Burton on Ellingham Ward. They had coffee together and she told mum to come again. Mum noted that Alan came out in a wheelchair but hobbled to the car.

¹⁸⁴ Mum took him various places in the car including church, school, work and the cinema. About two weeks after surgery, he was able to cycle to school. .

¹⁸⁵ Apparently, Mr Stephens told mum *"they had a raised blood urea for Alan Drew - he doesn't think it is A as it came from a clinic but there is no other Alan Drew. Had another blood test."* On 1 March 1977, Mr Stephens told mum that the path lady had taken the wrong blood so Alan needed another blood test the next day.

¹⁸⁶ He also had blood taken. Mr Stephens told mum that the blood test was normal.

came back. In December 1976, Tricia had to pick Alan up from school about 11.30. Mum simply noted “faint”. So, I don’t know if he felt faint or had fainted. The next day, he had the morning off school.¹⁸⁷ In September 1977, Alan spilled a cup of coffee on his foot. It blistered an area of 2” by 5”. Mum and I took him to hospital.¹⁸⁸ In November 1978, Alan complained of pain and an ache in his left chest and abdomen. The following year, in August 1979, while on holiday¹⁸⁹, he pulled a muscle in his leg.

My younger sister Liz suffered a number of illnesses in this period. In January 1975, mum noted that Liz was covered in a rash. She noted that Liz had groomed the horses rather than riding them¹⁸⁹ because of the weather. She hoped that the rash was not an allergy to horses. In October 1975, mum noticed that Liz’s feet were “an odd shape”. She said the skin was tight on top and very fleshy underneath. I (helpfully!) said it was bad shoes. Mum said it couldn’t be.¹⁹⁰ Ten days later, mum took Liz to see Dr Welch about her feet. He said there was nothing to be done now but they would wait until her feet stopped growing. Then the options would be to have the little toes off or try to straighten them. Mum promised Liz that it would be her choice and she wouldn’t make her do anything. I vaguely recall this issue namely that Liz’s little toes overlapped her other toes. I am not sure what was done in the end. In March 1976, Liz fell in the playground. The school called and mum picked her up at 1.15p.m. Mum said she was dazed and “odd” and could not remember anything. She phoned Dr Welch who was at Mile End. He told her to let her sleep and if she was not OK the next day to let them know. Mum noted that she seemed better in the evening but was not her usual self. However, the next day, she was better. In February 1977, while Liz and I were in Birmingham with dad, she had an earache which had kept her awake the previous night. I thought she looked very ill. In April 1977, Liz was sick at school. However, the next day, mum noted she was a bit better. In October 1977, Liz was sick at night. The next day, I came home at lunch-time to see Liz who wasn’t very well.¹⁹¹ Mum noted she was off school all day but better by evening. In June 1979, on Alan’s birthday, Liz was sick so did not want any of the Chinese food that mum and Alan got.



Overlapping toes are relatively common. They can be treated in different ways including with toe separators and surgery. I think this may have been the issue Liz had but I am not sure

The diaries documented a number of people who had coughs, sore throats and colds during this period. Mum noted having colds on 21 occasions during this five-year period. This was a lot more than any of the rest of us, between two and seven occasions. Part of this may relate to the fact that the information is from her diary. Also, I wonder if some of the colds that lasted a day or less might have been undiagnosed [hay fever](#). Nevertheless, mum did seem to have a lot of colds during this period, an average of four per year based on these numbers. In May 1976, mum was depressed and wondered why she was getting so many colds. It was perhaps natural that living in a house with so many people, especially children, there were quite a lot of coughs and colds shared around. Sometimes, mum

¹⁸⁷ He was off in the afternoon anyway. Presumably, the schools had broken up.

¹⁸⁸ Initially, the sister stripped the blisters and dressed it. He had to go for repeat dressings and he was off school for a while. By the 28th, he was better and went to school.

¹⁸⁹ See [Chapter 122](#).

¹⁹⁰ My sense is that she was pretty annoyed at me for saying this. Frankly I don’t recall.

¹⁹¹ I confess the main incentives might have been to get out of school and to ride my motorbike, see [Chapter 127](#).

seemed to apportion blame for a particular cold to a specific person. For example, in December 1976, mum said she had got Tricia's cold and that had come originally from dad! In May 1978, she wondered if she had got Liz's cold. Other people with colds in this period included Tricia, me, Alan, Liz, Irene Bell, Dr Day¹⁹², Pam Ludlow¹⁹³, Rev Eddy¹⁹², Mr Stephens, Rev Dowson, Malcolm Carter and Hilda Crowe.

A handkerchief in time

saves nine

and helps to keep the nation fighting fit

**COUGHS and SNEEZES
SPREAD DISEASES**

ISSUED BY THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Printed for H.M. Stationery Office by Harbury Printers Ltd. 51-4253

This public health advert from the Ministry of Health emphasises preventive measures to stop the spread of coughs and sneezes. I recall the saying "coughs and sneezes spread diseases" concluding with "catch them in your handkerchief"

¹⁹² When the GP who mum worked for, see [Chapter 121](#), Dr Day, was ill in May 1975, she described this as flu. I know there is a tendency to use the terms cold and flu synonymously. However, I recall mum being quite strict on this and insisting that flu was much worse than a simple cold. I have never known how you can be sure without testing which is rarely, if ever, done. In February 1976, when both Rev Eddy and Mr Stephens were sick, mum described this as flu.

¹⁹³ Sometimes, mum mentioned that people had colds when they were unable to do a particular activity. For example, in November 1975, Pam Ludlow could not go with mum to the Cathedral for a rehearsal and recording of "Songs of Praise".

Cold remedies that mum used herself or for us during this period included Anadin¹⁹⁴, Bradosol¹⁹⁵, Contac¹⁹⁶, Dimotane¹⁹⁷, Disprin¹⁹⁸, Fortagesic¹⁹⁹, Karvol capsules²⁰⁰, Lemsip²⁰¹, Phensedyl²⁰², Pholcodine²⁰³, Pholcolix²⁰⁴, Sudafed²⁰⁵ and Triogesic²⁰⁶.



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When we were children, we were given soluble aspirin (Junior Disprin) for aches and pains pretty much in the way children now are given paracetamol (Calpol) these days. However, it is now no longer recommended to give aspirin to under 16s because of risk of Reye's syndrome. This packet is now a museum exhibit!

¹⁹⁴ Mum's cold remedies included two Anadin often in combination with Lemsip. [Anadin](#) is a well-known brand name for pain relief. The [original Anadin](#), first produced in 1932, is a mixture of aspirin and caffeine but Anadin products containing ibuprofen and paracetamol are now available.

¹⁹⁵ [Bradosol](#) are throat lozenges containing hexylreorcinol, an anaesthetic and antiseptic. Mum was given them when she developed a cold and sore throat in hospital in December 1976.

¹⁹⁶ Mum took what she described as "[Contact](#)". I wonder if she was referring to [Contac](#) which is a mixture of paracetamol and pseudoephedrine hydrochloride.

¹⁹⁷ [Dimotane](#) was a mixture of an antihistamine (brompheniramine), a decongestant (phenylpropanolamine) and an antitussive (codeine). However, the exact composition may vary across different Dimotane products.

¹⁹⁸ [Disprin](#) is the brand name for soluble aspirin. In November 1976, when I was thought to have tonsillitis, [Dr English](#) advised mum to give me this. Alan was also ill at the same time and he was given Disprin four-hourly. I was 16 at this point but Alan was only 14. Aspirin is no longer recommended in under 16s because of the risk of [Reye's syndrome](#). At [that time](#), we were given Disprin at a much younger age. Indeed, there was a specific product for this called Junior Disprin. It was discontinued in the early eighties and is now a [museum item](#).

¹⁹⁹ See footnote 57.

²⁰⁰ I recall Karvol capsules from my childhood. They contained a combination of aromatic oils which could be squeezed on a pillow to help you breath and sleep when you had a cold. While they smelled strongly, my recollection is that the smell was not unpleasant. They are no longer available in the UK because of [concerns](#) over the use of one of their ingredients, chlorobutanol. Similar alternate products are available though.

²⁰¹ Mum's cold remedies included two Anadin often in combination with Lemsip. [Lemsip](#) is a very well-known British branded cold remedy containing paracetamol and phenylephrine hydrochloride. First produced in 1969, this medicine is still available today. Most well-known is the original hot lemon drink but various products are now available under the Lemsip brand. In January 1976, mum referred to taking a Boots Lemsip which I assume was an own brand equivalent.

²⁰² [Phensedyl](#) is a cough medicine consisting of a combination of codeine and chlorpheniramine.

²⁰³ Pholcodine was an [opiate cough suppressant](#) also known as morpholinylethylmorphine and homocodeine. It was withdrawn from use in the UK in 2023. Dr Welch gave it to her and warned her not to take "*too much*".

²⁰⁴ [Pholcolix](#) is a mixture of pholcodine, paracetamol and phenylpropanolamine.

²⁰⁵ [Sudafed](#) is a range of branded nasal decongestants that may have one of three active ingredients – pseudoephedrine, phenylephrine or xylometazoline. Various other ingredients may include guaifenesin, ibuprofen, paracetamol and caffeine.

²⁰⁶ See footnote 60.

In January 1976, mum was concerned that her cold had gone to her chest. She saw Dr Welch who gave her the tetracycline antibiotic demeclocycline (Ledermycin)²⁰⁷. In February 1978, she had a cough and catarrh following a cold. Dr Welch gave her the antibiotic doxycycline (Vibramycin).²⁰⁸

I think mum had the tendency to “soldier on” when she had a cold including going to work. My recollection is that we had to do the same and we could only be off school if we were at death’s door.²⁰⁹ However, mum’s diary showed that she sometimes had mixed standards, in my view, about what she could and could not do when she was ill. In April 1976, she noted that Tricia painted the ceiling as she didn’t have the energy. She had, however, had the energy to have lunch in the city and to buy a skirt at Marks and Spencer!²¹⁰

We did not engage with health services only for treatment. Rather, we accessed a number of preventative and other services. This included a range of immunisations. In March 1976, I noted that I had a tetanus injection and a polio sugar lump. I thought the sugar lump was worse! In

Viruses or Bacteria
What's got you sick?

Antibiotics only treat bacterial infections. Viral illnesses cannot be treated with antibiotics. When an antibiotic is not prescribed, ask your healthcare professional for tips on how to relieve symptoms and feel better.

Common Condition: What's got you sick?	Common Cause			Are antibiotics needed?
	Bacteria	Bacteria or Virus	Virus	
Strep throat	✓			Yes
Whooping cough	✓			Yes
Urinary tract infection	✓			Yes
Sinus infection		✓		Maybe
Middle ear infection		✓		Maybe
Bronchitis/chest cold (in otherwise healthy children and adults)*		✓		No
Common cold/runny nose			✓	No
Sore throat (except strep)			✓	No
Flu			✓	No

* In some cases, acute bronchitis is caused by bacteria, but even in these cases antibiotics will do nothing.

Antibiotics Aren't Always the Answer
www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use

CDC U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Nov. 16, 2017
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While antibiotics are not effective against viral infections, such as colds and flu, they can be used to treat secondary bacterial infections, e.g. chest infections. My impression is that antibiotics were used more then for cold-like symptoms than they would be now

²⁰⁷ In January 1976, mum was concerned that her cold had gone to her chest. She saw Dr Welch who gave her the tetracycline antibiotic demeclocycline (Ledermycin). In April 1976, Alan became wheezy and quite unwell following a cold. Dr Bennett also gave him demeclocycline (Ledermycin). A few days later, he was still unwell and had a high temperature. Mum spoke to [Dr Rutter](#) who said it was probably flu and that antibiotics would not help but would keep his chest clear. In August 1976, Tricia had a sore throat. She saw Dr Bennett who gave her phenoxymethylpenicillin (Penicillin V). In November 1976, I also had a sore throat and was given penicillin.

²⁰⁸ The next day, mum felt ill with a headache etc and it was worse after taking the Vibramycin. She rang Dr Welch at Tuckwood. He said it could be them but he then said to persevere. She remained ill for a few more days but then gradually recovered. She had Vibramycin again in March 1979, when [Dr Downes](#) prescribed it for her when a cold she had went to her throat, and in October 1979 when Dr Brittain prescribed it for her.

²⁰⁹ At the end of March 1976, I noted that my cold meant I missed going to the [Norwich Ipswich game](#) on the 31st. This was a First Division game which Norwich won 1-0 with Martin Peters scoring the only goal, see [Chapter 123](#). This was a big game for Norwich. It was only their third season in the top flight. They would finish in their then highest position of tenth although Ipswich finished sixth. The next day, I went to the pictures to see “[Death Race 2000](#)”, see [Chapter 122](#). Mum noted I insisted on going and I noted that my cold was a bit better. The next day, I noted that my cold was bad but I went to school, see [Chapter 118](#), and even played five-a-side!

²¹⁰ On Wednesday 10 May 1978, Dr Welch advised her to have the rest of the week off work. I assume she did. However, the next day, she had her hair done and went to a St Peter’s Guild meeting. The next day, she went to the Norfolk and Norwich and went shopping! At the end of March 1979, Dr Welch told mum she should have a

June 1976, mum, Tricia²¹¹, Alan and Liz had tetanus injections.²¹² Alan and Liz had diphtheria immunisations too. In December 1977, mum took Liz for a rubella vaccination²¹³. In October 1978 and 1979, mum had flu immunisations²¹⁴ at work.

Mum also noted when she had cervical smears. She had one in May 1977 and noted that her last one had been in March 1972. On 15 April 1976, mum saw Dr Welch. He told her to come for a smear and check-up on the 29th. However, when she saw him on the 29th, he examined her and said she looked healthy so she did not go for a smear.



Mum had been a blood donor for a number of years. However, I do not recall her ever noting this in her diaries before this period. I did find her blood donor card among her papers. This shows that she gave blood ten times between 1969 and 1981. However, there was an eight-year gap between April 1972 and May 1980. In April 1976²¹⁵, mum went to give blood but “wasn’t good enough”.²¹⁶ Mum was told they would do further tests and let her know. My suspicion is that the copper sulfate test that they use(d) for detecting anaemia raised concerns.²¹⁷ She was told that they would do further tests. In early May 1976, she received a letter from the blood donor people saying she was anaemic with a haemoglobin of 10g/dl.²¹⁸ She started taking iron supplements and I assume the matter was resolved.



Outside (top) and inside (bottom) of mum’s blood donor booklet. The inside shows her blood group which was A negative. It also shows that she had made ten donations by November 1981

week off work to recover from her cold. On Sunday 1 April 1979, she did not go to church and Alan brought her breakfast in bed. However, later, she did typing for both her works! In July 1979, mum noted having a bad cold but this did not stop her going fruitpicking!

²¹¹ Mum noted that Tricia’s arm ached at night.

²¹² I don’t know why I had mine separately from them. I am also not sure why Alan and Liz did not have polio boosters when they had their tetanus boosters. They went back, separately from each other, for these later that month.

²¹³ Mum referred to it as “German measles”. [Rubella immunisation](#) was introduced for pre-pubertal girls in 1970. All children have been immunised against measles, mumps and rubella since 1988.

²¹⁴ [Adult flu immunisation](#) has been offered to vulnerable people in the UK since the late 1960s. In 1979, mum had a painful left arm following the immunisation.

²¹⁵ I am not sure why she did not give blood between April 1972 and April 1976.

²¹⁶ There are [many reasons](#) why a person might not be able to give blood. The reason in mum’s case seems to have been that she was anaemic but she appears to have taken it personally! I wasn’t able to give blood when we came back from Africa in 1998. At that time, a history of travel in areas that were badly-affected by HIV was enough to be refused. Unlike mum, I simply accepted this and I don’t believe I have given blood since.

²¹⁷ Essentially, this involved putting a drop of blood into a vial of copper sulfate. If it quickly sinks, the person can donate blood. If it floats or sinks slowly, the person is not allowed to donate blood and has further tests to determine their haemoglobin level.

²¹⁸ Mum noted that it was the same it had been in July 1975.

However, she was due to give blood in April 1977. She told them she had had a parathyroidectomy and they told her not to come.²¹⁹ She wrote to the Blood Transfusion Service about this. At the end of the month, she received a letter from them saying they could not accept her blood. She clearly was not happy about this but was not sure what to do next. Options were to write again or to speak to Mr Ashken or Mr Green.²²⁰ On 20 May 1977, she wrote to Mr Green. Mr Ashken told her that Mr Green had spoken to him about it. Also, on the 25th, mum received a letter from Mr Green saying he agreed with her and he had written "to Cambridge".²²¹

Mum noted taking various of us to the dentist for one thing and another including check-ups, fillings²²² and dental extractions²²³. Our dentist at that time was David Rogers and I believe I recall him.²²⁴ I remember his surgery being upstairs in a property on Prince of Wales Road.²²⁵ Mum also took Alan and Liz to see the school dentist in December 1975.

I believe the building highlighted in red was the location of Mr Rogers' surgery upstairs. The building is 18-20 Prince of Wales Road and the photo was taken in 2020



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²¹⁹ I checked to see what the advice would be now for someone who had had a parathyroidectomy. It appears that it would be decided on a [case-by-case basis](#).

²²⁰ I am not sure why this mattered so much to mum. I think most people would have just accepted the decision!

²²¹ It is interesting that the Regional Transfusion and Immunohaematology Centre listed in mum's transfusion booklet is in Long Road in Cambridge.

²²² I had one filling there in January 1976 as did Alan. Alan had another filling in July 1976 and I had another in April 1977. Apparently, he also talked to me about university applications, see [Chapter 120](#).

²²³ I had a tooth out there on 15 December 1975. In June 1976, mum and Alan were told that he might have to have four teeth out and then wear a brace for a year. Mum discussed this with Malcolm Carter who thought he should have the treatment. However, in July 1976, Alan saw Mr Rogers. He knocked out a loose baby tooth and said nothing more was needed. In June 1978, Liz had four baby teeth out under general anaesthetic administered by Dr Reynard. I have not found out anything about him.

²²⁴ A number of contributors on [Facebook](#) also recall seeing him as children. Reported experiences were mostly negative. One contributor recalled that he had been her old dentist. She noted "I remember having a tooth extraction, he used the gas mask. I woke up with a bag of sweets on the arm of the chair after they tried to keep my mouth closed. For some reason I didn't want to shut my mouth". Another recalled him as a big strong man. She thought he was not the best but better than the children's dentist on Unthank Road. Another said he always smelled of curry. Another described him as a "butcher" noting that her experiences of him had produced a lifelong fear of dentists. Yet another recalled "I had 2 extractions with a general when I was about 11; They gave me enough anaesthetic to stop me being able to move but not enough to put me under and stop me experiencing the pain and feeling his knee on my chest as he fought to pull them out!" Another commented that he was "one of the worst dentists I had the misfortune to go to". Another complained that he was never given pain relief for drilling or extractions. So, he changed dentists in his teens. He thought that his wife had been his assistant. He recalled a particularly humorous story, "On one visit to Rodgers, I remember saying to Mum I needed the toilet that had two doors one in the reception room and one on the stairs, I went in and open the stairs one ran down to find my Mum at the bottom of the stairs blocking the door Bless'her." I don't remember him particularly clearly and don't really have any views on his competence or otherwise. I did need extensive dental treatment when I went to university but I put this down to my own fault and neglect although I suppose poor previous care and treatment could have been a factor. I think mum thought highly of him though.

²²⁵ Sure enough, the 1967 Kelly's directory lists him as a dental surgeon at Lombard House, 20 Prince of Wales Road. He was still there in the 1971/72 Kelly's Tradefinder. It seems that 18-20 Prince of Wales Road are now office buildings called Greyfriars House. As of April 2025, they appear to be [for sale](#). Apparently, in the late 1960s hire purchase financiers Lombard were based at 20 Prince of Wales Road and perhaps that is where the name Lombard House came from. They were also known as Lombard Banking or Lombank. Lombard Banking was [taken over by NatWest](#) in 1970.



This photo shows the same part of Prince of Wales Road at the time of the Coronation in 1937. It shows that the building which housed Mr Rogers' surgery must have been subsequently extended, at least upstairs. The [photo](#) is from George Plunkett's collection. I am grateful to Jonathan Plunkett for permission to include here

In addition to seeing the dentist about our teeth, we also saw various people about our eyes, including the GP, ophthalmologists, opticians, orthoptists and the school health services. In April 1975, mum saw Dr Welch about Tricia's eyes. He told her to contact the school health services²²⁶ which mum did. They told her an appointment would be sent.²²⁷ However, in just over two weeks, mum took Tricia to see ophthalmologist Mr Hunter²²⁸ at the Norfolk and Norwich. He noted that her eyes were still the same.²²⁹ If she had had glasses to correct the right eye²³⁰, she would have seen double. He tried it. He told her that she could drive and she should "go and forget it".

In September 1975, I saw the school nurse about shortsightedness.²³¹ She wanted me to see the consultant at hospital. Mum thought I was worried but would not speak to her.²³² Mum wrote to my

²²⁶ I am not sure why he told her that.

²²⁷ I am not sure if this was sent. It is pretty clear mum did not wait for it.

²²⁸ [Peter John Lewis Hunter](#) was consultant ophthalmologist at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital from 1957 to 1982. Born in 1921, he qualified from Birmingham in 1946 and died in April 2020. In 1947, he took up a post in the eye department of the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle upon Tyne. It seems he did national service and then was appointed to Bradford Eye and Ear Hospital before returning to the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle as senior registrar ophthalmologist. In 1957 he moved to Norwich as consultant ophthalmic surgeon, where he remained for 25 years. His wife Kathleen, predeceased him in 1992. They had five children and six grandchildren.

²²⁹ Which presumably means he had seen her before.

²³⁰ From what I know, Tricia had very reduced vision in one eye. Also, as far as I know, it has never given her any difficulty.

²³¹ I am a bit surprised as this sounds as if it was a new issue. But, I was first found to be shortsighted as early as 1966, see [Chapter 88](#). I suspect the issue is that I did not wear my glasses. I recall that I had difficulty seeing the board throughout my school career. It is perhaps odd that it took to 1975 for someone to do something about it. I readily accept I did not help as I did not want to have to wear glasses in school!

²³² See [Chapter 118](#).



This is one of the earliest photos I have of me wearing glasses. I do not know the date but it is probably later when I was at university, so post-1978, possibly early eighties. I don't think these are the glasses in question. I remember them as having heavy black plastic frames. I think these ones are later and have lighter metal frames

French teacher Mr Cheeseman. In November 1975, mum took me to see Mr Hunter at the Norfolk and Norwich. He said I was shortsighted and would need to wear glasses for all school work. Mum said I was quite upset²³³ and that she might ring Mr Cheeseman the next day. She did so and told him about my glasses. Two days later, mum took me to pick glasses. They were going to cost £21.25.²³⁴ About three weeks later, mum noted getting me my glasses. She said they were very nice but very strong lenses.²³⁵ She noted they cost £20.50.²³⁶ In January 1977, I went to what I described as “the optician”²³⁷. They said everything was OK and I should go back next year. In March 1977, I thought I had lost my glasses.²³⁸

In June 1976, mum took Alan to see Mr Hunt²³⁹, the optician. Following this, he had to wear his glasses at school and for reading for three weeks and was then to go back in early July. Mr Hunt said there was a problem with his muscles. Mum took him back as directed and they saw Mr Hunt again. He said that Alan’s eyes were abnormal. He needed glasses and he should go back in one year. In February 1978²⁴⁰, mum took Alan to see Mr Hunt in the afternoon. They were told that his eyes were about the same and that he needed a slight correction but it might cause trouble if it was done.²⁴¹ Mr Hunt noted that his eyes were good but they did not work

²³³ I am not convinced that mum was a good judge of whether I was upset or not. In my view, her comments on this reflect more how she was feeling than I was necessarily. I know I was not thrilled about the thought of having to wear glasses at school and, from memory, I largely did not even after this point.

²³⁴ The next day, mum wrote to dad about money for my glasses and Tricia’s trips, insurance and medical insurance. However, at the end of November, mum noted that she would pay for my glasses because of dad’s money problems, see [Chapter 114](#).

²³⁵ I am not sure what mum meant by this or what she expected! I suspect they were the right prescription for me as I am very shortsighted.

²³⁶ I don’t know why they were marginally less than the original price she quoted.

²³⁷ However, mum noted that we actually saw an ophthalmologist at the hospital. She noted that she picked me up from school and we went to the Norfolk and Norwich to see Mr Hunter’s registrar. Mum noted there was no change.

²³⁸ I am not sure if this was wishful thinking! I think they must have turned up although I don’t seem to have recorded this.

²³⁹ Robin Hunt worked at L L Tillett’s at 87 Upper St Giles Street. [Apparently](#), he was born in September 1944. L L Tillett was dissolved in 2010 but there is still an optician at 87 St Giles Street called Tillett Adams.

²⁴⁰ When Alan was off school with a cold. This was around eighteen months after he had been previously seen.

²⁴¹ I am not sure if Mr Hunt was talking about surgical correction or perhaps correction with lenses. I am also not sure why such a correction might cause trouble nor what kind of trouble it might cause.

together. Mr Hunt told them to come back in one year or earlier if needed. A year later, in February 1979, mum took Alan to see Mr Hunt again and Alan had his eyes tested. He said they could see the ophthalmologist Peter Hunter if they liked.²⁴² Alan agreed so mum was going to arrange it²⁴³. In March 1979, mum took Alan to see Peter Hunter. Mr Hunter wanted Alan to see an orthoptist at the hospital. He thought exercises might help but, if not, a small operation might be needed.²⁴⁴ Alan saw the orthoptist in May 1979 and was given exercises to do. However, in July 1979, he was admitted to the Ingham South Ward at the Norfolk and Norwich for eye surgery.²⁴⁵ On the 16th, Alan had the surgery.²⁴⁶ Ten days later, mum took Alan to Mr Hunt, the optician, to tell him about the surgery and to have his glasses straightened. From there she took him to the orthoptist, Mrs Ede, at the hospital. In August, they saw Mr Hunter who was very pleased with progress. He was given a follow up appointment for one year. The orthoptist discharged him from their follow up in September 1979.

Strabismus Surgery

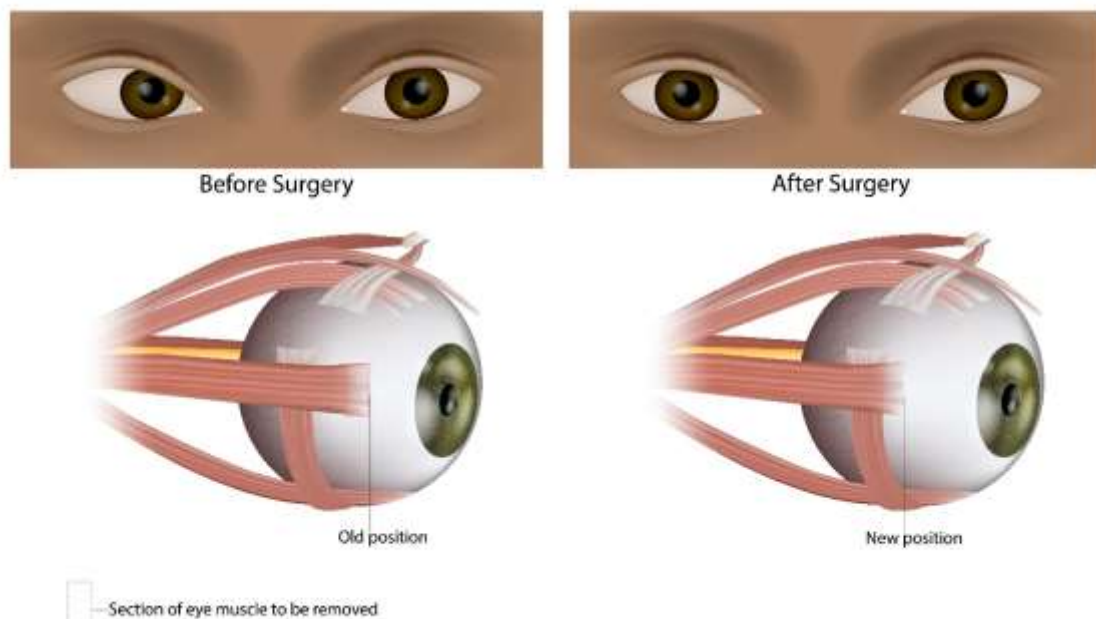


Image licensed for re-use from Alamy

Squint (or strabismus) surgery involves correcting one eye's position by shortening and reattaching the relevant muscle – image licensed for re-use from Alamy

As far as I know, Liz had no problems with her eyes during this period. In March 1976, mum had her eyes tested. She was to wear glasses for needlework in the evening.²⁴⁷ Three years later, in March

²⁴² My sense is that not something that Mr Hunt was pushing for but rather mum probably asked about it.

²⁴³ , another example of mum using her position to self refer.

²⁴⁴ Mum confirmed that this was what the optician had told them but here she referred to him as John Hunt.

²⁴⁵ There was some confusion over which eye was to be operated on. Mr Hunter told Alan the right eye but Alan thought the orthoptist had said left eye. Mum tried to speak to Dr Brittain about it but could not get him so spoke to Mr Ashken. He advised mum to phone Mr Hunter and ask him. Mum did so. He told her that it was the right eye but it did not really matter which one he did. This upset mum who went to speak to the then Minister's wife, Christine Lemmon. My [understanding](#) is that squint surgery is usually done on the squinting eye but it may depend on the exact case.

²⁴⁶ Afterwards, the orthoptist told him not to read or watch TV but Mr Hunter said he could.

²⁴⁷ This is slightly odd as it sounds as if it was a new thing but mum had been advised to wear glasses for headaches she was getting in 1961, see [Chapter 78](#).

1979, mum had her eyes tested again. She was told to wear half glasses. Grandma had had problems with her eyes for many years. She had given up driving because of poor vision in the early sixties.²⁴⁸ In December 1976, I read grandma's Christmas letters to her. In February 1977, mum took grandma to see Mr Tillett about her glasses as they were slipping.

In addition, a number of family members and friends were ill during this period.

There were a number of illnesses among grandma and grandad's neighbours. In May 1975, grandma and grandad's next-door-neighbour Barbara Carpenter lost her voice. Irene Bell lived next door to Barbara Carpenter so next-door-but-one to grandma and grandad. In June 1975, she went to see her doctor. A few days later, she was not well and ten days after that had the doctor. The next day, she was not well and grandma did shopping for her. A week later, at the end of May, grandma went to see her and Irene went for an Xray. I am not sure if this all cleared up but in July 1975, Irene Bell had an ear infection. Almost a week later, she was still not well. I am not sure if this persisted for several months or if Irene suffered another illness but, on 8 October 1975, Irene was getting better.

In May 1975, mum phoned her friend Mary Leach. She knew her from Kirkby where her husband Derrick had been the Minister.²⁴⁹ She was not well with "*nervous exhaustion*" and Derrick had written to mum about it.



Mum and Mary Leach in 1960

Mum sometimes noted when friends from church were ill. In September 1976, mum distributed flowers from Harvest Festival including some to Mr Buxton who was in the Norfolk and Norwich. In

²⁴⁸ See [Chapter 80](#).

²⁴⁹ See [Chapter 79](#).

January 1977, mum visited Eric Buxton.²⁵⁰ A few days later, she visited him again and noted that he had been in five full weeks. In November 1976, mum noted that Frank Papworth had phoned to say that his wife Nancy had been admitted to Deopham Ward because of adhesions. Mum went to see her a few days later. That same day, Mr Papworth came to tell mum that his wife's operation would be the next day, the day before mum's. In May 1977, mum visited Maureen Harris in hospital. She was in Wroxham Ward. On 6 April 1979, mum was talking about a play at St Peter's and noted that Dorothy's voice had nearly gone.²⁵¹

In January 1976, Rev Dowson's wife was ill which meant that plans for the next day had to be cancelled.²⁵² In May 1976, Rev Dowson told mum he was ill so he would not be able to come that week.²⁵³ In March 1978, Rev Dowson wrote to mum saying he was in hospital with what he thought was a pulmonary embolism again.²⁵⁴ In November 1976, Malcolm Carter was not too well. A week later, he was still not too well but he called to see mum and stayed to talk. On 31 March 1979, Peter Lemmon phoned mum at 10.30²⁵⁵ to say he had slipped a disc and was flat on his back. He asked mum to take "my CPD"²⁵⁶ to the meeting tomorrow.



This is a still image from a [YouTube video](#) posted in 2016. It shows (at 0.42) my mother talking to Rev Dowson at an event to celebrate fifty years of St Peter's Park Lane which was held in the eighties

²⁵⁰ The implication was that this was in hospital.

²⁵¹ I am not sure who this is referring to.

²⁵² See [Chapter 114](#).

²⁵³ Mum said she did not feel worse after this. She did ring Malcolm Carter though and arranged to see him. I think this perhaps shows how much mum had relied on Rev Dowson in terms of maintaining her mental health but it also shows that she was now also getting support from Malcolm Carter.

²⁵⁴ Presumably, this means he had been in hospital before for a pulmonary embolism but I am not sure when.

²⁵⁵ Not clear if am or pm.

²⁵⁶ Not sure what this is.

In August 1975, while on holiday at Plas y Coed²⁵⁷, mum noted that a lot of people had a sickness and diarrhoea bug. In July 1978, when mum was in Sidmouth, she met someone called Bill Richardson. While they were there, his mother had a stroke. In March 1976, mum noted that she had her hair permed by Jane as Isabel had tonsillitis. Sometimes, mum noted when people she knew through work were ill. At the beginning of April 1976, Mr Stephens, one of the surgeons for whom mum worked, told mum that he was going into St Bartholomew's Hospital²⁵⁸ (Barts) to have his gallbladder out. She noted that he did not look well. At the end of April, mum noted that Mr Stephens was going on well and that he had had one large stone. In October 1978, mum noted that Mr Stephens was chatty but not very well. Then, in March 1979, Margaret Prime told mum that Mr Stephens had been ill in theatre the previous week. An ECG taken at the time showed he was "fibrillating". In May 1977, June, from the Tuckwood surgery, phoned mum to say she had collapsed at work and had been in the West Norwich Hospital. Mum was not sure what was wrong. She wanted mum to sort her an appointment with Mr Stephens. In November 1977, mum went to visit Rosemary Davey²⁵⁹ in Rockland Ward. She had had a hysterectomy under Mr Carron Brown. In April 1978, Daphne²⁶⁰ thought she had cystitis. In November 1978, mum went to see Eileen Day²⁶¹ in Wroxham Ward. On 26 February 1979, mum noted that Dr Leach²⁶² had broken her arm while skiing. Initially, she noted it as a compound fracture of her right humerus. But, she later corrected this to say it was not compound. She was flying home. She was off sick on 5 March. On 13 March 1979, Doreen²⁶³ went in for a D&C. On 22 July 1979, Mrs Ashken phoned and told her that Mr Ashken had broken the little finger in his Rt hand. They were in Hampshire. He had had to cancel operations for Tuesday and Wednesday. On 24 July 1979, Mr Ashken had his arm in a sling. Mum had to do forms for him. This continued on 25th and she also had to make phone calls for him.

February 26

1979 Monday Apr No 7. (Dr Leach broke her arm (R compound fracture of humerus !!) on skiing holiday - flying back Drama Group at night. Knew out to be ordinary not compound #)

Mum's diary entry for 26 February 1979 concerning the skiing injury that Dr Julia Leach sustained

²⁵⁷ See [Chapter 122](#).

²⁵⁸ [St Bartholomew's](#) is a hospital in central London. Founded in 1123, it was threatened with closure in 1995 because there were considered to be too many hospitals in central London. In the end, it was redeveloped as a cancer and cardiac centre.

²⁵⁹ Rosemary Davey was medical secretary for Dr Goodwille, a [GP in Attleborough](#), and went with mum to a number of medical secretaries' conferences and meetings, see [Chapter 121](#).

²⁶⁰ I think Daphne was one of the secretaries who worked at the same private practice as mum at 41 Newmarket Road. I think she may have started in around August 1976 and she worked, initially at least for Dr Batty Shaw, see [Chapter 121](#). However, there are at least two Daphnes mentioned in mum's diaries, Daphne F and Daphne B. I think both worked as medical secretaries or receptionists. One Daphne certainly worked at the GP practice of Dr Brittain and Dr Watkins at some point. However, there was also a Daphne who was Mr Ashken's secretary in 1978 and I presume she was his NHS secretary. [Anthony \(Tony\) Batty Shaw](#) was born on 19 June 1922. He was educated at Rugby School and Balliol College Oxford. He did his clinical studies at [Guy's Hospital](#). He worked initially at Guy's Hospital before doing national service with the Royal Army Medical Corps. He then did further training including in the United States. He was appointed a consultant physician at the Norfolk and Norwich in 1956 and worked there until he retired in 1987. He married Patricia Heckels in 1954. He died on 19 August 2015.

²⁶¹ I think Eileen Day may have worked for the occupational therapy department of the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital at the same time as mum did. Mum mentioned Eileen a few times in that context.

²⁶² Dr Julia Mary Leach was one of the GPs that mum worked for between 1977 and 1991, see [Chapter 105](#). I have not found out much about her except that she was born in September 1948 and was a Director of the Town Close Educational Trust from 2004 to 2016.

²⁶³ I think Doreen also worked for the GP practice of Drs Brittain, Watkins and Leach, as did mum, see [Chapter 121](#). She is mentioned frequently in the diaries. There are also a couple of references to a Doreen in the bed bureau who might be a different person.

Mum sometimes got to know people through an illness, particularly a hospital stay. In December 1976, when mum was in hospital for parathyroid surgery, Sally Bracewell came into the room next to mum. She was a doctor's daughter. Mum thought she was nice and that they got on well. A few days after she was admitted, mum noted that Sally went to theatre in the morning. The next day, Mr Green came in the evening but just saw mum and Sally²⁶⁴. The next day mum noted that Sally went home. Mum went to see Nancy Papworth and noted she missed Sally. Mum also noted that Sally was back in Ellingham Ward in October 1977. Mum went to visit her.

Sometimes, one or more of my friends was ill. In November 1976, Everard Mascarenhas²⁶⁵ was not so well so did not go to school. I went there in the evening and he seemed OK. In February 1977, Everard did not go to school but, this time, it was because his brother Vernon was ill and he was looking after him. The next month, in March 1977, Everard did not go to school as he was ill. However, when I went round in the evening, he was better and was going the next day. In June 1977, Everard was not at school and I wondered if he was sick. In January 1977, I noted travelling home from Nottingham, where I had attended a course, with Ian Sherrington²⁶⁵. I noted that he spent the whole journey complaining about his state of health! In June 1977, I went to Gary Wood's²⁶⁵ house as he was not well but he looked OK when I saw him. In May 1978, I had some friends round. One who mum said was 14²⁶⁶ was sick and she said I cleared it up and was most upset.



Everard Mascarenhas was my friend when we were at the Hewett School. He was in the school football team

On occasions, I noted when one of my teachers was ill or injured. In June 1977, I noted that our Latin lesson was cancelled as Mr Winterbotham²⁶⁵ had sprained his ankle.

Sometimes, I noted if people I worked with at The Scientific Anglian²⁶⁷ were unwell mainly because this meant they were not at work. In May 1976, I commented that Ross²⁶⁸ was not at work as he was ill. The next month, in June 1976, Terry²⁶⁹ was not in as his doctor suspected he had an ulcer. In December 1976, Terry was not at work because he had had an accident in his car and, although he was not hurt, he was badly shaken.

Mum sometimes commented on illnesses she had seen at work. For example, she noted that Dr Baker²⁷⁰ phoned to say a "boy" aged 18 in Ward 7 had prostate cancer. Mr Ashken was very concerned. On 25 October 1977, mum had to take one of Mr Stephens' patients home and then to be admitted at the Norfolk and Norwich. On 4 March 1978, mum noted that someone she knew had had a vasectomy performed by Mr Ashken!

²⁶⁴ Presumably his private patients.

²⁶⁵ See [Chapter 118](#).

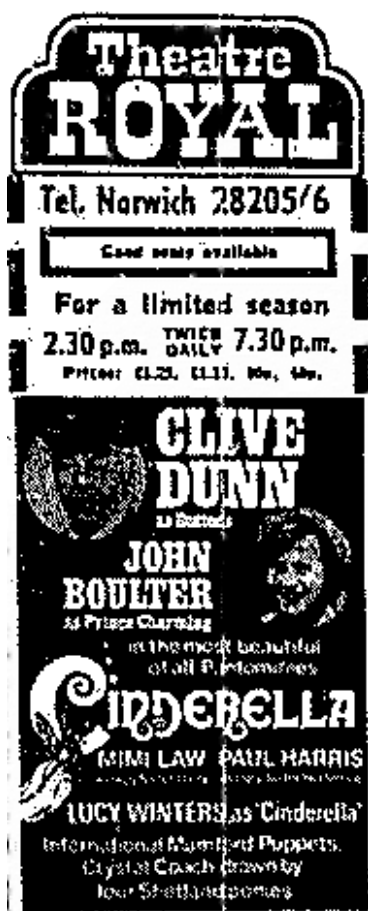
²⁶⁶ I don't recall this story at all and wonder how true it was. I don't doubt that one of my friends might have been sick at the house. However, I was nearly 18 at the time and it does not seem very plausible that I would have had a 14-year old friend.

²⁶⁷ See [Chapter 119](#).

²⁶⁸ I vaguely remember Ross and believe he attended King Edward School.

²⁶⁹ I also vaguely remember Terry. He was considerably older than the others of us who worked on Saturdays.

²⁷⁰ According to the 1971-2 Kelly's Tradefinder, Dr H de C Baker was a pathologist in Norwich at that time. [Apparently](#), he was born in London in 1924 and qualified from Manchester in 1948. He died from prostate cancer in 2004. He was a consultant at the Norfolk and Norwich from 1967 to 1983. Also, he was married with three children and five grandchildren.



Advert for the pantomime "the Coeliacs" saw in January 1975 – obtained from the EDP of 2 January 1975

On 11 March 1979, mum noted that she and Janet Bennett went to the Theatre Royal for a Viennese evening²⁷¹. The orchestra was conducted by [Henry Krips](#) in place of [Will Boskovsky](#) who was ill.

Grandma continued to volunteer at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital canteen²⁷². Often, she went on her own but, on occasions, she went with her friend Jessie Cushing. On at least one occasion, when Auntie Dolly was visiting, she went with her. In June 1978, mum went to the church stall at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital fete in the afternoon. Presumably, she went to help.

Mum remained involved with the Coeliac Society²⁷³ both locally and nationally. Mum was involved in local activities. For example, on 4 January 1975, "the Coeliacs" went to the pantomime²⁷⁴ in the afternoon and then to St Peter's Park Lane Methodist Church for tea.²⁷⁵

Mum was involved in organising local meetings. These included an Annual General Meeting. This was held sometime between January and March. Over this period, attendance grew from only eight in 1975 to 27 in 1979. In February 1975, mum was disappointed with the turnout. She had made biscuits the day before but wondered if it was worth it. In 1976 and 1977 for sure, and possibly in 1975, the AGMs were held in our lounge. In March 1976, I noted that Alan went. Mum noted that nine people came. In February 1977, 14 people attended a meeting at our house and I assume this was the AGM. In January 1978, it seems that the meeting venue moved from ours to the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. Mum went to a Coeliac meeting there. I don't know for sure that this was an AGM but I think it was as Paul Burgess was

elected Chairman, Jackie Aldous Treasurer and Mrs Ibott to help with secretarial work.²⁷⁶ In February 1979, at the AGM of the local Coeliac group, mum retired, presumably as the group's secretary. They gave her a silver powder compact, a lipstick, a cut glass vase and a record token. Rae Ward came to speak and there were 27 there.²⁷⁷ Following the 1978 AGM, mum sometimes met with Paul Burgess

²⁷¹ See [Chapter 122](#).

²⁷² Although sometimes grandad referred to this as going to the hospital clinic rather than canteen.

²⁷³ The [Coeliac Society](#) was founded in 1968 by Elizabeth Segall and [Peter Benenson](#). Elizabeth Segall was the wife of a doctor and the mother of a child with coeliac disease. Peter Benenson had the condition and also became a founder of Amnesty International. In 1971, the Coeliac Society had about 5,000 members and this rose to 12,000 by 1976, 23,000 in 1987, 49,000 in 2001 and over 76,000 by 2006. In 2001, the charity renamed itself Coeliac UK, see [Chapter 100](#).

²⁷⁴ Mum did not note which pantomime it was. However, according to an [advert](#), it was "Cinderella" starring Clive Dunn and John Boulter. Grandma and Auntie Dolly had been to see this on New Year's Eve the previous year, see [Chapter 122](#). There, I had noted that Lucy Winters played the lead role of Cinderella. However, this was based on an article in the Local Recall database which is no longer accessible.

²⁷⁵ She noted that Alan had been a big help.

²⁷⁶ Both Paul Burgess and Jackie Aldous are mentioned fairly frequently in the diaries in connection with the Coeliac Society. As far as I can see, however, this is the only mention in the diaries of Mrs Ibott.

²⁷⁷ I don't know who Rae Ward was. The spelling of Rae perhaps implies a woman. I wonder if there was a connection with the Mr Ward who spoke to the group on gluten-free supplies in October 1978.

and Jackie Aldous to discuss local work for the Coeliac Society. Mum sometimes referred to these as committee meetings.

Mum was involved in a number of fundraising activities for the Coeliac Society. These included selling Christmas cards²⁷⁸, collecting stamps²⁷⁹, coffee mornings²⁸⁰, Pippa Dee parties²⁸¹ and raffles²⁸². Sometimes, other people raised money for the Coeliac Society. For example, in May 1977, mum went to Boundary²⁸³ at 8.45 to see Mr Lines of Wroxham and other Stalham Lions²⁸⁴ off in a sponsored walk²⁸⁵ to Cromer to raise money for "Coeliacs". On 1 July 1977, mum went with Heather Ferguson to the Broads Hotel²⁸⁶ in Wroxham to receive the cheque. In December 1979, mum went to Gunton Hall Lowestoft²⁸⁷ at night with Jackie Aldous to receive a cheque for £100 for the Coeliac Society from the Business and Professional Women's Club²⁸⁸. They also gave £100 to "autistic children". Mum said there was a lovely meal.

JULY 1977
1 FRIDAY ☉ Dominion Day, Canada
W00K 18 - 193-194
AT 11:15 then straight to 1st. left home
2.05 & had hair set. Virginia Wade
won ladies Wimbledon 6-6, 6-3 6-1
Went to Broads Hotel Wroxham to
receive cheque for £500 for Coeliac Socy
Research raised by Stalham lions.
Took Heather Ferguson with me. Nice
meal. I went to see Ruddigore at
Theatre. Took Tania with her as I couldn't
go. Met Michael Rayner from D'Oyle
Carte at the lions do. (leading tutor)
He told me they want to go to America
to make money as they make a loss
everywhere in Britain.

Mum's diary entry for 1 July 1977

²⁷⁸ I am not sure if mum sold Christmas cards for the Coeliac Society locally only or if she was responsible for this nationally. I do know that she sometimes roped us in to help. For example, in November 1977, I helped my brother Alan deal with requests for Coeliac Christmas cards. That took us to more or less tea-time as there were lots.

²⁷⁹ Mum organised members of the local Coeliac group to collect stamps. For example, in July 1975, there was a Coeliac meeting sorting stamps. About 20 people came. I am not sure if this activity raised funds for the Coeliac Society or others or both. In December 1976, mum took stamps collected by "Coeliacs" to Roadline (B Road Services) for the "Blue Peter" Lebanon appeal. I recall "[Blue Peter](#)" appeals. The appeal in 1976 was for old stamps and postcards for medical accomodation, food, drugs and equipment for babies and children injured and made homeless by the civil war in Lebanon. Initially, I was not entirely sure what the reference to Roadline was. However, it [seems](#) they were transporting blankets for free and presumably transported stamps too. [Roadline](#) was the new name for British Road Services Parcels and this company left the National Freight Corporation in 1997 as LYNX Express..

²⁸⁰ Mum organised coffee mornings to raise money for the Coeliac Society. For example, in October 1975, she had a coffee "morning" for "the Coeliacs". Tricia picked up grandma to go. Mum noted it was both a coffee morning and afternoon. 29 people came, 13 in the morning and 16 in the afternoon. She raised £28.50 including £3 from sale of Christmas paper in Drayton.

²⁸¹ In November 1975, mum had a Pippa Dee party. She sold around £70 worth of items. This made a profit of £6 for the Coeliac Society. For information about Pippa Dee parties, see [Chapter 92](#).

²⁸² There were sometimes raffles for the Coeliac Society. For example, in October 1977, I made £2.00 selling tickets for such a raffle.

²⁸³ This is a reference to the [junction](#) of Boundary Road, Reepham Road, Cromer Road, Mile Cross Lane and Aylsham Road. There was a garage there. The Boundary pub is still there.

²⁸⁴ [Lions Clubs International](#) supports small-scale humanitarian and philanthropic projects. It consists of 46,000 local clubs with 1.4m members. It was established in Chicago in 1917.

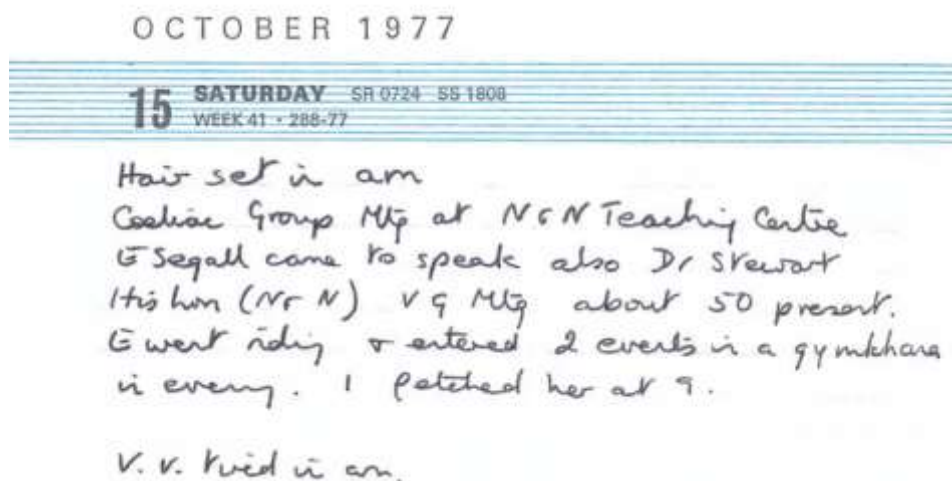
²⁸⁵ About 22 miles I think. They raised £505.

²⁸⁶ Mum said it was a very nice meal. Mum met Michael Rayner from D'Oyly Carte there, see [Chapter 122](#). I have found newspaper entries for the Broads Hotel in Wroxham from 1947 to 2003 giving the address as Station Road.

²⁸⁷ Gunton Hall is a large country house dating back to the 18th century. However, the hall was badly damaged by fire in 1882 and lay derelict for nearly a century before being renovated in 1980. It is now a [Warner hotel](#).

²⁸⁸ I assume the Business and Professional Women's Club was part of what is now [Business and Professional Women UK](#) (BPW UK). Founded in 1938 by three clubs in London, the network now has clubs across the UK divided into five regions.

There were also local meetings which may have had an educational focus. For example, in June 1976, Andrew Wright showed a Coeliac film for mum at church. Mum also talked to people individually²⁸⁹ about Coeliac Disease and the work of the Coeliac Society. In October 1977, there was a Coeliac group meeting at the Norfolk and Norwich Teaching Centre. Speakers included E Segall²⁹⁰ and Dr Stewart Hishon²⁹¹ from the Norfolk and Norwich. Mum thought the meeting was very good. About 50 people attended. In March 1978, mum went to the TWG Social Services Group²⁹² Norwich on Dereham Road²⁹³ to talk about the Coeliac Society. In October 1978, there was a Coeliac meeting in the afternoon at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital. The speakers were Dr P Crowle²⁹⁴ and Mr Ward²⁹⁵ on gluten free supplies. Mum thought it was good.



Mum's diary entry for 15 October 1977 documenting the visit of Elizabeth Segall, co-founder of the Coeliac Society, to a meeting of the local group at the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital

Mum also did administrative work for the Coeliac Society. In August 1976, she noted typing Coeliac letters.²⁹⁶ She also administered some money for the Coeliac Society.²⁹⁷ In July 1977, the month after

²⁸⁹ Such individuals included her GP, Dr Welch.

²⁹⁰ Elizabeth Segall was one of the co-founders, with Peter Benenson, of the Coeliac Society, now known as [Coeliac UK](#).

²⁹¹ [Stuart Hishon](#) was born in Portsmouth in 1945. He qualified from [Westminster Hospital](#) in 1970. He joined the medical registrar rotation in Leeds before becoming a Senior Registrar in Norwich. In 1981, he was appointed as the first gastroenterologist at [James Paget Hospital](#). He worked there until 1994. He was only 49 when he retired and apparently he suffered from depression. He died of hepatorenal failure in 2005. I think when he spoke at this Coeliac meeting, he must have been a Senior Registrar.

²⁹² I am not entirely sure who this group was.

²⁹³ The meeting was at 626 Dereham Road. This seems to be a residential property although there is an [advert](#) for Slimming World on the fence,

²⁹⁴ Dr Peter Crowle was born in Devon and worked as consultant paediatrician at the Norfolk and Norwich from 1977 to 2002. Some contributors on Facebook recalled him in a [discussion](#) of memories of the Jenny Lind Hospital. Sarah Drake described him as a lovely consultant.

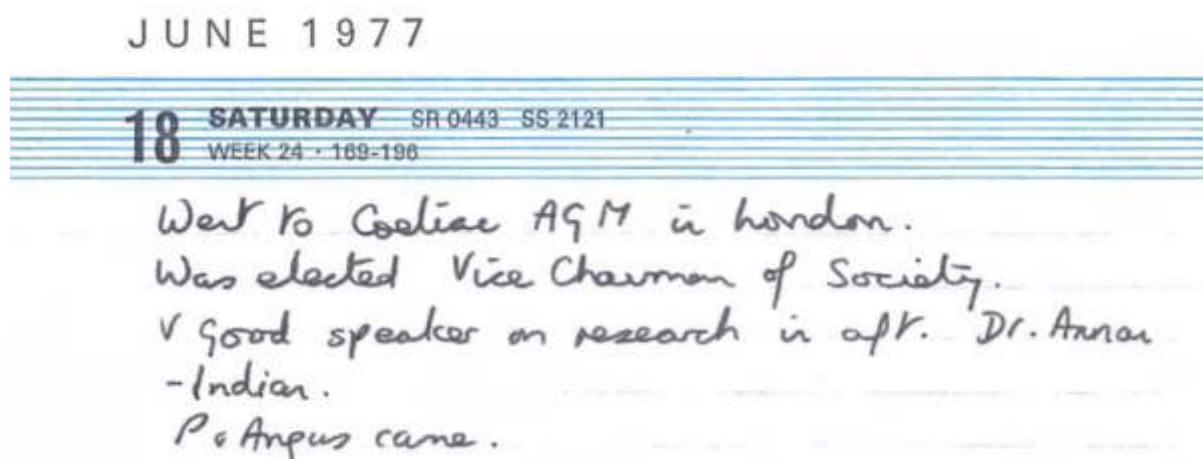
²⁹⁵ I am not sure who this was.

²⁹⁶ I am not entirely sure what these were, whether they were her own letters related to local activities or if she was doing this for others, perhaps nationally.

²⁹⁷ Again, I am not sure if this only related to money she raised through fundraising activities or was something broader. On 13 December 1976, mum noted sorting out "Coeliac money". This was the day she came out of hospital after parathyroid surgery. On the 23rd, she again sorted out Coeliac money and accounts. On the 31st, he typed and duplicated the Coeliac accounts. On 8 January 1978, mum sorted the Coeliac accounts. It seems to me the local group operated a January to December financial year and this would fit with an AGM in February or March. On 28 December 1978, mum worked on Coeliac accounts in the afternoon. Again, this

the national AGM, mum met Gayle Swan. She was a new Coeliac member and mum thought she might become the secretary²⁹⁸.

Mum attended national AGMs in London in June from 1975 to 1979.²⁹⁹ Initially, mum attended these meetings by herself. However, in 1978, Paul Burgess and Jackie Aldous attended too. They met mum there. In June 1979, mum and Jackie Aldous went together. Mum sometimes noted speakers at these meetings. In 1975, she noted it was Dr Peter Baker³⁰⁰ from Bristol. She considered him excellent. In 1977, she said there was a very good speaker, an Indian, Dr Annan. I have not found any details of them. At the 1977 AGM, mum was elected the Vice Chairman of the Society.



Mum's diary entry for 18 June 1977 documenting the Coeliac Society's national AGM at which mum was elected Vice Chairman of the Society

There were also, what I assume were, national meetings held outside London. For example, in November 1977, mum went to Doncaster for a Coeliac meeting. She said it was good. She met Kay³⁰¹ and Roger³⁰² on the train in Peterborough.

As Vice Chairman of the Coeliac Society, mum attended national officers' meetings. I am not sure if these occurred regularly and, if so, with what frequency. I also don't know if mum recorded all such meetings but she recorded two in 1977, four in 1978 and six in 1979.³⁰³ Mostly, the meetings were in the evenings so she usually travelled down by train in the afternoon and came back the same night,

would fit with a January to December financial year. However, she also referred to sorting out the Coeliac accounts out in March 1979.

²⁹⁸ I presume this would have been of the local group, possibly in mum's place now that she had national responsibility. I don't know exactly who this was. This is the only reference to her in the diaries that I have come across. I don't know if she took on the role of secretary.

²⁹⁹ In 1975, we went too and my sister Tricia drove. We went to dad's and mum went to the meeting by tube.

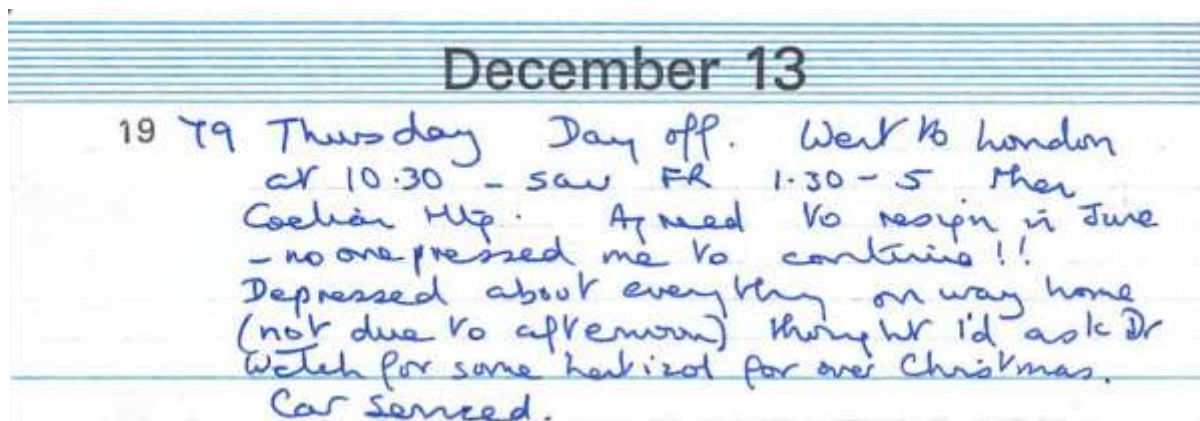
³⁰⁰ I am not entirely sure who this was. I did find a [doctor](#) by this name who was senior house officer at [Frenchay Hospital](#) at this time. However, I think he would have been too junior to be a national authority on the topic unless he was speaking about his own personal experience of the disease.

³⁰¹ I don't know who this was but presumably an officer of the Coeliac Society.

³⁰² This refers to Roger Atkinson. I am not entirely sure who he was but it seems he was an officer in the Coeliac Society. He often gave mum lifts to Liverpool Street Station after officers' meetings.

³⁰³ The 1978 total includes one meeting that was cancelled as Brian Brass, who I assume was a national officer, had a slipped disc. The 1979 total includes one that mum could not attend due to bad weather. I don't know if that meeting went ahead or was cancelled.

often quite late.³⁰⁴ Often, someone dropped her at Liverpool Street Station. Usually, this was Roger Atkinson.³⁰⁵ I think mum's preference was to park the car at Norwich railway station so she had it when she got back.³⁰⁶ In December 1979, mum went to a Coeliac meeting in London. I assume this was an officers' meeting. She agreed to resign in June 1980, presumably at the next AGM, but seemed disappointed that no-one pressed her to continue! I find this a bit hard to follow. If she agreed to resign, presumably someone asked her or rules/the constitution required it. It seems pretty clear that she did not want to step down and was hoping someone would ask her to stay. They didn't!



Mum's diary entry for 13 December 1977 where she agreed to step down as the Society's vice-chair in June 1980 at the next AGM. She was disappointed that no-one pressed her to continue!

Mum also attended what were called coeliac helpers meetings in London.³⁰⁷ On at least occasion, mum went to the Coeliac Society's London office³⁰⁸ and did some work there³⁰⁹.

In addition to grandad, a number of other people died during this period This included a number of close family and friends. At the end of April 1975, Frank Seville phoned. He was known to me as Uncle Jim as his father's name was also Frank. The reason for the call was that his mother Bertha Seville was very ill. She was known to me as Auntie Bertha even though she was my grandmother's maternal aunt,

³⁰⁴ On one occasion, at least, she stayed overnight with Brian Brass.

³⁰⁵ But, on at least one occasion, it was Brian Brass

³⁰⁶ However, it was not always easy to park in the afternoon when she wanted to so she resorted to various other tactics, including taking the car earlier to the station so she could park. However, this did not always work. For example, in October 1978, mum noted taking a taxi home as she hadn't been able to park the car at the station when she had tried at lunch-time. In March 1979, mum parked the car at the railway station before work and then got a taxi to work. She noted when she got back that it was nice to have the car at the station. So, in September 1979, she took the car to the station then walked to work and home and then got a taxi to the station. However, her well-laid plans fell apart as she had forgotten the car keys!! My sister Liz, who was 14, had to come in a taxi to bring them. I am not quite sure why mum didn't get a taxi to take her to get the keys and to bring her back to the station.

³⁰⁷ She went to such a meeting in March 1976. She went by train and described it as a very good meeting. In March 1978, she attended a Coeliac Helpers Day Conference with Paul Burgess and Jackie Aldous. Mum described it as a good day.

³⁰⁸ I suspect these were the offices in Willesden High Road. They moved there [between 1978 and 1985](#). Prior to that, the offices had been in a bedsit! The Society moved to bigger offices in High Wycombe between 1986 and 1989.

³⁰⁹ I am not sure what work she did there. She was in London to see Rev Dowson, see [Chapter 114](#), and presumably had some free time so decided to go to the Coeliac Society offices to do some work.

see [Chapter 16](#), so my great, great aunt. She was grandma's mother's younger sister. Since grandma's mother had died in 1937, Auntie Bertha had been a kind of maternal figure to grandma from then on.



This photo was taken in June 1974 in grandma and grandad's back garden while Auntie Bertha was staying with them. It is labelled on the back stating that this was the first "snap" Alan took with his new camera. Presumably, he had got this for his birthday. The note also says that it shows four generations, namely Tricia and me, mum, grandma and Auntie Bertha. This perhaps emphasises the role Auntie Bertha played for grandma since her own mother had died

The next day, Uncle Jim phoned again to say that Auntie Bertha had died at 10.30. A friend called Vera had been with her. The funeral was scheduled for Monday, 5 May 1975. Mum noted the news that Auntie Bertha had died and that grandma was quite upset. Mum took grandma to Mansfield for the funeral. Mum noted that the services were nice but that the car broke down on the way there, see [Chapter 127](#).

In April 1975, Amy Wilson had told grandma and grandad that her husband Tom was ill. Almost a month later, grandma noted that Tom was very ill. Two months after that, in July 1975, grandma noted

again that Tom was very ill. On the 16th, he was still very ill. Two days later, Amy phoned to say that Tom had passed away at 5.30. Mum noted that Uncle Tom (Wilson) died at 5.30pm. Tom was cremated on 23 July 1975. Neither grandma nor mum seems to have attended this.

Although mum referred to Tom as Uncle Tom, and we were expected to do the same, he and Amy were not in fact related to us but they were very close friends of grandma's and grandad's. They visited them often in Norfolk and they also went on holiday to Scotland together.³¹⁰



This photo was taken at the Norfolk coast. It shows Auntie Bertha (Seville), Amy and Tom Wilson and grandad

On 9 June 1977, mum noted that Olive Holland phoned at night to say that her mother, grandad's sister, Auntie Eva³¹¹ (Evans), had died suddenly on Wednesday night. Mum rang grandma to tell her. Apparently, grandma said mum need not go to the funeral.³¹²



Me, grandma, Tricia, Minnie Parkin and Eva Evans at Sheringham in 1961

³¹⁰ See [Chapter 92](#).

³¹¹ See [Chapter 1](#).

³¹² This surprises me a bit but perhaps grandma just gave mum the answer she wanted!

The Lofthouses were close family friends of grandma and grandad's. Arthur had been the Minister at Bourne Methodist Chapel in Kirkby for the first part of the second world war.³¹³ His adopted daughter, Dorothy, whose married name was Taylor, was a very close friend of mum's. Tragically, in February 1976, mum received a letter from Arthur Lofthouse telling her that Dorothy's daughter Heather had been killed on Sunday night in a car accident in York.³¹⁴ Mum phoned Dorothy. She decided not to go for the funeral but to go a few weeks later for a few days. She thought she might go from 3-6 March but that clashed with Tricia's exams. So, she decided not to go until the Thursday if Tricia agreed. She went on 4 March 1976. She arrived at 2.45 and Dorothy met her. They talked until 1.15am. On the 5th, she helped Dorothy write letters of thanks for sympathies etc. They went to the pub in the evening. Mum had two bitter lemons but commented that it seemed so pointless just drinking! On the 6th, Dorothy's husband, Alf took mum to Harrogate for the 8.49 train. Mum arrived in Norwich at 2.15pm and Tricia met her.

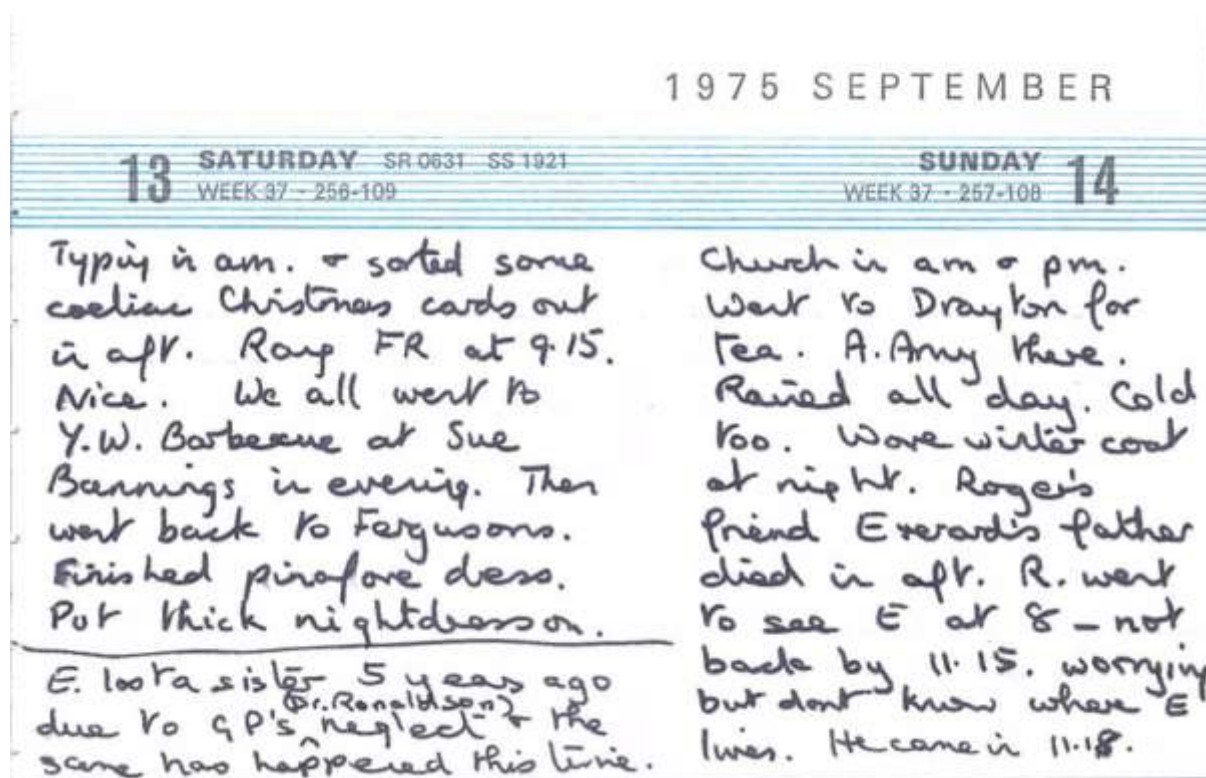


*Left – news article concerning the car crash in which Heather Tatlor was killed. This was in the Ripon Gazette of 13 February 1976 obtained through paid subscription to [Find My Past](#)
 Right – Heather, Dorothy and Jill Taylor on a trip we made to Ripon in April 1968. Heather was tragically killed in a car crash in 1976. She was the same age as me*

³¹³ See [Chapter 31](#).

³¹⁴ According to a [news article](#), she was a passenger in a car which hit a tree. She was 16 years old. Also killed was a soldier, Corporal David Fradley who was 26. The car driver Corporal David McNeil suffered head injuries and had to be cut from the wreckage by the fire brigade. The accident was blamed on icy conditions. Heather had been studying child care at the now-demolished [Marygate Centre](#) in York. She was formerly a pupil at Grantley Infants School (possibly now [Fountains CE Primary School](#)) and [St Aidan's School](#) in Harrogate.

During this period, there were deaths affecting people I knew. In September 1975, my friend Everard's father died³¹⁵. I went there at 8pm and was not back by 11.15pm. Mum was worried but did not know where Everard lived. She noted that I came in at 11.18! Mum noted that Everard had lost a sister³¹⁶ five years ago due to neglect by her GP Dr Ronaldson and she thought the same thing had happened again. On 14 September 1976, I noted that Everard and his family were going to church as it was the first anniversary of his father's death. On 29 April 1976, I learned that Mr Ames' five-day old son, Andrew Christopher Ames, had died. I wrote Mr Ames³¹⁷ a letter.



Mum's diary entries for 13 and 14 September 1975. She notes that my friend's father had died but her main concern was that I was not back by 11.15pm and she did not know where my friend lived. I am pretty sure I would have got into trouble about this on two counts, namely for being "late" and for not telling mum where my friends lived! I imagine that these concerns would have frustrated me when my main concern was for my friend whose father had died. He and I were 15 at this point. She also notes that Everard's sister had died some five years previously. She claimed both deaths were due to a doctor's neglect but I am not sure what evidence she had for this if any.

There were also deaths affecting people mum knew through work. In November 1978, Mrs Watkins' mother died and in December 1979, Dr Watkins' mother died. She was in St Andrews and had been there for three years or more. In November 1979, mum heard that the wife of Alan Byles, a consultant gynaecologist, was killed in a road traffic accident possibly deliberately. I think she was Florence Louise Byles and she was born on 28 January 1893.

³¹⁵ According to FreeBMD, his name was Aloysius Joseph Mascarenhas. He was born on 29 November 1917 so he would have been 57.

³¹⁶ According to FreeBMD, her name was Louella M C Mascarenhas. She died in 1969 and was seven years old.

³¹⁷ Mr Ames was one of my teachers at the Hewett School, see [Chapter 118](#).

There were a number of other deaths among people known to mum, grandma and grandad. On 8 January 1975, grandma heard that Mrs Chambers³¹⁸ had died. She had died the previous day and was one of the first members of Drayton Ladies' Meeting (DLM). On the 11th, grandma went to her funeral with other women from Drayton Ladies' Group. The funeral was held at St Margaret's Drayton. On 22 January 1975, Mrs Pointer took grandma to St Faith's crematorium for the cremation of Mr Haymer.³¹⁹ On 22 January 1975, mum noted that it was the funeral of the two Selsey children.³²⁰ On 4 February 1975, mum noted that Rev Dowson's newsletter had the address of their funeral in it. On 26 October 1975, mum noted that Tom Meakin³²¹ died at 7am. On the 30th, mum noted going to Rev Tom Meakin's funeral service in the afternoon. She took the names of people who attended for Sister Margaret. She came to ours in the evening and stayed over an hour. On 3 March 1976, mum noted that Rev Wagstaffe³²² was found dead on the doorstep in the morning. She thought he had been there since Tuesday after returning from the library. On 8 March 1976, mum went to Rev Wagstaffe's funeral. She noted that Mr Ream spoke "*quite nicely*". On 26 January 1979, mum heard that Heather Ferguson's father had died the previous day. Margaret Culley asked mum to write on behalf of the Young Wives. On the 27th, mum noted that she had sent Heather flowers as her father had died the previous Thursday. On the 28th, Heather was not at church as she had gone to sort out her father's things.

³¹⁸ Possibly Gladys May Chambers. She was born on 8 October 1916 and died in Q1 1975

³¹⁹ I don't know who this was and have not found any details.

³²⁰ See [Chapter 114](#).

³²¹ Based on FreeBMD, he was born on 28 May 1903. According to probate, his date of death was 26 October 1975. He had been living at 15 Kingston Square Norwich. He could have been the Thomas Meakin who was [based in Shetland](#) from September 1952. He was there until at least 1957. He may have been [in Staffordshire](#) in 1933. I found a reference to him being in [Thetford](#) in 1973. From 1964, he was Superintendent Minister for the Teignmouth Circuit. I found quite a [detailed article](#) about him including a photo. Based on that, he was born at Ashton-under-Lyme and he left school at 13. He worked for 14 years in the cotton mills. He then went to theological college for three years. By my calculations, that would bring us to 1933. He then spent three years in Cannock in Staffordshire and eight years in Birstall in Yorkshire. Immediately before moving to Teignmouth, he was in Hemel Hempstead. He was originally a Minister in the [United Methodist Church](#). The My United Methodists website gives his place of birth as Dukinfield, Cheshire on 28 May 1903. Dukinfield is now part of Greater Manchester and is very close to Ashton-under-Lyme. Apparently, he was ordained in 1933 but this is odd as this was after Methodist Union had happened yet he is recorded as having been ordained as a United Methodist Minister.

³²² I think this refers to Reginald Thomas Wagstaff who had been [a Primitive Methodist Minister](#). He was born in Lowestoft in 1896. He served as a radio operator in France during the first world war. He offered for the Primitive Methodist ministry in 1919. He spent a pre-collegiate year in the London Mission and then went to Hartley College in 1921. He served in the following circuits Tranent, Glasgow II, Nelson, Kelsale, Beccles, Loddon and Bungay, Bury St. Edmunds, Sheffield (North-East), Sheffield (Ecclesall), Rawtenstall, Martham, Sheffield (Carver Street), Winsford, Worksop, and Doncaster (North-East). He became a supernumerary in 1963 and settled in Norwich. His wife was Letitia Jardine and they married in 1928. He was a strong supporter of the Scout Movement. He and his wife acted as hosts in Methodist Guild Homes and they also led tours to the Austrian Tirol. His wife died in 1974.

