



December 1992

Dear

To think it's almost a year since we were looking forward to the opening of our new church extension! The Friday before it was "panic stations" because the Bishop of Winchester fell ill and was confined to bed for a few days. This resulted in frantic 'phone calls to find another Bishop to do the honours. (No easy task as Bishops are very busy people). Finally, the last-retired Bishop of Southampton agreed to stand in. Over 250 people including the Mayor, Mayoress and Councillors as well as other notable personages attended, and the evening was most moving and exciting. After the dedication service everyone retired to the new hall for refreshments and to duly admire all the facilities. Having the extra space has proved a tremendous boon, especially for Sunday School and Mothers & Toddlers, and we have had all our events there instead of having to use the village hall. We were given a skittle alley and bowls by a local company and have enjoyed a number of "fun" evenings as well as the usual fundraising events. Our lovely little church is greatly enhanced by the additions - everyone agrees over this (even those who had their doubts!)

As usual, New Year for the Gibbs was spent as a family at Mudeford, Kath and the boys returned for half-term in February. That month Jeremy made the move up from Beavers to Cubs; he is a member of *Green Six* and has found the activities and badgework great fun. A highlight of the year was the visit to the Scout Hut by 4 birds of prey. He will shortly be off on his first camp. He has also been in the colour party on Parade Sundays and represented his pack in a local five-a-side football competition.

8 years after producing his first regular newsletter and 3 months after the first *All Saints' Church News*, Andy furthered his interest in printing by starting his own part-time typesetting business in February. He is using Desk-Top Publishing to produce newsletters, posters, raffle tickets etc for local organisations as well as for the church. The technology he is using is a far cry from those early days when he used scissors and glue and formatted all his text by hand! There has been an excellent response from his clients and Andy hopes to expand and take on more work next year. He is still working for *Exchange and Mart* magazine at Poole during the day.

In March, Nick gave up smoking...for 4 days! Perhaps in '93 it will be 5?

Back in Mudeford in April for a week, Nick actually spent 2 days gardening (ably hindered by Jem and Tim!)

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Later in June, Melanie, Andy's girlfriend, celebrated her 21st birthday with an open-air party, a thoroughly enjoyable evening with Colin winning the hotly-contested Bagatelle competition and Michael doing well in the darts!

Michael, Joy, Fiona and Colin spent the last week in July in Wales which has a reputation for being wet most of the year. However, God blessed them with sunshine nearly all the time they were there and their outings included a trip on a steam railway from Aberystwyth up the Rhydol Valley to Devil's Bridge (a long way up - fairly nerve-racking!) with breath-taking views, and taking a ferry across from Tenby to Caldey Island, the home of an order of Cistercian monks, where they attended mass. They also visited Cenarth Falls where they walked along a footpath beside the river for some distance (Michael striding it out, while the more supposedly healthy specimens were struggling to keep up!) You can see the salmon leap out of the water there. They also met up with Kath and the boys for a picnic in The Brecon Beacons on a very hot day and Jem got completely soaked in a mountain stream! They also had an "historical, educational" visit to Cilgerran Castle about 2 miles from Lechredd (their holiday base) and to quote Fiona: *"I used to hate castles & museums when young, now I love them. I must be growing up!"*

Later in July it was Kath's mmmmpth birthday (she doesn't look a day over 40!) Nick arranged for a birthday cake in the shape of a grand piano to be made by a friend as a surprise. It looked like a piece of china, but tasted much nicer!

As part of her birthday gift Melanie's parents paid for Andy and herself to spend a weekend in Paris. This had to be postponed for 2 weeks because of the French truckers' dispute. Whilst there they visited all the attractions including the Eiffel Tower (right to the top), Notre Dame and a boat trip on the Seine. The next month, as their annual holiday, they spent a week travelling around South Wales, staying in "bed-and-breakfasts". Despite bad weather, they visited many places including some of those mentioned above. Towards the end of their holiday they drove back into England and spent a day at Alton Towers (the Disney World of Britain). After a shopping spree in Birmingham they accidentally came across the Cadbury's factory in Bourneville and spent 4 hours wandering around *Cadbury's World* exhibition. Jeremy and Tim were given the free samples of chocolate which they acquired when they spent that night in Bristol on their way home.

In August Kath and the boys spent a couple of days at Nick's sister's near Croydon (they were able to pay a visit to Arthur on the way). Then the whole family spent a fortnight in Mudeford where the weather was awful - apart from the evening of Mike's braai (barbecue) which we held to celebrate his 60th birthday, at the hotel opposite our church. The manager spent some years in South Africa and is married to a Pretoria girl. They have a little boy, Michael, who celebrated his birthday on the same day as our Michael! As the family's gift we had a number of our old cine films put onto video and spent an hilarious hour watching the antics of our children when young. The films also conjured up nostalgic memories of friends and relations.

During the Gibbs' summer stay, Andy and Mel took the boys to a Lego exhibition and also a Firework display on Christchurch Quay and Nick managed to win first prize at a skittles evening in the new church hall.

Kath has been playing the organ at various venues this year. She accompanied 2 performances of *Olivet to Canterbury*, played Bristol Cathedral organ for a Confirmation service, and gave a recital on a 17th century organ at *The New Room* (a Methodist chapel) in Bristol.

In September Andy started a course leading to the Radio Amateur Examination which he took on December 7th (The results are expected in February); the boys started a new school year and Kath took the plunge and applied for a teacher-training course. She had an interview mid-November and recently heard that her application has been successful.

Melanie was a beautiful bridesmaid and Andy took the video at a friends wedding in October. The newly weds were, unfortunately, burgled 2 weeks later - a sign of the times perhaps.

1992 was not a good year on the motoring front: Nick's car failed it's MOT, Kath's car had its window smashed and after spending 2 weeks summer holiday in Mudeford she returned home to find that all her tyres had been deflated and the valves thrown away.

Ashton Gate, home of Bristol City football club, was the venue for a grand fireworks display which was enjoyed by all, and as the old year draws to a close, Jeremy has begun to serve as acolyte at church.

Joy has recently taken on another job, that of running a Christian bookstall at our Wednesday coffee mornings down at church. This is as "outreach" and not for profit, although we do get 10% on every book sold. Those of you who know Joy well will remember how much she loves books and will know that this is right up her street!

The Vicar of Christchurch is retired as at 31st December 1992 (although he's already gone!) and Michael as senior curate will be busier than ever so we're hoping there won't be a long interregnum.

Fiona and Colin are prospering and are very thankful for the way God has looked after them this year. They are looking forward, with anticipation, to all that 1993 has in store. In all, we can look back on 1992 with some good memories.

*All of us, in Mudeford and Bristol, wish you all the blessings of a joyful Christmas and a peaceful 1993, with our love*

Michael, Joy, Andy, Mel, Fiona, Colin, Kath, Nick, Jeremy and Tim.