

2021 CHRISTMAS NEWS OF VARIOUS HEPPELL FOLK:  
BRIGHTLINGSEA, PORTLAND, BRIGHTON

Heavens to Betsy! What a couple of years. But... the good news is: no fatalities in the immediate family, no one with Long CoVID, no one in the debtors' prison, no houses repossessed and so on. We seem to be getting through all this and are triple-jabbed-grateful for our good fortune. We don't really have any bad news at all. (at 22.12.21). As ever this newsletter would not be printed posted or indeed written without the help and encouragement of Lys, to whom many many thanks are due.

This year with our children past or approaching 40 it finally seemed appropriate for each of them to report on their year - with a few subedits from Grandad. So, here we go with the year's news:

**Toby and Cali with their evolving house in Brighton:**

Life in Brighton for Toby and Cali has been rather less about enjoying the hustle and bustle of their city and more about exploring the countryside of the bordering South Downs on foot - you may remember they took it upon themselves to walk the 100 miles from Winchester to Eastbourne last year. [ed notes: they have added trips out on their tandem to this activity too]

Aside from walking, work on the house continues and the pair have also jumped on the lockdown 'grow your own' trend by ripping out the old front garden and replacing it with six raised beds which have been providing them with plenty of food for the table and no end of gardening chores at the weekend.

Toby started a new job at the start of this year, still working in the sailing magazines world though he now works in a purely digital role. His new role is remote and (what with one thing and another) Cali's work as a packaging designer has also been remote over the last year.

So they've been working away in their little office, doing work on the house (the bathroom is now, finally, complete) and generally reflecting that they are glad they didn't buy that tidier, half the size house in the middle of Brighton with no garden.

**Melissa, Simon, Louis and Amelie in the independent free state of Portland**

As ever, it's been a year mostly afloat in Portland with Melissa, Simon, Amelie and Louis. Louis started the year continuing his Optimist sailing and after a few successful regattas he has now transitioned into the Feva and is proud to be a part of the South West Regional Sailing team with many of his friends who have moved on with him. He's loving sailing with pal Nicola, and although they are the youngest in their squad (by some way) they are already shaping some promising results. Louis has this year started Secondary school and is flourishing (Top of the year with positive points) and loving the new experiences Secondary school brings.

Having sailed continuously over the winter, Amelie was rewarded with a successful position on the British Youth sailing team, being one of just 7 boats selected across the UK, in the 29er with her team-mate Katy. Their sailing this year has taken them all over the UK and seen them participate in their first international regatta on Lake Garda in October. School apparently is an inconvenience when you have plans to be an Olympic sailor but Amelie is making do and ploughing her way through Year 10 and the start of GCSE's - It's best to not ask about her thoughts of the UK Education system or exams...

Melissa is now in her 3rd year as Principal at Atlantic Academy, it's been a testing few years but the school is growing from strength to strength. This year has seen Melissa's school link up with

Juliette's Beach School in a collaborative project. Beyond work life, Melissa has managed to spend some time on the water both sailing and paddle boarding and has recently purchased a new wing foil with visions of foiling around Portland Harbour. It might take a few more hours of practice, turns out it's a rather hard new hobby!

Following a summer in Tokyo supporting the British Sailing Olympic team, Simon returned home to a very busy business which has continued to grow and develop this year. When he's not working (which sometimes Melissa may declare is too frequent) he's also on the water in Portland Harbour sailing his new foiling Moth. Having spent the Europeans in Garda in his own boat he appeared to acquire a new one on his return. Turns out it's fast and a lot of fun - I feel it will be a busy summer next year!

The house is still not finished, why wallpaper when you can spend time on the water (sounds like a familiar family story...) [ed notes: yup]

### **Let, Josie and Elodie building a house in Brightlingsea**

Let, Josie and Elodie in Brightlingsea have managed almost an entire year on (and in) the water; sailing, paddle boarding, windsurfing, kayaking, swimming... Josie sailed in her first ever National Championships (with her uncle Si) in the Mirror, coming 2nd overall and took part in the Oppie Nationals too with big cousin, Louis, showing her the ropes and introducing her to his various pals. Both girls thoroughly enjoyed an entire summer of sailing and water sports, with the usual ballet and acrobatics classes thrown in too. Many thanks to the lovely friends and family who kept the girls sailing whilst Grandad's hip was falling apart/on the mend!

Letty has been super busy keeping Beach School ([beachschool.org](http://beachschool.org)) running through lockdowns, getting involved in some exciting new projects with oysters, lobsters and traditional boats locally and working with the Time and Tide Bell charity organising scientific research and gathering lovely historic beach life stories around the UK. Let has taken up cold water swimming, which has been going well too... still managing at least once a week in the sea as we type in late December.

The bungalow is a never ending project but, rather excitingly, is now water tight. Brexit and Covid have meant a bit of a burst of progress, but the saving and pausing is a necessary process. Next year, there might be working electrics and a floor... who knows! We remain sure that we will meet the aim of moving in by the time Josie attends big school! The chickens will no doubt enjoy the gentle quiet of no building work all day!

### **Stephen and Carole - still finishing off the house they moved to in 1987**

And finally, for grandparents Stephen and Carole in Brightlingsea it has been another interesting year. Stephen still has projects around the world - opening a school in Riyadh this year but so much more too. And thanks to CoVID doing much of this from the office in the back garden of The Anchorage. A lot of work in education still, of course - with a push further into outdoor learning - but Health has inevitably become a much bigger part of his working life too with some fascinating projects ranging from a mobile dentists bus for refugees to huge training centres to reduce the nursing shortages. In amongst this, he fell into a skip and had to have a new hip! Tweeting from the operating slab was a new experience that not everyone enjoyed!

Carole has been up to her eyes in helping support Beach School, but also with a house of 5 people ~~two~~ three four of which are not so very obviously tidy, she has her work cut out there.

She is everyone's backstop for project bids, worksheets and more here too. Although Letty and her girls live with us, Carole has really missed her regular visits to the other two grandchildren in Portland, so it was a lovely surprise when they arrived for a pre Christmas couple of days. "My how you've grown" etc. We all feared a post Xmas lockdown guillotine would drop shortly.

We should have (almost did) all been going skiing this winter as usual, but with our channel train booked for 04:30 last Friday the dear old French chose to lock down to UK visitors at midnight Friday 5 hours before - so all the girls' work on the dry ski slopes here seemed wasted - except that we **will** be skiing in early 2022 - we just don't know quite when or how yet!

Our lovely old 1907 oyster smack the My Alice has been laid up since September having new bulwarks fitted - just locating a larch tree trunk with the right curve in it was hard enough, but the work is about halfway finished now. With CoVID there was little racing but we have been doing "lots of little jobs too" and we had a weekend as a pirate ship, which was great fun too. Helpfully we have many sorts of rum to keep morale up and are hoping for a vintage year in 2022. We will see.





of  
ve  
ags  
ag