

December 1984.

29 Larchwood,  
Keele University,  
Staffordshire.

A merry Christmas to you! Here once again is our yearly report; our first was produced for only one year when we had so much to tell that it was impossible to scribble it on a card. However so many nice things continue to happen that now we seem do it each year.

Our oldest son, Paul with wife Rosalind, has changed jobs moving to be an analyst programmer with Thomas Cook. They are now part of the 'Peterborough Effect' and live at Bourne in Lincolnshire not too far from Grandma and Grandad. Rosalind, who had difficulties in finding a suitable job in Warwickshire, has already found two and is working at schools in Peterborough and Bourne.

Stephen, our second son, celebrated the snow just before last Christmas by breaking his leg playing snowballs. This didn't prevent a trip within two days, on crutches, to Germany to keep up anglo-german relations. The plaster suffered however and needed a thousand mile service on his return before he could play football, still on crutches(!), on Christmas day. He is a management trainee with Rio-Tinto Zinc and spent the first six months near London with one of their small companies. Now he is at Milton Keynes, very close to his other Grandmother, and enjoying his job as a quality control metallurgist and his life in his bachelor pad.

Michael graduated at Cambridge crowning his rugby, water polo and wine tasting with a creditable upper second in the Chemical Engineering tripos. He is now staying on for a fourth year to take the Part II so the sport continues with additional appearances as goalkeeper for the first college soccer team.

Patricia and I started off the year with a trip to Florida - work you understand! We attended an excellent conference at Clearwater Beach but we are clearly getting older since we didn't swim although the temperature was warm by Scottish holiday standards. We were entertained by Ravi and Rochelle in Atlanta for the New Year, visited Disneyland, the Epcot Centre, Cape Kennedy and the Everglades which was lovely, when all at home was cold.

Patricia came home to help out at the Polytechnic with some part-time lecturing and demonstrating. It was her first experience of giving a course of lectures. She survived; of the students there is no news but she has

been asked again.

We skied with Christopher and Gwenda Horden at Tignes enjoying some superb snow and marvellous catering by Gwenda and Pat. Michael and Stephen were also in Tignes with their own party and it was lovely to ski with them again: i.e. see them disappearing into the distance.

The highlight of our year was our party to celebrate, one year late, our silver wedding. Many friends came and we were particularly happy that Grandma and Grandad, now getting on for eighty, drove over from Norfolk, that Kathleen and Frank Glover, whom we last saw at the wedding(!), came from Reading and that Enid, our Bridesmaid, could be with us. The sun shone allowing us to eat in the garden, the champagne was served from under the yew tree and it was a memorable and lovely day. We hope that other people's marriages proceed in this way: with the champagne cooled in the old baby bath.

The rest of June was spent commuting to Cambridge. It is the College's 400th year and we attended the May Ball with Rosemary and Brian Thrush in a party of Fellows. Michael of course was there too with his girlfriend, Nicky; he had just heard his results so there was much to celebrate. Despite our anxiety we lasted the night well - more than our youngest did - he wasn't on the survivors' picture at six AM.

Four days later we were back again for the Quatercentenary lunch (the first free do for members in 400 years?) where we met John and Jean Gittins from Toronto and Geof. and Helea Oldershaw. We stayed with John and Jean who spent a sabbatical year at Robinson and who gave us some lovely plants which we are toiling to keep alive in North Staffordshire.

A week later it was Michael's graduation which was splendid if surprisingly simple. It was a lovely warm nostalgic weekend when we both showed that we could still punt, get stuck and get involved in a water fight.

Then I went to sea with Eric Whittle: Michael and I helped sail his boat from Barry in South Wales to Benodet in Brittany. The weather was not kind and the forty-hour trip took sixty but despite the sickness it was splendid.

Now a holiday from all this social life was required so we went to Germany. After a few days in Berlin, our efforts to see the Zwinger in Dresden were thwarted by the East German police who moved us on to Czechoslovakia; actually it was our fault and their inflexibility. We walked in Bohemia, visited several lovely castles, and several shut ones, and stayed again with George and Jaja in Brno. On then to Austria for further climbs and then to Germany and too many cathedrals. It was lovely

to get such a hospitable welcome back to Goettingen from Klaus and Almut Luther, with whom we stayed, Heli Troe, Karen Titze and Pat's tutors at her old language class.

Back home again a little work was done and then we heard that Cambridge had approved me for a higher doctorate(Sc.D). This is awarded on published work and clearly my sincerest thanks are given to those with whom I have worked over the years: my research students, post-doctoral fellows and of course Don Ramsey, Sidney Leach and Jurgen Troe with whom I have spent periods of leave.

Life at Keele is much the same although the University is still struggling to overcome the effects of the financial cuts. Lots of people have gone (voluntarily) but few have been replaced. We seem to be reaching the 'worst case scenario' where, I believe, we shall still have a few too many academic staff but can just manage. This means that everything will be closed up tight for several years with no replacements and no funds for new ventures. However we have a new Vice-Chancellor, Brian Fender, who seems a lively man and many hopes are placed on him. Our own research still goes well with some ups and downs but also some worthwhile results.

Outside Keele our thoughts are always about the miner's strike. This is a mining area which is divided in its support for the strike. Fortunately there has been little violence here but the aspect, for all of us, is discouraging. Whatever the rights, it is depressing to see two sides, with a common interest, so intensely and bitterly divided.

So this is our report for the year. Unfortunately there is no dividend to declare; but we do think of you all and send to you our heartfelt best wishes for the coming year.

Peter and Patricia Borrell.