

The Hallas Gazette

What Sam & Sheila got up to in 2024 & 2025

Introduction



I expect that at this time last year many of you heaved a deep sigh of relief and thought, "Thank goodness I haven't had to endure a newsletter from Hallas Palace". I'm afraid it's back this year.

As always, we are sorry that we haven't kept in touch with you as regularly as we should have done or, indeed, at all. That doesn't mean that you are not in our thoughts.

What has been happening in the Hallas world, I hear you cry. Or perhaps I don't. I'm going to tell you anyway.

What Sam did

Much of our time is taken up with church life. Sam continues as 'techie genius', webmaster, sometime



pianist and fabric secretary. That's fabric as in buildings, not as in cloth. He also leads the team broadcasting the morning service on YouTube every week.

A while ago Sam was more or less co-opted into the role of film archivist for the Hitchin Historical Society. A recent project was transferring two 20 minute 8mm



cine films of our town dating from the mid 1960s

What Sheila did

I think I'm in my fourteenth year as church secretary, a task which is mostly administrative but also includes what I call the Pooh Bah jobs – the ones that don't belong to anybody else. These might be anything from cleaning when our proper cleaner is away, searching for lost property or finding the driver of a car which is causing an obstruction. It's an exciting and responsible job. Oh yes, nearly forgot, I still make the coffee too. On the more serious side, it's a job which will become more time consuming as our minister is retiring next April and we will be without one.

One of this year's highlights occurred on Easter Sunday when I had the joy and privilege of assisting our minister Jane to baptise our friend Carol and then to welcome her into church membership.

Family & Grandchildren

Watching our three beautiful granddaughters growing is a joy.

We have the pleasure of collecting seven year old Zoe from school every Thursday. She has all sorts of interests and loves reading, drawing and writing very imaginative, if somewhat illogical to an adult mind,

stories. She can sing, is learning to play the piano and cello and also loves her dancing classes and being a Brownie.

Matthew, Lizzie and their two girls live in Kings Langley so we don't see as much as them as we would like. Well, it's Kings Langley if you're posh, it's North Watford if you aren't. It's not all that far as the crow flies but it's a horrible drive.

Evie is six and a real livewire. She's going to be sporty. I've never seen a



child run as fast as she can. She goes to gymnastics classes, loves bouncing on the trampoline in the garden and is learning to play the piano.

Lily is almost three and chatters fluently. She loves animals but we will have to wait and see what other interests she develops.

Holidays

We've had two great holidays since our last letter. I had long wanted to see a glacier before they all melt so September last year found us in Switzerland. We went with a party from Great Rail so, unsurprisingly, there was oodles of train travel which was a great way to see the country. We stayed in Lausanne first and then moved on to Interlaken. We had a wonderful

and found ourselves in a place that can only be compared to an airport departure lounge. There were restaurants, expensive shops and a gallery of ice sculptures all



Jungfrau viewed from Interlaken

view of the Jungfrau from our hotel bedroom window. On our first evening it turned a beautiful rose pink in the sunset but the following morning it was hidden in cloud, there was noticeably more snow on the surrounding mountains and we didn't see it again from ground level. We did, however, take a cable car and a train up the Jungfrau

and skiers way below us.

This summer our travels took us to Norway. We flew to Oslo which is a very modern city in love with technology. On the first full day we took a train across country to Bergen. Bergen is very quaint in places but, unfortunately, it lived up to its reputation for being the



Panorama of Bergen

built inside the mountain. It was a fantastic feat of engineering but very odd. We managed to find our way to an outside viewing platform and saw a glorious never to be forgotten sight – a glacier in front of us and walkers

wettest city in Europe. After two days there we started to make our way back to Oslo, staying in Voss which is described as 'the adrenaline capital of Norway' but I think that only applies in the winter sports season. There wasn't a lot of skiing in July. We ended up back in Oslo and spent our last morning enduring a cold, wet and windy cruise on the Oslo fjord. That typical Hallas holiday weather keeps following us.

Next year, it's a cruise along the Danube.

To finish on a Christmas note, here's what we saw on a visit to the Christmas extravaganza at the Thursford collection in Norfolk last year.



As always, we send our greetings and best wishes to you all, especially those of you whom we haven't seen.

Wishing you a happy Christmas and a peaceful new year.

With love from Sam and Sheila

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