

Cransley Comet Open

With 7 visitors (including a few ex National Champions) and 8 home sailors (4 of them teenagers, one fresh out of Level 2 just a few weeks earlier), the Comet Open at Cransley was poised to be an interesting event.

The wind was a northerly but was prone to swinging wildly through the woods to the east, creating an infamous “Bermuda Triangle”! This caught a few visitors out on many of the beats. The course was primarily a Figure of 8, and suitably briefed and fed, Race 1 got underway. Eddie Pope (Ogston) immediately set out his stall and despite being chased by myself, was far too nimble in the everchanging shifts. Charlie Guyett from Cransley showed early promise but a dodgy mainsheet knot saw his chances fade. With Bob Dobbs chasing hard for 3rd and most of the visitors starting to adapt to the Force 1-2 with freakish gusts of up to 3-4.

The 2nd race, after a sumptuous lunch, promised to be increasingly tactical.

Race 2 saw myself edge away from Eddie who caught a lump of weed on the first beat and never recovered. Like a limpet, Bob Dobbs pursued but no cigar, whilst Henry Jaggars (who does have a cigar, well cigarette whilst sailing!) carved his way into 4th. At this point I have to point out that the Cransley boats were having their own battle royals and from the amount of laughter and screaming from the youngsters were enjoying it immensely – just how it should be!



Race 3 started with a different start line as the wind had decided that a shift to an easterly would make it more interesting. Young Charlie led the field for a couple of legs before the tussle between Eddie and myself recommenced, although the 13yr old held on to 4th place behind Michael Ettershank. The remainder of the fleet appeared to contemplate going for a swim to cool down from the frustrations around the central mark of E which was either approached at speed or drifted up to!! In the end Eddie broke free and took the trophy.

We had visitors from Cornwall, Devon, home counties (inc Crawley), Hunts, and UpRiver, I think they enjoyed the challenge of Cransley – if not the Afternoon Tiffin tea made up for it at the end.

Well done to all who took part (Eddie, Bob, Chris, Michael, John, Brian, Henry, Charlie, Sarah, Julie, Rhian, Emily, Tom and Niamh + me) and to the race, safety and shore crews – cracking days sailing!!

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Photo courtesy of Helen Britton