

Steve and Jenny Bunning

2010

The snow has been falling for a day or so offering camouflage to the sheep and gulls. Today's sea is inky grey, shaded by snow and falling sunlight, though for most of November it's been whiter than the land. Jenny's out at kirk (cleaning rota) and hasn't a free evening (mostly music) before our Christmas Bahrain travels; this evening we're off to a thanksgiving supper with friends (if we can get out through the snow) and tomorrow Steve's choir reassembles for Christmas.

January began our year in infamous style as Steve was plucked from the waters of northern Orkney by the Coastguard helicopter; as far as he was concerned it was from almost certain death; Jen, from experience, is learning to take these incidents in her stride. With no lasting ill effects (two hours in the water led to mild hypothermia) it became a "fifteen minutes of fame" experience with paper, radio and TV interviews. Being Orkney, everyone knew about it and the teasing is diminishing rather than ended. This incident is why this year you've received an RNLI card instead of a photo.

Peridot has been used well, including a couple of trips to Auskerry, around Gairsay, and a one-way sail to Shetland. Wind conditions caused us to return with boat on a Northlink Ferry, but still gave us a satisfying holiday, calling in for a blustery, eventful night at Fair Isle and then exploring some of Shetland by public transport. The camaraderie in Victoria Dock, Lerwick, was excellent. We are keen to return, but plan to make the most of trailer sailing using Northlink to enable us to explore the northern isles of Shetland. The gas heater makes it all possible for

Jen to contemplate! We've also taken many folk out and even raced in Rousay regatta, although Peridot is (or we are) so slow that everyone else had finished supper by the time we crossed the line. In the autumn we sailed in different style, chartering a large yacht in Sicily with family and friends. It was wonderful to just anchor and dive in, though we still experienced a variety of weather to keep sailing interesting.

Again we have enjoyed lovely visits from friends and family, though we've been a little quieter than in previous years. Some have been up for specific events (such as the St Magnus Festival) and others have had events thrust upon them. Remember we would love to welcome you here in 2011, by which time our next project of installing a wood burning stove should be complete.

This year's lambs were a mixed bunch – lost more than usual, but also had the biggest ever; freezer now bulging.

Steve is now (remarkably!) in his sixth year of doing the same job; possibly the fact that it is reinvented very frequently has helped with that stability. Jen is still at the same school but has moved a couple of children on to the secondary school this year. Given current local government cuts there will almost certainly be some (more) changes in the year ahead but so far we have no idea what effect these will have. We've done a little foster caring, mostly respite but one emergency placement when a mother was ill.

We hope you enjoy a lovely Christmas and look forward to staying in touch through 2011.



Peridot in Auskerry – remains of wrecked ship behind



We had a couple of nights with this young lad staying



Jen photographs Steve paddling into danger