

The Datchet Guide to Buying a Second Hand Flying Fifteen – What to Look for

Some thoughts on what to look for on secondhand FFs....

Foils:-

- check out the keel. Look for rust stains, chunks and nicks out of the leading edge at the bottom.

A refurb is about £120 locally we discovered, but you have to get the keel off and give it to the guy.

So better to get a nice looking keel.

- rudder : check the tip of the leading edge, and also check the fit when it is mounted in the boat. Any slack in any direction (bushes) when you wiggle it? Is the locking bar and brass head in good condition? You'll need an Allen key too get the rudder off and on. I think it's 17mm

Hull:-

- it'll be Dingwall or Ovington probably. They say the Dingwalls depreciate faster but they are good boats too.

- run an eye along the outside. Even if the boat is pretty new, look for repairs (press with the palm of your hand to see if it 'pants' there) , and what I find most is that you get 'dings' - little areas where the convex has been pushed through to concave. Brett Dingwall can take dings out if you leave the boat with him a while, but it's the kind of thing you leave until you've got loads of them and do them all at once.

- leading edge in good nick?

- inside : tanks dry and got their bags

- toestraps easily adjusted?

- look at the hog just below the table : any splits visible there?

- there are basically two fit outs. Alan Bax or Phil Evans. It's all a matter of preference and so long as it works for you, that'll be fine.

- has the boat been adapted so that bags or chute can be used?

- has the tiller been rubbing the forward edge of the stern tank? We can show you a fix for that.

Rig:-

- What mast is it? Most popular now for most body-weights will be selden epsilon. For lightweights there are alternatives.
- get in the boat, grip the mast at just below the gooseneck and try to rotate it... Any play there?? There shouldn't be....
- rigging look in good order? I find the first thing that goes is the loop at the wire tail of the genoa halyard, where it crosses the hook. Check too that the hook is not gradually pulling itself straight.
- mast should preferably have spreaders with all the modern selden adjusters on them. All look OK? The latest ones are much easier to handle and have moved on from the mini bottlescrew things.
- windex there?
- Boom : the best ones rotate now on a round gooseneck. Does it have a chamfer at the outboard end?
- main halyard : the main stress point seems to be at the top end where the halyard sits across the to sheave under load. Look in good condition?
- spiro pole or double ended? The main thing is that the spiro needs a takeoff higher up the mast than the double ender. Check to see if the owner has had a mind change ever and that thing has been done properly either way.
- main boom : outhaul runs freely?
- spinnaker pole in good nick? Has it ever been converted from spiro to double ended because mine came out too long for the rules when I tried that.
- does it come with a rig tension gauge?

Sails :-

- the main choices are pinnell and bax or goacher. There are some nice Batts around, but they are not so popular - though finished second in the Worlds last year. Whichever the boat was originally set up for, you have to stick with really. I just found that out to my cost when I tried to set P&B on a Goacher/Evans boat. The result was horrible. They're both good, just not to be crossed over.
- how old are the best set? Unless you are really light, you will want the most powerful

cut probably. If the genoa is 2 years old, you'll want a new one. Probably if the main is 2-3 years old you may want a new one. (may). It's about 1000 for a suit.

Spinnakers - well I run mine till they blow. Probably I get four seasons maybe five, in a bags boat. If you have a chute boat, they probably last slightly less time.

I think a new one is 500. You just need to budget for it that's all!!

Covers :-

- Looking for signs of wear at the rear quarters. Check for rot. Can the under straps maintain good tension – critical on a flat cover. I prefer flat to boom up and find them easier on the fifteens because of trailer height. Plenty would disagree with me though.

- loops for trailer light board??

- an under-cover is a nice thing to have, also a padded rudder bag.

Trailer :-

- expensive!! Grip the top of the wheel and jiggle it. Any bearings wear evident?? Did they launch (salt water) on this or a beach trolley?

- So long as it's a low loader (low keel platform) you'll be happy with it. At datchet you need a 50 foot trailer rope (maybe 60? I forget) for launching

- lighting board... does it attach to loops on the cover