

Port Vila
Vanuatu
South-west Pacific
December 1992

Here's our Christmas letter to tell you what we've been up to. Again, we are sorry that it is not a personal letter, and that these letters don't seem to appearing much more than annually.

We are still enjoying life here, but Ian's contract ends at the end of May. We hope that we might be able to stay for another six months or a year, but this depends on many political and other factors.

David is now three-and-a-half. He thoroughly enjoys going to kindergarten, which he attends for two hours every afternoon. He likes to sing songs and produce numerous works of art. He also enjoys Sunday School. At the moment, since the weather has become hot, Viv and the children have been going to the pool most afternoons. David loves swimming and jumping in the water with his friends, though he still needs a ring or a float. David is now a very chatty little boy who likes to talk on the telephone. He still loves puzzles and reading books. For his birthday in July we gave him a bicycle, which he rides, among other times, when he goes to the slides and swings in town.



Matthew, on the other hand, is now one-and-a-half, and is a very mischievous, fun-loving little boy. He loves to ride his car, climb, and runs with a distinctive duck-like gait. Matthew likes nothing better than sitting and talking. His favourite subjects include aeroplanes (it runs in the family), cats, dogs, food and bubbles. He also likes to watch videotapes, and his favourites are Spot and Winnie-the-Pooh. He does a good line in building towers of blocks and sorting shapes, and is also thrilled by making imaginary tea-parties.

We are still attending the Family Worship Centre on Sundays, where Viv is still involved in the music and serves on the church Committee. She is also teaching Sunday School to the older children which leaves Ian the onerous task of looking after Matthew during the sermon. Wesley West, who was our pastor for the last year, and Ruby his wife have just left us to go to Korea. Frank and Karla Beardsley will be re-joining us in January, This means that it is a particularly busy time for the rest of the church members as we take on extra responsibilities in the absence of a pastor,

Ian continues to run with the Hash House Harriers on Monday nights, and this year is responsible for introducing new members to the rest of the group. Viv is active in Playgroup, which both David and Matthew attend on Thursdays, and Mama Blong Vanuatu, a mother's support group involved in charitable work for the community.

In the last year, Viv's parents have visited us again for just under two weeks. This year we were able to show them much more of what there is around here, They were delighted to see the children, who were thrilled to have them around. David Woodward, our best man, also came to see us. We took him to Tanna, an island to the south of Port Vila, where our experiences included looking into the crater of an active volcano, seeing wild horses on the plains and travelling in a truck with a giant turtle for company. David and Viv also went on a trip to see coral and on a day-trip on the sailing-ship Coongoola.

About a year ago, we both took to playing bridge with the local bridge club, Viv had played a bit at university, but it was a completely new experience for Ian. We still go along and we are improving,

It seems a long time ago now, but still worthy of comment, that Port Vila was badly affected by two tropical cyclones earlier this year. Cyclone Betsy on January 9th and Cyclone Fran on March 9th were the most ferocious for five years. Altogether seven cyclones hit Vanuatu this season, many more than usual. These two caused more damage than might have been expected, because the structural damage caused by Betsy was often completed by Fran. Fran destroyed one hundred and sixty houses in the Port Vila area, but our house suffered only slight structural damage, although it did get flooded by the rain. Afterwards, the sun shines brightly again, everything dries up, the fallen trees are removed and everybody goes back to work. We also had an earthquake in October ... these are unstable times.

Again, we are sorry to write so rarely, but there are so many of you. Even so, we would be very interested to hear your news. We will let you know whenever we will be in your part of the world again. We wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year, and hope to be in touch before next Christmas.