

COMING HOME

Travelling in an ambulance was not unusual, but this trip was special. I had been isolated from my four older sisters and big brother for 366 days, yes one year and a day.

It must be the middle to late September, a bit chilly outside, the ambulance men wrap a red blanket over me, which seems to have been woven from barbed wire, and was nowhere as comfy as the cream ones with the holes in.

I am delivered home. Home, this can't be home. It's about the size of a biscuit tin, contains all manner of things, a table and six chairs, a side board, a piano (upright), a three piece suite, a dog, now that's different I haven't seen one of those before, but best of all an open fire, roaring away in the grate, that's why they call it great, because it is. The fireguard seems to be made out of solid brass, but upon closer inspection has tiny holes left between the weave; I swear you could have watched an eclipse of the sun through it without any damage to your eyes; and my bed placed under the window, not in front of..... but next to the fire.

Home! This is the woman who came to see me each night, but where's my mum? I begin to cry for her, the woman tells me it's all right and that she's my mum, I know she's not, she doesn't wear a hat or uniform like my mum.

Unbeknowingly to me, my eldest sister, Dawn, had seen the ambulance arrive and had hastily asked the teacher if she could pop home to see me (we lived opposite the school), she arrived almost as soon as the ambulance men left. A young woman wearing a uniform, 'I want to go home, please let me go home nurse'. She looked taken aback, tears flooded her eyes, we were all crying. Dawn gave me a cuddle and said, 'You are home Shaun'.

Shaun Hardy then aged two and a half