



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year ! Happy Chinese New Year too ! :-)

2017 Christmas Newsletter from the Lovelock Family in Sunninghill on www.gpss.co.uk/xmas17.htm



Hi All ! I've been writing these online Christmas Newsletters since [1995](#) . Every picture or link will take you to a picture, video, or page. Many of us prefer paper, to show friends. The printer-friendly version is in [xmas17p.pdf](#) but may be old. Paper will not play videos - yet :-)

I start the 2017 Newsletter with this picture of June at her Royal Ascot Tennis Club Christmas party on 1st December. This was just hours after she'd had a hospital operation that morning, to fit a metal plate into her broken wrist. Three weeks earlier, June had fallen in the kitchen, and both broken and dislocated her left wrist. She'd said it didn't feel too bad, and it was three days before she eventually had it x-rayed. She'd used her car, but said she was not happy about driving to work. It was then off to Reading Hospital A&E to fix it in plaster; then the recent Operation. I was reminded of the [Day that Samantha was Born](#). After the unexpected birth at home, with June in bed, cradling baby Samantha, she said, "Robin, you may as well make a cup of tea for the three of us". As we sipped our tea, I remember Dr Kortman's hands were shaking, and June said, "That was not so bad : I would not mind having more children" ! The bad news is that she is right-handed, so can still hit me :-)

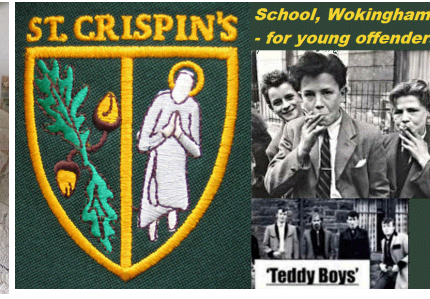
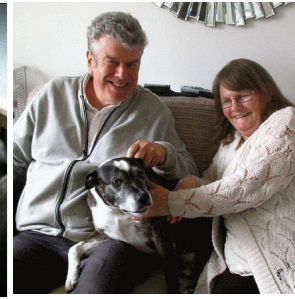


We never know what the next day holds for us. Despite a good start, the year soon began sadly: June's father, [Jack Ponsford](#) , passed away a month before his 98th birthday. Our [Sunninghill Parish Magazine](#) included a page of tribute, and some of you may find other pages of interest. Jack remained as "bright as a button", right up until his last day, reading the newspaper in Frimley Park Military Hospital.

I lost count of the stories he told me, many of which old men do not tell their children, and certainly not their daughters ! e.g. his war memories, including being caught by the [Germans](#) , north of Dunkirk, near De Haan, hiding in a farmhouse with Sid De Haan, who later set up SAGA Holidays. They shared adjacent bunks in Stalag 8b POW Camp, before an exchange of POWs in 1943, in time for Jack to be sent to the south coast, in time for Normandy.

But it was his local Sunninghill stories that were amazing, including helping his mate shift furniture from the Ferguson's place opposite us in Sunninghill, to Dummer. Then laying the carpets there. All the while interacting with the young family including [Fergie](#) who married Prince Andrew. Other stories included those of [Diana Dors](#) and husband [Alan Lake](#) , but I won't say more here. Sleep well Jack.

Robin's 70th Birthday Party was in the Cordes Hall Sunninghill on 26th May, and was very shambolic due to his poor delegation of things - but he thoroughly enjoyed where he'd put effort in the weeks before it: contacting members of his massive extended Sharp family. Also seeing old friends again. Good that we did not have that police raid, half expected :-)



Pam Coughlan is a lady close to me, who could not make it up from Exeter to my party. However, we stay in touch by email and 'phone, and work behind the scenes with our www.NHSCare.info activity. Few know about it, but one new friend is set to receive £1.4 million from the Government, using the Law Firm that we gave legal advice to all those years ago. I am reminded of my dear ex-EASAMS friend **Trevor Saunders** and fond memories. On a much lighter note, a fraudster in **Manilla** made the mistake this year of trying to use that old scam of being stuck in a hotel without money to pay his bills and get a flight home. I had a conversation for about a week with them, not pretending that I knew it was a scam. He'd done me a favour by revealing that I had two new "clients" this year with exactly the same name and northern accents. They were let in on my little joke that follows ... I contacted my banks, and an old overseas ex-marine chum. The fraudster must have been delighted on receiving a personal delivery of a pack of sandwiches, 2.55 GBP, and a note from Robin: "I hope this is enough for now" :-)

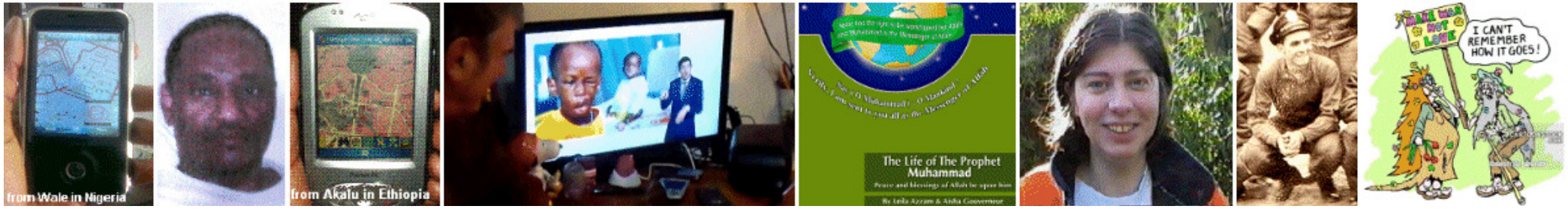


Sicily in 2017: There is much more on our [Holiday](#) page, including a [Video](#) . Enrico and Matilde were our guides, and Duke came to dinner in Naxos too. We visited a few favourite spots within easy reach, such as San Marco, and Taormina. Three nights in Portopalo allowed us to explore the deep south of Sicily, including the amazing ancient church in Ispica. Robin had problems pronouncing "Monte Arso", when we were shown around the farm where Alessio is working. We had a picnic with friends near Antillo, and pinched most of the cherries they were growing :-)



Enrico will remember Akalu, and our light-hearted email banter, when they were both developing Pocket PC based systems for their home countries: Sicily and Ethiopia. The BBC TV World News at 0700 on 22 February 2017, triggered looking at old emails, discussion, and this message that is still on the "Home" page of www.GPSS.co.uk : Ethiopian Famine, and Africa. Perhaps Pensioners can help bring a little Peace and Understanding in the

World ? One can but hope. Love to you and yours, Akalu.



It's a funny old World, with overlapping networks of friends and family. Italy, Italians, and things Italian, are a love that June and I share, further back than 1999, when we started taking [Holiday](#) there - or Sicily ! Bert Davies, passed away last year, but it was only late this year, that my Team-Joker friend Peter Facey, on the [Snoopy](#) pages, helped me create the online [Book](#) of Bert's war memoirs, as a PoW in Italy. Bert's son Alan and I got up to mischief together, from when we were about seven, and lived in Luckley Rd Wokingham. Bert and Alan introduced me to fishing, and would take us places in his car, with [Gus](#) before we all got push-bikes. In later years, Bert would give Alan and I a lift to London each day, when I went to University. I have many happy memories, including Bert teaching me the poem [Albert and Lion](#) :-)



That's Peter and Dick, in the recent video of us mucking about on Bray Lake. Goodness knows if Snoopy's Boat 11 will make it's attempt to cross the Atlantic this year, but I'm sure it will try before April Fool's Day in 2018 ! :-)

Here are some pictures taken this year, that give you a flavour of how we spent our time, and who with. Thanks Terry, for the caption "Into which arm did the doc say the plate was implanted?" - my testing the metal detector on June's wrist. Also for pointing out that the turfs I got from a rogue trader next door were not a good colour match. June and I had a lot of day trips out, doing things like [Geocaching](#) . Here we are with Dick and Liz. The women took a late holiday in Portugal with Gary, but I preferred it at home...



... meeting up with friends and relatives, I'd not seen in a while. Eric Wardle passed away this year, but his videos and his boat, Snoopy Sloop 12, live on.



Our Games Room needs a tidy up before Christmas Lunch here with the family. Women can be so unreasonable. For those using a google-translate flag, the caption reads June says "Robin ! You are NOT to use my Turkey Baster to suck water out of Snoopy's Robot Boat !".



June and Samantha took an "Active Away" overseas tennis holiday in April, to Sani Beach in Greece. They love tennis and sunshine. In September they were joined by Michelle, Saskia and Gary, on another overseas holiday, just down the road from Lagos. They brought me back this little boat, and it brings back happy memories of Lagos in 1981, and chatting to Nigerian friends ever since.



So it only remains for me to say, whatever your circumstances, Love and Strength to all. This even includes [Lawyers](#) . When using the Net, take care what you click on :-)
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