

Cransley Comet Open

Sometimes you get to sail on a “perfect storm” day in conditions that suit nearly all with a great bunch of like minded folk, with good courses, good food and with everyone still smiling and happy at the end. The Cransley Comet Open this year was one such day!

15 turned up from 8 different clubs, 7 locals, 4 youngsters and 4 ladies and the remainder dodgy oldish boys! The first race saw a classic port biased line that caught most folk floundering up the starboard end whilst wily local Nigel Austin sneaked in at the other end with Chris Hatton, Chris Robinson and Eddie Pope in hot pursuit. The pressure told and Nigel crumbled to 4th with 16 years old Chris H pulled away effortlessly in the Force 2-3. Chris R and Eddie had a great battle but on the final lap Eddie was swallowed up by the unforgiving weed and Chris cruised past. Henry Jaggars and John Copenhall followed by two Cransley ladies , Rhian Bevan and Sarah Austin. The three newbies (to any kind of Open meeting), Emily Brittan (13yrs), Declan Bell (12yrs) and Charlie Guyett (12 years) all fought bravely, 2 in Mino rigs and one reefed, although Declan found that capsizing was very tiring (especially straight after a fantastic Youth Sailing Camp on the Friday and Saturday!) so decided to call it a day after a couple of laps and help on rescue. John Sturgeon also sympathised with Declan and went for a swim but we won't mention that!

After a sumptuous lunch, the wind started to increase to a steady (if still shifty) Force 3 and after an adjustment of the line, the same order as the first race happened although this time Chris H didn't pull away as much, and Nigel managed to hold his nerve to fend off Chris R and Eddie, with Henry, John and Sarah in hot pursuit. There were also some great battles further down the fleet with duels between Nigel Fern, Dave Waymont, Rhian and Julie Aves occurring and Emily stealing a march on Charlie. 35 minutes into the race a huge black cloud stopped over the reservoir, emptied its contents onto those below very quickly, with rumbling and lightening in the distance and then left the 14 drowned rats to finish.



Still the spirits were rekindled with afternoon Tiffin, traditional at Cransley between Races 2 and 3 – none of this back to back nonsense. Chris H told Nigel where he was going wrong (very kind) and probably regretted it as after the start the latter went away from the remainder of the fleet in an increasing SW Force 3-4. Chris H managed to overhaul Chris R and Eddie and with Rhian enjoying the friskier conditions and with Henry maintaining very consistent form, the final race was all but done. It was with true grit though that the two Cransley youngsters Emily and Charlie finished all 3 races and along with Declan we hope that these will have enjoyed the experience so much that they help form the next generation of Comet sailors!

Well done to all - and many thanks to the ladies Helen, Nicola and Sophie and also Sue for ably helping John on race and for Arran and Stuart for pulling folk out the water. Top days sailing!!!!

Nigel Austin Comet 875

Photo by Sue Bull.