



CAPITAL WINGS



Gosh! It's almost Christmas 2024. The year seems to have flown by and thoughts are now moving towards spending holiday time with family and friends. But first, my thanks to Kerrie for an account of Big Al's landmark birthday celebration.

Big Al, as everyone knows him, reached the big "60" in October. He is not one for big celebrations and was happy to know that no party had been arranged for him. However, what he wasn't aware of was that the "meal" at the local Chinese was not just for seven of us but was in fact for 29! Kerrie had been planning this party since January, inviting the usual reprobates to help celebrate this milestone, with friends and family from all parts of the country in on it. Even Mark flew in from Saudi Arabia just for the surprise.

As is the norm during the football season, there was a game on this particular Saturday. Great, that gets him out of the way for the travellers to gather at Al and Kerrie's house, to be transported then to the Chinese restaurant. Al's mate, Rob, was driving to the game at Brighton and then coming to the restaurant after picking up his wife on the way. All was set in place — balloons on the tables, cake in the kitchen ready to go, everyone around the tables. Chloe was tracking how close they were getting to the restaurant on her phone. As they walked in with Al, he never noticed the quiet table in the corner for 29 until we all started singing Happy Birthday.

Al genuinely thought he had got away with it it was never going to happen, was it? Sadly, missing from the evening were Ray and Ginny as they were ill with flu-like symptoms.

After the meal, everyone came back to the house to continue the evening celebration with copious amounts of alcohol. As the clocks were going back

that night, there was several the party who managed to make the '2 to 1 club' which turned into the '3 to 2' because people only noticed the time at 3.14am. As per the norm in the Peskett household, a full cooked breakfast was provided a few hours later for those who had stayed and anyone else who fancied coming back.

After the last ones had left, Al was still in a daze as to what had happened. He would, however, like to thank all who came to help him celebrate his 60th.

Capital had its own Christmas gathering at the end of November at our Mole Night venue, The Woodbine Inn. This is not to be confused with the post-Christmas weekend bash in January. The pub had put its festive lights out in October and combined with the super moon over Epping Forest, this made for a beautiful view. More on the party in next month's report.



Moonlit Inn

The end of the year makes us reflect on what has happened and where we have travelled on our Gold Wings during the year. Johnny has looked through his library of unpublished photographs and here are a few more to remind you of events both at home and in Europe.

Sparklers were lit in Slovenia when the organisers presented those with birthdays during the Slovenian Treffen with cakes. Peter and Wendy had a double celebration and shared their delicious cakes with many, including Johnny and myself.



Sparkling Peter and Wendy

At the British Treffen in Oakham, Hilary got udderly delirious after her parts were tickled. She's always ready for some fun and jokes with her group of dancing ladies when the fancy dress theme is announced.



Excuse Me

We mustn't forget to say thank you for the time that our Reps and National Committee members put in on our behalf to organise events and corral us for run outs, meetings and meals. Yetti and Ginny continue to do sterling and unstinting work for Capital. He was modeling a rather fetching apron when he collected a prize at Oakham. I wonder if he wears it at home when he's cooking the evening meal?



Yetti Dressing Down

Annie and Chris Easter enjoyed swapping tokens for money at Oakham. They are also great friends of Capital despite living in Devon. Annie is the Minutes Secretary for the GWOCGB and Chris, the Editor of WingSpan. Johnny liaises with Chris to send in our monthly report. Our thanks go to them both for the work they do.



Easter Delight

Many of us ventured to Skegness for the 10th Anniversary of the Light Parade there. It was the first time for us and we thoroughly enjoyed the weekend's events and exploring Skegness. I don't know how many of you know the history of the Jolly Fisherman but I will tell you anyway.

John Hassall, one of the greatest of all poster artists, drew the original Jolly Fisherman poster in 1908 having visited Skegness only once. The poster was commissioned by the Great Northern Railway to encourage visitors to use their trains for holidays and seaside breaks. The slogan "*Skegness is so bracing*" formed part of the poster and is as famous as Jolly himself. May 1989 saw the unveiling of the new Jolly Fisherman statue in Compass Gardens, close to the Grand Parade and here he is.



Jolly Fisherman

Christmas wouldn't be Christmas without Santa and some fairy lights. Santa visited one of our parties in the New Year so we trust he's getting ready for all your parties now. As you know, Capital is unable to have our Christmas Lights Run around London now. The introduction of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods has resulted in blocked or diverted roads and ULEZ puts almost everyone off from visiting the city whether you are riding in/on any sort of vehicle. We still decorate our bike though so here's some sparkle to remember the old days.



Hello Santa

All that's left is for me to wish you all a very Happy Christmas however you celebrate it. All of us at Capital send you New Year best wishes and we look forward to meeting up with you somewhere, sometime in 2025.

Miss (Helen) Whiplash



Tango Lights Up