

The Hallas Times

The doings of Sam & Sheila in 2019

Introduction

SOME SHOPS HAVE BEEN DISPLAYING their Christmas wares for four months and for the last three mornings we have woken up to a beautiful, sparkling but very cold world, so it must be time for the most important event of the year. No, I'm not talking about Brexit or climate change or troubles within the royal family or the loose cannon occupying the White House. It's this year's instalment of the endlessly fascinating account of life within Hallas Palace.



Baby talk



Undoubtedly, this year's great excitement was a reprise of last year's major event and we are now the proud and doting grandparents of two gorgeous little girls. Matthew and Lizzie promised me a very

special birthday present and on October 25th, two days before my birthday, Evelyn Florence Rose arrived in the world. She is a lovely, placid baby and has just learnt to smile.

Evie's cousin, Zoe, is now 16 months old and continues to be a delight. She loves books, music, being outdoors and her comprehension and vocabulary are growing every day. Her favourite activity when she visits us is to empty the contents of the vegetable rack and carry them around the house.

Both boys have changed jobs this term. Tim is teaching at Hills Road



in Cambridge and Matthew has taken up the post of Head of Music at Aldenham School near Elstree.

Dedication

One special occasion this year was Zoe's Dedication on May 19th. It's similar to a Christening, for those of you who are not of the Non-Conformist persuasion. There was a morning service at Tim and Harriet's Church followed by a light lunch and cake and then the family came to Hallas Palace for the rest of the day. Fortunately,



the weather was sunny and warm enough for everyone to sit in the garden. Accommodating 15 adults, 5 children and a dog indoors would have been something of a squash.

Church news

It has been a significant year for our Church which celebrated its 350th anniversary in March. We held a variety of events which included a concert, a quiz, an evening of Tilehouse Street memories and a lunch.

We have recently appointed an administrator which has reduced my workload as church secretary a bit. I sometimes call myself Pooh Bah but really Sam deserves the name more than I do. [Check Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* if you don't understand the reference.]

What we did on our holidays

Channel Islands

We have enjoyed a couple of holidays. For a long time I had wanted to 'collect' the two Channel Islands which I had not previously visited i.e. Alderney and Sark. So in June we decamped to Guernsey for a week and one day took the ferry to Sark only to find ourselves being filmed for the local television news because the Sark Ferry Co. was celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. I was expecting to find Sark peaceful and relaxing. Well, so it was – after the thunderstorm had moved away.

Later in the week, the typical Hallas holiday weather accompanied us to Alderney. It

was wet, wet, wet but we found a lovely café which stayed open especially for us and served delicious bread pudding. The sun had come out by the time we returned to the airport only to find that our flight had been delayed by two hours owing to an emergency medical evacuation earlier in the day. Of course we didn't mind that – naturally the emergency had to take priority and the airport staff had tried to phone us – on our home landline number! It didn't seem to occur to the staff that passengers booked on a 4pm flight from Alderney are not going to answer a phone in England. The flights between the islands in tiny planes which only take about two dozen passengers were great fun. You can hear

everything the pilot says and there are great views from the windows.

On our last day we had a white-knuckle ride in a boat to see the wildlife around Herm. We saw seals, but, disappointingly, no puffins. The picture at the top of page 1 shows us in our waterproofs and lifejackets.

NT bashing in Surrey

In September, we spent a few days in exotic Surrey and hammered our National Trust membership with visits to Polesden Lacey, Clandon Park and Hatchlands. We also went to Guildford Cathedral which I had previously only seen from a distance. It looks so forbidding, sitting atop its hill but inside it is very impressive – spacious and with simple decorations.



Arts festival in St Peter Port



The Avenue, Sark



High Street, Guildford

What's Sam been up to?

At Church Sam continues to use his gifts and talents in all sorts of ways:- playing the piano, looking after the fabric of the buildings, doing most of the techie stuff and maintaining the website. Not to mention pushing over wobbly gravestones to prevent accidents. Who knew he was so strong?

A couple of years ago Sam assumed the mantle of film archivist for Hitchin Historical Society on the retirement of Richard Whitmore. He has spent many happy, or possibly



*Sam presenting
'Old Hitchin on Film'*

frustrating, hours converting old cine films and still photographs into watchable video productions. This culminates in a public

showing as part of the Hitchin Festival in July and for the Historicals in November.

His fame is spreading and he has given three or four presentations to different audiences – twice at a local Rotary Club and for the village trust in nearby Preston. There is another booked during 2020.

Another one of his interests is telecomms history and he has been working with the Telecomms Heritage Group and BT Archives to scan and preserve documents.

As always, we send greetings and best wishes to those of you we haven't seen or contacted recently.

We wish you all a very happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

With love from Sam and Sheila