

“Very busy in a most fabulous way...”

Jill Oakes, on the plans for unloading the imported Flying Fifteens

From the perspective of **Jill Oakes** and her team of Flying Fifteen (F15) enthusiasts, it truly was an unbelievable moment...to finally unlock a huge shipping container that had come all the way from Australia by sea, and to have the sight be exactly as they had expected and hoped for. A quick comparison with the packing up photos taken weeks before in Perth by Aussie F15 sailor **John Hassen** confirmed that everything had arrived in total ship shape. And there was even a bit of Australian water still in one of the rudders!



The story began in the spring of 2024, when John Hassen’s group from Western Australia (with the largest Flying Fifteen fleet in the world) arranged with SISC member Jill Oakes and her group in Ganges to donate four Flying Fifteen sailboats to Salt Spring. (See here for a recap of the whole story: <https://ffiwa.com/wa-flying-fifteens-to-canada/#more-5163>). For the Ganges folks, it seemed almost too exciting to actually contemplate! They spent several months waiting in anticipation, with fingers crossed and high hopes, for the huge shipping container to make its way to Salt Spring.

F15s Arrive in Ganges, July 4, 2024
story by Jill Oakes and Wendy Vine

Finally Jill and her team learned that the container full of donated Flying Fifteens was due to arrive in Ganges on Thursday, July 4th at 2 pm. They had tracked the container's journey by freighter from Perth, Australia to Indonesia, and then to Vancouver; finally it was coming by truck to Salt Spring. A bonus was having it arrive early that day, at 11:30 a.m., much to everyone's surprise.

SSI Harbour Master **Russ Ellis Gray** played a lead role in creating Unloading Plan A, which outlined very clearly who was doing what. A combination of interested SISC members and members of the sailing public showed up to help with the very well-coordinated effort. **Eric Jacobsen** was instrumental in checking out a variety of options and arranging with **Dan Child** of *Dan's Crane Service* to help lift boats out of the container. **Nick Williams** from *Mid-Isle Marine & Equipment* operated the forklift, working in tandem with Dan to control the crane remotely. It was one fine "unloading dock dance", with the forklift and crane slowly supporting the boat-loaded trolleys until they were resting safely on the ground.

Jepp and **John** were ready with their welding equipment to weld pieces on the trolleys as necessary. Then two of the boat hulls, FireFox III and FPhoenix, strapped upside down to the top of the boat-loaded trolleys, were lifted off, flipped over with everyone's help and, along with their matching keels, taken to *Mid-Isle Marine & Equipment* for bottom coating.

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Tony Meek, Gail Bryn-Jones, and Russ unscrewed the multitude of ratchet straps securely holding the load, leaving critical straps secured until the boat-loaded trolleys were removed.

Gail and Jill helped remove the spare sails and spare boat parts, handing them off to **Cindy Jacobsen, Kelly-Ann and Hue Haslauer, Shelley Kobyłka**, and **Ruth Riddell**, who loaded them into two vehicles and took them to the F15 sail loft for sorting.



Heather Sloat, Kristi Norget and **Helena Bryn-McLeod** joined the sail-sorting team; then everyone ended up at Centennial Dock helping Tony and Eric re-assemble and rig two of the four “new” boats, FFiddle

Dee Dee and Mini FFin. Once they were rigged, **Jan Macpherson** provided the safety kits.



By 6 pm, the new Flying Fifteens were launched at Centennial Park, and sailed over to the Sailing Club to the welcome party on F-Dock, hosted by **Daria Zovi**.

Commodore David Wood warmly welcomed the boats, amazed and delighted that they were actually here and that the plan had come to fruition. Kelly-Ann provided champagne to welcome the imported Flying Fifteens into the Northern Hemisphere.



John Hillier and his **Junior Race Team** did a sailpast. **Silk Questo** was event photographer.

Afterwards, the new boats were tied up at the floating dock SE of the SISC docks. (Thanks to Daria for making a sign

for the temporary spot and to **Rod Macdonald** for use of the float.) A huge thanks goes to absolutely everyone who participated in this day and made it possible.

The next tasks are to replace some lines, wooden tillers fatigued by sun and heat, and other minor maintenance issues. But for now, the group is elated to have this step



accomplished. The boats are here and it's only onward and upward now for this energetic group. Their next event, a weekend workshop with visiting New Zealand coach Lily Grimshaw, is on July 12.

Anyone interested in the Flying Fifteens can check out the Flickr photos available from the Club website, and the Club's Flying Fifteen page: <https://www.saltspringsailing.ca/club-racing-2012/the-flying-15/>