

*The light shines in the darkness*  
**Christmas 2004**

It seems like only a few weeks since we typed our last Christmas letter but in fact a whole year has flown by.

### **Rotorua**

The year started with the family going on a trip to Rotorua. We enjoyed visiting Hell's Gate, a vigorously active thermal area, and another day we went to Kiwifruit Country near Te Puke. There, we toured an orchard and went to a castle and a dragon maze, which was lots of fun. We also went to the the 3-D maze at Te Ngae and went up Mount Ngongataha on the Skyline and enjoyed riding on the Luge. We liked visiting the thermal spa pools each day. The weather was glorious during our time there. We travelled back to Wellington via Napier and Hastings, visiting old haunts such as the beach at Port Ahuriri in Napier and Cornwall Park in Hastings.



### **Floods**

The period of good weather we experienced during our break was the exception: overall, this summer was one of the wettest in memory and at one stage the rain was so persistent that the Hutt River flooded resulting in the closure of roads, schools and businesses. Train and bus services were cancelled and many houses were damaged, both by floods and the consequent landslides. Luckily, our house was unaffected, although there were several big slips close by, even in our street.



### **David**

David is now in the fourth form at Taita College and is continuing to do well. He did very well in the Australian Science Competition and his science project was selected for the regional finals. He went to several plays, including Romeo and Juliet, with school groups. He continues to play the violin and has just taken his Grade 2 examination. He has also taken up archery and has been having lessons on Sunday afternoons at Trentham Archery Club.

### **Matthew**

Matthew joined David at Taita College this year. He has been in the third form debating team and his science project was also selected for the Regional Finals. He seems to be doing well academically. He continues to enjoy chess and real time strategy games.

### **Christopher**

Christopher is in his last year at Stokes Valley School and will be going to Avalon Intermediate School next year. He has had a successful year, being involved in Tournament of Minds and doing well in the Australian English and Writing competitions. He has continued to attend the Gifted Kids Programme at Rata Street School. He has had an enjoyable year there.



### **Ian**

Ian has had a difficult year at work as the merger between ANZ Bank and National Bank has radically changed the work that he is doing, though this is still in the area of Credit Risk. Outside work, he has continued to be

very active in Toastmasters, where he has been working to help start a new club as well as continuing with his existing club. Ian is still active at church, where he is still on Vestry. This year, he was in Palmerston North for the Diocesan Synod weekend. He also serves on the Southern Committee of the Australasian Institute of Banking and Finance, for whose annual dinner he made one of his trips to Auckland this year.



### **Viv**

Viv continues to work at Stokes Valley School, working with English as second language students and in the study centre. She also did some relieving work with a little boy called Jake. Viv continues to spend most of her available Fridays helping out at the Gifted Kids Programme, which is always great fun. She is still involved in Kid's Stuff at church, though now with a larger team which makes the job easier and more rewarding. She is also still a leader at Friday night youth. Although no longer on the Committee, Viv remains an active member of Upper Hutt Toastmasters. She has also been re-elected to the Board of Trustees of Avalon Intermediate School. She is looking forward to the challenge of being a staff member of Korauui School, the school which will result from the merger of Stokes Valley School and Kamahi School at the end of this year.

### **Overseas trips**

In March, Ian travelled to Sydney for two days for a banking conference and to catch up with a couple of old friends. An early start one day and a late night return the next were the only impact on those left behind, but Ian had a chance to take in Sydney Harbour for the first time since 1991.

In September, Viv and Matthew set off on a round-the-world trip, including a long day in Paris giving Matthew the chance to climb the Eiffel Tower and see the Arc de Triomphe, Notre Dame, the Avenue des Champs-Elysees...

The main purpose of the trip was to spend time with family, especially Viv's dad Don who was diagnosed with cancer earlier in the year. It was very good to spend some time with the family, and also to catch up with some friends. A few days in Walt Disney World in Florida on the way back made for an altogether very enjoyable trip.

David has also travelled to England to see his grandparents and will be spending Christmas and the New Year in England. Later, when David has returned to New Zealand, the whole family will be travelling to Vanuatu for a week's holiday and to see how the country has changed.



### **Conclusion**

You know what we will write here, and it is as true as ever: we hope that everybody has a safe and enjoyable Christmas, and we send our best wishes to you all for the New Year. We're sorry that we are running a bit late this year...

Lots of love from us all

Ian: +64 27 245 6089 ; [ian.halliday@gmail.com](mailto:ian.halliday@gmail.com) ; <http://ringbark.livejournal.com>

Viv +64 27 220 8856 ; [viv.halliday@gmail.com](mailto:viv.halliday@gmail.com) ; <http://vivh.livejournal.com>

P O Box 5472, Lambton Quay, Wellington, New Zealand