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COURTNEY

27th August 1992 – 13th July 1999

(An Obituary by Geoff & Sheila Davies)



Courtney Browne was born on 27th August 1992. This special little girl came into our lives when Darren met Melanie (Courtney's mother) in 1994. The first we knew about Courtney was when Darren said he had a girlfriend who's "... got a kid". When Darren first brought Courtney to see us in the April of that year we couldn't help commenting on what a pretty little girl she was and so well behaved, although according to both Darren and Melanie she did have her moments. She was even carrying Darren's cans of lager to cement that bond between them. This was certainly a year of many events both exciting and sad. It was the year Grandpa Geoff took early retirement. It was the year Auntie Nicola got married; and it was the year Great Grandad Bert passed away. Even the year of her birth holds a special event in the family; being the year Poppa's aunt Annie reached the age of one hundred! Still, back to Courtney.



Oh, so this is the Davies household



I hope they don't get the wrong impression

Courtney was quickly adopted into the family and Darren became her Daddy. She effectively became one of the family.



I think they like me

Our first grand-daughter had arrived. "Sheila and known as "*Seal of death*". Apart from fairly regular also joined us on family outings - October 1995 to celebrate birthday. She enjoyed watching the river and even had '*yellow*'



Yes, they like you



Guess where I've been

Geoff" then became visits to see us, Courtney notably to Alresford in Grandpa Geoff's the ducks swimming in *plastic guts* in her bath.



Train!

As with most memorable things phrase. Our two dogs became she saw Grandpa Geoff's new Rover she used to say '*Geoff beard green car*'.

This little girl also loved playing games in the garden, especially croquet (see picture below), and really loved the car that



'Ninnie' (Melanie's mum) had Courtney's favourite colour was pleased when she found purple

Whoop did that to you? Fancy a lift love?



bought her some years prior. purple, so she was especially flowers in Grandpa's garden.

This is a petunia. Okay?



Courtney certainly started the ball rolling when further grand children arrived in rapid succession - Cousin Bethany in



I wonder if I've got a brother or sister

December 1995 followed by Courtney's brother Sean a year later in 1996. May 1997 saw the arrival of sister Hayley in May 1998 Andrew in May 1999. remember receiving the call Courtney whilst he attended



This is my brother Sean

Cousin Jonathan with Bethany's and finally Jonathan's brother Grandma and Grandpa always from Darren to look after Sean's birth.



...and these are my cousins.

In 1996 Courtney started nursery school in Mychett where she made slow but steady progress. However, for some time

Melanie had been concerned about Courtney's physical and mental progress and, although assured by health workers that she was okay, decided to have some tests done on her daughter. It was in the August prior to Sean's birth that dreadful news was received which hit us all like a bombshell: Courtney was diagnosed with a terminal illness, an undiagnosed form of Leukodystrophy, for which there is no treatment. Slowly her brain was dying and she was given months, or at most a few years, to live - possibly reaching the age of seven. Darren and Melanie were devastated, their pain felt and shared by all members of the family. Although Sean acted as a stabilising force at this time, from then on Melanie was in constant fear that their little son would end up the same way.

Courtney moved about quite a lot in her short life. After her birth she lived with her mum and 'Ninnie' (her maternal grandmother) in a flat in Mychett. Melanie and Darren then applied for family housing and spent a few months in temporary, but inadequate, accommodation on the Old Dean estate in Camberley before finally settling down in a two bedroom flat in Frimley. Later, she spent a few months in Bristol during 1998 before moving back to Mychett with her mother and Ninnie. Courtney had her home comforts and was always surrounded by her toys. She was admitted to Portisbury School in Camberley where, during her schooling there, she played the part as an angel in their Christmas play. A particularly memorable event during this period was her mum's participation in the press publicity given to a campaign relating to disruption of the school's bus service following a change in Council policy.



But you can't find me!

Although Courtney could never convey verbally how she felt, she appeared to enjoy her short life. It was always noted how happy and contented she seemed. She loved birthday parties, Christmases of course, and the barbeque at Auntie Nicola and Uncle Mike's; but one of the highlights of her life but have been a secret wish come true when the Make a Wish Foundation funded a trip to Disneyland, Paris, with Mum and Darren a few days before Sean was born. In fact she spent the night at Grandma and Grandpa's whilst Daddy attended Sean's birth. Her final outings with Grandma and Grandpa included a walk along the Basingstoke canal and a trip to Lightwater Country Park in 1997, which she enjoyed immensely. Our picture shows her pointing out the wildlife that exists in the park, but she did feel sorry for poor Grandpa, who had to haul her in the pushchair up steep gravelly slopes!



Now, this is our route for today.

With her condition now deteriorating rapidly, Courtney was finally admitted in March 1999 to Naomi House Children's Hospice near Winchester where she spent the remainder of her short life. The family will always remember the exceptional treatment she received from the staff at Naomi House. Even in her last days the staff offered much sympathy and solace to family members. After life finally departed from her at on 13th July 1999 a memorable and moving memorial tribute was conducted for her in the Dovecot chapel at Naomi House on 20th July. Among the tributes voiced was the poem below written by Grandma, with Auntie Melanie's help, and delivered by Grandma. She was cremated in Basingstoke Crematorium, her ashes being retrieved by her mother Melanie.

What about Courtney's likes and dislikes? She certainly loved Tot's TV and always enjoyed Grandma and Grandpa reading stories from a little set of books they had. One of her favourite toys at Grandma's and Grandpa's house must be a plastic animal shape puzzle that produced the appropriate sound when each animal was put in its correct place and pressed. Her favourite music included *Jumparound* and she loved her *Milkyway Stars*.

Fortunately, we have many photographs and ample video as a record of her life; but the photograph below, particularly, is how we like to remember her.

Courtney - A farewell from Grandma

She captured our hearts from the moment we saw her,
Just one look in her eyes - who wouldn't adore her?
With shiny brown hair, such a beautiful child,
Her nature was always so gentle and mild.

It didn't take much to make Courtney smile,
A walk in the park ... Feed ducks for a while.
Stories, The Lion King, Tots TV sounds,
Milkyway Stars and, of course, 'jump around'!

These are the things we'll remember with pleasure
And through the dark days, they are moments we'll treasure.

It's difficult now through the tears and the pain,
But before long we'll be smiling again
At the memories of that darling young lady,
Whose life came to an end after fighting so bravely.

And though we can't see her we will love her forever:
Courtney, a Special Granddaughter.



So long everyone.

Don't forget me.