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Newsletter of the Grafham Flying Fifteen Fleet

Issue 1 - January, 2018

Happy New Year!

Welcome to the first Fleet Newsletter of 2018. Much of the following material has appeared before, mainly in Tim's regular email bulletins, but you will find some previously unpublished content and a summary of recent changes following yesterday's Fleet AGM.

Under New Management

After the usual tightly-fought elections, the following were 'persuaded' to offer themselves up to serve the fleet for the coming year. I should say, in passing, that the task of identifying suitable volunteers was made particularly difficult this year because of the long and dedicated work of the outgoing fleet officers - **Fleet Captain** Tim O'Brien, **Treasurer / Scorer** John Forsdike and **Fleet Dinner / Trophy Management** Jim & Freda Hibbert.

For 2018, the incumbents of these offices are:

Fleet Captain - Barry Wyatt

Treasurer & Scorer - Jonathan & Trish Knight

Fleet Dinner & Trophies - Susie Sonntag

Anniversary

It can hardly have escaped notice that, back in July, the Father of the Fleet (John Clifton) celebrated his century by, amongst other things, scaring the living daylights out of his helm (Paul Stevens) by virtue of his exploits with the Spinnaker in his beloved Fifteen 'Flying Swan'. As well as the usual cake, John was presented with a commemorative sweat shirt - and I don't believe this photograph has received wide circulation before now.



Sadly, John has decided that the time has arrived to hang up his sailing boots, so FF3504 is now up for sail. If you're looking for a reasonably-priced race-equipped Fifteen, take a look at her [detailed specifications](#) - or get in touch with John on [REDACTED] to arrange a viewing / test sail.

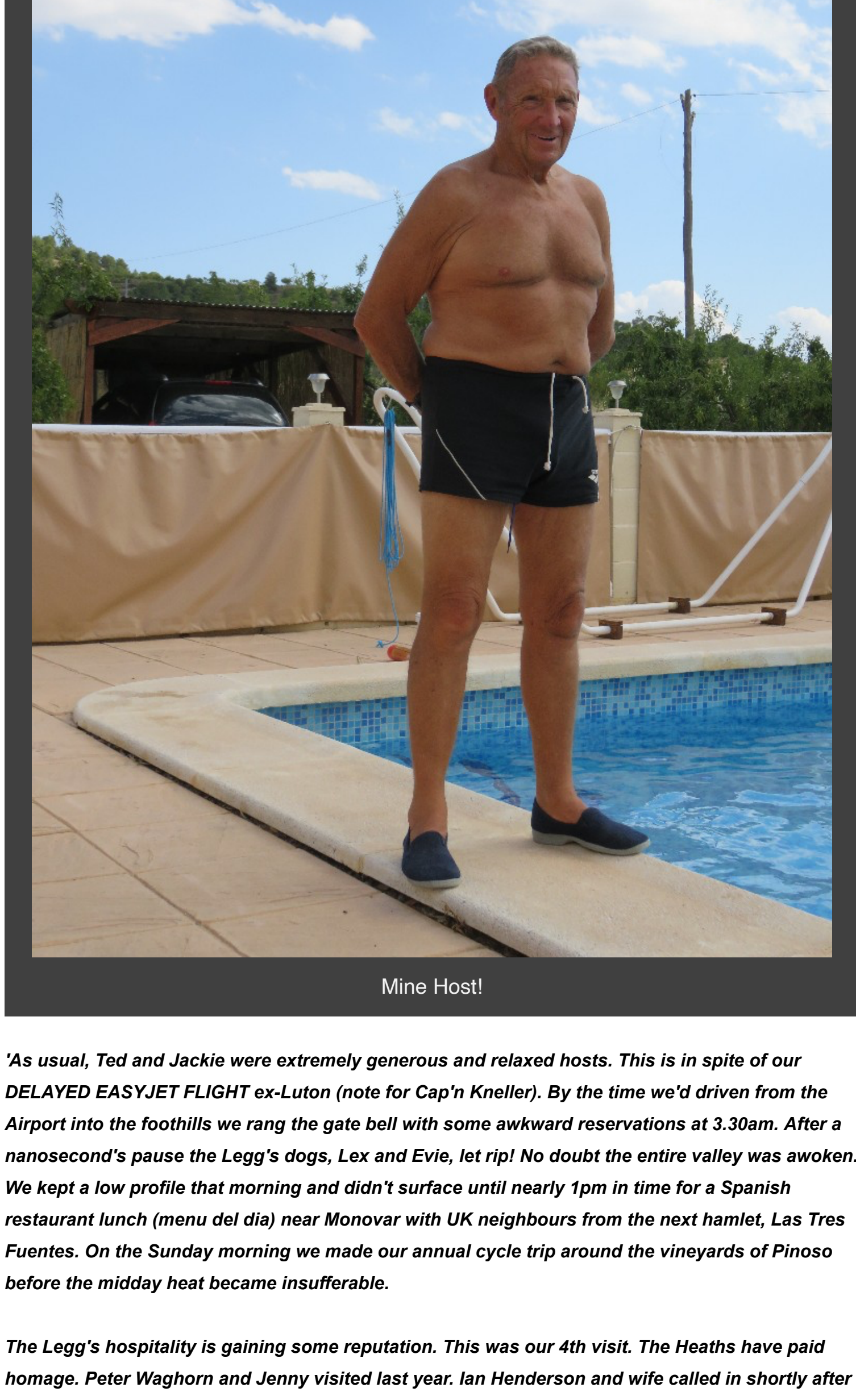
Alan Eade

The old-timers in the fleet (yes, I know I can now count myself as one of you!) may remember Alan Eade, who was a regular on Wednesday evenings around the time I bought my first Fifteen. Alan suffered a heart attack last June. Following treatment at Addenbrookes and Papworth, he is progressing well and, when we last heard, was much more active. We wish Alan a full recovery.

Fifteens Far and Wide!

The name Ted Legg conjures up a final blast from the past - for this issue at least. For many years, Ted crewed the legendary *Fighting Fit* with Nick Heath, eventually purchasing her and campaigning her in Wednesday evening series at Grafham before moving to Spain (when Nick reclaimed *Fighting Fit* and resumed racing her nationally and internationally in the FF Silver Fleet).

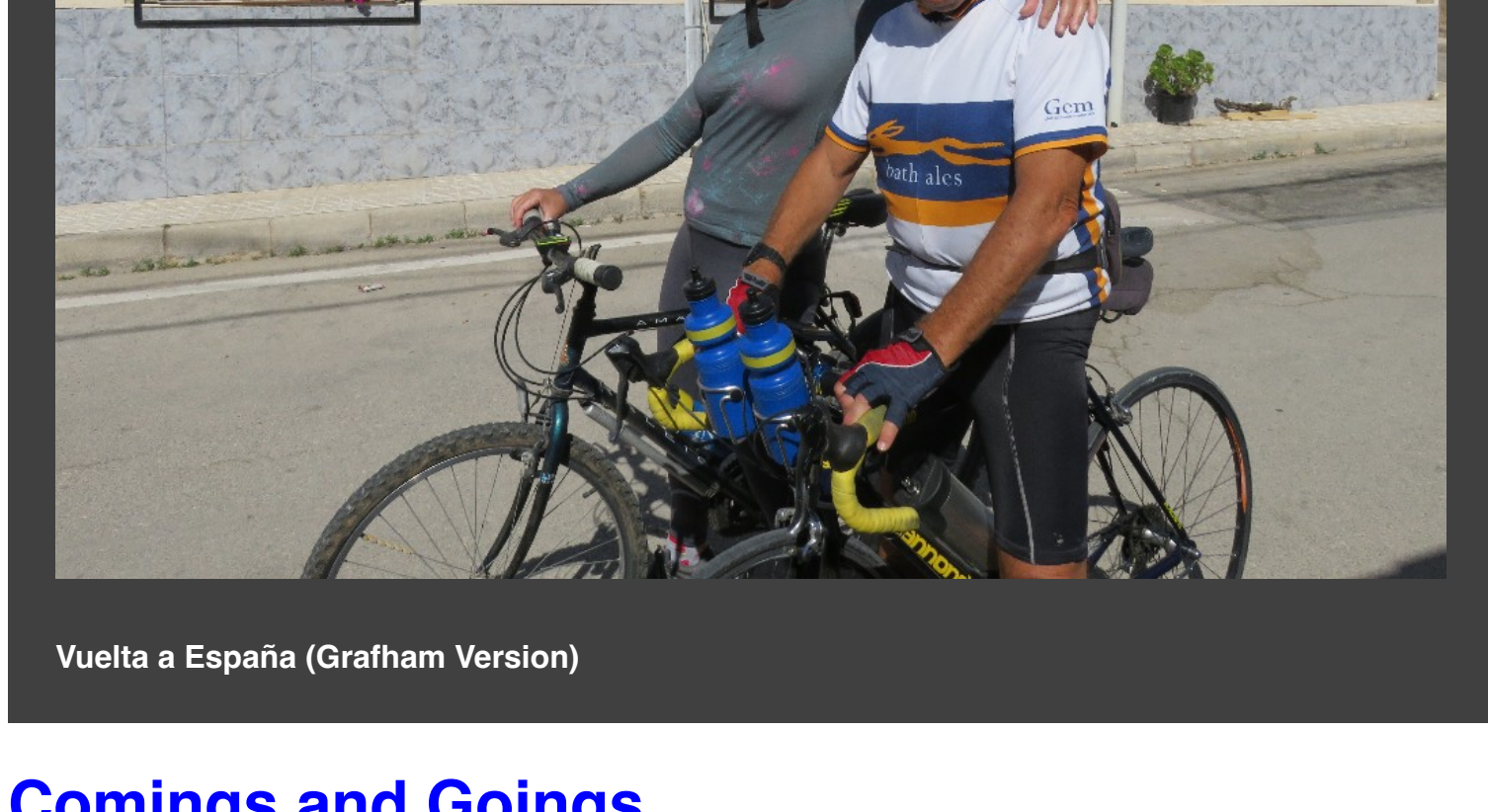
Back in the summer of 2017, Pip Noon (coincidentally, Nick's preferred crew in these latest exploits) visited the Leggs at their almond grove villa in Las Encebras, a hamlet outside Pinoso and Pip kindly sent us the following account.



Mine Host!

'As usual, Ted and Jackie were extremely generous and relaxed hosts. This is in spite of our DELAYED EASYJET FLIGHT ex-Luton (note for Cap'n Kneller). By the time we'd driven from the Airport into the foothills we rang the gate bell with some awkward reservations at 3.30am. After a nanosecond's pause the Legg's dogs, Lex and Evie, let rip! No doubt the entire valley was awoken. We kept a low profile that morning and didn't surface until nearly 1pm in time for a Spanish restaurant lunch (menu del dia) near Monovar with UK neighbours from the next hamlet, Las Tres Fuentes. On the Sunday morning we made our annual cycle trip around the vineyards of Pinoso before the midday heat became insufferable.

The Legg's hospitality is gaining some reputation. This was our 4th visit. The Heaths have paid homage. Peter Waghorn and Jenny visited last year. Ian Henderson and wife called in shortly after Pip and Shawn. As the second residence for the Fleet, we've decided to rename their house the Grafham Water Country Club (GWCC). On offer for guests: pool, sun loungers, quaffable local Moscatel wine at 1.50 Euro per bottle, terrace BBQs, rambles and dog-walking along the field terraces with expansive views of Murcia, gastronomy, the local market and customised cycling itineraries.'



Vuelta a España (Grafham Version)

Comings and Goings

2017 - 2018 is likely to prove a period of major change for the fleet - and several of its key members.

Last autumn, **Ben Longstaffe** took up a new job in Dublin, depriving us of a regular member of the Sunday racing community and Mark of a crew. We understand that **Mark** is thinking of returning to the Laser fleet - for which we offer profound condolences! - but we expect regular guest appearances through 2018.

I've already noted **John Clifton's** decision to hang up his sailing boots: he'll be sadly missed, though we hope to see him socialising at the club on warm Wednesday evenings.

Julian Clarke has announced his intention to take early retirement from his teaching post in the summer and to move to north-west Yorkshire. He's sold his boat and is busy practising the dialect - but he was back at Grafham yesterday, sailing with Simon Kneller, so I doubt we've yet seen the last of him!

And finally, in the debit column, we're likely to be losing **Richard Ledger** shortly: Richard plans a move to Poole, where the Dukes have proved it possible to race seven days a week!

However, some of these gaps have already been filled by new recruits to the fleet: **Mike & Jean Wilczynski** bought FF3583 back in the autumn and have been racing regularly and enthusiastically through the challenging conditions we've experienced during December and January. Following Ian Williamson's decision to retire from active sailing, Brian Appleyard now has sole ownership of FF3464, which he continues to race (mainly) on Wednesday evenings. And Mark and Ben's boat is not leaving Grafham, having been sold to **Andy & Sue Rhodes** who, I believe, spent the autumn familiarising themselves with what, for them, was a new class and preparing to join the fray in the spring.

Waiting in the wings are a number of people who are anxious to experience - and race - a Fifteen, or who are actively considering buying one and joining the fleet. These include:

Name	Email	Tel
Sam Neal	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Holly Griffin	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Nigel Ferrier	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Richard Rose	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
Sebastian Murray	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]

Should you find yourself without a crew at any time, please contact one of the above, give them the opportunity to experience close crewed class racing and, at the same time, increase our racing fleet.

'Recent' Happenings

Autumn 2017

GWSC Fifteneers were represented at the worlds in Napier NZ by Pip Noon who, helmed by Nick Heath, secured 1st place (Classic Fleet). Four Grafham boats entered the Nationals in Falmouth in November, with Mark & Ben Longstaffe securing 5th. Ten Grafham boats sailed the competitive visiting entry.

The Training day in early October was well attended, with 7-boats out on the water. We are grateful to Dave Lucas and Mark Longstaff for their insights and on Wednesday running video commentary, a classic in itself which made for a fun afternoon and some learning too! We expect to re-run the exercise in the Spring - details here in due course.

The Grand Prix was sailed in particularly windy conditions on December 30th. The entry was sadly depleted but Simon Kneller & Simon Dabson did exceptionally well to claim third place in the medium handicap fleet. Our retiring Fleet Captain distinguished himself in the 500m Butterfly section of this event. Both he and crew Colin Nutt abandoned ship when (I believe) the main sheet block parted. (Tim was suitably evasive when interviewed subsequently!) FF4042 continued on her way, causing some alarm among the rest of the racing fleet. Tim was rescued by a passing Blazer who was judged to have made the quip of the day when he announced 'I've only room for one!' Another one (in the form of a safety boat) did indeed come along later to pick up Colin but they wisely called a halt to proceedings once they'd been re-united with their boat.

January, 2018

January has suffered from either excessive or insufficient wind - to say nothing of Arctic temperatures. Four boats ventured out on January 7th. There was then no racing until 21st, when Mike & Jean braved the fog and snow for the one race offered. This week (28th) the weather relented and six boats enjoyed sparkling sailing in 15+ knots and (relatively) balmy temperatures.

For your Diary

Annual Dinner and Prize Giving takes place on March 24th. You should have received menu details and payment form - if not please mail me and I'll pass on a copy. Please note that, even if you're unable to attend the dinner, fleet dues are now payable (Helm: £8.00, Crew: £6.00). John Forsdike will be pleased to receive your cheques - or you may send them direct to the Treasurer (Jonathan Knight, [REDACTED]).

We host the Flying Fifteen Inland Championships on the weekend of June 9 - 10. This year, the event is a qualifier for the World Championships so we're likely to attract a sizeable entry. The Class Association has decided that Grafham should host the Inlands biennially on a permanent basis, so this is something of a feather in the cap for the Club. We're considering organising (with support from the Class Association) a training day on the Friday before the event itself (i.e. on June 8th). Details here in due course.

To Come

I've received complete results for the 2017 series from John Forsdike, but I've not yet updated the relevant pages in the Fleet Section of the Web Site. I will do this in the next couple of days. I've also got to tidy up the notes of Sunday's AGM and circulate these.

The eagle-eyed among you will have noticed that I've changed the medium that I'm using to prepare and distribute the Newsletter. I've not yet checked, but I suspect this means that you'll no longer be able to access the fleet email distribution list from the message header. Instead, I plan to circulate this as a separate file.

