



It's been a quiet sort of year, with nothing much happening.

That's an opening sentence that we've been longing for years to be able to write. But somehow it gets less and less likely with every year that goes by, and this year it seems more untrue than ever. Rather like your lifestyle, in fact!

The high point of the year, of course, was Tracy's ordination in June. This was the culmination of a long process that amongst other things had included the move to Britain three years earlier, the degree course (which still has another year and a half to run) and many experiences. Looking back through it, it's good to see a plan unfolding, and to know that the plan is in safe hands. The ordination service and day itself was wonderful. What so easily could have become formality and ritual was nothing of the kind. All the family and the many friends from England, Wales and Norway who came for the event felt that it had been a truly special and enjoyable experience. Next event is the ordination as priest in June – this time (probably) here in Kelbrook. Tracy's year has been full. As well as full-time work in the parish she's continuing with her degree. The demands of the course have involved her being away from home for 21 weeks in all, spread out through the year: most of this time in Nottingham. With various holidays in addition, she feels she's hardly been at home this year!

Holidays included a week back "home" in Måndalen in February (all of us), four days at Spring Harvest in April, a much warmer break in Brindisi (southern Italy) in July (just Tracy and Matthew), and a fortnight in Wales in August (without Beth, who was in the USA at the time).

With all this going on, it's not surprising that Tim has not found much time to do anything other than being chief cook, bottle washer, secretary and telephone fielder. Foreign trips were certainly off the menu by and large, although he did manage to play concerts in Italy (a memorable few days in Rome together with Andrew) and Germany. Luckily there were quite a few concerts locally (big events in Ilkley, Grassington and an 850<sup>th</sup>-anniversary recital for Bolton Abbey) and he's kept busy with examining and running courses. He recorded a CD a few weeks ago together with a Yorkshire choir (which should be released by now) and has written a lengthy article and a book, both of which are being published in the USA (the book – see <http://www.rishton.info/new.html> – has a Foreword by former Archbishop George Carey). Next year looks like being a bit busier, though, with two solo CDs, a choir CD, concerts in all sorts of curious places (such as a 3-week concert tour in Brazil) and lots of other things.

It's been a significant year for Katie (5 in February), who started school, here in Kelbrook, this Autumn. Katie is very enthusiastic about everything, and school is no exception. She dived into the classroom on the first day, sent anxious parents packing with a dismissive wave of the hand, and set about re-organising the place to her specifications. We just hope they'll survive. Following the family tradition, she's now anxious to learn to ride a horse – and reminds us of this frequently.

Andrew celebrated reaching double figures (10 in November) with an extremely-active bouncy castle party in the village hall. He joined the cricket club in early summer, and has really found something to be enthusiastic about. He's practised hard all summer and is looking forward to getting back to his team in the spring. Having done a school project about the Romans he was anxious to visit Rome, and delighted when Tim was asked to give a concert for the International Organ Festival there (and took Andrew to page turn). We walked for miles around the city, visited every imaginable Roman site and ate pizzas long after bedtime, so it was a visit to remember.

Matt also visited Italy – the short break in Brindisi – and enjoyed wonderful days swimming outdoors, returning well browned and happy. He's doing fantastic things with sciences and, clutching his laptop, seems very professorial (mad professor, at least). Though not still doing regular gymnastics, he's very fit and likes (in the summer at least) to cycle to the swimming pool after school.

Beth (who will be 16 in March) has been (and continues to be) preoccupied with GCSEs this year, as well as her job at the local chip shop and two regular baby-sitting "contracts" for local families. As well as this, she's achieved a long-standing ambition and got a dog (Hallie) who she's busy training, both through participating in a dog agility team and via the Kennel Club scheme in Skipton. Nevertheless – never one to sit at home when there's the possibility of travelling – she found time both to visit Norway in the Spring (to attend the confirmation of her best friend, Marianne) and to slip over to the USA for three weeks this summer. Together with five other teenagers, she visited families, stayed at a remote Indian encampment at the Blue Ridge mountains, swam in lakes, helped re-build homes as part of a community project and went sightseeing and shopping in Washington – acting as a representative of Bradford Diocese. It was all quite an experience, and she's already planning the next trip (as well as looking forward to American friends visiting next summer).

When friends visit it's always a pleasure. Well, nearly always. It's good to spend time together, and showing people around the Dales and local villages means that we experience and discover things that otherwise we'd probably overlook or simply not bother to do. This year there's been plenty of it. Friends and colleagues from Norway visited for the Ordination (we've just received a copy of the parish magazine in which the Yorkshire Dales are described by two of our visitors as "completely flat" – which I suppose they are compared with Åndalsnes!) and Beth's friend Karina stayed for a longer period. Another Norwegian friend, Mali, stayed for a while in September, and a friend from Wales dropped by a couple of times. Next year will involve a more protracted stay –Marianne (the one whose confirmation Beth went to) will be coming to stay for a year and will be doing the first year of "A"-levels at Beth's school.

Who knows what next year has in store? We've given up trying to guess, but one thing seems sure – it won't be any quieter!

