

Sport

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Terrifying flip after powerboat record

By Mary McBride

TWO powerboaters climbed unhurt from their damaged boat after it flipped 360 degrees off Gurnard on Sunday — just seconds after setting a new round-the-Island speed record, averaging 88.55mph.

Italians Mario Invernizzi and Giovanni Carpitella had just crossed finish line for the record in their 32ft ProVee class Ceramica Panaria boat, but had another Solent lap to complete for the the Honda Cowes Classic race.

Disaster struck when their boat caught the wash of a spectator boat, took off and hit the water upside down, before flipping back up.

The engine cover, which had broken off, was picked up by a nearby press boat and the two men climbed out of their cockpit to await rescue by the Cowes Inshore Lifeboat, which towed the powerboat back to Cowes Yacht Haven.

Two minutes later another ProVee class powerboat, the bright yellow Thunderbird, collided with a yacht just off Lepe while completing its final Solent lap.

The bow was ripped off the small navy-hulled yacht, Joanna, and her shocked crew of three stood on deck waiting for rescue.

Rescue crews were also called to help Thunderbird, which began sinking after the collision, with crewman Chris Peeters of Hamble unconscious after apparently overcome by carbon monoxide fumes and trapped in the cockpit.

Thunderbird's own support RIB crew, with friends and family of the crew, managed to pull him clear and into their RIB, then made a fast dash back to Cowes where an ambulance had been radioed to stand by.

As the ambulance had not



This powerboat flipped upside down just off Gurnard, seconds after setting a new round-the-Island speed record on Sunday — the two crew climbed out uninjured.

Photo by Ingrid Abery.

arrived, the Cowes Fire and Rescue team used their resuscitation equipment to give him oxygen on arrival at the Yacht Haven. He was admitted to hospital at St Mary's, Newport, and released the next day.

The sinking boat was towed into the Yacht Haven by Cowes Inshore Lifeboat, who sent crew member Oliver Hulse to try to control the vessel. However he slipped and badly cut his hand, requiring immediate hospital treatment. The boat was eventually pumped out by the fire service and craned out, after the emergency team had dealt with another ProVee boat, the Norwegian Attacking Vikings, which

sank in the marina before it could be craned out.

Southampton woman powerboat driver Shelley Jory also had a narrow escape when her blue 24ft V24 boat, Winging it Offshore, flipped over in the Solent.

Shelley and her co-driver, Gavin Brown, managed to escape and the boat was towed into Cowes, where it sank to the bottom of the Yacht Haven, with just a few feet of its nose showing above the surface (see page 54).

Divers managed to attach lines and again the Cowes fire service came to the rescue, hauling the boat to the crane area and pumping it out

as it was raised to the surface.

On Saturday the fire officers from Cowes retained were also kept busy, dealing with fuel leaking from damaged powerboat tanks, to avert fire hazard in the Yacht Haven.

Cowes retained station officer Robin Orledge said: "It was a busy couple of days for us. It was different to the usual problems we have to deal with."

On Sunday fire officers had to deal with three vessels that were semi-submerged, pumping them out so they could be lifted from the water. They also dealt with some casualties until paramedics arrived, according to station officer Orledge.