

Comet Open at Cransley Sailing Club on Sunday 30th July 2016

Cransley SC hosted their annual Comet Open meeting with 13 visitors and 4 locals enjoying a relatively steady Force 2 north-easterly breeze. Cransley managed to get two folk on the water at the last minute who were not really expecting to, Alan Hatton and Peter Stein! With so many on the water, the start line was set across the whole lake for the first race (actually for all of them), and it wasn't long before young Chris Hatton from Severn SC was showing the fleet a clean transom – who is that guy? Nigel Austin from Cransley and Chris Robinson from Burghfield had a close tussle over a 6 lap course, and despite losing his traveller (poor knot! – shades of Cardiff!), Nigel managed to hold on literally for the last 2 laps to beat Chris. The chasing pack was lead by Eddie Pope (Ogston SC) in a borrowed Comet from Dave Harris (Severn SC) and Henry Jaggars (Beer SC). The remaining Comets were closely grouped and there was a fair few calls but none malicious, we are just not that type of fleet!!



Then followed the reason why Cransley always seem to attract folk, well that was what I was told when I asked one of the visitors – the lunch! Barbequed kebabs and lots of healthy salads (ok some Pizza). Fully refreshed and with the Duty Officer altering the course (so we had a hooked finish, we like to confuse visitors!), all 17 boats sailed two races back to back.

The 2nd race saw a repeat 1, 2 but a fantastic 3rd was posted by John Twigg from Ulley SC - just shows what a good start can do for your confidence! Henry, Eddie and a fast improving Emma Brisley (hadn't sailed a Comet for 7 years and was cajoled into it by John Coppenhall (her dad) that morning) followed but Chris Robinson was suffering from post lunch traumatics with an 8th behind Dave. Nigel Fern from Staunton Harold crept into the top 10, however for the remainder of the fleet the middle race was generally their discard.

Race 3 was started with quite a crowd on the bank, unfortunately the only capsizes of the day happened to “yours truly” 30 seconds before the start much to the amusement of all –and dampened my spirit!. Spurred on by a good start Chris Robinson saw his chance to snatch 2nd overall and apart from a brief moment when Henry led on the last lap, he never looked back! The first lap saw Peter Stein up with the leaders briefly however Chris Hatton, who had already won, clicked into results mode halfway through the race and pulled through to third, with Dave and Emma following on. Eddie retired whilst in 4th place due to another unravelling knot but this was the only retirement throughout the day, so we have to conclude everyone was enjoying themselves really!!

Afternoon tiffin was served prior to the Prizegiving – sometimes you have to get the priorities right! With 2 weeks to the Nationals at Rutland, this was an ideal warm up, well done to Cransley for a great day (including all the top weedcutters, safety and catering crews (including Bob the Barbeque), Duty officer (John T) and helpers – Cransley to be renamed in this Olympic year the “Rio of the Midlands”??

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