

Do not be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people

The Halliday News

Christmas 2005

Coming Home

As most of you will know our year started very sadly with the death of Ian's mother at the end of January and of Viv's father two weeks later. Both Ian and Viv made trips across the world and back at that time. Shortly afterwards we made the decision to return to the U.K. on a permanent basis and the remainder of this year has been taken up making that decision a reality.

Leaving Stokes Valley

There were many farewells and a lot of work to do before we were ready to leave Stokes Valley, our home for almost six years. We filled three skips with rubbish as we pared our belongings down to only the most essential in preparation for our move. In May the sea freight was packed and sent on its way across the world, leaving us with just enough in the way of possessions to carry on functioning effectively. There were farewells to our friends at Toastmasters, youth group, work, Kidz Stuff and church, and a lot of last coffees with good friends, and one big event on our last Saturday in New



Zealand when everyone who wanted to had a chance to say goodbye. We miss all our great friends in New Zealand but hope that many of them will take the opportunity to meet up with us in the U.K. sometime. We finally left Aotearoa, on 30th June, Ian's birthday, giving Ian the chance to celebrate his birthday twice, once in New Zealand and once in the United States.

The Trip Home

We travelled first to Auckland where we went up the Sky Tower and enjoyed a cruise round the harbour. That night we flew to Los Angeles, where we visited Universal Studios and spent a couple of days up at Disneyland, where we celebrated David's 16th birthday. We all had a wonderful time there, highlights included California Screamin', Soaring Over California, Indiana Jones and best of all being part of a pre-test for



the new Space Mountain. After our time in L.A., David flew back to New Zealand where he will be staying with our friends Beverley and Dallas until he has finished the exams for his NCEA Level 1, roughly equivalent to Britain's GCSE. After this, he will fly to join us in the U.K. in time for Christmas. Meanwhile the rest of our family flew overnight to New York, arriving just in time to celebrate American Independence Day. That day we saw

the Statue of Liberty and took a trip on the Staten Island Ferry. We were all very tired that day so we watched the fireworks over the Hudson River on television rather than in real life, though we could hear them live from our hotel room. The following day we went up the Empire State Building, where there were very long queues, but the magnificent views were probably worth the wait. Our next flight took us to Munich, where we spent a very laid back day, sightseeing at a gentle pace, in a cart pulled by a bicycle! We ate ice cream in the Marienplatz as we watched the old clock chime and all was very pleasant. The following morning we flew to London where we arrived just as the bombs were exploding on the Tube and on a bus. As you can imagine all was very chaotic and even managing to reach our hotel safely was something of an achievement. We did manage to catch up with a friend of Ian's that evening but sightseeing was definitely off the agenda. So the next morning, amidst heavy security we caught a train to Liverpool, where we were met by Andrew. He and Angela helped us get our large amount of luggage to Bromborough and our new home.

Settling in

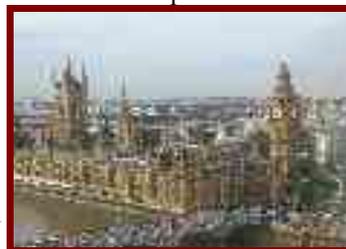
Once we arrived we started the process of turning Marjorie's house into our home. This involved a lot of tidying, sorting and throwing out, which was hard work, and hard emotionally too. We've filled two skips with rubbish by now but we still haven't found room for all our sea freight much of which is still occupying our garage. Many other things needed to be sorted out too, opening or changing bank accounts, buying mobile phones and getting the boys into schools were all high priorities. These have all been accomplished with Matthew now attending Wirral Grammar School For Boys (the school next door to Viv's old school) and Christopher at Birkenhead School (Ian's old school). Both boys seem to be settling in well despite the inevitable differences in culture and many comments on their strange accents and turns of phrase! Viv has joined the parents association at Wirral Grammar though Ian avoided the temptation to do the same. Ian is actively seeking employment at the moment, but hopefully will have been successful by the time you read this letter. There is still a lot of work to do in the house here, but we are just trying to do a little at a time so that we're not overwhelmed by the magnitude of it all. We are back attending St Andrews Church in Bebington, where Ian and Viv both worshipped as teenagers. It is also the place where we were both baptised, confirmed and married, and the place where Viv's mum worships too. It is strange to be back there after all this time, but we've already been involved in Merseyfest, and have joined a housegroup. Viv has been playing her clarinet in the music group there and we all look forward to getting more involved as time goes by.



Other news

Other things which have happened this year include David playing Shylock in Taita College's production of the Merchant Of Venice. The rest of the family were not there to see his performance, but we have heard very good reports of his performance and hope to get a video of the play. David is still an enthusiastic member of Trentham Archery Club and purchased his own bow earlier in the year. Matthew was a member of Taita College debating team, which did very well this year winning all its debates this year and Matthew being awarded best speaker twice.

We took another trip to London in August when we did all the touristy things we had been planning to do on our trip home. We enjoyed Madame Tussaud's, The London Dungeon and went to see the Mousetrap at St Martin's Theatre which was thoroughly enjoyed by all, even though Viv and Ian had seen it before. The next day we went on the London Eye, a more interesting experience than you might think, we also visited a Dali exhibition which was mainly enjoyed by Viv. We then visited Birmingham, but our visit was much curtailed by work being done on the railways in the area, which meant we had much less time there than we had hoped, though we did manage a ride on a canal boat and a trip to the aquarium there. We hope to get back down that way again before too long and to catch up with a few people.



Happy Christmas

So it just remains to wish all our friends many blessings for Christmas and the new year, hoping that we will be in touch or able to see many of you in the year ahead.

Love from

Ian, Viv, David, Matthew and Christopher