

Staunton Harold Sailing Club

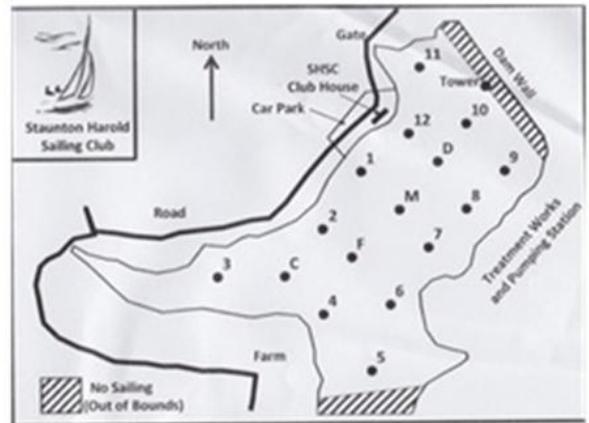
Comet Open Saturday 23rd October 2021

A fresh breeze and a good turn out!

Saturday 23rd of Oct saw the final Comet Open of the year at Staunton Harold Sailing Club near Melbourne in Derbyshire. It was a grey day with a fresh southerly wind of 12 mph and over with gusts in the low 20's and lots of wind shifts as usual.

There were 3 races with 2 to count. John Robinson, the Officer of the Day set 3 interesting courses using the full extent of the Staunton Harold Reservoir.

21 boats turned out for the event, the largest number of all the 2021 Comet Opens.



Race 1 – Course – 4s, 1s, 8p, Dp, G(M)

In the first race, Eddie Pope (Ogston SC) was in the lead at the first mark, Pete Coop (Winsford Flash SC) was second and Ben Palmer (Baltic Wharf SC) third with Kris Kenmuir-Hogg (Staunton Harold SC) in fourth. Usual front runner Alan Bennett had a poor start but by playing the shifts he moved through the fleet. Everything was up for grabs. Places were changing as the race progressed. By the second lap, Kris gained the lead and at the end took first place with Eddie second and Ben third.

Dave Wayment (Staunton Harold SC) remembers - On the second leg I was behind Helen Leivers (Severn SC) approaching Mark 1 and the wind seemed to intensify and there was a bit of a swell on. Helen, I noticed, had decided to tack around the mark and I was just thinking that seemed a sensible option but before I could copy, the wind had taken over and I was past the mark, sail was on the wrong side and I was out of control. This speedy rounding of the mark had left me ahead of Helen and I didn't now dare gybe to get the sail on the right tack as I was certain I was heading for catastrophe probably right in front of her. I can't remember how the boat stayed level or how I recovered but somehow I beat nature for once.



Norah Captures the moment

Further down the pack Nigel Fern (SHSC), Henry Jagers (Beer SC) and Charlotte Coop (Winsford Flash SC) were battling it out with Nigel gaining 11th place followed by Charlotte and Henry.

Meanwhile Pete Mountford (SHSC) executed a spectacular capsized to windward on the second beat from which he never caught up.

The fleet then adjourned for lunch.

Race 2 - Course – 4p, 6p, 7p, 12s, 1p, 10s, G(M)

This time Kris led from the start and built up a good lead over Alan Bennett (SHSC). However Kris was in trouble, he went the wrong way, wrapped his mainsheet around Mark 8 had to do turns then went round Mark 12 the wrong way and had to round it again. This gave Alan the chance to catch up but the gap only became a bit shorter!

The fleet slowly became separated, quite literally at mid point; Paul Hinde, Henry Jagers and Nigel Fern were in contention at the back of the leading group. Going from Mark 12 to Mark 1 Henry and Paul immediately went left whilst Nigel went well into the bank before tacking, he was lucky to catch a lift that saw him reach Mark 1 well ahead of the pair of them. Eventually Henry caught and passed Nigel whilst Paul slipped further back.



Norah on hand to witness the 'lift'.

Boats behind Alan did catch up but the final result was Kris 1st, Alan 2nd and Ben Palmer 3rd.

Race 3 – Course – Fs, 1p, 2p, 7p, 8p, 10p, G(D)

There was a very competitive start to the third race which was held back to back with the second race. Kris sat this one out with his unassailable position of first place. It was everything to play for at the first mark. Pete Coop had a close lead over Alan and kept it for the race. The gap extended to about 5 lengths but closed after the third lap. The final leg up to the finish was excitingly close and was tack for tack but Alan couldn't get past Pete.

The battle for third place was fierce between Steve Bellamy (Winsford Flash SC), Sue Jones. (Nottingham SC) and Ben Palmer and Eddie Pope. Eventually Eddie captured the third place with Sue hot on his transom!

There was also the moment when Chris Robinson (Burghfield SC) (on port) and Dave Waymont (on port) tried to make a sandwich with Nigel Fern (also on port) as the filling. No shout of starboard from Nigel, just a commanding order "David, tack NOW!" *Reason – Chris had sharply tacked onto starboard and Dave needed time to react to my plea so that I could also tack without causing a collision - NF*

There was also a hotly contested battle between Chris Fowler (Ogston), Charlotte Coop (WFSC), Chris Robinson (BuSC) and Nigel Fern going into the final marks of the race. At Mark 10 Nigel held a slender lead over Chris F, with Charlotte closing quickly, Chris R rounded a little while later. The leading three took a conventional line back to the finish whilst Chris R bore away towards the club bank. It was a tacking battle between the leading 3 until about 20 yards from the line when Nigel noticed that Chris' gamble had paid off handsomely. Chris was barrelling in on Starboard and there was nothing that Nigel could do to stop Chris crossing the line ahead of him!

Overall Result

The final positions for the day were 1st Kris Kenmuir-Hogg, 2nd Alan Bennett and 3rd Pete Coop. Sue Jones in 8th place was the first woman.

A great day was had by all. Staunton Harold, with its extensive water and good facilities was a perfect venue and the grub at lunch was good too.

Kris when asked how he felt about the day said ' I feel lucky and flabbergasted! There was nice sailing with a good friendly fleet. Lesley and Sam's chilli at lunchtime won it'.

Nick Baber (Nottingham SC) wins the quote of the day – “I have finally managed to plane a Comet”, with a massive grin on his face! That’s what it is all about.

Steve Boud C740

With contributions from

Kris Kenmuir-Hogg C683, Peter Mountford C864, Alan Bennett C126, Dave Waymont C527 and Nigel Fern C845

