

Early Spring Newsletter – April 2014

John Harding

A very strong turnout of Class members celebrated the life of John Harding at the Service in St Mary's Twyford last Thursday. We remembered and honoured a man who had clearly made a huge impact upon his many friends across the varied strands of his busy and active life. Above all John enjoyed having 'fun' and sailing was at the heart of all his pleasures. If there was one recurring theme from those who remembered John, it was the sheer enjoyment of his presence that he brought to any event, especially for those who had the privilege to sail with him.

Your Class Committee will meet on the 29th April and amongst other early summer business will consider the vacant post of Class Captain.

John was keen to press ahead with this early spring Newsletter so I have taken it upon myself to complete it on his behalf.

The Way Ahead Committee Final Report

May I pay tribute to Mark Hall and his skilled team in completing two years of considerations and hard work to produce the WAC final report. The WAC was conceived to capture the enthusiasm of our Centenary Year coupled with the marketing successes run by Ted Roose and his team. The WAC was tasked to advise the Class Committee on the **way forward** in 12 subject areas, including Objects of the Association, future construction options and consequences, the Rule Book, and other areas. The WAC has reported their considerations with recommendations against each subject area. The results will be set before the Class Committee on the 29th April for consideration and further actions that the Committee feel appropriate. The WAC's broad conclusion found that the Class is in very good shape, the anticipated dip in turnout numbers post Centenary highs has not materialised, and newly renovated classic hulls are continuing to appear in the divisional fleets. All very good news.

The Technical Advisory Committee

Tony Monks and his knowledgeable team have been providing key advice for your Class Committee while quietly getting on with the demanding and often detail work of keeping our technical standards and protocols up-to-date. A considerable amount of skilled time has been devoted to the new Class Database that records each XOD and its governance arrangements concerning measuring, weighing and compliance with Boat Check-List requirements. A new issue of Measurement Certificates for each boat is in progress and then the traffic light scheme will be rolled out later this season. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact your Divisional TAC representative.

Arrangements for Cowes Week 2014

You will have seen earlier details of our plans for this year's regatta in the minutes of January's Class Committee Meeting, which are on the website.

Cowes Combined Clubs – who between them contribute about 240 volunteers and 'manage' the Regatta - have firmly taken onboard the many useful and constructive comments and suggestions made by the Class last year. For this summer, we are anticipating some new features.

First, the RYS start line ODM will be about 35 metres further out this year for all starts, so we have asked that this line becomes our standard RYS line - with the illuminating guidance lights. We have asked that the PRO may still retain an option to lay a replacement inflatable ODM to allow the line to angle either to the east or west to provide an overall fairer line if it becomes clear that boats might

bunch at a particular line end. The downside to this angled line is that the transit guidance lights will be switched off as they will no longer mark the line and trials with alternative, moveable, lights have not been satisfactory.

The committee boat start option will remain throughout the week, with the exception of the Thursday which is Cowes Town Regatta, and the second Saturday when very limited afloat resources are available. If we consider we would not achieve fair or good quality racing off the Squadron line, we will elect for the Committee Boat start. During the Regatta's first 4 days, when the sport-boat mini-series will be underway, our start will be before the second sport-boat start; this is a change from last year which was the other way round and found to be unsatisfactory. This revised scheme should make our starts much slicker and predictable. There are other adjustments in hand that are designed to enhance the quality of our committee boat starts – with, amongst other initiatives, a much stronger liaison between the committee boat and the course setters back in Cowes.

A novel feature this year is that White Group starters may have races starting on the Shrape Line. These starts are designed to keep us clear of the new Cowes breakwater, that will be only half built in August; the bottom half! We may use the Shrape line when starting to the east against an ebb (westerly setting) tide. We will watch the consequences closely and if in doubt will opt for a committee boat on that day.

We have modified our OCS penalty from last year, reverting to normal racing procedures. Starting under Flag Papa, for any XODs OCS we have asked for the traditional two guns, flag Xray, and, for any boats OCS, the chance to return to the pre-start side of the line and start again. This should make it fairer for those caught the wrong side of the line at race start without the burden of carrying an automatic time penalty. Last year under Papa there was only one gun and boats OCS didn't know of their penalty until the race results were shown.

The Central Solent Regattas

The Class is increasingly enjoying the two other main Central Solent Regattas: the Hamble based Central Solent Championships and the Charles Stanley Cowes Classics Week.

About 30 boats are expected to make their way to the Central Solent Champs on the weekend of the 12-13th July. This regatta has always enjoyed a strong representation of skilled helms and previous Cowes Week trophy winners to test their skills in busy back-to-back windward/leeward courses on the Hill Head plateau.

The more relaxed mid-week Charles Stanley Cowes Classics Week, 21-25th July, should see over 40 XODs this year. The organisers have noted our feedback from last year and we will be racing from our own committee boat in the quiet central Solent area with a combination of windward/leeward courses and some round-the-cans to test navigation skills.

For those seeking a longer stay on the sceptred Isle, there are additional Cowes based 'shoulder' regattas on the weekends immediately before and after Classics Week, or for those seeking a regatta experience further west, the Taittinger Regatta will be held at Yarmouth on the post Classics Week weekend, which this year is the weekend before Cowes Week begins.

I believe these regattas display a wonderful example of why our XODs retain such a loyal following – excellent and varied competition in large fleets, in a friendly Corinthian style, sailing a technically demanding, classic dayboat that has been creating pleasure for over 100 years.

That's all for now

Now I'm off to tease a bit of varnish work on *RELAXATION* for we need to launch soon. Now where did I stow those sails at the end of last year? Good luck – and see you on the water soon.

John Long

Deputy Chair of the Committee