

THE HALLAS CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2017



There has been much earnest discussion in Hallas Palace recently regarding whether or not to write a newsletter this year. We wondered if, perhaps, a newsletter has had its day as electronic communication is increasingly taking over from 'snail mail'.

Sam was asked to set up a Facebook account for Church and discovered that he could only do that by setting up a personal account first. So, those of you with time on

your hands and nothing better to do can see what Sam and I have been doing. Not everybody is on Facebook, of course, and bizarrely, I know that one or two poor,

deluded souls actually look forward to receiving this annual missive.

One argument in favour of continuing is, as always, to maintain contact with those of you we don't see from one year's end to the next. That doesn't mean that we don't think about you and wonder how you are.

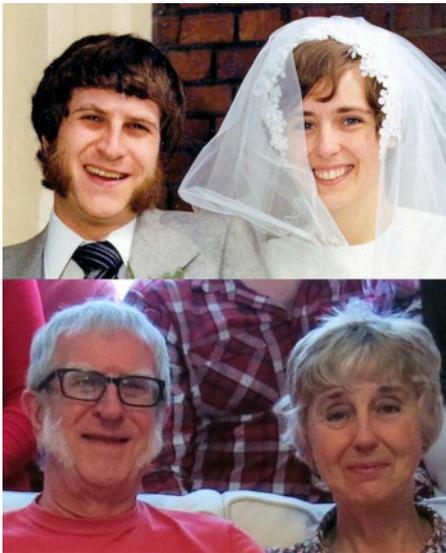
Year of Anniversaries

One reason we considered not writing a newsletter is that the year has sped past but with few particular events of note, although 2017

could have been dubbed the Year of the Anniversary. Ruby, tin and paper anniversaries to be precise.

Sam and I celebrated 40 years of wedded bliss on Easter Sunday, April 16th. We thought that Easter Day was probably not a good time to have any sort of family celebration so I devised a wicked plan. I knew that my sister, Di, and brother-in-law, Jon, were coming to stay for a weekend in May so that the 'boys' could go to

the Dunstable Downs Radio Club car boot sale. "Right!" I thought, "Let's invite the whole family on that Saturday and Di can help me in the kitchen." Big sisters are wonderful! She worked hard and was absolutely brilliant. I think everybody enjoyed the day but with hindsight it was a bittersweet occasion, as that was the last time many of the family saw my cousin, Susan, who sadly passed away three months later.



40 years on



Family day in May



Tim & Harriet cut the cake

In August Tim and Harriet celebrated their tenth wedding anniversary with a party in a local hostelry.

As I write, during the last weekend in November, Matthew and Lizzie have returned to the village of Chilham in Kent – where they were married – to celebrate their first anniversary.



Matt & Lizzie celebrate



Coleton Fishacre - home of the d'Oyly Cartes



Living Coasts zoo & aquarium, Torquay



Greenway - home of Agatha Christie

Holidays

We have had a couple of holidays. During the very hot spell in June we went to Totnes in South Devon, staying in a pub/ hotel right beside the River Dart. Normally our holiday activities are constrained by bad weather, so it made a lovely change to be too hot to expend energy dashing about and climbing the Devon hills.



Stott Park Bobbin Mill

However, normal service was resumed in September when we went to Waterside in the Lake District. We had one dry and sunny afternoon but we managed to visit the places we intended to see including Beatrix Potter's house at Hilltop, the Stott Park bobbin mill and, best of all, the Lakeland store in Windermere.



Bowness-on-Windermere



Near Sawry - scene of many of Beatrix Potter's stories



Red Squirrels seat, Grange-over-Sands

Tim & Harriet

Tim and Harriet remain very busy with their respective careers and church and musical activities. Harriet was promoted in the summer and is now a Research Funding Manager at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Tim is Head of Music Technology at Woodhouse College in Barnet. A while ago he was commissioned to write a text book to cover the AS and A level Music Technology syllabus. This has entailed a great deal of work for other people as well as Tim and one of them was Sam who proof read it all. I can't understand a word but looked forward to having a copy to show off. Now we have a copy I'm even more impressed.

Matt & Lizzie

Matthew is now in his second year of teaching music at Freman College in Buntingford. He has recently put many hours of work into directing Guys and Dolls which we greatly enjoyed watching. Mathew also does a bit of moonlighting from time to time as rehearsal pianist for various amateur music societies.

Lizzie is doing well and getting good reports on her Music Therapy course and at weekends, when she can get a booking, she visits care homes, singing with and to the residents. For relaxation Lizzie and Matthew borrow a wheaten terrier called Teddy and take him for long walks.

What's Sam doing?

Sam's role as Church Fabric Secretary has been busier than ever this year as we had a major survey of both church and hall done. The results brought to light a number of problems, of which we would have preferred to remain in blissful ignorance. Now we have to find the money and means to deal with them.

Sam adds: I've also kept up my involvement with presenting *Old Hitchin on Film* during the Hitchin festival in July and again at the Historical Society in November. As archivist for the Telecomms Heritage Group I've been busy scanning documents for on-line storage and access as well as being webmaster for the Church's web and Facebook pages.

Blessings

I will mention two small blessings for which we are grateful. The Church's pre-school has had a change of leader and the new one is far less demanding of Sam's time and talents than her predecessor. The other is that the Lunch Club had become too small to be viable and closed in July. This was sad in a way but I now have Mondays free, with no commitments. Yippee!

We will close by wishing you a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

With love from Sam and Sheila