



Daveys in France

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Alan & Pat Davey
15 Rue des Alizés
33140 Villenave d'Ornon
France

alandavey@gmail.com

www.daveys2france.blogspot.com

Dear friends and supporters,

We wish you all a very happy Christmas and a blessed New Year!

Our first three months in France are now behind us, and we have lots to thank God for and lots to pray for!

DEFLE (our language department, shown above)

Life at the DEFLE is good. Sometimes Alan struggles with all the literary emphasis. It's much easier to do a talk about the battle of Verdun than to do an essay on solitude in an extract from the book "Lauve le pur". Pat struggles a bit with the future. And the imperfect and the conditional. Fluency still seems like Kilimanjaro – a far off dream.

Meanwhile we have many good contacts. Please pray for Roberto (Brazilian) who came to church and seems close to faith, for Daniel (Venezuelan) who is devoutly catholic but who says he wants to come to our church, for Jean Vietthong (Vietnamese) a seminarian who also said he wants to come sometime, then for Ben (American), Muhammad (Yemeni), Cassandra (USA), Jessica (USA) and many others.

School (Gwilym & Catrin)

Again life at school is basically good, though very different from Britain. Gwilym has settled well and is coping with the language. Those who predicted fluency by Christmas were a little optimistic, but he's certainly doing OK.

Catrin has not had as much help as Gwilym, but has had more stress from the staff ("Your brother is speaking French, why not you?"). The headmistress is keen to help her, but frankly too busy, so we are facing up to the need to find extra help for Catrin with her French.



Marbles are very popular at school

Financial support

Alan has not had to visit Britain to do extra deputation. We need to discuss plans for our pattern of home visits with the mission, but we hope that we may come to Britain each summer during the school holidays and spend the first few weeks visiting churches and the next few weeks with family and friends. Alan is especially keen to visit those churches that support us generously without us having visited. (I hope it doesn't put them off!) More about that soon, I hope.

Church life



This is the little church at Anglade, near Blaye, where we hold services once or twice a month. It is well kept inside and out (I think the roof is supposed to look like that!) and seats about 30. The tower has a bell which is rung just before the service! We've settled well into the life of the church here. We have little jobs to do (supplying bread and wine for communion, recording the sermons, etc).

Our language course is quite full, and the pastor's life is rather busy, so although Alan is notionally attached to him during this settling in period, it isn't that easy to meet up.

Homesickness

Yes, a bit. Mainly when the children have been homesick, which is when they have been unhappy at school. However, we think things are settling down.

Future plans

Alan will continue at the DEFLE till February and then for another semester (March to June). The kids will probably stay at the same school, perhaps with help in French for Catrin. Pat may finish at the DEFLE after this semester and do some other kind of language study.



This picture has nothing to do with homesickness

Health

For the first few months we haven't needed any medical care, though the kids have caught pretty well everything going, as you would expect. Now it's time, however – Pat needs the dentist and optician and Alan needs the doctor soon.

Thank you once again for all your prayers.

A bientôt!

Alan, Pat, Gwilym & Catrin

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Mr. Phil Harman, 14 Eaton Avenue, Connah's Quay, Flintshire. CH5 4HR

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