

We've all just returned from a village breakfast at the church hall: about 100 of us, mostly families with young children, ate the normal Norwegian breakfast — cheeses, various cold meats, scrambled eggs, salads, pickled peppered fish (that Peter Piper picked?) and different sorts of bread and crackers. It was great fun: we sang carols and had competitions afterwards. The church and church hall in Innfjorden are in a nearly new and well-used building, with meeting rooms for the scouts and various childrens' clubs.

Which brings us to our first bit of news: we've moved from Måndalen, where we've lived since 1991, some ten miles down the road to the even smaller village of Innfjorden. We had thought of moving a few hundred miles north, to Sandnessjøen, but for various reasons (mostly that we couldn't find a suitable house there) we changed our minds. Our new house is a large old four-storey place, which we've had to almost completely re-build, from new floors to new roof, new plumbing and electrics, new windows and doors, new stairs and heating system (very important here!) — in short, everything! It's been hard work this year, but worth it (we think).

So we have a new address:

6385 Innfjorden

Norway

Tel. +44 7122 3881

Fax +44 7122 3445.

(post sent to the old address is still being forwarded).

Matthew and Bethan are very pleased with the new house, because they have many friends close by. So many, in fact, that we can rarely make an accurate guess of the population of the house. Bethan still plays flute in the little orchestra in Måndalen, but like most soon-to-be-10-year-olds is hard to pin down, due to a busy social life. This does not stop her having an insatiable appetite for mystery books. Matthew (8 in April) is particularly proud of his medallion for having played in the Innfjorden football team this year, but he won't go full time with Manchester United because he wants to be an inventor. During a Christmas carol, the words "Hosianna in excelsis" cropped up, at which Matthew confided to us that Chelsea were not a very good football team. They've been competing against each other in the swimming pool as well: they've both got badges for swimming 200 metres. Thomas (4) also loves swimming, but otherwise it's tractors and Fireman Sam for him. Tracy (not saying age) is enjoying being English teacher at the 6th-form college in Åndalsnes, though it means heaps of exam papers to mark at this time of year! There's also suddenly a lot of translating: even a few books, including a Norwegian geology book which is making us reach for the technical dictionary. Perhaps the main event of the year was winning the National Endurance Riding Championships, held near Lillehammer. This led to being invited to planning meetings for the Norwegian national team, and to judging competitions, etc. Tim (old) is still doing all the things mentioned in previous letters, but is also music consultant for a Norwegian diocese and is in charge of postgraduate church music courses at the University of Tromsø. The latter means spending a week in Tromsø (1000 miles North of here) every month, plus a lot of work done by internet and phone, but it is sufficiently exciting that it's worth it. He's also to take over as Head of Organ at the Northern Conservatoire when the new organ there is finished. Next year there are also plenty of concerts, including a couple of tours in Denmark.