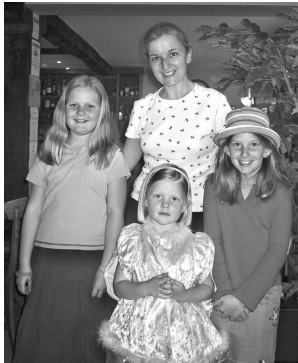


## Three Days in the Life of a Grandad

When I first met Jimmy, the small son of someone who lived on a military base we were visiting, he looked at me in awe and wonder. Then he took hold of my hand and simply stood next to me, occasionally looking up and squeezing my hand tightly. He was four years old and had a delightfully innocent face. I was moved by his attention to me.



Assumpta with Jenny, Milly and Grace

Earlier this year I took Jenny to the Ashmolean Museum and we saw lovely paintings and wonderful statues, Guy Fawkes' lantern, and an armoured hat worn by the judge who passed sentence on Charles the First. We spent time in Christ Church College, examining the cathedral and the place on the stairs to the Dining Hall where part of the first Harry Potter film was made. Jenny was interested and fun.

### Are You Really a Granddad?

"Are you really a Granddad, really, honestly a Granddad?" he asked. His mother appeared at her front door, I told her that he seemed to be impressed that I was a grandfather. "He's been waiting for you ever since his own Granddad left last week," she said. "Charlotte told him that Jenny and Milly were having their Granddad and Granny to stay and he really misses his own so he will probably adopt you." He did and everywhere we went on that visit Jimmy seemed to appear and tell me that I was a Granddad. "You're a Granddad, Granddad!" he would say. On the football field, in the NAAFI, there was Jimmy, telling people that I was a Granddad, always addressing me directly as Granddad I basked in the glory that Jimmy bestowed on me!

That is seven years ago now but I still feel rather special when I think that being a Granddad can be so exciting to someone. As all three grandchildren have grown, it has often been my privilege to take them out together or singly.

### Assumpta's; not The Ashmolean!

The next day, I took Milly out. "Where would you like to go?" I asked as we drove up the road, "The Ashmolean?" "Assumpta's." she replied, "I like it there." We went for a delightful walk in some woodland, talked about trees, birds, animals, and then set out for the Chequers at Churchill. We had the usual warm welcome and Milly was made to feel especially grown up.

The following day I was a little late arriving downstairs. Grace was standing there in her best outdoor clothes. She had been asking since 7am where she was going to with Granddad today. After all, it was her turn. Grace was pleased to stroll through Burford, looking at shops, having lunch at the Copper Kettle, sitting outside at a sunny table, and just talking as only Grace can.

Three days out with three very special girls... but I think I was especially fortunate to meet Jimmy and be told how important a Granddad really is.

**Peter Hills**