

HAPPY CHRISTMAS

Christmas 1996

PEACE ON EARTH: GOODWILL TO ALL MEN

Three Years

It's now three years since Ian, Viv, David and Matthew left Vanuatu for New Zealand. We're still in Hastings on the East Coast of the North Island, and we still don't seem any better at writing to people. So we continue with the annual newsletter and hope that you enjoy reading our news. This has been a busy year when we have continued to be involved in St. James Church and in various school, pre-school and not school at all organisations. Here are a few highlights of our year.

New Computer

This year, we bought a new computer (as you might be able to see). So, we now have up-to-date technology and at last are on-line. For those of you who care about such things, it's a Pentium 100 with 16MB of RAM and 850MB of disk and a 4x CD ROM drive. For the rest of you, it's a new computer. This machine has proved to be a monster which gobbles up huge amounts of time, especially for Ian, Viv and Matthew.

A Year ago

We started 1996 in England. This was our first return to England since coming to New Zealand. It was a great shock to move from the New Zealand summer to snow on the ground. None of the boys had ever experienced snow, and playing snowballs on Stafford station as we were changing trains was an experience that we will never forget! On Merseyside there was snow overnight on Christmas Eve, so that we experienced a real white Christmas. It was lovely to be back and able to see so many of our family and friends, but as ever, time seemed so short and we had to leave again without having time to track down so many of you.

Vanuatu

In July, we went back to Port Vila for a week. It was wonderful to go back. It was especially nice to see our old housegirl Anna and gardener Moses, but it was also lovely to catch up with many old friends from Church, Hash and elsewhere. It was wonderful to revisit many of our old haunts, though it would have been nicer to stay longer than a week. It was particularly nice for the boys to go back and see places and people that were so important to them when they were younger. It was a real change from Hastings and a lovely, relaxing time, though the journey to get there proved a little more eventful than we had hoped or imagined. Hastings to Port Vila doesn't normally take seventeen hours and via Melbourne is not the most direct route!

David, Matthew and Christopher

David is continuing to do well at Mahora School, where Ian is still on the PTA. He was joined this year by Matthew, who is doing very well too. Both boys put in a good performance at the School's Fun Run early

this term. Christopher is now a chatty, energetic and strong-willed two-year-old. They have written a little more about themselves in the paragraphs included, though Christopher needed the help of a scribe.

The stupid cat

This year has seen the stupidest cat ever to live join us. Some cats are born leaders, but Anagram is a born follower. She follows us to school, to the fish-and-chip shop, to kindergarten or anywhere but she can never find her way back. So at dead of night I wander round the district, listening for the pitiful mewing. December 3: I came home from a meeting to the news that poor Anagram had been run over and killed outside our home in Hastings. In this, she joins Marmalade, who was killed in October 1995. We remember our cats fondly.

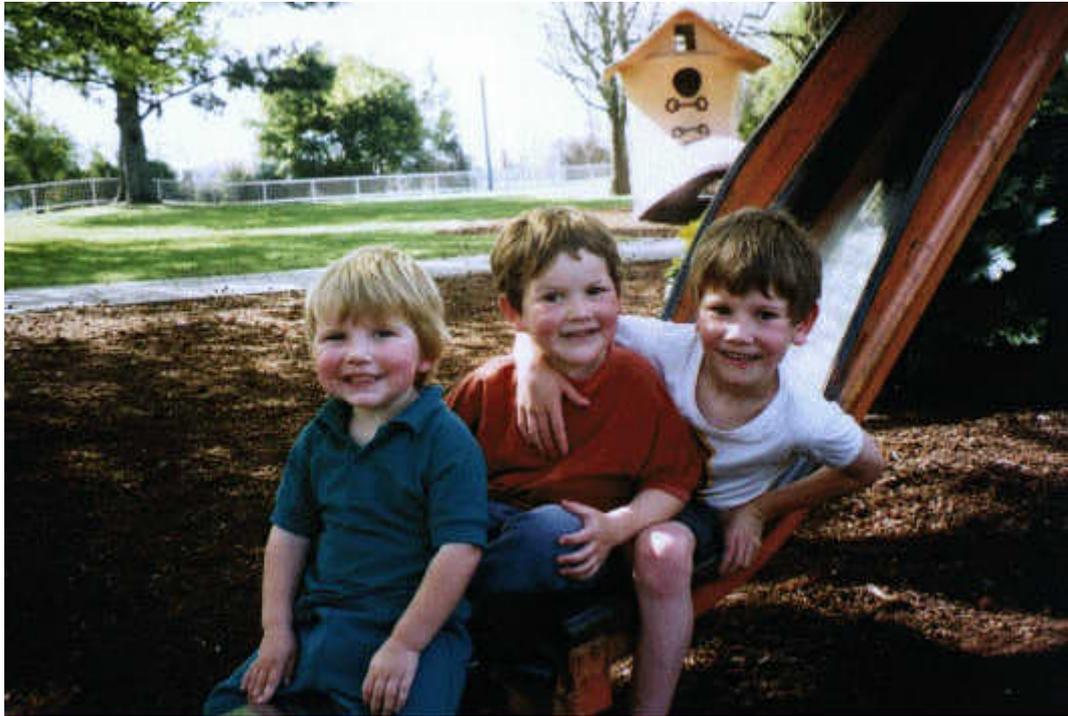
Books and speeches

This year, Viv has started selling books for The Book Circle, a division of Reed Publishing. She sells books at parties in peoples' homes, and also at kindergartens, child care centres and schools. This is interesting and fun and gives Viv the opportunity to buy lots of books. Ian is not selling books, but he has started to go along to a group of Toastmasters International. Toastmasters meets every two weeks for members to practise public speaking.

Looking forward

Just after Christmas, the five Hallidays will be spending a week in Melbourne. For those of you in the Northern Hemisphere hazy about such things, it is a four hour flight from Auckland. We are also looking forward to Viv's parents coming out to New Zealand again at the end of February. They will have the opportunity to celebrate two family birthdays, Viv's and Christopher's, before returning home.

lots of love for 1997
Ian, Viv, David, Matthew and Christopher



David

Hallo, I'm seven now. My best friends are Emma and Kane. I like reading. I like riding my bike.
I like making things with wood.

Matthew

I am five now and I have started school. I like to play with Reece and Sean. I like to swim and
play on the computer.

Christopher

Christopher would like to tell you all that we have a cat called Anagram. Christopher likes to be
called 'Ratty' because he likes "Wind in the Willows". Christopher's best friend is Emily (age 3)
and he goes to Playcentre twice a week. He likes to play with Duplo.