

It's a blustery Saturday at the end of November, and we're all sitting around a large log fire thinking Christmasy thoughts. The log fire reminds us of the many past years in Norway, and it is a huge satisfaction to look out of the window and see a vast pile of neatly-stacked log - enough for the next three winters - the result of chopping down several trees around the house this Autumn.

As usual, it's been quite a year when we look back on it. It's been lovely to see so many visitors, expected and unexpected, both from Norway and from Britain; great also to take part in all sorts of events together with family and friends. It's hard to believe we've been in Kelbrook for over two years, but we're certainly very happy and settled here.

The coming year promises to be exciting, too – the main event being Tracy's ordination in Bradford Cathedral on 27 June.

Tracy has been well travelled this year. Apart from several stays in Nottingham, she spent 6 exciting weeks as temporary Vicar at a church in Northern Norway (being "promoted" to Rural Dean half-way through). Apart from the experience of taking and preaching at many Norwegian services (including confirmations), her stay included manoeuvring a floating boat quay into place, a trip up the coast to visit old friends, a flight down to Måndalen to visit our old home (and the whole family met up there) and an overnight stay in Hell on the way home (that's the name of the town where the airport was).

Otherwise, all the coursework has gone extremely well, and things are developing well at St Mary's. Relaxation (all too rare) includes taking the dogs to agility classes, which they love.

Tim has also travelled: two concert trips to Germany (one to Bavaria and one to the former East Germany) were very exciting, and three concert trips to different parts of Norway were also great fun. Within Britain, concerts ranged from London (celebrating the 10th anniversary of an organ magazine) to Edinburgh Cathedral. The most eventful concert, though, was at home in Kelbrook where the organ broke down and had to be hand pumped. Last Christmas included playing for BBC1's Christmas service (which was very successful) and a Messiah, which is being repeated this December. Tim's also contributed to an American encyclopaedia and is just completing a new book.

One of the year's exciting events was installing a 2-manual pipe organ in the house. It's a good job the study is so big (and has such a high ceiling) or it would never have fitted! A team of people had to be assembled to carry all the bits into the house, which was then full of pipes and soundboards for a couple of weeks until the organ builders came and put the whole thing together in two days. It's been a "pipe dream" for years, but has at last come true!

Beth (14) has had a year of successes: top sets in most subjects at school, just short of a distinction in a flute exam, and some very good horse riding in the Yorkshire Dales. But more than that, she is (as always) such a lovely person to have around. She went to Edinburgh with Tim (as page turner for a concert) and on a school outward-bound trip (which ironically ended up coming canoeing a couple of hundred yards from our house – her only satisfaction being that her Head of Year fell in), as well as hiking and camping in connection with the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Matt (12) has also progressed both in Gymnastics (which he really enjoys and has a great

talent for), in trumpet playing and at school, where he seems to be top in just about everything – determined to make his parents feel inferior. One of the highlights of his year was being confirmed here at Kelbrook by our lively and unconventional (and very effective) Bishop. This meant a great deal to him (and to the rest of us), quite apart from the big family gathering and party that it involved. Together with Beth, Thomas Andrew and one or two of the other youngsters from church, he is running a Fair Trade stall which is proving very popular.

I refer to Thomas Andrew because he's still determined to drop the "Thomas" and be known as Andrew. Now 9 years old, he coasts through life in a laid-back way, with most things - be it work or friendships - coming fairly easily to him. In October, Andrew, Katie and Tim took a week's last-minute holiday in Menorca, staying at a lovely hotel and enjoying some late-season sunshine by the pool and on the beach. Andrew spent most of the time in the pool, generally having water fights with a friend called Abby.

Katie is 3 (4 in February) and is an active, sociable, all-singing-all-dancing model who loves playing outside. She's very gentle, though, and is still the image of Beth at the same age. She started at nursery school this Autumn, and enjoyed it from the very first day. The nursery has just moved into a newly-built extension at Kelbrook School so she is able to walk to and from school along with Andrew, which pleases everyone. Having been with Tracy to Norway for 6 weeks in the Spring, various trips during the summer and a week by the sea in the Autumn, she is now addicted to holidays and periodically enquires whether it's not time for another.