



STATEMENT FROM YOUR CLASS CAPTAIN

Dear Members

As many of you are aware, a devastating fire occurred in West Cowes on the 25th January starting around 1230. The fire originated in a car body workshop apparently as a result of an angle grinder setting fire to a fuel tank but that is currently only hearsay. Whatever the cause, the fire spread with terrifying speed. Both Paul Kelsey and I were at East Cowes Marina and witnessed the fire soon after the start but within minutes it had grown into a major conflagration. It was sadly obvious to us that in all probability the main storage shed used by David Heritage was in direct line. There was a strong south-westerly blowing and various gas canisters, etc, exploding, so we assume that within a short time it hit a number of classics being stored or restored and from there to the main Etchells storage then onto the Dragons and XOD's all in the same shed.

We have not been able to access the site of this fire and will probably not do so until next week, but at the moment we must assume the total destruction of the following five XODs:

Anitra X 52
Delight X 75
Sapphire X 81
Xin Bai X 99
Leading Wind X 108

This is a terrible loss not just for the owners but also for the Class. We can ill afford to lose such good quality boats.

On a more positive note, David Heritage's workshop, in which there were a number of boats, was spared and apparently did not suffer any damage, which is quite remarkable given the proximity of the fire. In the workshop were Myrtle, Rachel and Partnership, whilst other Cowes Division boats, Lightwood, Jonathan's new acquisition Xenon and Heyday, were all elsewhere. Neil Clifford's boat was stored in an adjacent shed and this escaped any fire damage. In addition, there was no loss of life or any injuries, which of course is very good news.

I have received so many offers of help from many members, which demonstrates just what a wonderful Class we have. For the moment we are going through the process of claiming on our insurances and seeking replacements, although we will need to actually confirm the total losses, as will the insurers, so we will have to wait a few more days. You will be interested to know that David Heritage has said that the trailers melted, so what chance has a lovely wooden boat. The losses affected many people and some thirty boats in all, including a 58 ft fully restored classic that has been worked on for many years and was about to be commissioned. All very sad.

Thank you again to all in the Class who have offered their support and to all those from other Classes and elsewhere who have sent messages of sympathy and support. It is good to know that the Class and the Cowes Division is not on its own.

Mike Till
XOD Class Captain
28th January 2016