

It was the summer holidays and as usual, the children were travelling on the Cigam Express to stay with their grandparents in the country.

The journey had been long, the sandwiches eaten early on and they were all tired and hungry.

'Are we nearly there?' asked Charlie, for the tenth time. He was the youngest grandchild and all journeys seemed much longer to him than to the others.

'Not far to go now,' said Ben the eldest, looking at his watch. 'It's almost 12.30 and just time to gather up our things'.

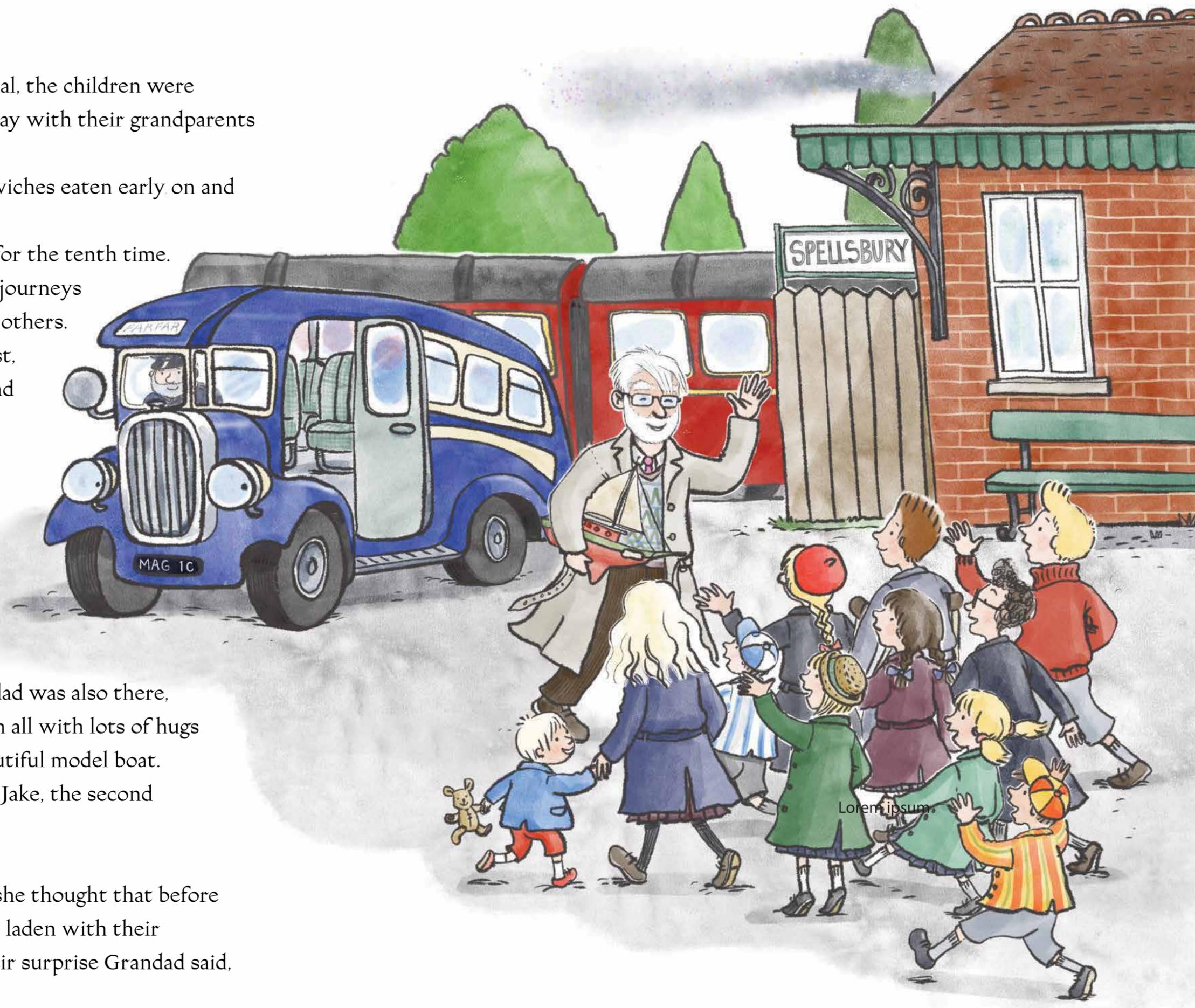
The train slowly pulled into the station and the children tumbled out onto the platform.

They stopped short. Instead of Old Joe waiting for them in the wagon pulled by Mabel and Henry, he was in the driving seat of the oldest, strangest bus they had ever seen. Grandad was also there, which was unusual, and he greeted them all with lots of hugs and kisses. In his hands he carried a beautiful model boat.

'When will we play with that?' asked Jake, the second eldest grandchild.

'All in good time,' replied Grandad.

'I'm starving hungry,' said Daisy, and she thought that before long they would be sitting round a table laden with their grandmother's delicious food. But to their surprise Grandad said, 'I've got other plans.'





‘But when are we going to eat?’ asked Daisy.

‘Don’t you worry about that,’ replied Grandad. ‘Let’s just get you on the bus.’

They threw their luggage in the boot and piled onto the bus. To their delight, on each seat was the largest Cornish Pasty they had ever seen.

Charlie found it too big to hold, so Freya his sister, broke it in half.

‘It’s got meat and vegetables in one end, and apple and blackberry and custard in the other,’ she said.

Sam whispered to Daisy and Bea, ‘we can only eat the sweet end. What a pity!’

Grandad overheard, of course, and said, ‘Did you think we had forgotten? Of course, yours are without meat.’

‘Yummy,’ said Mollie the eldest girl. ‘I’m going to eat the sweet end first.’

Grandad and Old Joe took their seats in the front and knew they would have a little peace and quiet while the children were eating.

The bus started off and they were on their way.

Sam, who finished eating first, asked, ‘Where are we going?’

‘Well, I thought we’d go to the Far, Far Distant Land,’ said Grandad.

The children cheered.

‘You always tell us stories about that,’ said Bea, ‘but I never imagined we would ever see it. Will it take long to get there?’

‘How long is a piece of string?’ said Old Joe from the front.

The grandchildren didn’t know what he was talking about but were too polite to ask. After what seemed like hours of the bus struggling up and down hills and along the narrow lanes, it began to slow down. The children could see the sea and, before long, the bus drew up to the harbour.

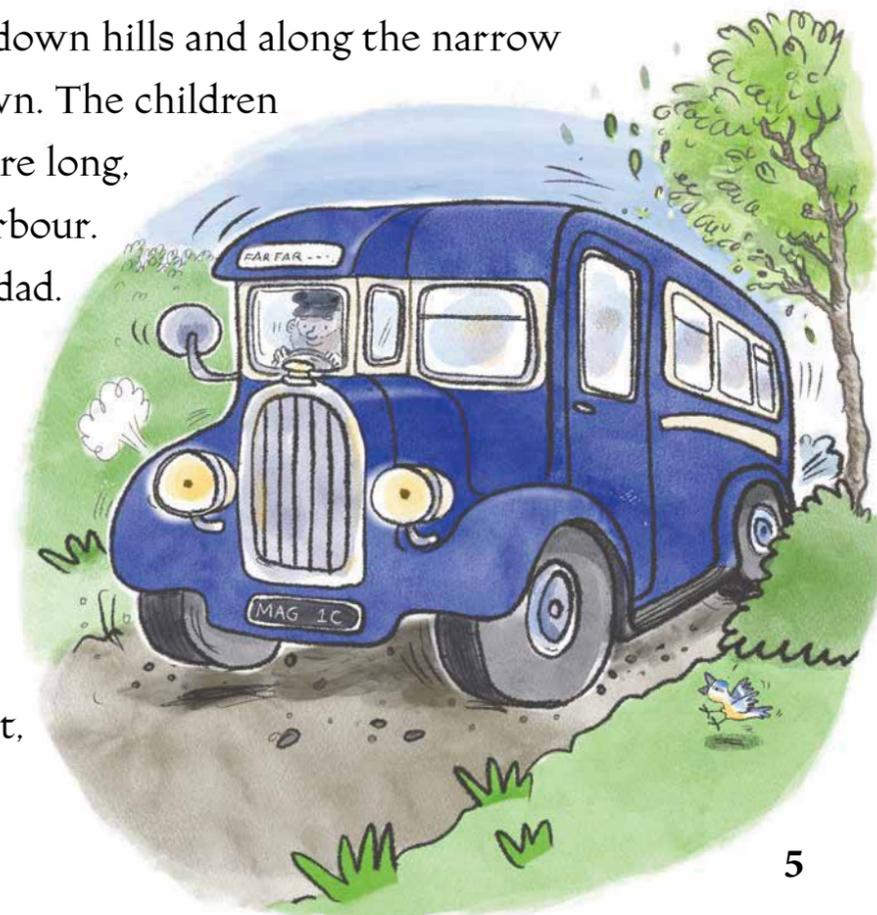
‘Out you get!’ said Grandad.

‘Mind you don’t fall in the water Charlie!’

Millie, his older sister, grabbed his hand tightly.

Grandad was still carrying the model boat.

‘We need a pond for that, not the sea,’ said Joe.





Grandad didn't reply and carried the boat along the jetty and while the children watched, he carefully lowered it into the water, where it bobbed gently in the waves.

'Now for a bit of magic,' he said.

Jake nudged Mollie, they had both been the last to believe in magic and seemed to be up to their old tricks again.

'When I tell you, I want each of you to shut your eyes tight and to turn in a small circle to your right. Then turn very slowly, until I tell you to stop.'

'Which way is right?' asked Daisy.

'You follow the hand you write with, of course,' said George.

'It's called clockwise,' said Ben, who knew longer words than the others.

'Why's that?' asked Bea.

'Because the hands of the clock go to the right,' he replied.

'Let's not waste any more time', said Grandad. 'We'll all have a practice at turning right before the real thing. Ready, steady, go!'

Charlie tried to go left but Millie pulled him to the right.

Daisy also turned left because she wrote with her left hand.

'Other way, Daisy,' whispered Grandad 'the others haven't seen.'

'Right, let's do the real thing now. Don't open your eyes until I tell you, as some of you may be quicker than others.'

Millie kept a hold on Charlie, as Sam helped Joe, who had a poorly leg, and they all turned slowly clockwise.

'Right, open now!' said Grandad.

All eyes opened and the children could not believe what they saw!





'Aren't you coming with us?' asked Freya.

'No, Old Joe has to work on the farm, and I have to help your grandmother get lunch for you all.'

'We don't know how to get there,' said Millie, nervously.

'The boat knows,' said Grandad 'you just follow the wind.'

And sure enough, the sails filled with wind and the boat slowly left the harbour and out towards the open sea. The figures of Old Joe and Grandad got smaller and smaller and the children were on their way.

Charlie noticed his sailor suit. 'Now we are really ready to sail,' he said.

The small boat had become a full-sized, rigged sailing boat!  
'That is impossible!' said Mollie, 'I can't believe my eyes!'  
'That's always been your problem Mollie,' said Ben, her brother.  
'How many times do you have to see magic to believe in it?'  
'I didn't say I don't believe in magic, I said I didn't believe my eyes!' she mumbled.

'Welcome to the good ship SPELLBOUND,' said Grandad. She will take you to the Far, Far Distant Land. On you go, single file along the jetty and Old Joe and I will help you aboard. Six of you sit on one side and five of you on the other.'

'That's so the weight is not all one side,' said Joe, 'which might make the boat sink.'

'Magic boats don't sink,' said Grandad.

'Off you go now,' he said, when they were all settled on board.

