

Christmas 2006

Dear friends

The end of the year is racing towards us - again! We look forward to your news and hope our edited highlights will be of a little interest to some of you!

In February, Hannah & Laura went with Kay to Germany to visit friends. This was in the interests of learning the language - Laura opted to take German, Music, Drama and History in addition to the compulsory subjects at GCSE.



At the end of June, Kay's dad, Eric, was rushed to hospital with acute pancreatitis.

This was a worrying time, however, he has made an excellent recovery and we are thankful that all four grandparents are in remarkably good health. Alastair's parents are currently on a 2 month tour of NZ and India! After Hannah finished her exams (for which she obtained excellent results), and only days before flying to NZ, Kay took her class from school on a 5 day residential to Center Parcs. Nine youngsters with complex medical and physical needs take some looking after and the 10 staff were exhausted when they arrived home, but a fantastic time was had by all!

On July 16th we headed off on our much-anticipated trip to New Zealand.



We had a brilliant time - 5 weeks in all. The antipodean winter threw its worst at us - temperatures around 6-8 degrees in Auckland and -3 degrees in the South Island! Nevertheless, we saw all our favourite places in glorious sunshine at least once, so we were more than happy. We were particularly thrilled to be able to see Judith & Harry Rishworth (best man & bridesmaid at Kay's parent's wedding in 1957) - visiting Harry in the nursing home on many occasions and enjoying meals and trips out with Judith. Kay and the girls had skiing lessons on Coronet Peak in the South Island and we stayed at Mount Cook in the snow with spectacular views on every side. Auntie Janet flew up from Wellington to stay with us and we saw the Bruce-Jones, our neighbours from Copthorne who had emigrated to Christchurch. We exchanged houses with Rev. Lyn Otto in Auckland, which kept costs to the minimum.

We were thrilled to fly to Sydney to visit Aussie friends Dominique & David who had married in 2004. We had a wonderful 5 days and made full use of the ferries to get around. Ruth & Pete Ellem (Westhill 1980-83) met up with us one day & it was great to catch up with them and discover the intricacies of the Anglican church in Sydney!





In September, Marie (now 23!) came to stay for a long weekend. Some of you will remember that we came close to adopting / fostering Marie in 1990 - Kay had taught her for 2 years during our time in Doncaster. We have maintained close links with her over the years and had a very positive weekend, which Marie thoroughly enjoyed - she can't wait to come again!

In October we went to Cornwall and despite mostly very wet weather, Hannah and Laura managed a great day surfing on the beach at Newquay. After



a 2-hour lesson they were both hooked! We almost lost Tilly that day as she took off after them into the sea and almost swam to Ireland!! It took much frantic yelling to persuade her to come to shore!

Hannah: Hi everyone, Merry Christmas. Well, this has once again been a busy year! In February I went on a school trip to Berlin with my History class studying the World Wars, which was a lot of fun but also very thought-provoking. I also enjoyed my second trip to Germany, when we went to Freiburg.



Probably the biggest task of my year was sitting my GCSE exams, which was hard work, but not too bad in the end. On a lighter note, this was soon followed by my school Prom, which was fun, and of course our trip to New Zealand. It was amazing, considering that we hadn't been for 6 years, how well we just slotted back into Kiwi life. Highlights for me included my 16th birthday out there, learning to ski, taking part in the Mid-Winter Swim, and meeting up with friends. Since then, it's been back to school, and I'm now enjoying being part of the Sixth Form, and am studying AS English Literature, History and Theatre Studies, and A2 Philosophy and Ethics. I also really enjoyed learning to surf at October half-term - a dream come true for me! - and passed my grade 5 Music Theory exam, in order that

I can do my grade 6 saxophone exam at Easter. I have also just finished being in my school play, Romeo and Juliet, where I played Lady Montague, after having been in my local theatre's production of the Pied Piper in June, and have just been cast in my theatre's upcoming production of The Crucible. Now I anticipate coming mock exams, as I realise how much quicker the pace of A levels is compared to GCSE!

Alastair has enjoyed his involvement with General Synod this year, and has consequently come off some local diocesan committees to spend more time in the parish. He continues to work hard locally in his role as assistant Rural Dean. Although we continue to see growth in the number of families attending church, several key people have moved away recently which has had a significant impact on finances and leadership - particularly amongst the young people's groups. We also regularly struggle for musicians, especially pianists - and Kay is often the only one singing in the music group! The parish centre project has taken a great deal of time, but the PCC are now questioning just how much they want to do - all in all quite a few challenges this year! Yet God is faithful and as we begin our 12th year in Copthorne, we are particularly encouraged by the growth in faith and commitment of the teenagers.



Laura: Hello everyone, happy Christmas!!! I can't believe it is Christmas again already! New Zealand was the best thing about this year for me; many enjoyable things like skiing, horse riding and seeing friends made me want to stay forever! Australia was also very nice! I would like to go back to both New Zealand and Australia as soon after I finish school as possible. I have no idea about subjects to do for A-levels, even though it is a bit early, but I know I want to go back to New Zealand...priorities! School is going well in most subjects; I am just getting used to GCSE life now, and am enjoying my subjects. I am looking forward to the Christmas holidays; I go on lots of dog walks and meet up with my friends and cook! I am also going to do my Duke of Edinburgh award this year and am looking forward to it a lot! I am sure you will hear all about it next year!

With much love, and every blessing from us all - Kay, Alastair, Hannah, Laura & Tilly the dog