



Class Captain

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A message from the new Class Captain

Even if my appointment in an uncontested election may have evoked memories of the mildly undemocratic processes once embraced by Chairman Mao, I can honestly say that you have done me a great honour and that I fully appreciate what a privilege it is to serve the Class. I shall do my best to continue the good work done by Mark Hall and will support all those who diligently devote themselves to our cause on the various committees or otherwise in official or unofficial roles.

As those of you who know me will already recognise, I come to this job with no other agenda than to defend and promote the interests of a class we love and to support those who are responsible for organising and administering its affairs. It is highly unlikely that I shall ever feel it appropriate to take sides in the various debates that interest many and excite a few. Rather, I hope to encourage those who hold strong and often conflicting opinions to advance their opinions harmoniously and constructively. The class is full of enthusiasts and enthusiasm is a priceless quality. But ill-feeling, suspicion and back-biting have no place in our discussions, privately or publicly. It was therefore a great relief to me personally that the rigging issue at the AGM was dealt with so sensibly and any decision on what is, I appreciate, a contentious matter is postponed till after the Centenary. My firm view is that we should, for the foreseeable future, be pre-occupied with things we agree about – that is, making the Centenary a great success – rather than things we do not.

As regards the proper administration of our affairs, I believe it is crucial that we recognise and, if necessary, re-affirm the clear structure for that task. The starting point – typical lawyer, I hear you say - is our Constitution. That states that the business of managing the Class is in the hands of the Class Committee. Each Division has two representatives on that Committee. So if a particular Division has a constituency position it wishes to promote, that is the place to do it. The next tier of our structure consists of the various committees. The Technical Advisory Committee has, according to the Constitution, a clearly defined role. It is, to *advise* the Class Committee. Again, the job of advancing views that may be held by a particular Division lies with the Divisional representatives. It would, I suggest, be unusual if an individual member or

group of members were to lobby the TAC independently of their Division but there is no reason why that could not happen where it was appropriate. However, in the first place, it would ordinarily be best were the particular Division to be invited to consider a particular proposal before it reaches the TAC – unless, of course, it is a matter that the TAC itself decides it wishes to consider.

The Marketing, Centenary and Way Ahead Committees combine the roles of acting as a forum for discussion as well as performing particular functions delegated to them by the Class Committee. My current intention is that the Committee Chairmen and I will meet early in the New Year so that we can define those functions as clearly as possible and present our proposals to the Class Committee shortly thereafter. Thereafter, I will generate a further note explaining what has been decided and how we intend to proceed as we look forward to the Centenary. We shall also address particular issues such as the need to establish an improved system for recording all measurement certificates and ensuring that John Wilson, our Official Measurer, is given the kind of management systems that he surely needs if an onerous and crucial job is to be made tolerable and workable.

Apart from bringing you up to date whilst wishing everyone a Happy Christmas my other reason for writing is to record my gratitude to everyone who has been kind enough to wish me well in my new post. But I will single out Mark and Tina for particular mention. Mark has been a marvellous Class Captain: calm, dedicated, wise and fair. The amount of time and effort he has devoted to our cause has been remarkable and any successor would be justly proud of doing even half as well as he has done. Tina, likewise, has been an enormous help: no request is ever too much trouble and I know I shall depend on her a very great deal in the future.

Best wishes for Christmas and 2010.

William Norris

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