

## **Hawley Lake Comet Open**

The day of the Hawley Open dawned clear but overcast. I got to the lake early. There was not a lot of wind but, very unusually for July, the wind was in a favourable direction, North-Easterly. We could have a reasonably long beating first leg to the windward mark. Not only that but the route to the first mark meant that helms could, if they wished, go either side of an island which added variety and an element of chance to each race. The wind was not always consistent so it was a throw of a die which side to choose. (No hints, even Hawley helms are never sure which route to take.) We had our usual race officer, Andy Pearce, helped by Mike Ogle who stood-by in the rescue boat. We ran the same system as last year with two races before lunch and two after it. There were ten helms and they all completed every race.

### **Race 1**

Race 1 began with light and initially steady winds. Ben Palmer got ahead and rounded the first mark in the lead. Chris Robinson rounded second. Third place at the mark was a battle between Annette Walters, Scott Waterland and Henry Jaggars but Annette got through to take third. They held these positions at the end of lap 1. Given the wind conditions, there was only time for two laps. By now the wind had dropped. During the second lap those who stayed close to the bank lost out so there was much changing of positions. However at the finish Ben still held the lead, Chris was second with Annette third.

### **Race 2**

Race 2 began with Henry over so he had to go back to the start. John Sturgeon was first to the first mark with Annette and Tim Higgs close behind. Later on the run leg down to the starting mark John chose to stay out in the lake whilst the rest of the fleet took the route behind the island. Often John's line would have been favourable but not today and he dropped back into sixth place. Annette was first at the end of this lap, Bob Dodds second with Chris Robinson third. During the next lap Bob got past Annette and moved into the lead and Ben moved into third. This is how they finished at the end of the third lap.

The fleet then adjourned to the club house for lunch.

### **Race 3**

The third race was held in rather trickier wind but three laps were sailed. Ben once again got into the lead followed by Tim in second and Annette third. On the second lap Ben's lead was hauled back after he sailed into a dead spot which allowed the fleet to catch up. This was the first of several dead spots, which made life interesting. Annette, Ben and Tim had many skirmishes throughout the race but in the end Ben maintained his position to win. Annette got past Tim to come second and Tim was followed by Bob in fourth place.

By now the sun was shining very pleasantly but the wind was very fickle and light.

### **Race 4**

At the start of the fourth and last race the breeze lifted so the fleet got away from the line before the wind dropped back. Bob and Henry managed to get away and stayed in that order to the finish. Other places were hotly contested in the light winds until the race officer ended the race after one and a half laps. Annette finished in third place with John behind in fourth.

All in all a pleasant day with Jacqui Sturgeon providing the lunch and afternoon teas. The final positions were Ben first, Bob second, and Annette third.

John Sturgeon  
Comet 400