

FEBRUARY 1984.

Dear

We have delayed sending our annual newsletter because we have been in a state of flux not knowing whether we would be staying in our present parish or moving to pastures new. This has now been resolved so we are once again in print and can bring you up to date with all our news.

1983 has been a good year for us.....

Michael continues to keep in good health and has had no further problems with his heart - in fact, he would have been "signed off" by the hospital last August if it wasn't for a particular drug he is taking which necessitates a six-monthly check-up. We thank the Lord for his healing.

Joy continues to be the driving force behind the family, keeping us on the "straight and narrow". She has been a great help to Michael in his ministry.

Kathryn obtained her BA(Hons) degree majoring in music. Joy and Michael travelled to Bristol for the graduation ceremony and although it was a stifflingly hot day enjoyed witnessing their elder daughter receive her diploma. A few weeks prior to this event Fiona and her dad had been to Bristol to attend an organ recital by Kathryn as part of the examination for her degree, a pretty nerve-wracking evening for all three as so much rested on this being a success!

Fiona has been doing voluntary work which has kept her busy. She had sent an application to various colleges for social work training, but there has been a complete change in future plans for, after about 5 years in the wilderness, Fiona has once again found God. She has truly let Jesus into her life and has as a result become a more mature open person giving out much love. As she says, she is still the same Fiona, but a far better one. She doesn't as yet know what the Lord has in store for her, but thinks that maybe Bible College is the next step, which will be in either September, 1984 or 85.

Andrew is now in his third year in senior school. He is doing very well and is in one of the top groups in his year. He is C.B.(Citizen Band Radio) "mad", and has a 40-channel set paid for by himself, which has a good range. He starts his "0" level course in September.

Arthur (Joy's brother) has sold the shop as he was finding it increasingly difficult to arise at 4.30 every morning (including Sundays), especially in winter, and two flights of stairs up to the flat have been proving too much for Joy's Dad who is now 90. They will be moving to a ground-floor flat in another part of Wokingham on the 17th February. Their new address:-

18, Burford Court, Rances Lane, Wokingham, Berks. RG11 2LJ.

With the shop gone Michael will be relieved of the various jobs which he has been doing for them over the years, i.e. the VAT returns, the books, and the stock-buying (with which Joy was also involved). We won't be sorry to be free of all this!

The big event of the year was "the wedding!" Kathryn married Nicholas Gibbs a Customs Officer living in Bristol. They had a Nuptial Mass with Michael performing the marriage ceremony, Nick's Dad playing the organ, Andrew (then 13) giving the bride away, and Fiona as chief Bridesmaid. The reception was held in the village hall where Mike takes services for our Community Church and some ladies from the parish did the catering for a "sit-down" meal. It was a day we shall always remember - even the weather was perfect!

Kathryn and Nick have recently moved into their own home, a three-bedroomed terrace house, and their new address is:-

85, Oxford Street, Totterdown, Bristol. BS3 4RL.

Now for the.....

Now for the reason for the delay in sending this newsletter....

Michael has accepted the post of Priest-in-charge of All Saints' Mudeford (pronounced "Mudderford") in the parish of Christchurch, Dorset. His duties will involve him taking services in the beautiful Priory itself, which is 311 feet in length, being the longest parish church in this country. The High Altar of the Quire was consecrated in 1195, but sadly much of the building was destroyed by the fall of the Norman tower in the 13th century. However, some parts of the original still remain. There is a memorial to Percy Bysshe Shelley and his wife. Christchurch is situated at the estuaries of the Rivers Avon and Stour with Mudeford being on the coast just  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles away. The church building in Mike's charge is only 120 years old; the stained-glass windows are really beautiful and it's a "cosy" little church. We're looking forward to becoming part of the family there. Mudeford itself is still partly a fishing village and Michael will have the dubious pleasure of being rowed out on Rogation Sunday in May to "bless the waters" for a good harvest of fish - this will certainly "rock the boat"!!!!

We are quite excited about new challenges ahead, but moving away from his friends and school where he is so happy won't be easy for Andrew. We have found a "co-ed" two miles from Mudeford with a good academic record and are sure that he will soon make friends and settle down - he's much more "out-going" than of old, partly due, we think to conversing over the "C.B."

We're also wondering how our two cats (actually Kanga, the ginger Tom, is Fiona's) will react to their new surroundings!

In our present parish we have had a good year. The Community Church of St. Nicholas which Michael looks after has been going from strength to strength. The weekly communicants have risen and the attendance at the quarterly Youth service is about 150. The Sunday School has a membership of about 60. The Christmas communicants for the whole parish rose by 30% over the previous few years. The pendulum seems to be swinging back again.

When we leave at the end of March we realise that we will miss Wokingham as we have lived here since July 1973 but, having met some of our new parishioners we know we will be made very welcome in Mudeford and will make many new friends in the years to come. Some of our old friends will be able to visit us as Dorset is only a  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -hour/<sup>journey</sup> by car from Wokingham.

We do like receiving news of you and treasure all friendships that have been made over the years which can never be broken by time or distance.

God bless you,