

XOD – Class Captain’s newsletter – August 12th 2010

Cowes Week over: lessons learned for next year?

Whether you view the end of the week with relief, delight or exasperation or frustration will depend on many considerations, most of which I appreciate. However, let us begin by considering some positives, particularly if you are in the third or fourth categories.

First, much as I have enjoyed the remarkable triumphs of Stuart in recent years, it was a great pleasure to see Steve, Peter and Patrick win in *Catherine*. They have sailed consistently well for many years and this was a thoroughly deserved and absolutely comprehensive victory. Quite apart from the superb way in which they sailed, they were at all times modest and charming about it. I am simply delighted for them and offer them many congratulations speaking, as I am sure I do, for us all. I do likewise when I wish Stuart a speedy repair of his hand and better luck in trying to take his revenge next year. It will also be no surprise to Stuart’s admirers to learn that he was entirely uncomplaining about his injury and was at the very front of the queue of those who were thrilled with the Lawrences’ success and congratulated them on it.

Second, you will find a Press Release I have just written on our website. I say something about the first 5 boats home which I shall not repeat here save to say that the combination of youth, age, experience and sailing pedigree to be found in those five boats is a remarkable testament to our class: the winning helmsman aged about 46, I am told: in second and third places, Ben Paton and Andrew Shaw, both under 25, sailing in family boats and/or with family members. In fourth and fifth, the Jardine twins, Ado and Stuart, now in their mid-70 and as competitive as they were when first winning the Captain’s Cup over 50 years ago. If you don’t think that bodes well for the future of our class, you must have an even more pessimistic disposition than I have when I realise that – again – I have gone the wrong way up the beat and am about to fail to lay the windward mark.

Third, we got 8 races for the first time in years, at least 2 of which were very good, two bad, others average (no need to comment, thanks: I have had enough ‘helpful observations’ over the last week to last me a lifetime). Rather more important, I

believe, is the fact that we now have a really good relationship with the Race Officers and, contrary to the impression some of you seem to have, they are entirely sensitive to the importance of the XODs to Cowes Week as a whole. Their shortcomings are largely the product of habit and, perhaps also, the ingrained attitudes of an otherwise long-lost feudal society. But they are genuinely trying to be helpful and I felt that by the end of the week they were increasingly co-operative and receptive. They also realise that with 100 or more boats there can be no question of conventional squadron line starts next year. What I believe we are working towards is either starting on that line but with an outer distance mark in the form of a moveable object (probably committee boat) to give us a far squarer line or starting from around (or beyond) the Shrape from a proper line and coming back to the West inside Alpha as a form of gate. And/or we may have committee boat starts as we do every year and I promise to keep away (if we possibly can) from the Family Nadgers (work it out).

Your input

If you wish to make constructive suggestions about next year you can either prepare a memo for me in writing (do not try and bend my ear face to face or over the phone: it will only bend so far) or (and this is my preference) channel your suggestions through your Divisional Captain who can then circulate a divisional memo (as it were) upon which we, as the Class Committee, can decide. That will enable me to prepare what will, I hope, be a single document recording a consensus view which we can put to Cowes Week Ltd when we meet them later in the year.

August Press Release

I have referred to this already and it is on the website and when Tina sends round this newsletter, it will be attached. We plan to send it to the usual media outlets – local and national newspapers, monthly county magazines, the yachting press and so forth. However, if you have any contacts of your own that might be worth pursuing, please send them a copy yourself, even at the risk of duplication. Then please tell my wife, Lesley (she is acting as Press Liaison -norrislesley@googlemail.co)

Sponsorship

My earlier newsletter refers. Please re-double your efforts

Thank you, fellow seals

Can I thank all those who were kind enough to express sympathy or gratitude for the efforts we made and what we were able to achieve during what was, at times, quite a difficult week? I hope the increased level of communication of the Race Officers' plans was a help, even if the execution of those plans was sometimes sub-ideal.

Particular thanks are due also to Tina Scott for her continuing support and immaculate organisational skills, to Ted Roose for dealing so effectively with the Press and to Jeremy Willcock and his team for organising the Team Racing on the first Friday with impeccable efficiency (and very nice sandwiches).

William Norris

12th August 2010