

Part seven: a special occasion

The next morning they had bacon sandwiches for breakfast. This was a big treat. They normally only had that on birthdays or special occasions.

And today felt like a special occasion. It's just David didn't know why.

'Here are we going today, then?' he asked his mum.

'It's a surprise,' Mum said, looking out of the window. 'You'll know soon enough.'

David sat eating his bacon sandwich, wondering what the special day out would be.

He fantasised that it would be a trip to watch United play today. They were kicking off at midday. But he knew that would cost way too much. So he forgot the thought.

At half-past-ten David saw the posh car arrive outside the old man's house, like it often did. He watched the driver in his uniform come out of the car, open the back door, then walk towards the old man's front door.

Except he wasn't walking to the old man's front door, he was walking towards their front door.

'Mum!' David shouted from the front room into the hallway, where he had heard her.

Then he saw his mum in the doorway, standing with two coats. His and hers.

And she was grinning.

'Come on, love,' she said. 'This is your surprise.'

The surprise was the most surprising surprise David had ever known.

First he met the old man. The former United player.

Then he saw that he was wearing a medal. His FA Cup Final medal.

Then the man thanked him for solving the mystery. The medal had been hidden in the wall. David had been right. And the old man said that he wanted to take David and his mum out for the day to say thank you.

Next they drove to United's stadium.

Then they went inside.

And watched the game.

And met the current United players.

And David got to shake each of their hands and hear them all say thank you to him for solving the mystery of the missing Cup Final medal.

That night when David closed his eyes, he did not need to make up stories to make his life feel more exciting.

Now he had memories. Real memories of watching United and meeting players.

Tom Palmer – March 2011