



Issue 3
September 2001

Phil & Shona's
Official Newsletter

Hello from Dunedin! Spring has sprung & we're beginning to forget all about winter already. Seem to have missed spring clothes & have gone straight into summer! Winter seemed soooo long when we were in the middle of it, but now that it's over & the weather is HEAPS warmer - well winter seems really quite short & a small price to pay for the *beautiful* autumns & springs. The daffodils are gone, the tulips are blooming one by one, & we're still waiting on the crocus', freesia's & tiger lily.

As we look back over the diary, we realise there is so much to tell you! Where to start? S'pose the beginning is as good as any!

Makeovers!

We've both got new looks! Shona's gone short, as she got tired of the long hair & the constant washing & the fact that virtually everytime we took her photo, the hair was wind blown & untidy. Besides all that - it was time for a change! And Phil - well we all know you can't cut his hair much shorter than it already is, so we've taken it off altogether. Yep, he's gone for the 'chrome dome' look for the summer, so don't get a surprise when you see him next! Makesi (one of the School of Ministry SOM students & an old friend from BCNZ) was rapt as he didn't feel like the only member of the SOM Chrome Dome Club anymore!

Dansey's Pass

Queen's Birthday Weekend we took a day trip up to Kurow & over Dansey's Pass. A fantastic trip, but Dansey's Pass is definitely a dry weather road! *Not* the kind of road you take after the first snowfall, unless you have a 4WD, which we don't. We knew the road would be metal, not sealed, but in loads of places it wasn't even that! Didn't seem to be much metal at all, just slippery muck. Phil really enjoyed it, & Shona did to - when it was all over! The possibility of getting stuck in the middle of nowhere while it was snowing (only a little though) didn't appeal to her. Still, we had a great adventure & it's one we won't ever forget. And those are just the sort of adventures you have to have (at least that's what Phil reckons)! There's a great pub & backpackers on the Naseby side of Dansey's Pass. We'll definitely have to make a day trip back there next year for a meal, preferably with good company (other than ourselves) & a good bottle of - grape juice!

New Car

We got our new car! A teal coloured Toyota Tercel. If you haven't heard of it before you're not alone. It's basically a Corolla that has a different badge, depending on the country that it's intended for. In Russia it's known as a Corsa, while Tercel is intended for the Canadian and US markets. In NZ it goes under the label of a Corollall. For the more technically minded its specs are ... 4 door saloon, 16 valve, 1500cc EFI, 4-stage ECT, power steering, aircon & electric windows. It's quite an improvement from our old car, didn't cost too much at the auction and suited our requirements - which includes fitting *all* our music gear particularly Shona's keyboard. The auction itself went well, although it was a nervous process to go through. If we'd bought the same car at a car yard we would've expected to spend at least another \$2000 on top of what we paid at auction! We'd never go back to a car yard after this!

Richmond & the West Coast

Our visit to St David's Presbyterian in Richmond went well. They're a friendly group who seem open to a broad variety of worship styles (judging by their music list they sent us). We were given the opportunity to share a little of what we'd been doing in Dunedin & Phil led the service as well as preaching. It was great to finally meet them & put faces to names.

On the way up to the top end we spent a night in the resort village of Hanmer Springs. We woke up to a *very hard* frost! All the cars were white with ice, including ours. There were heavy hoar frosts, the whole week we were away! Really very pretty, but damn cold & it made for cautious driving.

After Nelson, we meandered our way through the sounds to Picton, (just *have* to go back there for a holiday one day!) where we spent the night in an *excellent* backpackers. It came complete with a wonderful German Shepherd & so Shona didn't feel quite so homesick for Diva (her Mum & Dad's Shepherd).

The next day we recrossed the island, going first to Blenheim, then up the Wairau Valley, through the Nelson Lakes district & on through the Buller Gorge to Westport - our lunch stop. The Gorge has NZ's longest swing bridge on the site of the Murchison earthquake epicentre. Pretty cool stuff, but Shona was glad Phil was right behind her on the bridge 'cos it was very wobbly & *high* over the river. In the afternoon we continued down the coast to Greymouth via Punakaiki. Sadly, the blowholes weren't at their best, as it was low tide.

We can definitely recommend a backpackers not to stay at in Greymouth during winter! We ended up with 2 hot water bottles, 2 duvets, 2 sleeping bags on the bed & a 1-bar heater in the room, which was on a 1-hour time switch! Talk about cold! Might as well have had no heater at all in the room! And if you're ever in Greymouth, you just have to check out Darcy's Bar & Grill. It's about 20 minutes drive north of Greymouth, up the coast. Their speciality is Water Buffalo & we can recommend the Buffalo Steak, & Thai Curry Buffalo sausages. MMMMMMMMM!

We spent an extra night in Greymouth (despite the cold room) & checked out Blackball, Lake Brunner & popped over Arthur's Pass to check out the new viaduct. Awesome piece of engineering! And you should see the ramp at the bottom meant to stop vehicles who've cooked their brakes on the way down!! Last stop for the day was Shantytown, where we did the tourist

thing & panned for gold (the water was freezing!) before heading back to Greymouth for dinner.

Next day we did the long drive down the coast & over the Haast Pass to Wanaka. Stopped at Franz Josef for lunch & walked as far as we could to see the glacier, but would've liked to have got closer. Unfortunately, if we wanted to get any closer we needed a guide & this wasn't part of our plans. Maybe next time. It was very awesome, but Haast was even better & drop dead amazingly stunning. Besides the scenery, the hoar frosts had formed HUGE icicles down parts of the cliff, right beside the road. They looked like a set of organ pipes & were as thick as Phil's thigh! Once over the pass we were blessed with a wonderful view of a very still Lake Wanaka at dusk. We were a little late getting to Wanaka, but thankfully got a bed - probably the last one in town! - otherwise we would've had to pay for a motel or driven on for another few hours to Cromwell, Clyde or Alexandra!

And the next day we were back in Dunedin to our own *warm* home, & our own bed (YAY!) We've really enjoyed the travelling we've done round the South Island this year. Might as well make the most of it while we can, 'cos who knows which parish we'll end up in when we finish down here.

Three's Company

The BIG news is that by the end of March 2002 we'll be a family of 3! Due date is around the middle of March. Shona's been keeping well & thankfully the morning sickness wasn't too bad. Mostly constant nausea (whoever came up with the phrase *morning sickness* lied!), but we did have our fair share of power chunders! You know, the whole 'being parents' thing can feel kind of daunting, but we take each day as it comes 'cos there's no point in worrying and being anxious about what lies ahead in the future. Firstly, 'cos God's already got things under control. Secondly, 'cos if our parents coped then so can we! And thirdly, 'cos past experience has taught us that such times aren't usually quite as bad when you're in the middle of them. The worst bit is usually the worrying beforehand! As some wise old sage once said, "No point in crossing your bridges until you get to them!"

We're now into the getting fatter stage, & Shona's been singing that line from the song *Love Shack*, which goes something like, "she's as big as a whale & she's about to set sail. Oh the Love Shack is a little ol' place where ..." You get the idea!

Seniors Community Worker

Since July, Shona's been employed, for 10 hours a week, by Dunedin South Presbyterian as their Seniors Community Worker. It's only for 4 months, just to keep things going & growing until the church can obtain a grant to fund the position full-time (or nearly full-time). Dunedin South has a high population of elderly people, who've traditionally moved down from the hill suburbs as they get older & more frail. Their main needs involve isolation & loneliness, & this is where the church comes in - providing different activities that help to meet these needs - including Shoppers Club, Men's Pub Lunch & Café Friday. The work is expanding & soon we'll have a Ladies Pub Lunch as well.

Shona's enjoyed the work. It's great fun, been good experience for future ministry & the people are super.

Marriage Sermon

You may remember from our May newsletter that we were both going to be preaching on 1 Corinthians 7 about marriage. This went really well and generated a great deal of feedback. We were both very worried about how the message would be received, as many people who attend the service are from, shall we say, "complex relationships." While we tried very hard to remain sensitive to their differing understandings and practices regarding personal relationships, the text did not make it easy. It was a struggle as we prepared, to think of a way that wouldn't come across as condemning of those who were in defacto relationships. In the end after seeking counsel from a number of other preachers we ended up preaching from an A4 sheet containing *only* our preparation notes. This was quite a departure from our usual practise of preaching from a full script! Consequently we had to rely heavily on God's Spirit to lead us. The 'tag team' style of preaching was interesting! Often we'd address the same issue, but from a male or female perspective, with Phil directing a male perspective to the women while Shona did the reverse. It's interesting that when we were preparing for this sermon there was little in the way of resources available on the Internet. The text wasn't even in any of the lectionaries we consulted! We suspect that in today's politically correct climate, some preachers put this topic in the "too hard" basket. Anyway, we put our best into it, and all the hard work we did grappling with the text seemed to pay off - judging by some of the feedback. Most telling was a comment made by a visitor who normally attends a predominantly middle/upper class church in Dunedin. "Thank you for your teaching. We wouldn't get something like that at my church. That was real! We only get nice pat sermons that don't touch real life issues." It was encouraging for us to know that the leadership of the church also had confidence in us to tackle some of the hard issues of life. It was quite a learning experience for us both.

National Assessment

August 10-13 saw us up in Wellington for National Assessment. Thankfully Shona didn't find it too nerve wracking, probably 'cos she knew what to expect - after being there the year before with Phil. She was very open to whether she got accepted or not, as there were pro's & con's both ways. Not being accepted would make things a little less complicated & would mean we could get out into parish ministry quicker, but would also mean that Shona couldn't be as *fully* involved in ministry. Really, this was just another door we had to knock on, waiting to see whether God would open it or not. And He did. The outcome of the weekend was a positive one & Shona has now been accepted into the Ordination Studies Programme (OSP) at School of Ministry. She is able to start in February next year, but has chosen to defer for a year to spend time with the baby. Phil finishes OSP at the end of next year & will then be a house daddy for a couple of years, while Shona studies at SOM. That's the trouble with knocking on 2 doors (the ministry door & the children door) at the same time - they both might open!! Still I'm sure God knows what he's up to! We've also been given a SOM house to live in for the rest of our time here in Dunedin & will be moving at the end of January. YAY! It's right next door to Knox College, so we won't have to run the car as much & the rent is also considerably cheaper than what we've had to pay this year. Interesting times lie ahead folks! Watch this space!!

Phil's Field Placement

This semester Phil's been working with the Salvation Army. As part of his training he's expected to spend a semester in a social work agency, & this was his. His time was spent mostly helping in the foodbank, which included things like assessment interviews, advocacy, supervising volunteers, as well as making up food parcels. He was also involved with the *Oasis* and *Bridge* programmes, which help people with various addiction disorders. Part of the *Bridge* program includes Recovery Church on Friday night. This is an easy way for people in recovery to gradually develop the spiritual aspect, which is a feature of *12 step* programmes. Phil also helps with an after school homework help programme 1 day a week. There's been a great deal of learning in this placement as Phil has gained a practical competency in social work - all of which will enhance his church ministry.

All for now ... running out of room!!

Please pray for ...

1. Safe travelling.
2. Shona & baby's health. Pray that all goes well.
3. So much to get done before we head north!

Shona & Phil ☺☺

Coming Events

19 - 22 Oct (Labour W'End)

Army Band Reunion in Christchurch.

12 Nov - 31 Dec

We head north to Auckland & other places to visit family & friends. Phil will also be doing research at BCNZ & St Johns Theological College Libraries for his synthesis project. He then hopes to get most of the synthesis written in January, before the baby & the sleepless nights arrive! Maybe we'll even fit in a wee holiday of our own during this time!