

“Oh no! Not you again!”

By

Yvonne Crabtree



PETAN PUBLISHING

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Book One – For Pete's Sake

Book Two - “Oh no! Not you again!”

Dedication

I would like to dedicate this book to Pat Crabtree, Pete's Grandma, who bears the burden of being Pete's remaining grandparent! She is very precious to us all.

Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to thank everyone who bought a copy of my first book, 'For Pete's Sake'. A special thank you must go to Nick Denison, who was 'Sales Person of the Year', having sold more than 30 copies! So far we have raised over £2,000 for the John Gaffney Home, where Pete lives. Hopefully, we can raise more from the sale of this book.

My thanks, as always, to everyone involved with the running of JGH. Life at John Gaffney isn't always perfect (then again, neither is Petel!) but we're getting there!

The whole extended family deserve a mention, not only for their continued support of Pete but also for their salesmanship – I couldn't have done it without you!

To my daughter Hannah and my sister Janet, for their encouragement, advice and assistance with writing this book, a big 'thanks'. Writing is a lonely task and it was great to have them both at the other end of the telephone or email.

Andy deserves special thanks for the title of this book and as ever, his unfailing patience and support.

The residents of Hellifield also warrant my thanks for the way in which they have made us a part of the village and welcomed Pete so warmly. He has made a whole new circle of friends for himself and also for us.

And finally, my thanks go to Pete, once again, for enriching our lives in such an entertaining, if sometimes exhausting, way. I hope that your thirtieth birthday will be all that you wish and that you will have many more birthdays to celebrate.

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Prologue

We stood on Gran's doorstep – Pete with a wide grin of delight on his face, me looking apologetic and rather sheepish. This was our third visit to her house that day and I thought that her patience might wear a little thin at the sight of us, yet again, framed in the doorway.

As she opened the door, her face registered a curious mixture of disbelief and resignation as she cried: “Oh no! Not you again!”

I can't remember why we had already visited the house twice that day, and Gran hasn't been around to ask for some years now, but our third visit was to collect Pete's coat, which he had left behind – on purpose, naturally.

He was a dab hand at this bit of cunning behaviour, knowing full well that if it was something important, such as his glasses or any medication that he was taking, then we would have to return to retrieve it and no matter how hard I tried to check that he had all his belongings with him, he quite often managed to slip something out of sight. He would usually wait until we were nearly home before announcing that he had ‘forgotten’ something, making my blood pressure rise dramatically, as I juggled in my head the logistics of returning immediately or making another trip later; all the time trying to cope with the traffic and Pete's incessant chattering.

Although that was the first time that Gran had uttered those immortal words, it was most definitely not the last and they have since been picked up by most of the family and many of our friends. Pete is very good-natured when people greet him with this phrase; he smiles politely, if a little tiredly at the joke and responds with, “Yes, it's me again.”

A couple of years ago, whilst out shopping, I came across a doormat with those very words upon them and couldn't resist buying it for Pete. I wrapped it up and gave it to him that Christmas (not his only present, rest assured!) and although his reading skills are not great, he very quickly worked out what was written. Again, he was very good-humoured and shared the joke with the rest of the family but since then, I've tried to stop saying it to him, as I realised that the joke has now, along with the mat, worn rather thin.

Chapter One

End of College Life.

We left Pete, at the end of the previous book, on New Year's Eve 2001, having just returned him from his Christmas holiday with us, to the John Gaffney Home where he had been living since the previous July. My Mum had died at the end of November, quickly followed by her younger sister and we were all feeling pretty low. Pete had accepted his new life amazingly well, especially considering the emotional overload he'd had to deal with and we were quietly congratulating ourselves on having moved Pete into sheltered accommodation that was not only suitable for him but also practically on our doorstep.

Although I knew I had taken a step forward in seeing the flat as Pete's home, I also knew that his life would never run on straightforward tracks. I'm always aware of potential disaster hovering somewhere on the horizon because, as is often the case with Pete, just when we start to relax, something will come up to bite us, making us realise that we can never be totally 'off-duty'. Even though he doesn't live with us any more, I don't think that I ever completely manage to fill my lungs with air, as there is always a portion of me that is holding my breath, waiting for the next problem to occur.

Presumably still grieving for his Gran, Pete took to staying in bed late in the mornings, rather than getting up to go to Craven College in Skipton, where he was technically a full-time student on the ABC Work Preparation Skills Course. His hours varied each day but on the mornings when he had to be there for 9am, he often wasn't ready or even out of bed. The taxi drivers wouldn't or couldn't always wait, so Pete would have the day off.

We knew that this was something we had to address with Pete, but it was still a shock when, early in the New Year we were contacted by a member of staff from John Gaffney, to say that Pete's place at Craven College was going to be withdrawn, as his attendance was too poor. I was horrified, as I knew that he needed the continuity of the familiar faces and surroundings to help him understand that not everything in his life would change, just because Gran was no longer a part of it. Withdrawing his place was like pulling out the rug from under his feet.

He really had been forced to cope with so much, in a very short space

of time. As well as losing his Gran, Andy's father had become very poorly after a series of mini-strokes and Pete asked often if Granddad was going to die, too. He sometimes asked this question in Grandma's hearing and of course Grandma would reply, 'No, Peter, we hope he's going to get better.'

Of course, we all hoped that he would make some sort of recovery but whilst wanting to keep up Grandma's spirits, we didn't want to raise Pete's hopes unrealistically, so we felt that we were treading on eggs.

On top of all this, Pete was diagnosed with an under-active thyroid, which at least helped partly to explain why he was finding it difficult to get out of bed in the mornings. He started to take 'Thyroxine' and we began to see some improvement, although there were still days when he just refused to get up.

We realised that some of this was to do with the approach used by the member of staff unlucky enough to have been given the job of rousing him! Those with more experience or who had their own children, could usually manage to cajole him and get him up and moving in time, whereas some of the younger, less experienced members of staff would ask him to get up and if he ignored them or said, "No!" would then just leave him. When I queried this, I was told that it was 'Peter's choice'.

Whilst accepting that Pete has the right to make choices for himself, he nonetheless needs guidance. I have often said before, that it is no good for Pete to make choices without understanding what the consequences of those choices will be. He will often choose to eat fish and chips or to order a take-away late in the evening, which many people do. What Pete doesn't understand is that eating large amounts of fatty food, especially late at night, is unhealthy. Lying about in bed for half the day is something that lots of people, particularly teenagers, like to do but again, Pete has to realise that he does have some responsibilities. Just because he doesn't earn a wage, does not mean that he shouldn't pull his weight in the working world – even if that only means that he cleans his own flat, does his own shopping and attends to his own laundry. He should not be allowed to think that it is okay to leave those chores for other people to do, whilst he does nothing. With the right sort of gently humorous encouragement, he will usually cooperate with good grace and it has to be better for him to be active in both mind and body, than to spend his time listening to music and watching T.V.

After discussions about this problem with various members of staff, an alarm clock was tried, with, as I had suspected, little success. Peter has

never liked the sound of a ticking clock in his bedroom and the sound of an alarm bell ringing close to his ear was far from being acceptable to him. He responded in an unambiguous manner and after throwing the clock out of his window a few times, got the message across that there was no point in continuing with this. We bought him a coffee maker, which could be set to come on at a given hour, thinking that the smell of the coffee would tempt him to sit up but after the novelty had worn off, this also lost its charm and was consigned to a store cupboard in the kitchen.

Pete also told us one day, after a lengthy conversation about why he sometimes didn't want to go to college, that he was worried about the trips they occasionally went on. He has always been anxious about going anywhere new and needs a lot of explanation and reassurance that there won't be any large animals or fast rides. Clearly, he didn't feel that the staff were doing enough on the explaining and reassuring front, so that was something we could help to rectify. Having discussed the problem with them, the staff then made time to talk with him, going through the itinerary of any trips that were being planned and he was then usually much happier.

It frustrated me to see, when I looked back through his early reports from college, when he was still living at home, they all stressed the fact that he was always on time, wore the appropriate clothing, looked clean, smart and tidy, always had the correct files/equipment for the day, was interested in the lessons and participated fully.

The reports written in the first year after he had moved, record that he was often absent or late, was unkempt, hadn't showered and wore inappropriate clothing. Incidents recorded were: shorts in winter, no waterproof coat for gardening and on more than one occasion, wearing his waterproof trousers with only a pair of underpants beneath, resulting in 'very sweaty legs'.

He often 'forgot' to take his glasses and had started to take enormous bags to college, such as a huge sports bag or a suitcase, with his few bits and pieces rattling around inside. Pete appeared to have no motivation and didn't want to join in with group discussions. No wonder they were not keen to keep a place open for him.

Clearly, something needed to be done or he would lose his place. We hurriedly made an appointment to visit the college and took Pete's key-worker from John Gaffney along with us. Between us, we put forward Pete's case for him and explained thoroughly just what he had been dealing with over the past few months, and to our relief, he was given

another chance. Although there were occasional lapses his attendance did improve and by March 2003, his annual reviews were back to something like normal.

A diary link was established between college and the John Gaffney Home, which proved helpful to everyone. The staff at John Gaffney would know what Pete was meant to have with him on particular days and the staff at college would be able to pick up if anything in Pete's home life was causing him problems. Changes in staff or residents at JGH often had a big impact on Pete, especially if they were sudden.

Pete continued with his ABC Work Preparation Skills course and did further work experience at 'The Little Chef', eventually receiving his certificates at the presentation awards ceremony in October 2003. This was held at a large hotel in Skipton and as usual, I was on tenterhooks as Pete walked up on to the stage. The potential for him to play the fool and do something totally inappropriate was a distinct possibility but I should have had more faith. He behaved impeccably, walking on to the stage, receiving his certificates, shaking hands with the vice-principal and returning to his seat without a trace of silliness. I was immensely proud and, I have to confess, hugely relieved!

College life was being scaled down, though, as Pete could only continue to attend on a part-time basis, having completed all the full-time courses that were available to him.

Unfortunately, due to a mix up about the hours that Pete would do at Craven, part way through the first term of his new courses, we discovered that he was being charged for his transport to and from college, whereas before, when he had attended as a full-time student, the transport had been provided at no cost to Pete. As he was now travelling by taxi, twice a week, to Skipton and back, the cost was prohibitive to him. Pete's benefits had still not been properly sorted out since his move to John Gaffney, so he had a very limited amount of money available and could clearly not continue to fund his own transport.

It was a genuine mistake, but clearly it was not *Pete's* mistake and yet he was being penalised for it. Had we realised that he would be charged for the transport, then we would have looked for another course at a nearer college or found him something else to do but we would certainly not have agreed to him paying out such a large amount of money each week.

Fortunately, we were able to persuade the appropriate agencies that Pete should not have to pay the price for someone else's error and some money was found to cover the transport costs until the end of the course but it

was clear that his college days were coming to an end.

Pete enjoyed the rest of his time at Craven and possibly because he wasn't going every day, his time keeping and attendance were no longer an issue. There were still some problems with him eating his packed lunches on the way to college and then spending his money on sausage or bacon sandwiches and he couldn't seem to arrive at college with his glasses. Notes were written in the diary, asking the staff at John Gaffney to make sure that Pete had his glasses and the staff would reply that they had put them into his bag but somehow, he never had them when he arrived. He had obviously become very adept at slipping them back out of his bag and hiding them in his bedroom whilst the staff had their backs turned, as they were usually to be found somewhere in his room or, on occasion, lying on the grass beneath his bedroom window!

He still regularly attends his appointments with the optician and usually is prescribed a new pair of trendy-looking glasses, which really suit him - but he never, ever wears them. I persuaded him, as he prepared for one of his recent visits home, to wear his brand new pair of specs in the car on the journey to Hellifield. After about 10 minutes, during which time he never stopped fiddling with them, he removed the glasses.

"Why have you taken your glasses off?" I asked him, "They look really nice."

"Well," he replied, "they're making my eyes all sweaty." There's no answer to that, really, is there?

Other than these few incidents, though, he seemed to once again enjoy his experiences at college. He was able to keep some contact with people he had known through playgroup, junior and senior schools, as well as forming new friendships at college. We knew that it would be difficult for him to maintain those friendships once he had left college and it was with regret that we watched his time there come to an end.

We have some wonderful photographs of him from his college days, showing him having fun and participating in a wide array of activities. His photograph appeared on and in several of the college prospectuses, which we have kept as mementos of his time there and he still recalls visits to the 'Gargrave café' with the Small Animal Care group, every time we pass through Gargrave on our way to or from Hellifield.

Looking back through his old college reviews and the diaries, it's lovely to read the many positive remarks made by his tutors. Pete was clearly fun to have around and there were lots of nice comments about how well behaved he was whenever he went out with any groups from college.

Although he had sometimes had an 'off day', when he would ignore people or be rather uncooperative, the overall picture was of a young man who was at last beginning to mature.

Chapter Two

Transition to work

Once Pete's college hours had been reduced to part-time, something else had to be found to fill his days. We had long since established the fact that Pete functions best when he has steady occupation and Jeannie McNeil, (the Occupational Therapist assigned to work with Pete shortly before his move to the John Gaffney Home) had confirmed that for us, in the report she provided. In the report, Jeannie explained how easily Pete could become sidetracked and said that he would need to be motivated by appropriate praise and supported in any task he was asked to undertake. Jeannie recognised Pete's sense of humour but stressed the need to keep this under control, as he has a tendency to get 'carried away' with game playing.

Pete was taken to visit 'E4', a small unit on the outskirts of Bradford where printing is done for the National Health Service. People with a variety of learning disabilities work there, doing a wide range of tasks including collating, stapling, filling and labelling envelopes, shredding and delivering the finished work. After attending for some 'taster' sessions, it was agreed between all parties concerned that Pete should spend one day per week there. This was eventually extended to two days and for a long time Pete was quite content to go there. As usual, there were some familiar faces – people he had known from school, college or the various leisure activities he'd attended over the years – but also some new people, to widen his social horizons. We found, once again, that Pete often preferred the company of the staff to that of his peers and even though there were the expected tales of him 'winding people up', all in all, we were happy with the provision as there was a wide enough range of activity for him not to get bored and for him to be able to find several tasks that he actually enjoyed.

Surprisingly, one of the jobs that he really liked was shredding. E4 has an industrial sized shredder, which needs to be emptied regularly and we were told that Pete was one of the few people working there who could both shred papers and empty the machine efficiently. Less surprisingly, he loved it when it was his turn to help with the deliveries and would cheerfully carry boxes and parcels out to the car and into the offices at the

other end. Unfortunately, this was an activity that most other people enjoyed, too, so didn't come round anywhere near often enough for Pete's liking!

As he still had gaps in his weekday schedule, Pete was encouraged to try several other work placements/sheltered work options, with varying degrees of success, until he eventually settled on Wakefield Road Training Unit. The clients here do a range of activities, for example, putting nuts and bolts together, then placing them into appropriate packaging, which turned out to be Pete's favourite job. In fact, he liked this job so much, that he was often to be found with the wooden peg that he used to knock the nuts onto the bolts, snugly concealed in his bum bag. When I asked him about this, he told me that he was keeping it safe, so that no one else would use it when he wasn't there!

We weren't quite sure that this type of work would stretch Pete enough but as he hadn't fitted in or hadn't wanted to fit in to the other places he'd been to, we felt that we had to let him give it a try. The staff were cheerful and welcoming and again, Pete recognised several faces from elsewhere. The main thing was that Pete seemed happy to go and they seemed happy to keep him. As we had established over the years, if he doesn't want to be somewhere, he will make sure that everyone knows about it and if things can't change to his liking, he'll behave in such a way as to make sure that he's asked to move on.

At one training unit, where there was a hot, noisy kitchen, he behaved in such a way as to be a danger to himself and others and was deemed unsuitable for the venue. At home, he is always very sensible in the kitchen and very wary of anything hot, so we could only presume that he hadn't wanted to be there, probably because it was too noisy and hectic for him. We tried to explain to him after this and indeed, on many other occasions, that life would be much easier for him and all around him, if he would just *say* when he's unhappy about something. Sadly, being unable to explain those sorts of feelings seems to be a large part of his secondary disability, which we are still struggling to help him verbalise.

In January 2002, I started to look after my great-niece, Emily, who had been born 10 weeks early, the previous May, weighing a little under 3lbs. Her Mum, a primary school teacher, returned to her job on a part-time basis and as Emily was still quite tiny and likely to be prone to chest infections, it was felt that she wouldn't cope very well with going to a nursery. As I was not working at the time, (having given up my job as a florist when Pete came home from Wheelsby residential college in

Grimsby) Emily's Mum and Dad asked me if I would help out for two and a half days each week, during term-time.

It soon occurred to me that Pete could help out with looking after his baby half-cousin, as he still had one free day each week and he was thrilled with the idea. As he quite often came to stay with us over the weekend, it would be no problem for him to stay over an extra night, to be there on a Monday morning. Fortunately, we were able to change his days at Wakefield Road and everyone was happy with the arrangement.

Having gone from being the boy who rose with the sun, Pete had turned into the teenager/young man who had to be prised from his bed with a crowbar but when he knew that Emily was coming, he was almost always up and ready. I had explained to him that because Emily was very tiny, she could pick up germs more easily than other babies and that he must be very clean, especially his hands, if he was going to hold her and play with her.

From the start, he was very responsible and extremely helpful. He would lift the pushchair in and out of the car for me, carry her rucksack with the spare nappies and myriad accoutrements that seem to surround small children these days and generally assist in all manner of ways. He was very patient with her when she started to take food from a spoon and although he grumbled a little when she threw her toys on the floor, he nevertheless unfailingly picked them up for her.

I never left them alone for more than a moment or two— not because I thought that he would harm her in any way, as he was always loving towards her – but because I never knew if he would attempt to do something beyond his capabilities, such as trying to lift her out of the high-chair or change her nappy. He was quite keen to help even with this activity, although he would pull a face of utter disgust if the nappy was more than wet!

Looking after Emily also helped with keeping Pete fit, as we walked for miles with her in the pushchair. Pete always wanted to push – unless we were going uphill. Upon reaching an incline, he would grind to a halt, moan, groan, sigh and wait until I realised that he was not keeping up with me. At this point, I would have to take over, as I quickly realised that we would never get anywhere if I waited for Pete to continue! We regularly walked from our house down to Grandpa's, then up into Shipley centre and back home, a round trip of a good 5 miles, often laden with shopping, balanced precariously on the tray underneath the pushchair.

The arrangement with Pete helping to look after Emily worked really

well but came to an end when Emily finally started nursery full time. I had taken a part-time job in a florist shop in Bingley, increasing my hours there as my time with Emily decreased. Andy's father's health had deteriorated by this stage, as had my stepfather's and I was spending more time visiting them both, but particularly Ken, my step-dad, who needed more support as he was living alone.

Pete was slightly disappointed not to be able to come to the house during the day on Mondays any longer but accepted the change to his routine more readily than I had expected.

With a change of manager at the John Gaffney Home, Pete had been given a choice about how he wanted to arrange his week and no longer worked on a Monday or a Wednesday. On Mondays, he spent (or was meant to spend) the day cleaning, washing and generally catching up on household chores. I'm not sure how much work he actually did and suspect that the staff member assigned to support him probably did more than Pete, although I could be maligning him here!

On Wednesdays, he and his best friend, Liam, began to attend a local leisure centre that they had been encouraged to join by Pauline, the new manager at JGH. Pauline's husband worked there at the time, which was great, as I felt that there was someone who could, to some extent, keep an eye on Pete. He loves going to the centre and although there has been the odd occasion when his behaviour has been less than exemplary, generally he has conformed well. There has, I believe, been some slightly-too-boisterous behaviour in the changing rooms but he is under no illusions about the fact that, if he does misbehave, he won't be allowed to go any more.

He loves to swim and happily joined in with the Aquarobics class but has been less enthusiastic about using the gym. Too much like hard work, I suspect! Much of their time is spent relaxing in the Jacuzzi and as they usually go into the cafeteria afterwards and eat a generous lunch, just how 'fit' it makes them is anybody's guess. However, it's great for his social development and even if he only has a small amount of exercise, it's better than none. He soon charmed the ladies in the Aquarobics class and is patently well known to all the members of staff. Andy and I have been with him to the leisure complex several times, occasionally to swim with him but sometimes just for lunch. A few people from our old church at Saltaire use the complex too, so there is often someone for him to chat with.

In the previous book, I related an embarrassing story that occurred

during a holiday to Portugal and I seem fated to have these moments when in the company of Pete, anywhere near a swimming pool.

Pete had invited me to join him for a swim one day, so I looked out my swimsuit and a large towel and set off to meet him. Getting myself ready in the ladies' changing rooms, I thought that my swimming costume felt slightly gritty but didn't pay much heed to that, assuming that it still had a bit of holiday sand in it.

I joined Pete in the Jacuzzi, where we both enjoyed the warm bubbles and then I suggested to him that we should have a swim. As soon as I stood up, I realised that I had a problem. Walking towards the pool, I could feel the fabric of my swimming costume stretching downwards in an unattractive and moreover, rather worrying manner. I lowered myself into the water rather more quickly than is usually my wont and swam a few lengths, for form's sake, before retreating hurriedly to the changing rooms, the swimsuit hanging in unpleasantly wet folds around me. I quickly removed the offending article and deposited it in the bin! Clearly, I had not worn this garment for some time and it had not so much lost, as abandoned its elasticity. Not quite as embarrassing as the episode in Portugal but bad enough, particularly as I had more chance of bumping into someone who might know me!

We discovered that Pete had become known at the leisure centre as the young man who 'has suitcase, will travel' due to his propensity for taking an inappropriate amount of luggage with him. He and his friend travel by taxi, as there is no direct bus route to the club, so he isn't burdened by having to carry it all. As there is limited space in the lockers, the large bags that Pete takes won't fit in, meaning that he has to leave them lying around in the changing room. If the staff at John Gaffney spot what he is taking as he leaves, they will usually send him back to reduce the size of the bag but Pete, as I have already mentioned, is very skilled at sneaking past without being spotted, despite carrying with him enough luggage to emigrate or at least take a very extended holiday!

His love affair with rucksacks, holdalls and indeed, bags of any and every type gradually became an obsession and having several different work placements and leisure activities led to him developing this even further. He wanted to have a different bag for each place that he visited and wouldn't even use the same bag on his two days at E4 or Wakefield Road. They all had to be packed at least a week in advance and if we weren't careful, he would do his holiday packing about three months before we were due to go anywhere.

Aside from the fact that he wanted a bag for each venue, the bags themselves were often inappropriate to the job. He would take a suitcase with wheels to the supermarket or bring a selection of thin carrier bags with his belongings crammed into them when he came home to stay for a weekend. Unfortunately, whatever we say or do about this has absolutely no effect and if it doesn't impact upon what we are doing, we now generally try to give in with good grace and allow him to use whichever bags he chooses.

Whilst on the subject of bags, I mentioned in the previous chapter that Pete has grown rather tired of the 'Oh no! Not you again!' joke but when the boot is on the other foot, he shows no such consideration and if he gets a laugh for any of his antics, it will be repeated ad nauseum.

He has a running joke with Andy, for example, which has gone on for quite some time, which started one day when I asked Andy to hold my handbag for a moment. Pete jumped in, drawling comically the phrase "What a pretty lady!" We laughed, as he fully intended us to do and the joke was born. After that, if either Andy or Pete so much as touched my handbag, the other would respond with the same phrase, always delivered in the same manner. It has now got to the point where, if Andy doesn't notice that Pete is holding my bag, Pete will wave it under Andy's nose until he receives the correct response. He then clutches the bag to his bosom, a la Les Dawson and grins in triumph, whilst I refrain from hitting them both over the head with the dratted handbag, as I am now heartily sick of hearing this routine!

On the whole, Pete settled into life at John Gaffney pretty well. Although there was some trouble with bullying, which was an unpleasant experience for all concerned, this was eventually resolved and another chap became his flat mate. It was difficult for us, as his parents, to have to stand by and watch as Pete struggled with this but having 19 people of varying ages and with varying disabilities all under one roof will always produce friction of some sort. How many people would accept being told who they had to share their home with, without really being given much say in the matter? And why do we think that people with a learning disability will be able to cope with sharing a flat more easily than anyone else? Tenants do sometimes move from one flat to another, as vacancies occur and friendships wax and wane but new tenants have to be slotted in somewhere.

As we were only five minutes away by car, we were able to pop in to see Pete fairly often and we sometimes had a meal in the flat with him.

Hannah's school was only two minutes away and once she had passed her driving test, she often drove herself to school, so could call in to see Pete on her way home. He stayed overnight with us on a fairly regular basis, usually at weekends and his social life still generally revolved around us. His overnight stays with Grandma and Granddad, and with Grandpa, had reduced dramatically as they were all less able to cope but he still visited them frequently.

In October 2003, Hannah started her student life at Greyfriars' College in Oxford. Pete was involved with this right from the beginning, as Andy and I both felt that he needed to understand where she would be. He came with us to visit the college in the term before she started there and was delighted when we were invited to stay for lunch. He visited Hannah on several occasions, usually staying with us in a nearby B&B but occasionally sleeping on a mattress on Hannah's floor, once she had moved out of halls and into student accommodation.

Pete and Hannah's relationship had definitely returned to normal after he finished at Wheelsby College. I had been anxious that it might not remain so after Pete went to live at John Gaffney but he seemed to accept the fact that Hannah was still living at home, whilst he had once again moved out, most probably because he wasn't so far away.

Once Hannah went to Oxford, they were on a level playing field and I felt that he was even more relaxed about things. He must have sensed that her life was moving away from ours, particularly after the first year when, having moved into a house, she stopped coming home at the end of each term. Pete and I had been talking about Hannah one day and discussing when we might next see her, when he asked, "Is she still ours?"

"Of course she is!" I replied but it made me realise that he is more aware than I sometimes give him credit for. Hannah's life will probably (and hopefully) not revolve around ours in the same way that Pete's does and he had recognised that. He never seems to begrudge her independence, although he still misses her. We don't always tell Pete when Hannah is coming to visit, so that she can surprise him and he is always delighted to see her, although his first question to her is usually not, "How are you?" but "Which car have you brought?"

He has not taken a huge interest in what Hannah does as a job – he knows that she works in an office, 'like Dad' and that she has a company car, (always an attraction for him) - but he has followed her moves around the country with great interest.

After university, Hannah moved to live in Guildford, Surrey. Her next

move was to Leamington Spa, where Adam, her boyfriend at the time, was living. When Adam got a new job in Derby, Hannah applied for a transfer with her company and went to Derby too. She stayed with the company, but not the boyfriend and moved house again twice, whilst working in the Derby area. Eventually, having formed a new relationship, she moved back to Guildford, still with the same recruitment company.

Pete's reaction to all of this has been mixed. Whenever I tell him that Hannah is moving house, he replies, "What! Again?" but he loves being involved in the moving process, especially if it means borrowing the van from Dad's work. He also fancied moving in with Hannah, when she had her own flat in Derby. Having stayed for a weekend with her, when it was his birthday, he announced that he wouldn't be coming back to Bradford with us.

"I'll live here with Hannah," he told us "and while she's at work, I'll watch DVD's, and listen to music."

"And what will you do at the weekend, when Hannah goes to visit Jon in London?" we asked.

"I'll go with her!" came the speedy reply.

Several times now, we have helped Hannah to move her belongings from one part of the country to another and Pete is always a willing assistant, enjoying his role as 'Mr. Shifter'.

When we helped Hannah to move from Leamington to Derby, one bright summer day, we set off very early one Saturday morning; the three of us perched up front in the cab of a van borrowed from Dad's work. The usual van had gone to the garage for a service, so we used the replacement that the garage had sent.

Having arrived in Leamington without incident, we helped Hannah and her boyfriend to shift their belongings down two flights of stairs and into the van, then drove to Derby and unloaded it all at the other end. This time, we had only one flight of stairs to cope with but we were pretty exhausted by the end of it all.

Hannah had suggested that we make up beds on the floor but although Pete was keen to stay, Andy and I were ready for our own bed. We waved them goodbye, went to a nearby fast-food restaurant for something to eat and then set off on the final leg of our journey, back to Hellfield.

The sky was beginning to darken as we travelled up the M1 and we noticed a couple of drivers flashing their lights as they overtook us. After this had happened several times, Andy realised they were actually flashing

at us. He pulled on to a slip road just south of Wakefield and got out of the van to check if we had a problem. He discovered that the lights weren't working, which was not at all what we wanted to find. We were tired and grubby and just wanted to get home for baths and our beds. To be honest, I could have wept with frustration.

Having 'phoned the 'helpline' number on the side of the van, we were told that we would have to wait, possibly for several hours, as we were not a priority. "Give me the 'phone," I said to Andy. I spoke to the receptionist, explaining that we had Pete with us, and she very kindly agreed to move us up the queue. I very rarely use Pete's disability in that way but to be honest, I knew that he wouldn't cope very well with hanging about outside in the chilly evening air. A passing patrol-man approached us within minutes of us pulling off the motorway and told us quite firmly that we should not return to sit in the van. As it was too damp to sit on the grass, we had no choice but to stand until the pick-up truck arrived. Fortunately, it arrived within a fairly short space of time and Pete was delighted to be getting a ride home, high up in the cab of the breakdown lorry!

Unfortunately, Pete was past his best and spent quite a bit of the journey home making the coughing sound that is usually a prelude to him being sick. We asked the driver to pull in to a service station and Andy took Pete in, giving him the opportunity to wash his face, use the loo and buy a bottle of water. By the time we arrived home, we had been on the go for about 19 hours and were all exhausted. It had certainly been a memorable trip!

Pete always loves going to stay with Hannah or, if she doesn't have space for him, staying in a nearby hotel or B & B for the weekend. On a recent visit to see Hannah, we all went out for the evening to a pub near Jon's flat. Although it was autumn, the weather was quite mild and we elected to sit outside, enjoying the view of the river. Just before we were ready to leave, the sunshade, which for some reason had been lowered into position, was retracted by an unseen electronic mechanism.

Watching this with absolute concentration, Pete looked at us and said thoughtfully, "Hmm, it's a convertible pub." What a wonderful idea!

The last time Hannah needed help with moving house, I thought that Pete might be less keen to join us after our previous experience but I couldn't have been more wrong - he was delighted to be asked. Once again, he proved to be useful and I mentioned quietly to Andy that it was a shame that we couldn't find Pete a job as a removal man or a 'white van

man's assistant'.

It was becoming clear that his regular jobs were beginning to lose their appeal. We had several discussions with him about this but as is always the case with Pete, he found it difficult to explain what was bothering him at work and what he might like to do instead.

At his next review, Pauline suggested that Pete might like to try doing the 'trolley run' at the offices of the management company that is responsible for JGH. Several other residents had jobs within the organisation and Pauline was confident that Pete would fit in. It was finally agreed that he would do this on Monday lunchtime, each week.

A member of staff accompanies Pete to the offices, either by bus or car, where he is responsible for loading up a trolley with sandwiches, drinks, chocolate bars and a variety of foods that can be heated in a microwave. Having transferred all the items from the refrigerator to his trolley, he then has to wheel it to every office, advertising his wares as he goes.

According to one member of staff, Pete is the perfect salesman – never allowing anyone the opportunity to refuse. If they turn down a sandwich, he offers them a drink or a Twix or a packet of crisps until the poor person gives in and buys something, if only so that he will go away and leave them to get on with their work!

At the end of his round, he returns the trolley to its original spot, having emptied it of any remaining items. The member of staff who accompanies Pete sorts out the cash and hands it in to one of the offices.

The trolley run lasts about forty-five minutes and is a perfect job for Pete – it doesn't take too long and he has an opportunity to chat to lots of people, many of whom were already familiar to him. At the end of his shift he is paid a small amount of money, which he then spends on a sandwich and a drink from his trolley. What more could he ask?

For a while, this new job seemed to settle him and he stopped talking about wanting to leave E4 and Wakefield Road but after a couple of months, he once again began to complain that he didn't want to go to either place any more.

Pauline suggested he cut down to one day at each and that on his spare day, a Thursday, he could help the lady who comes in to clean the communal areas at John Gaffney. I wasn't sure if Pete would want to do this but to my surprise, he seemed quite keen and having been shown clearly what was expected of him, seemed to knuckle down to it.

Again, this new addition to his weekly routine stemmed the grumbles

about his other work but the day came when he announced that he didn't want to go to E4 any more. I suspect that like all of us, he gets bored with doing the same things week in, week out. He decided that he would carry on going to Wakefield Road but we were concerned that he would once again have too much time on his hands, never a good thing for him.

The night staff had begun to report that Pete wasn't sleeping well and would often be up and wandering round the corridors well into the early hours, sometimes knocking on other people's doors or ringing doorbells. This was not making him very popular with the other residents, none of whom wanted to have their sleep disturbed.

Trying to find out what was preventing Pete from sleeping was far from easy. We tried asking him if he was too warm or if there was too much noise. We wondered if he was worried about something but it was impossible for him to explain. Although he has been able to articulate his 'wants' for a long time, expressing his 'feelings' is something he has much more difficulty mastering.

The other problem with him being awake half the night was that he couldn't rouse himself, or be roused, the following morning and we felt that the whole situation was spiralling out of control. The temptation to bring him back to live with us at Hellifield was strong and even Andy was beginning to wonder if we needed to look at a different setting for him.

Whilst we were considering what we could do to help the situation, Andy had an inspired idea. Knowing Pete's love of travelling in his company's silver van, Andy asked the driver if he would be prepared to take Pete with him on one of his delivery runs, one day per week. The driver agreed quite readily and we were both delighted but I did suggest to Andy that he should get someone else to sound him out, just in case the driver didn't feel that he could say 'No' to Andy.

Pete was over the moon when we asked him if he would like to help Ken, the driver, to take a delivery to Wrexham each Tuesday. We explained that he would have to be up and ready, as Ken wouldn't have time to wait for him. Andy accompanied them on the first trip, just to check that there would be no pitfalls that we hadn't already thought about and returned home reasonably confident that they would be OK together.

So far, Pete has always managed to get himself up in good time, with his sandwiches packed for the journey and wearing appropriate clothing. He also dons his yellow safety jacket and takes along a supply of C.D.'s, as he is in charge of the 'in-van' entertainment. Poor Ken has to listen to a whole range of music, from Irish ballads, Dolly Parton, the Beatles, Abba

and everything else in between. I just hope he has earplugs at the ready!

Ken told Andy that he never normally had anything to eat on his journeys but Pete has soon sorted that out. Even though Pete goes armed with a supply of sandwiches, which he eats 'for breakfast' on the way down to Wrexham, he has managed to persuade Ken to stop at a kiosk on their return journey, to buy sausage sandwiches for lunch. With his powers of persuasion, I'm sure there must be a role for him in politics!

He has recently given up going to Wakefield Road and has taken a break from his cleaning job, so once again we are on the lookout for new things for him to do. Just as we think we have things sorted out for him, everything changes and we feel like we are back to square one.

We did ask Pete if he would like to move nearer to us, thinking that he was maybe ready for a change. We thought that Skipton might be a suitable place, where he would know several people from his days at Craven College and be within easy visiting distance of Hellifield. He considered this for a while but then said, "No. I'll stay here with Liam."

When he stays with us at Hellifield, Pete usually sleeps well and although we occasionally have to ask him to switch off his TV or stop talking to himself, he rarely keeps us awake and certainly doesn't wander around the house at night. Aunty Janet has said that whenever Pete stayed at her house, whilst their cat, Keith, was still alive, Pete never moved during the night, as he would allow the cat to sleep on his bed. Cats aren't allowed at John Gaffney, as there may be people with allergies, so sadly, that can't be the solution in this case. We still haven't got to the bottom of this problem and would welcome any suggestions - answers on a postcard, please!