

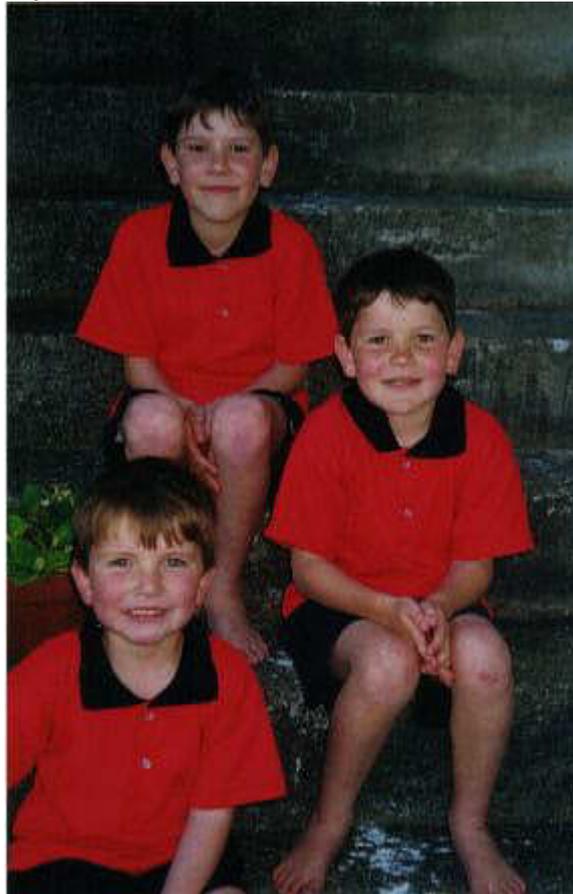
Happy Christmas

Christmas 1999

NEW ADDRESS - NEW EVERYTHING

Christmas is coming...

We hope that this will reach most of our friends in time for you to know our new address in time for the Christmas mail, but fear that it may not...



Stokes Valley

Just north of Wellington, the capital of New Zealand is the Hutt Valley, with two notable places, Upper Hutt and Lower Hutt. Between the two is Stokes Valley, where Ian, Viv, David, Matthew and Christopher have bought their new home.

National Bank of NZ

In the middle of 1998, Countrywide Bank, where Ian was working at the time, was taken over by the National Bank of New Zealand. This meant that there was again uncertainty over Ian's future, so plans to move to Auckland were suspended. Ian continued commuting from Hastings, but in November stopped travelling north to Auckland and starting travelling south to Wellington, where he was seconded to National Bank. This position was made permanent in April and so plans for the whole family to move to Wellington at the end of term were made.

The computer systems of the two banks were merged in September at the end of a project Ian was very proud to be involved with.

Three floors

We have bought an unusual unit here, spread over three levels. There is room for each of the boys to have their own room, but mummy and daddy still have to share, as one of our boys explained. We're on quite a steep slope, but it isn't at all a bad place to be. We have all day sun and a beautiful panoramic view over the whole area.

Good-bye, Hastings

We will certainly miss Hastings and Hawkes Bay, our first home in New Zealand. Among other things, we are sad to say good-bye to St. James Church, to the kindergarten and Playcentre, to the boys' first school at Mahora and to the places we had our fun. We look forward to life in and close to the Capital, and especially to continuing life as a family. Ian missed many changes in the eighteen months he has been away during the week.

Ian's News

St. John's Church in nearby Trentham has become our regular place of worship. Ian is continuing in Toastmasters, having taken on the role of Area Governor, overseeing the running of four Toastmasters clubs in central Wellington...all of them breakfast clubs. Last year, Ian couldn't believe that he had joined a breakfast club - by now, nobody can believe that he's managing four of them. He is working hard to make a success of this, though it does mean a large number of very early mornings.

Viv's News

After a very busy start to the year holding the position of president at both Camberley Kindergarten and Cornwall Park Playcentre, as well as being on the Kindergarten Board of Governance, things were a bit quieter once we moved to the Valley. I have been doing some work as a relieving teacher aide at the boys school, which I have really enjoyed and plan to continue. I have also been helping with reading at the school on a voluntary basis. I have started to help lead Kidz Stuff the children's ministry at St. Johns. I have also joined Upper Hutt Toastmasters Club which is a friendly and busy Toastmasters Club.

Sport

Sport plays a large part in New Zealand life, as you will no doubt be aware! This year, David has started playing softball, while Matthew has taken up cricket and touch rugby. Christopher plays T-Ball. Viv and Ian don't play, they just drive the car to and from sports fixtures and practices.

David's News

I have turned ten this year. I have had a very interesting year. At the end of third term, we took a trip to Hastings.

I was there for 2 days with Matthew. While I was there, Matthew and I read our poems, and received a certificate each.

I've been to Te Papa The Museum Of International Arts. I went on Future Rush. That's a ride that seems like you're in the future. Good-bye, and Merry Christmas!

Matthew's News

I turned 8 this year. It is very nice here in Stokes Valley. Our house is a 3 storey house. You come in through the top door. There are lots of slopes and views. We have also got a reserve and a big backyard which is ideal for our cats and us to play in. Te Papa is a cool museum in central Wellington, I went to see a dinosaur exhibition called Terrorsaurus it's got lots of awesome dinosaur models. If you ever get the chance you should go and see it. We went to Owlcatraz and saw lots of owls and other interesting animals. I went to

the Zoo I saw every animal there from meerkats to giraffes.

Christopher's News

Now I am 5. I go to school. My best friend is John Bailey. I went to a museum, I saw dinosaur models there. We went to see owls at Owlcatraz we did not only see owls. I like to count to 80.

All our love and best wishes for Christmas and the New Year

Ian, Viv, David, Matthew and Christopher