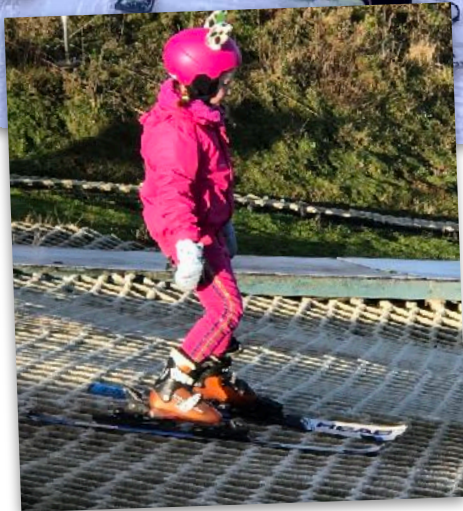




Well, that was a strange old year; no fatalities - we've been fortunate

Locked down or über cautious for most of the year, nothing has been "as normal", but the family is resilient; there have been plenty of delightful moments - and even a few things that seem better somehow. Here's how we got on:

Let's start with the **skiing**, back last January. All the family were up at Val Thorens as usual, & there was a LOT of snow. The smallest + medium ones collected their increasingly advanced ski school accreditation badges, the largest just skied our socks off. Plenty of time still for soups, wine, rhum, crêpes, fireworks etc.



This end of the year, we are skiing on nylon, in Suffolk. Not quite the same, but heh, it's warmer.

Work has been interesting. **Stephen** JUST made it back from Australia via Hong Kong in March - through alarmingly deserted airports - before all travel ceased. Since then he has been working all round the world from his little garden office / gym, play house! Projects seem to take him often to two or three countries a day now, all without moving! **Melissa** is headteacher at the wonderful Atlantic Academy on Portland - the smiles on faces there, and the data on progress, all show what a remarkable turnaround she and her team have achieved. Their delightfully bonkers Christmas Panto <https://youtu.be/pzOX4LHFDdl> speaks volumes for the team spirit there, despite utter exhaustion after the World's Longest Ever Term! You'll recall that **Toby** left his role as editor of Yachts and Yachting, intending to freelance, only to be snapped up by their rival magazine house. He did do some freelance work but this year is once again salaried and this time focussing on the online world of journalism - all this largely from home in Brighton of course. Those soulless days of commuting to London are over, and hurrah to that!

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Cali continues in her design job - seems odd to be designing the graphics for Christmas 2021 just as Christmas 2020 gets cancelled, but it shows a that glimmer of normality lies ahead. She mixes commuting with WFH and, with Toby, enjoys the odd brave outing on their tandem alongside some long distance hiking. WFH + no commuting + single employment = a bit more spare time, and is indeed the promised land! **Juliette's** BeachSchool.org is booming in Brightlingsea with a noticeable impact of the whole town - [outdoor learning during a pandemic is as good as it gets](#) - even the Women's Institute wants a share of the action. and she is also busy with her arts project distributing huge cast bronze bells onto tidal coasts. **Simon's** new bigger workshop, right by the National Sailing Centre at Portland, is busy with tweaks and repairs to fast boats, and he is producing (amongst other things) some carbon foiling moths that are absolute works of art (and go pretty damn quick too!). But there is space enough inside to be finally rebuilding the structural components of the Portland family's quick little Fastair Grainger 075 Trimaran so that some scary-fast offshore family fun might feature in the 2021 newsletter!



HOUSES has been a standing item in this newsletter, seemingly forever! So, quick version: Toby and Cali's Brighton home is now unrecognisable from what they bought, inside and out. Latest transformation has been to the rear garden with paving gone, new turf, retaining walls, pizza oven and more built. Inside much woodcrafting skill has made a fab change too. They win Best Progress Prize! Juliette and the girls, having bought the "house next door" to the Anchorage (empty for 5 years and wrecked!) have pretty much knocked it all down and are the now putting it back up - in doing so it is going from



bungalow to bung-a-roof-on and is now looking like work in progress. They win the Best Potential Prize in that it couldn't be worse and might actually be rather gorgeous one day. You will see Kent from the new bedrooms! The Anchorage has been a bit busy with 3 generations aboard, but at least we have a new pond. Please don't ask about the yellow swing (!) and there are very personable chickens too now -

many of you may have Zoomed to them and had a jolly cluck back!

So, in Portland: I asked about progress on their house, new patio, kitchen, windows etc., but we ended up

talking boats, of course. So **BOATS** is our last heading here. Where to begin! My Alice has had no racing all year (sad face) but she has endured a few bad years since her 1907 build, and been sunk twice, so she seems sanguine about it. all. No Brightlingsea One Design racing for Aina either. But G'dad and Josie have been racing the little Mirror even if their National Championship was cancelled (understandably). During lockdown, Josie (just 7) has thrown herself into her sailing, mopping up any number of certificates (who says kids out of school fall behind!!). Her reward for this has been to be allocated a brand new full-race Optimist dinghy - one of very few nationally awarded - and



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quite a lot of publicity in regional papers, RYA news etc. Little Elodie (4 - who has just started school in Reception) was out and helming for herself this summer too! Anything sis can do...!

Meanwhile on Portland, Louis (10) is enjoying qualification into of his Regional Optimist squad - with a few hundred boats at every event it's pretty competitive stuff! He has been balancing that against ranking 1st (!!)

in his year at school AND and being head boy. Big sis Amelie (13 and 2nd in her school year!) has graduated from her National Oppie squad and moved into 29er skiffs with her regular sailing partner Katie and occasionally dad (double olympic skiff medalist Simon, so not a bad back-up). The girls are way too small for the boat really, but such good little sailors that it's all a bit win or swim! They will be astonishing in a year or two as they grow taller. Anyway, it was little boats mainly in 2020 - back to the big stuff next year, hopefully. Here are some more images from 2020. Not bad considering. **Happy, safe 2021 to you and yours!**



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our house in B'sea was one of the town's advent calendars this year - so from us to you, Happy Christmas



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