

Daniel's Diary 2005

Michael John Sewell

82 Shinfield Road, Reading RG2 7DA

michael@sewells.org

<http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/users/pes20/MJSewell/mjs.html>

January 29, 2006

January

Now that I'm one, I've "just begun". I don't know if you were brought up on A.A. Milne [The End, in Now We Are Six, 1927], but my Grandpa Michael was. So now I had better find out what I have to say for myself. Nobody else will say it.

"It's bloody January again", 2005 this time. Sorry for the language, but I'm quoting Michael Flanders at the drop of a hat, so I have to be accurate. Last January I took an Early Day Return drive around Berkshire, on the 7th, and came back on the 8th to show my family what they'd got. I had been waving my hands and feet at them since the previous May, when my Dad was in the Hebrides, driving my Granny and Grandpa and Peter around on Harris and Lewis and Uist and Barra.

This January I'm in a better position to throw my weight about. I have been quite influential already. They've more or less built a new house for me. My three siblings didn't achieve that. There are three new rooms upstairs in my house, and I now have a room to myself, so I don't have to share my parents' confidences any more. I just share their hoped-for sleeping time when I feel like it.

My new room used to be used by my sister Jacqueline, and I shall be very glad if she will take all of her stuff out of it, instead of some of it. But where will she put it? I can wait for a year or two until I get my PC, actually.

I have this big people carrier to carry me about. It is quite spacious, and I am willing to share it occasionally. They strap me into a capsule, very very tightly, so that I can only move my eyes. I just sit there not moving a muscle, and looking backwards to see if we're being followed.

Each Sunday my Dad takes me to Reading, to visit my Granny and Grandpa for 24 hours. This is where I learnt my favourite word "cluck". They have a grandfather clock, and every time it strikes I whip my head round to look at it, or listen, and I tell them "cluck". I point at it too, to make my point that I know what's going on. Whenever I see another clockface, or a picture of one, I say the same thing, so I am getting the idea.

I don't say much else yet, but I do notice things. They have a mobile in the Reading house which my Uncle Richard made when he was little. (I am not talking about a phone; even I am too young for that, although the time will come, and I am practising). It is made of three felt owls suspended from sticks, and it is my very first priority to check that out when I go into the room. I point at it, and Grandpa holds me so that I can touch it, and I touch his photo of a sunflower too.



Figure 1: Daniel with Jacqueline, David, Tom and John: 8th January 2004

I am very good at sign language. Everybody seems to understand what I mean very quickly, if they want to, when I express my views. Occasionally they don't want to know, so then I sleep on it. But for the most part they are to be congratulated on their perceptiveness. I have never seen my signs in a book, so perhaps there is scope there for some precocious youngster who has learned to write as well.

In my Granny's house I have a circular rug where I sit, with my back to some cushions, and my toys in their cardboard box, on its side in front of me. I don't do crawling, but I can shuffle on my bottom. So I sometimes find that I have one leg and one shoulder in the box, and then I am stuck and have to be rescued. I find I am pretty good at shouting if I want to. It helps to make my presence felt.

I also like to practise standing up whenever I can. I can do this easily by holding on to a table or a horizontal bar or by leaning my tummy on the front of a sofa. but best of all, I do it by holding on to someone's hands. Then I can practise walking too, and when I can do this I shall really give them the runaround. In the meantime I have a playpen as well, which I can hold on to, or sit in if that is really what they want.

Eating comes naturally. That's really what hands are for. You can use them to put pretty well anything in your mouth. If it's not nice you just spit it out, like when my Dad tried to trick me by pretending to put yoghurt in, and then switching to gruel at the last minute. But I was ready for that, and I spat it out straightaway. You have to watch these grown-ups. They like to insist on their own views.

Sometimes I get bored with feeding, and throw food off my High Table to the dog, Beano, who I've already warned to be ready and waiting. He cleans it up pronto, and everything is tidy and ship-shape Bristol fashion. Actually I've found out recently that you can't do that from the High Table in some Colleges where they don't have a dog, and I'm still considering my Granny's views about that.

When I get to Granny's house on a Sunday evening, I have a little play with my toys, while the grown-ups chat, quite often about me. My Grandpa likes my hair-do, which I agree does look as if most of it grows out of one point on my head (which I expect he would call a singularity if he dare). Then I have a bath, during which my Dad pushes off, thus leaving me in the sole charge of my Granny and Grandpa for nearly 24 hours. I always hope they're feeling strong enough, and I expect they do too.

But it is OK. They have done this kind of thing before, but when they were much younger: 18, 16 and 13 years younger in the cases of Jacqueline, David and Tom. I bet they thought they had retired. It needs both of them, and I shall test them. I play in the bath with my boats, get lifted out to dry and dress, and have a drink downstairs while I listen to some classical music on a CD. It is all very soothing.

Then I get carried upstairs to my cot in their bedroom, and on the way upstairs I look at the usual pictures of Tom, and the moose, and the tree, and the lady. Then, rather quickly, I am in my cot in a darkened room, and I usually fall asleep before I have time to complain. What happens next is in the lap of the gods and the fireworks.

Usually I sleep for twelve hours. But once I was woken up by a very loud bang, when my parents had gone to a New Year party. I hadn't had a New Year before, so how could I know they celebrate it with parties and fireworks? Another time, in my first "season of mists and mellow fruitfulness", I had more mists than fruit, and I had a snotty cold for weeks. That made me wake up.

One night I woke up without giving any reason, and stayed awake for a couple of hours, twice. My Grandparents entertained me. Actually, they're not bad at it. I sit next to my Grandpa in his bed on these occasions, while my Granny fetches me a nice warm drink of milk or juice. We have a low light on, Grandpa swings the light switch cord, and I watch it. He counts my fingers with his fingers, and sometimes I snuggle up my head to his head.

I'm getting to like music. They had it where I went to my Jo Jingles classes, which I often missed



Figure 2: Resting after effort: January

because of my cold. You wouldn't believe how some of the other children crawled on the floor there. I thought they were much too young for that. Most of all I like playing on my Grandpa's piano. I use all my fingers. That's what you're supposed to do.

I went on a bus for the first time yesterday, twice. Granny and Grandpa took me into Reading, and brought me back to their house. Buses are great. I didn't have to pay, and Granny and Grandpa didn't have to pay either. It was a nice Low Rider. Granny just wheeled me on in my buggy, and there was a nice open space for me to sit in it near the front and watch the people. Some of them smiled at me, but I was keeping a low profile, wondering about it all. We went to three banks, where Grandpa gave them all some money. There's something I don't know about money. We did some people watching from the Oracle coffee shop.

Granny came to see me today, with Grandpa, on her way to do some Governing at Great Walstead. She's quite good at Governing, and I've found it's better not to mess her about. I was with Mum, wizzing around my kitchen on my wheels, which I'm pretty good at. Then I had my lunch, and after that Grumps came in and carried me around for a bit, while Mum "rested after effort". I don't know if you're aware that that is what the Professor of Electrical Engineering at Bristol University liked to do in 1964, and walking down the Champs Elysée at the same time if he could.

I've just had my first experience of "Afternoon Tea". I mean the real thing. It was Jacqueline's 18th birthday party. Twelve of us went to the Oakley Court Hotel, towards Windsor. We were all dressed in our best. I was very smart in new shoes, new trousers and a very dishy striped shirt. I loved it. The room was enormous, with huge windows that I left my fingerprints on after tea. There were at least six tiers of plates, each loaded with fancy sandwiches and cakes and buns. You could have as much as you wanted. I did my best. And there were three pots of tea, and white china to drink it from. The last time there was an Afternoon Tea it was at Cliveden, for my Grandpa Michael's 70th birthday. I didn't go, and when it got to half-past five and they hadn't come home, I insisted that Cliveden be telephoned to find out when they were coming home. I shall make sure I go to the next Afternoon Tea.

The last day of January. We took a walk around the Whiteknights Lake, and I watched Granny feed bread to two Egyptian geese, masses of moorhens, a couple of coots and two swans. At the end of my afternoon sleep, when Grandpa came to get me up, I decided that I would be smiling as soon as I opened my eyes. So I let him say my name for a few minutes before I surprised him. He was very pleased.

February

I went to my Nursery this morning, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. I go every Tuesday and Wednesday. When you can't walk or read, like me, it's nice to get out of the house and have some social life. There are about ten people like me in the room, and about three lasses to look after us. It is all bright and clean. There are lots of toys, including shiny CD discs which have been invented for me to play with. We have breakfast and sleep and lunch there. I have to be good, because my parents get a written report on what I have been doing every single morning, if you can believe it.

I visited the Doctor and, when I was looking across the room, he jabbed me in the leg with a needle. Then he told Mummy that I might have a temperature tomorrow, a rash next week, and a swelling in two weeks, but it was all in the cause of pain now for gain later. It's a very funny business, and I shall watch the Doctor carefully next time.

We had a nice tea party with Jacqueline and Tom and Mum, and Granny and Grandpa, and Hayley and Grumps. Grandpa clapped his hands when I did something good, so I clapped too. Mum rubbed a balloon on her pullover, and then made my hair stand up by holding it over my head. Jacqueline had just got back from Reading College, where they told her that her portfolio (big word for me) was outstanding, and she could have a place next year. She was very pleased. I haven't started my portfolio yet.

When Granny came to get me from my Nursery today, I put all my square bricks into her hand, one by one, and there were so many that she couldn't hold them all, and they started to fall out again. When we got home, Jacqueline was just back from Farnham College, where they had told her that her portfolio was very good and she could have a place for 2006. I walked round the sides of the playpen, while Grandpa sat in the middle talking to me. Grandpa has started *his* portfolio, of charcoal drawings of people with nothing on, if you can believe it. I have to grow wings, as babies do, and learn to fly, before he can draw *me* without my clothes.

It's St. Valentine's Day, and I went with Granny and Grandpa to Odds Farm Park, to get my very first view of farm animals. They all stood on four legs, like Beano and Squealer, but some of them, such as donkeys and cows and sheep, were really big. I looked at each sort carefully for a long time, and when I realised that they were alright, and only interested in eating things, I made a big smile. We watched the feeding of the lambs by hundreds of children, and I pulled the hair of some of the children and their Mummies. At Granny's house I had been improving my balancing and walking by asking someone to hold my hands.

I felt very bouncy when I got to Granny and Grandpa's house this Sunday, wearing my nice new olive green coat and new shoes. I told them about the clock, I played the piano, and I insisted on being walked around the rooms before my bath and bottle and bed. I've learnt to hold my hands out as a hint for walking help. I slept for twelve hours after my bath. Grandpa said my eyelashes curved as much as my nose, when I was having my morning bottle in his bed. After breakfast Granny showed me her box of bricks, which I had fun fitting together. Then I flourished the Confederate flag, and walked around the room holding on to chairs and knees and doors and hands, which I hadn't really done before like that. My leather shoes really help. But I wonder if you know how tiring it is to be on your feet all the morning, and I had to have another sleep before ten o'clock. Then we went to Street's Garden Centre to have coffee with Maggie. I looked at some flowers, and had my drink in a high chair. Grandpa tried to draw me in his little notebook, but I didn't have the patience to sit still. He'll have to get quicker. After lunch I did some more walking, holding on to tables and walls. I've realized that you don't get much done if you just sit down all day. But then another little sleep before going home.

The last day of February, and I walked in Granny's garden, holding her hands, standing by the garden seats, and sitting in the summer house playing with the silver pennies. She had some little daffodils in her house, which I called "fluvvers". I did some serious bottom shuffling in her lounge. Grandpa drew



Figure 3: Monday morning early: March

a circle with his pen, and put numbers 1 to 12 round it. I pretty soon told him it was a “cluck”, after thinking about it.

March

I sat on the sofa with my sister Jacqueline, who gave me some sweeties.

I wasn't very well today, but I liked it when Granny put the thermometer in my ear to take my temperature. Grandpa drew a quick pen drawing of me in his new pocket sketch book, and Mummy said to him “Did you just do that?”. I liked reading my “Very small caterpillar” book. I'm getting quite good at standing up by the table, and playing with my telephones.

When I got to Granny's house today, in my new facing forward car seat, my brother Tom was already there because he had been to the Circus with Granny, and he kindly helped me to walk around. I stayed up while Granny and Grandpa had their supper, for once, and I had great fun eating broccoli florets straight out of the saucepan, holding them one by one in my fist.

It is The Ides of March today, which my Great Grandpa Sewell always mentioned. After I came back from my Nursery, Granny said I took my first two steps, from the sofa to the coffee table in my house. I had fun with my two red balloons.

We all went to Grandpa's house for Mummy's birthday party, all eight of us round Granny's big table, and I stayed overnight. The next morning I went to Oxford for the first time, where I played with Paddy's toys, and we saw Andrew and Kate and Olivia who had come over from Princeton. I slept in my new front-facing car seat on the way home.



Figure 4: Daniel sketched by Michael Sewell: 7th March 2005

Granny had a visitor called Daphne Matthews, who saw some pictures of me and said I was going to be a leader. I went to Street's Garden Centre, and sat in their high chair to entertain three pairs of golden oldies while I had my doughnut. At home Mum gave me cucumber to dip into an egg cup of ketchup, but I preferred to drink the ketchup. I saw my beautiful sister striding home, carrying her portfolios, and with the wind blowing her hair off her face.

I went to see Bunty today, for the first time, with Granny and Grandpa. I had a lovely day. I slept for over an hour on the way there. We stopped in Midhurst, at The Tea Pot. They have three sorts of people in Midhurst, those who can't resist smiling at me, those who wonder if it would be alright to smile at me but don't, and those who are sure they're not going to smile at me. Bunty and her friend Joyce were very pleased to see me, and I showed Bunty all the flowers in her room and in her garden. She had a white bird in her garden. Granny provided lunch, including broccoli and yoghurt. After more conversation and exploration we went home, and I slept for another hour in the car. We took afternoon tea Next to the The George in Odiham. Grandpa told Mummy that I had been brilliant, and I snuggled Beano. The ages of Bunty and me nearly add up to 100.

Dad and me took a big chocolate Easter egg to Granny and Grandpa on Sunday evening. Dad had a boiled egg and I had a snack. I wanted to stay the night as I usually do, and I arched my back to tell Granny that I wanted to do this, when she carried me to the car, but Dad took me home again.

April

I know it's April Fool's Day, but I showed Grandpa how I could stand on my own two feet for the first time, without leaning my bum on the sofa or my tum on the coffee table. He took Jacqueline and Tom, with Granny, to see Bunty. I stayed behind this time, to look after Mummy and David.

Granny's just had her Cornwall fix, so I didn't see her for a week. I showed her how I can stand on my own two feet in my new trainers. I even walked two or three paces. I looked at a lot of flowers in Grandpa's garden. You won't believe this, but Grandpa changed my wet nappy for the very first time. He needed some practice. I had a great time playing with my big brother Tom when I got home.

After my Nursery morning, I had a good sleep while Grandpa was digging my allotment, and then I showed Granny and Jackie how I could catch and throw my ball, and some other things. I like walking a few paces. I showed Mummy how to throw an orange.

19th April today, and a big day for me, because I reckon I walked properly for the first time. When Mummy came home I showed her how I could walk at least six paces from Grandpa to her, and then back to Grandpa, and then back across several times. Mummy was very pleased. Of course, I had been practising with Grandpa after I came home from Nursery at 1 p.m. He had been given the serious responsibility of picking me up by himself for the first time, and at 5 p.m. he changed a dirty nappy for the first time, so it was a big day for him too.

St. George's Day, and Dad says I've really started walking several steps, and frequently, so Mum says I'm now officially a toddler. I had a nice time at Granny's house, sleeping for 11 hours solid, and then another hour in the morning and in the afternoon. I had great fun picking up my new beach ball, which is half as big as me, and bouncing it. It came from Kynance Cove. I learned how to feed Grandpa toast fingers when he was trying to feed me toast fingers. That was great fun.

I'm getting quite good at throwing things, especially from my high chair. I threw half a baked potato, fast, and Beano caught it, just like that. He was ready and waiting.



Figure 5: Daniel with some friends: May

May

Granny and Grandpa had a holiday from me. It's called a Bank Holiday, I think because they can bank on it. So it has been two weeks since I went to see their beautiful garden, where I pulled the fluffy bits off dandelions. My big brother Tom helped Dad to take me there. I slept all night, as usual, and Granny and Grandpa took me to Bucklebury Farm Park. Three donkeys came to have a close look at me, and after thinking for a bit I smiled at them. I pulled their fur and patted them through the fence. One of them came running across the field to see me, braying all the way. It was a very loud noise. There were little goats, and a lot of brown chickens, in other fields, and a swallow catching flies on the wing. I watched lambs being fed some milk.

I saw Peter yesterday, at Granny's house. I had forgotten about him, but after looking at him for a bit I decided that he was alright. I took Grandpa for a walk round his garden, and I was looking at all the fluvvers, and pulling the fluffy bits off lots of dandelions. This morning we went to Street's, where they have people even older than Granny and Grandpa in their coffee shop. We saw two big clip-clop horses, and looked at some seriously big cows on the way home, with big curly horns and dangly bits beneath them.

I was quietly eating a snail in Mummy's garden, but she wouldn't let me finish it. If the French eat snail's, why can't I? Anyway, when Mummy was washing up, I helped her get towards supper by filling the top oven with potatoes. That is what the Irish do, after all.

It was Dad's 44th birthday today, and I had a really nice day. After a morning sleep, Dad took me over to Granny's house. Grandpa played with me while Dad and Granny went shopping, and after



Figure 6: Daniel with his beach ball: June

lunch they went shopping again while I had a sleep. Then I walked around three rooms on Granny's first landing, and found a string of bells. I helped Grandpa check his e-mail, but he didn't want me to press the buttons on the PC. Next I went back to my house, to fetch Mum and Jacqueline and David and Tom back to Granny's house for Dad's party. I had lots of broccoli, and some of the other things on Mummy's plate. Dad opened some presents, including a framed drawing, by Grandpa, of me. Then I showed everyone round the garden and summer house, before we went home.

I took morning coffee, or at least a sip of Granny's cappuccino, at the Café Rouge in Henley. We walked along the River Thames looking at the swans and ducks, and I had a nice turn on a roundabout. After a long sleep, Grandpa and I spent half-an-hour peacefully exploring his garden and summer house, where I played with silver pennies and floating seeds. I smelt a lot of azaleas.

I went with Dad and Tom to Grandpa's house to see Richard, because he had just got back from America. I showed them all how I could hold Tom's phone to my ear, which is what you're supposed to do with phones. I practised throwing my big beach ball and catching it myself, for the first time. I've learnt this trick from my big brother David, who does it all the time at home. I've been watching him. Tom helped me to play the piano. I had a nice long walk with Grandpa round his garden, looking at lots of different fluvvers, and smelling or picking some of them.

June

I can roll onto my front now, but then I don't know what to do. I don't fancy crawling. I went for a ride in my buggy to feed the birds on the University lake, straight after breakfast. There were a lot waiting for me on the path, including three baby coots and their parents, a moorhen, several mallards, two mandarins, and a pair of swans with five cygnets. Grandpa had a lot of bread to feed them while I watched. He gave some to me to feed them, but I just ate it myself every single time, and washed it down with a drink from my bottle. Granny phoned to find out where we were, and when we got back I

watched Grandpa and Granny plant a tamarix in their front garden.

At my Mulberry Nursery I have just moved up a class from the Caterpillars to the Ladybirds. I expect that's because I can walk now, even though I can't get up when I sit down unexpectedly. I had a very nice first morning there. I was having a rest in the darkened room, where most of my new friends were sleeping, when Granny and Grandpa picked me up at lunchtime. In the afternoon I was showing them how I try to throw balls through the basketball hoop, but it was too high for me.

I slept all night at Grandpa's house, and I gave them a big smile when I woke up. I can nearly pull myself up to sit in the cot. We went to feed the ducks and me with bread again. Granny picked us up from the University, and we shared a doughnut at Street's Garden Centre. I did some shouting there for fun, and we bought some courgette plants for Dad. Grandpa and me had a good look round his garden, and then I slept for two hours after lunch. When Mummy came home, she said I actually said "Grandpa" when I waved goodbye to him.

We all went to something very unusual last Saturday. Dad drove us a very long way in his car, and we stopped at a funny place near an enormous bridge, just so that some of us could change our clothes while I had a feed. Then we went to a building in Chepstow, and I discovered that our whole family was there, with some other people, all in one big room. What was all this about? There was some talking at the front, and Richard and Donna said something, while I walked across the middle from Dad to Grandpa, and back, more than once, with my bottle, until I threw it on the floor. When we went outside again there seemed to be a game going on to see which of the grown-ups could take the most photos, with the most people in them.

Then we drove off and parked in a field. Everybody had come, and we got out and walked down a big grassy field to some tents near a river. You wouldn't believe what went on for the next six hours, and there was no way that I was going to think of going to sleep, or I might have missed something. We had something called nibbles, which was actually slices of salmon on crusty bread, and I noticed that Grandpa kept going back for more. There were lots of people who seemed to know who I was, so I was graciously pleased to look carefully at them. Everybody was talking to everybody and eating and drinking at the same time, so I tried it too. I shouted "Grandpa" several times across the field. He was very pleased that I can do that now.

Some people were trying to hit little white balls across the river, and David did it several times, very well. I heard some bangs somewhere else, and then everybody started to eat a pig, if you can believe it. Granny took herself a little way away, and actually made some tea on a little cooker she had brought with her, and it wasn't fastened to any kitchen wall like mine is.

The next thing was even more extraordinary. Four people began to make some music out of funny shaped things which didn't look anything like radios or TVs or even pianos. I studied them very carefully indeed. All the people round me started dancing, even Granny. I've never seen anything like it in my whole life. The dance was called The Gay Gordons, and somebody actually told Granny to do it. That tells you what an unusual day it was, because usually nobody tells Granny what to do.

That was still going on when we went home. I thought it would be best to sleep all the way home, so that Dad could drive peacefully. I had an extra sleep the next day.

Granny picked me up very early on Monday, and when I got to her house Ann and Dick were there having breakfast. I looked very carefully at them, because it was unusual. They went off very soon, and I had a very nice day looking at the garden. There were all kinds of new fluvvers to see. But after my sleep we went to a shop in Reading where I had to stand in front of a white wall, and a man flashed a light in front of me seven times. I looked at him as seriously as I possibly could.

Dad took me to Granny's house as usual on Sunday evening, and the next morning I had a nice long



Figure 7: Daniel dancing with Lily at Richard and Donna's wedding: 18th June

time with Grandpa in his orchard. He just watched while I showed him how I could pick up baby apples and green spiky chestnuts from the ground, and put them all into the wheelbarrow. I didn't try to eat even one of them. Then I took them out again, and flung them away very fast, one at a time. Every time an aeroplane went over I wanted to look at it. Then we went to see some strange animals at Beale Park. They had real owls, emus, deer, and sheep which spoke to me.

After my Mulberry Nursery on Wednesday, Grandpa had to sign an Incident Report, because another child had bitten my leg. But while Granny was pushing me home and I was drinking from my bottle in my left hand, I had a fun game putting up my right hand so that Grandpa could put his finger in it, and I smiled every time. When Mum came home I had a lovely game throwing a ball to them while I was taking afternoon tea. I threw it real fast, and Grandpa caught it, and even Granny could do it.

July

I had my first hair-cut today. I sat quite still for twenty minutes while the lady did it. My Great-Great-Grandpa Sewell would have been proud of me. Granny taught me that I should give her something gently, instead of throwing it. I'm thinking about it.

I had a funny weekend. Dad took me to Granny's house on Saturday. Grandpa took me into the garden, and I ate five raspberries and seven redcurrants straight off the bushes before you could say "tummyache". Grandpa let me pick them. I went back to my house the next morning, while Granny and Grandpa went to Great Walstead, and then they picked me up again the same evening to sleep at their house. I learnt to throw some bread to the ducks for the first time, but I still ate most of it myself. There are limits. Granny gave me a lovely ride in her wheelbarrow.

The next time I went to Granny's house I spent three whole hours, if you can believe it, in the orchard with Grandpa on Monday morning. I always show him the way across the lawn to the little gap in the bushes where you find the orchard. I'm not very good at slopes and steps yet. I just put my best foot forward, and if the ground isn't there I fall over. We ate some blackcurrants which Granny picked.

At my house the next day, my lovely sister Jacqueline read to me from The Baby's Dictionary, and I looked at lots of things in it with her. After my sleep I played in my garden with Tom and Granny, and I learnt to say "butterfly". You have to listen rather carefully, but I am learning new words like that now.

Granny and Grandpa turned up early on Saturday morning, and surprised me when I was having my TV fix with Dad on the sofa. They took Tom off to pick strawberries. I had to make the most of it, because Granny never uses her TV, except to stand a yellow and orange squash on. On Sunday evening I went with Dad and Tom to Granny's house. I took my big blue ball and a rugby ball. Dad warned her that I might not go to sleep very early, and he was right. I shouted until after nine o'clock, and Granny had to have a late supper, and show me a helicopter outside my bedroom window.

Red letter day, today, though, 18th July. Grandpa and I played cricket for the very first time, on his big lawn. I had found his big cricket bat in the bedroom, and I bowled my big stripy beach-ball to him. I did some batting too, and I tried using a small hockey stick which Granny found. But I wacked myself on the leg with it, instead of the ball, and that hurt. Before all that we went to Well Place Zoo, where they have lots of birds, including owls and flamingoes. I enjoyed that so much I just talked to myself about it in the afternoon instead of going to sleep. Grandpa found me standing up at the end of the cot, for the very first time.

I had a lovely moment with Grandpa the next day, in my home garden after my sleep. I heard some sounds of children playing in the school over the wall, and I managed to say "children" to Grandpa by a kind of double snuffle in my nose. He knew and I knew what I was talking about, and we smiled at



Figure 8: Daniel with Granny: October 2004

each other.

I took morning coffee with Grandpa and Granny and her friend Maggie at the Oracle in Reading. While Granny and Maggie were gassing like ladies do, I did a tour with Grandpa, looking through all the glass walls at the people below on the moving stairs. I don't have moving stairs in my house. Even the handrails move. We went down and up several times, and I waved to Granny from high up.

After my Nursery the next day, I had a long sleep, and then I found a frog in my garden. I'd never seen such a thing before. It came back later to see Mummy. I made a new game, putting small pebbles into the end connector of Mummy's garden hosepipe, and then tipping them into my mouth, and then out again because they didn't feel right. I sat for a long time with Grandpa on the bench with my bottle, and a small ring on the same arm. Grandpa said I learnt some topology when I tried to take it off without letting go of the bottle.

Just before my Irish holiday, my morning coffee with Granny and Grandpa at the Café Rouge in Henley was wonderful. The waitress gave me a high chair and then, without me asking for them, a box of crayons and a plastic mat to write on. And that was even before we had ordered anything to eat. Then Granny and Grandpa had large cappuccinos and hot croissants with strawberry jam. The waitress brought me a personal cup of cappuccino froth, and she turned on the music again when Granny asked her to do. We didn't have to pay for any of these extras. It was the first time all that happened to me, and I shall have to go there again.

At Granny's house I slept after lunch, bounced a ball off a net on the lawn, picked some blackcurrants and raspberries, took Granny's pegs out of her peg box, watched some butterflies, played with silver pennies and floating seeds in the summer house with Grandpa, had afternoon tea in the orchard, helped to de-pod the broad beans which Granny picked, rushed into the house to escape a squall, went out again and sat in a puddle, had supper at six o'clock (late for me), had a bath and went to bed.

Something strange had happened to the blackcurrant bushes today. Almost all the berries had gone. I had to look very hard to find any at all. But I did persevere, and I found some quite small ones hiding under the leaves. So I ate them.

I'm going to Ireland today, but I don't know it yet. Granny has an owl sticking to her fridge, and I tried to stick it to some of her other cupboards, but it wouldn't. That puzzled me. I had a big breakfast and played with apples in Granny's orchard, and looked at the bees on her lavender. Grandpa tried to teach me to go downstairs backwards on my hands and knees, but I didn't like that. After some cricket with my big ball and his big bat, I went home for lunch.

August

I'm back from my Irish adventure, where I stayed a night in Tralee Hospital with a hole in my head. I fell on a step, and cut my forehead to the bone, so there was a lot of blood and it needed four stitches. I was lucky that the Hospital was only ten minutes away. The Irish nurses thought I was beautiful, so that was a good start.

Grandpa thought I was a size bigger when he saw me again. He has bought me my first cricket bat and a red ball, so we played with those in his garden when I wasn't picking blackberries. I can stand up in my cot now, which is a challenge for everybody. I am learning to come down stairs forwards on my bum. I don't do crawling, so I don't come down backwards.

I had a nice time at Boulter's Lock, walking about in my reins for the first time. I was chasing very tame squirrels, looking at the ducks and boats, and pointing out every single aeroplane. Then Granny



Figure 9: Communing with the Oracle: August

bought ice-creams for us all.

We all went to Grandpa's house for his delayed birthday party, and I showed Mummy where the blackberries were. I played cricket with Tom and Grandpa. Tom stayed the night, as well as me. But I didn't want to go to sleep until 10 o'clock, so I stood up in my cot for a long time expressing my views.

Next day it was raining, so we all four went to a camping shop which had lots of interesting goodies, including a sleeping bag for Tom. Then we went to Oxford to see Edward and Paddy, and I looked at the goldfish in her pond. Next we went off to Blenheim, where we rode on a train, and saw some beautiful big butterflies. I wacked two boys who were bigger than me. When Grandpa stopped me by holding my arms, I put the boot in instead. I heard their Mummy say "That boy doesn't like other children".

As a Thursday surprise, I had a very nice visit to Henley with Granny and Grandpa. They walked me along the river with my reins, and I looked at the boats and fed the ducks with bread. Then we went to the Café Rouge, where we secured a table near the counter. This meant that, when I finished the first cup of cappuccino froth which they gave me, I could pass my dirty cup and saucer and spoon up to the waitress myself, just like at home. And when she said "Would he like another one?", I made it clear to Granny that I would, so she gave me another one. I ate some of Granny's croissant too. At Grandpa's house afterwards, I played cricket with my bat and ball. I have learnt to say "ball".

Grandpa got into trouble today. Dad phoned him in the evening to say that a change of my nursery nappy was "indicated". I had a fresh nursery nappy just before I left at one o'clock, so I didn't have a new one after my sleep before we went to Boulter's Lock. And we got back just as Mum arrived, so she gave me my tea straightaway.

My Nursery report said I always like to play with their bat and ball. After my sleep at home, Grandpa was lying on my bedroom floor looking at me with just one eye, so we had some fun while I was waking



Figure 10: Self-service: September

up. At Boulter's Lock I watched some big boys playing football, and paddling in the water to get their ball out.

September

My Nursery nurse told Granny that I always look for the bat and ball to play with when I go outside. By the way, I don't thump the other children at my Nursery, although I might at my church playgroup which Mummy takes me to on Thursday mornings.

I gave Mum a day off for her to play with Hayley. It was the first Friday in September, and Granny and Grandpa took me to Henley in the morning. It was perfect September weather, and we walked along the river path after I looked at the football field next to the Mill Lane car park. I fed ducks and geese, looked at boats large and small, moored and moving, pointed out every single aeroplane, saw the people, and eventually we arrived at our usual coffee shop, Café Rouge. I had my free cappuccino froth, and some of Granny's croissant and jam in my high chair. We went to Sainsbury's, and a bank, and I met a couple of green elephants in the street which were just my size. Back along the towpath, to Granny's house for lunch.

They tried to get me to sleep in my cot, but I didn't do it until Grandpa went to sleep too, on his own bed next to me. When I woke up I had a lovely surprise. Jackie was there because Granny had picked her up after her first day at Reading College, and we all played in the garden. Then we all went home for tea in my garden.

I heard Grandpa saying to Mum that I "was the best thing that could have happened to" him now.

September 11th is a special day for me, because this is when I first climbed Grandpa's stairs, (nearly) by myself. I have been learning to crawl for the first time, and I was practising this in the garden. Of course, I can walk already on the flat, but not up and down steps. At bedtime I tried crawling up the stairs to my bath. I only fell back a couple of times, and I was caught by Grandpa. I was playing cricket with Tom and Grandpa, doing my special bowling backwards over my head. Tom hit my red cricket ball into the next garden, and Grandpa had to get it with a rake. Granny had bought a drum for me, and I had some fun with that. I can nearly say a lot of words now. I drew Grandpa's attention to a fallen pear, and he put it back in the tree at my request.

After finishing my bottle, which I always have in my buggy on the way home from Nursery, I held it in the air for it to be taken from behind, which it was, without a word needing to be said. Everyone knows their place in my ordered environment. After two hours of sleep, we went to Boulter's Lock, where I watched the squirrels, and ate my ice-cream and part of Granny's.

I went with Dad to Grandpa's house as usual. Even if other people's cricket season is finished, mine certainly isn't. I played with my bat and ball as usual, straightaway, and I can say "bat" and "ball" very clearly now. Then we went to the blackberry bushes, and I ate the last two berries. I had a great time in Granny's kitchen, playing with the cupboard key, putting it in and pulling it out again.

I had a long sleep after my Nursery morning. In my garden the grass had been mown, and I was wacking the little balls with my golf club. I've got a pretty good swing, and I like to practice it.

I keep looking for raspberries where I used to find them in Granny's garden, but I can't understand why I can't find any now. Grandpa did find four blackberries for me. I helped to pick some pears, and threw them into the box. When Granny and Grandpa left my house, I did my regal wave and called out "Byee" very cheerfully several times. I've just learnt to say that.

Tom was helping me to bump down the stairs on my bottom, while everybody else was looking at Jackie's artwork. I'm still learning to do that, because I never did crawling. At tea time I had a jolly good time face painting with my chocolate yoghurt.

October

For the first time I climbed up Granny's stairs by myself, by crawling on hands and knees. And then I climbed down again by myself for the first time, bumping down on my bottom. So it was a double first. Of course, Grandpa was watching very carefully. I also showed them that I have learnt some new words which they didn't expect, like lollipop. In the garden I helped with apple picking, and I ate what really must have been the last blackberries this time.

When I went to Nursery today, I went straight in for the first time without keeping Daddy waiting. I know the routine pretty well there now. When we visited Boulter's Lock in the afternoon, we came away without having our usual ice creams, and just as soon as I realized that we were going away from the kiosk instead of towards it, I made my views known in a clear and prolonged manner.

Granny gave me my bottle as usual, but I just unscrewed the top this time, and drank straight out of the bottle. She was very impressed. In the night I decided to wake up between two and three o'clock, and I was very chirpy ... but Granny was rather quiet. We went to see Maggie Walker, who has patterns all over her walls, and fishes in her garden.

By the way, I always call Granny "Mummy" myself, and she is getting into a bit of a tiz about it, saying it is not right and trying to think of other names like Gran-Gran. But I'm not going to take any notice of that. It's obvious that the senior female looking after me in each house is called Mummy, and that's it.



Figure 11: Squirrelling: October

Granny came to my house for her birthday tea, and it was great fun with everybody there. I was very cheerful, and played at hats with paper. At bedtime I went outside first, to look at the stars and the Moon, which is what I usually do these days.

It's been two weeks since I went to Granny's house, and I went in with Dad feeling very bouncy, and played hitting my big ball with one of my long flat bricks. When Dad left I said "Byee" to him though the front window for the first time. Later I really said "Granny" after all, to Grandpa when I wanted him to take me to her in the kitchen. I showed her that I am now strong enough to open all the green drawers and cupboards in her kitchen. We looked at the stars, and I slept all through the night, except for a few minutes when Granny got me up to talk to me. When I woke up, I was looking carefully at the picture in Granny's bedroom of a man with a hat on, which Ann painted. It was a rainy day, so we went on two buses, and visited two banks and we had a nice coffee and bun where I rode on the escalators.

I was playing with the snails in my nursery. On the way home I had my bottle in one hand as I always do, and a couple of chestnut leaves to wave about in the other. After my sleep Grandpa took me to Punt Hill, and I ran around, and threw a tennis ball to Grandpa for his catching practice.

We had David's 17th birthday party at Granny's house, and my whole family went there for a meal. My high chair had a "Reserved" notice on it. We had cooked ham and apple snow, and a chocolate cake. I played my game of hats, when I put a piece of paper on my head, and other people do too. I stayed the night when everyone else went home, and I didn't complain about that after they left. Quite often I say "Oh dear" if something happens which I don't quite like. In the morning I woke at 5.30, and Granny put me in her bed where we all snoozed for another hour. When Grandpa made the tea, I counted the shells on the windowsill, and then we got up. After breakfast I noticed that Granny disappeared for another sleep, before she got up and running. Then we took a bus into Reading, and Granny bought a train ticket, because she has to go to Great Walstead tonight to appoint a new Head Teacher. When she

wanted to me to sit in my buggy again I made a great protest, which I do by arching my back so that I am absolutely stiff and straight, and then I don't fit in the seat. I found four raspberries in Grandpa's garden when we got back, which I insisted that he pick for me, and then he picked six blackberries as well. Mummy and Tom came to pick me up after my afternoon sleep.

November

Although it was the day after the noisy night, I felt pretty bouncy when I got to Granny's house, and I was wearing my salmon top which Grandpa liked. We went for a sunny walk round the lake, where I fed the ducks, and then took coffee at the student's outdoor coffee bar. Grandpa produced a boomerang, which I hadn't seen before, and I told him he had to throw it over the bar between the rugby posts. He couldn't always do it. When we got back to his garden, I had my pudding as the first part of my lunch, by finding about ten raspberries and two blackberries and insisting that Grandpa pick them for me.

I went to Punt Hill with Grandpa for my golf practice, and I got my swing going pretty well. Punt Hill is the highest hill in Maidenhead, and from it you get a splendid view of lots of buses, aeroplanes from London and White Waltham airfields, and the Man in the Moon for good measure, every single one of which gets a specific comment from me. Of course there are also boys and dogs to watch carefully too.

I can reach the door handles in my house now, so that I am almost a free agent in terms of moving about. I still come down Grandpa's stairs by bumping down on my bottom, so there is room for improvement there. I get quite excited by looking at the Man in the Moon. I explored the Oracle with Grandpa today, going up and down the escalators and into the fashion shops with Grandpa, while Granny rested after her coffee. In the garden at my house there were lots of balls on the lawn, and I could not make Grandpa understand that the one I wanted was the largest, muddiest rugby ball at the far end of the lawn, to take into the house. Eventually I made my point, but I had to persist.

When I got to Granny's house, she found a small hockey stick which was just right for me to use as an indoor golf club, with a plastic golf ball. I eventually went to sleep at nine o'clock. Next morning was cold and frosty, so we took a bus to the Oracle, where you can run around in large warm indoor spaces. A lady called Jackie gave me a balloon at the Information Desk. After his cappuccino, Grandpa took me on a walk around the Oracle with my balloon, for a whole hour. Lots of people looked at me and smiled. On Tuesday morning I had a nice time at my nursery. After my sleep, and golf with Grandpa at Punt Hill, I showed him how very well I could say "lollipop".

I'm pretty much at home at Granny's house now. I was hitting a couple of plastic golf balls around with my hockey stick. I didn't go to sleep until nearly 10 o'clock, and Granny was pretty well wacked, but I did sleep until 7.30 in the morning. When we came back from Reading, I insisted on walking to the bus instead of sitting passively in my buggy like a dummy. I followed a pigeon as closely as I could. I sat on Grandpa's knee on the bus for the first time, and didn't get into my buggy until we got off.

When I woke up at my house, I walked along the pavement, while Granny pushed my buggy, because I wanted to walk behind the children coming out of Boyne Hill School, and we walked all the way to All Saints' School. Granny and I went in there, and I interviewed the Head Mistress.

December

I had a big surprise. Ann came over with Granny and Grandpa to fetch me, instead of Dad taking me to Granny's house. We gave her some tea before we left. She watched me have my bath, and afterwards I made it clear that I didn't want to go early to bed. Why should I because I wasn't sleepy? So I didn't



Figure 12: Getting into the swing, feet and head still: December



Figure 13: Granny, Bunty + Daniel = 100 years, Grandpa: December 9th

go to sleep before half-past ten. We took Ann to Reading Station in the morning. Later Granny showed me how to pull up some carrots from her garden, which I hadn't done before. I looked at the Wyevale fishes on the way home. When Granny and Grandpa left I insisted on being the first to the front door, because I might have gone with them. But I didn't, as it turned out.

Friday 9th December was a big day because I was 2 years old minus 29 days, and Bunty was 98 years old plus 29 days, so added together we were exactly 100 years and no spare days. Grandpa had worked all this out, of course, to provide an algebra exercise for the 10-year-olds who he teaches at Bisham School. He gave me and Bunty each a 100 year birthday card which he made. So I went over to Granny's house for the night, with my big brother Tom to look after me. He does that very well. Grandpa had an avocado stone, which he and Tom were spinning on the kitchen table. I am big enough to see onto the table when I am standing on the floor now, and I had a go at spinning it too. I had an 11 hour sleep, to get ready for the next day.

In the morning the four of us went in the car to see Bunty, to celebrate this birthday. We took morning coffee in the Midhurst tea shop, and had lunch at Bunty's. I played with lots of little toys which she has, and watched the birds on the lawn which she feeds. I think she quite liked it that I went to see her. It was a big day, and I slept all the way home on the way back. I am getting to be able to say any words that people want me to say now. I just have to copy them, and I'm quite good at working

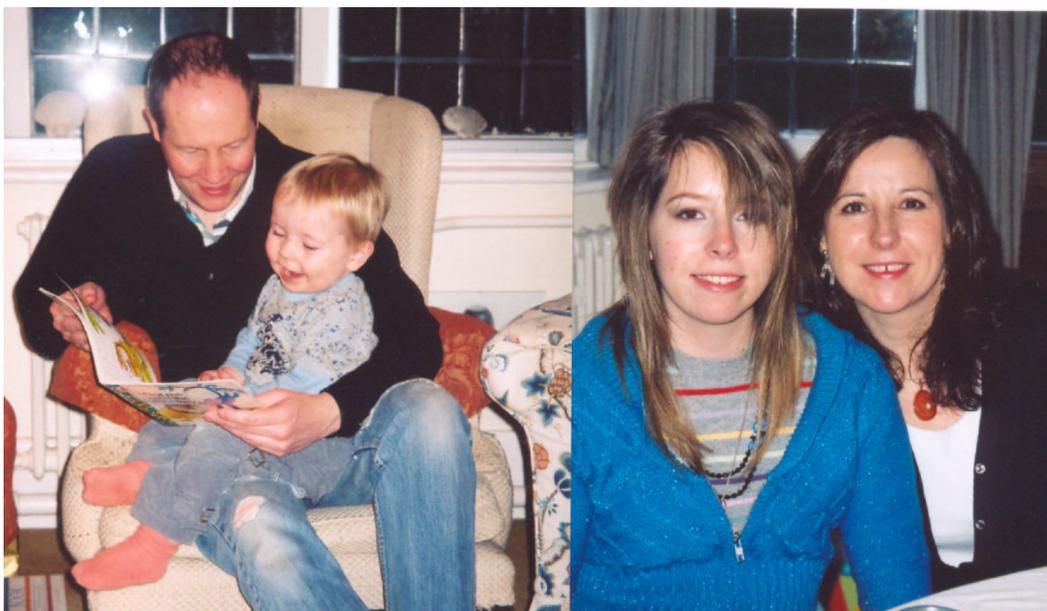


Figure 14: Dad and Daniel, Jacqueline and Mum, Boxing Day

out what they mean. As usual I looked at the Man in the Moon when I went outside to say goodbye to Granny and Grandpa.

After just one night at home, Dad took me over to Granny's house for my usual Sunday night visit, and for the second night in a row she persuaded me to go to sleep straightaway (no mean feat) and to sleep all through the night. I practised with my little hockey stick and plastic golf ball on the carpet. I address the ball well now. When I got home there was a tree covered in lights inside the house, which I couldn't help noticing because the other lights had been switched off for my benefit.

I was very bouncy when Dad took me into Granny's house. When I was having my bath I asked Grandpa why he was using his bootrusher on his teeth. I slept all night until after 7.30, and Granny was very pleased because she did too. I went upstairs safely on my hands and knees and, for the very first time, came downstairs backwards on my hands and knees in the morning, instead of bouncing down step by step on my bum. I saw the Man in the Moon in the Morning, high up from Granny's bedroom window. We went to the bank where they have a mirror for me to see myself, and I waved goodbye to the bus driver, which he liked. I helped Grandpa get some leeks from his garden, and I had a nice play with my toys in Granny's kitchen.

I had a surprise when I was quietly sitting at home eating my cheese sandwich for lunch, and watching the television, when Granny and Grandpa burst in, on a Thursday. It wasn't their usual day. But pretty soon they went off with David.

On Christmas Eve I went to Granny's house with Dad. But I was surprised when we only stayed for a few minutes, and then Dad tried to put me back in the car. I protested vigorously, and Grandpa had to buy me off with some silver pennies.

Grandpa telephoned us on Christmas Day. I spoke to him. This was the first time I had spoken on the phone. Previously I had just looked at it, wondering where the voice was coming from. Dad told Grandpa that I have "suddenly started to talk in paragraphs, not sentences, but it's all gobbledigook".

Just you wait. I'm a person of firm views.

I had a splendid day on Boxing Day. We all went over to Grandpa's house, and Peter and Richard and Donna were there as well. Granny had made lunch for everybody, and I sat in the centre to preside over it, with all eleven people round the table. I liked that. Afterwards Dad and Granny washed up very fast, and then we all opened presents. I had a spiky ball which lit up, and a splendid caterpillar which Ann sent. There was a tree in the corner, lit up with baubles, and eventually a pile of paper wrappings behind a chair. I had a lot to say to people, all the afternoon, and they usually understood it. We went for a walk, and I didn't want to go in my buggy, but Dad made me sit in it to come back to the house.

I had a kitchen for Christmas, with a cooker and plates and saucepans and cups and saucers and food. So now I have fun giving my visitors a cup of tea, or some broccoli, or a tomato, or I cut them a piece of cake. Whatever they ask for, I busy myself briskly to provide it.

Dad took me to Granny and Grandpa's house to pick up Tom, because he had stayed there for the night after going to see *James and the Giant Peach* on the stage. I had some cake with my bottle, and I asked for the little chair and table which Grandpa's Dad made, so that I could have my tea in comfort. I had a nice time talking to Tom. We get on very well. I won't be writing any more diary, because it is New Year's Eve, and I can understand everything now, and say most things too.

I'll sign off by saying that my sister Jacqueline has just been to New York, and my giant brother David has become a famous rugby player, with a photograph of his team in the newspaper and a headline which says "Sewell is the brightest star among many". I shall try to be famous too.