

# THE HALLAS CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2018



A trickle of cards has been coming through the letterbox over the last week or so. The Christmas cake, pudding and mince pies are safely stored away, so it must be time to compose the annual literary masterpiece which will doubtless feature as the highlight of your celebrations.



Those of you with long memories, or perhaps nothing better to do with your time, may recall that last year's epistle began with an account of the soul searching discussion in Hallas Palace as to whether or not an annual letter had had its day and been superseded by Facebook. We have been begged by thousands to continue. Am I prone to exaggeration? Never!

This year has been very special for several reasons and I expect the chief reason for our joy will be immediately apparent when Sam adds the photos. On Christmas Eve last year Tim and Harriet told us that they were expecting a baby so that made Christmas wonderful. On Sunday, 22nd July, one of the hottest days of the year, Miss Zoe Jessica Hallas arrived in the world. She is very beautiful, a total delight and we try to spend as much time with her as we can.



*Harriet, Tim and Zoe just after birth*



*Zoe with Nanna & Grandad*



*Flat in Shefford*

In some respects Matthew and Lizzie have had an eventful year but things are settling down now. They have left their rented house in Royston and bought a modern, first-floor flat in the small Bedfordshire town of Shefford. They moved in mid-July on another swelteringly hot day – not a good one for heaving furniture up and down flights of stairs. It is lovely to have them just 15 minutes drive away.

in her cap. She is involved in projects all over the place, including Meldreth, Huntingdon and Saffron Walden. This last is an initiative working with dementia sufferers and their carers and has been reported in the local paper several times.

Matthew and Lizzie's household has expanded this last week with the arrival of a cockapoo puppy called Gilbert (as in 'and Sullivan').



*Matt with Lizzie celebrating her graduation*

Matthew is currently acting Head of the Music Department at Freman College in Buntingford. He is working hard and enjoying the challenge, despite limited resources and lack of staff. He makes a little pin money by acting as rehearsal pianist and/or musical director for various local amateur music groups.

Lizzie has completed her Master's degree in Music Therapy and is the only member of her set to have been offered a job in music therapy, so that is a feather



*Gilbert the cockapoo*

Sam and I keep busy. Much of our time is spent on Church affairs. Work is always needed on the fabric which falls to Sam either to do or get done. This year it was the replacement of a flat roof which was a big (read expensive) and unexpected job.

I am still Secretary, or possibly Pooh Bah as in the Mikado. The tasks that don't fall naturally into somebody else's remit come to me.



*Flat roof repairs*

Sam has been improving his mind by attending several courses on various forms of 20th century music and films. He has also spent a considerable length of time making a video of stills photographs, compiled from old photographs, his own photos and other bits and pieces. The video was very well received when shown to the Hitchin Historical Society.

We've had some fun as well. Sam developed a hankering to revisit his childhood haunts, so in the summer we had a week's holiday in West Yorkshire. Besides visiting Huddersfield we went to the Royal Horticultural Society gardens at Harlow Carr, Harewood House and a couple of National Trust properties. We also located Hallas Lane and Hallas Bridge near Bradford.

In September we spent a few days in Wroxham, Norfolk, visited Sandringham and enjoyed a cruise on the Broads. Then normal Hallas holiday weather returned with a vengeance. It could have been November when we chose to travel along the coast from Cromer to Wells-next-the-sea. We were intrigued by the upholstery on the bus going to Sheringham that invited us to visit Wimborne, Poole and Bournemouth.



*Hitchin in 1903*

On the subject of weather, in March we booked to go on a guided walk following the route of the River Tyburn which now flows entirely underground. Yes, you've guessed it. It was the weekend of the icy blast, dubbed 'The Beast from the East', but despite the cold only two people failed to turn up.

As if all this excitement wasn't enough, we've seen ten live shows with performers as diverse as Susie Dent from Countdown, Historian Neil Oliver, Griff Rhys-Jones, Bill Bailey and Rory Bremner.

**Sam adds:** Yes, we've had a busy year. How can Sheila have forgotten to mention that we had a new bathroom installed in April? There were only a



*Wroxham Broad*



*Huddersfield from Castle Hill*

couple of days when we had neither a bath nor a shower, so not much chance to stay dirty. We had two baptisms at Church which involves a good



*A Hallas at Hallas Lane*



*New bathroom*

deal of preparation to open the baptistry. Besides the roof repairs we had to replace the south-facing first-floor windows due to rot and one of them falling out last autumn. Church will celebrate its 350th anniversary next year meaning that planning is already under way for a week of festivities. In addition my aunt Margaret was 100 and Sheila got her bus pass.

**As always we send our greetings to those of you we haven't seen and wish you a very happy Christmas and a peaceful new year.  
With love from Sam and Sheila**