

2022 Comet Association Championships

Staunton Harold Sailing Club 14th / 15th of May

21 competitors were signed on from across the country but only 20 took part following the late withdrawal of local favourite Alan Bennett due to a swollen face following an insect bite!

Saturday dawned bright, warm, and with very little wind. What wind there was, was very fickle in that it did not stay for very long and also, often, changed its mind as to where it was coming from!

Race 1 Course – 2, F, 8, Gate to M

OOD Colin Davis, having discussed the lack of wind, decided to postpone the start of race 1 until the wind was more cooperative.

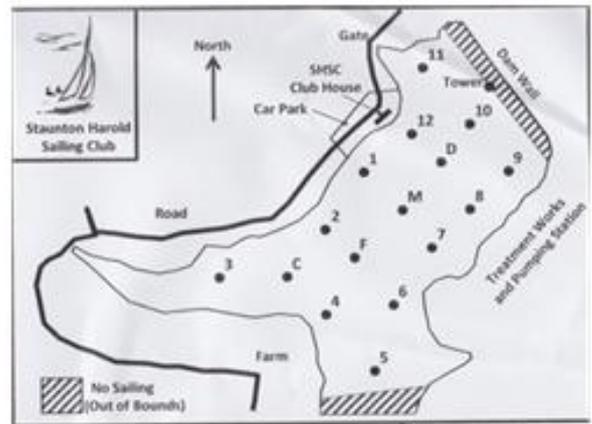
Eddie Pope (C377) led at every mark, having started close to the committee boat. He was chased very hard by Andy Dale (C788) for the first lap or so, but then Andy was passed by Bob Dodds (C869) and his son Izac Dodds (C701) on the dreaded downwind leg which pushed the catching boats along. The low wind speed caused some bunching and consequent calls for starboard and water leading to penalty turns around the marks especially at 8. The long beat back to 2 was just that 'long' as the wind dropped away to virtually nothing on lap 2. As third lap progressed the wind filled in, but swung around so that the finish for some was a run giving the rear of a group the opportunity to close up and the Race Officer a headache due to the 'blanket' finishes. Bob stayed in 2nd and Izac was 3rd. The fleet was widely spread out and Eddie even lapped a couple of boats.

The fleet then adjourned for lunch! Lunch had been planned as a 'hot slice', plus sandwiches etc as a meal deal but unbeknown to the galley staff, vermin had attacked a gas pipe overnight and the gas had run out. Fortunately the race officers were on hand to remedy the problem using a gas bottle and pipe donated by Nigel Fern from his caravan!

Race 2 Course – 4, 6, 1, D, Gate to M

Bob Dodds, in his correct efforts to get to the line, caused some competitors to cross over it and or into each other at the Committee boat end of the line leaving a nice hole for Nigel Fern (C845) to slip through. Meanwhile at the Pin end Sue Jones (C835) and Lee Purslow (C190) had a real flyer and led from Eddie at 4. Not far behind them, also at 4, Nigel Fern forgetting the full water at the mark rule got in Bob's way and had to do 2 sets of turns as on completing the first set grazed Joanne Hill's Comet (C522) dropping him from well inside the top ten to second last!

Eddie was then closely chased by Izac and Ben Palmer (C597). They nearly caught Eddie at the penultimate mark



Attempting to catch the breeze!
© Paul Williamson



Battling at the back!
© Paul Williamson

of the last lap, but he managed to catch a puff of wind to move away again. Izac finished 2nd, followed very closely by Ben.

After a lot of changing positions Joanne Hill beat the other boats at the back of the fleet to come in 16th. Dave Waymont and Steve Boud fought tirelessly for last place!

The fleet were grateful to have their positions recorded from the rescue boat rather than having to go all the way to the finish line.

After 2 very long and arduous races we were glad to come ashore to the welcome bar, a lovely 3 course meal cooked by Lesley Fern ably assisted by Sue Boud. This was followed by some splendid music provided by Madison Blues, supported by Steve Boud showing his unknown, extremely, talented side!

Race 3 – Course 9, 12, 7, C, Gate to F

Sunday's wind was much stronger than on Saturday causing a few competitors to don head protection, but was quite shifty. There were a couple of capsizes prior to the start. Steve Bellamy (C311) started brilliantly and led until the final mark, when Ben gained an overlap. Steve was caught in Ben's 'dirty' air and was passed by Eddie just before the finishing line.

Race 4 – Course 8, 1, D, 2, Gate to F

The wind was still building with nice planing conditions on the reaches. Bob led from start to finish, though Ben managed to close up at times. Andy Dale sailed really well to clinch 3rd place in a tight finish with a couple of other helms. One discard was allowed at this stage, but the 5th race would determine the overall results. This was held back-to-back with race 4.



Close action throughout
© Paul Williamson

Race 5 – Course 8, 1, 6, 2, Gate to F

The wind was similar to race 4. Chris Robinson (C867) made the best start at the pin end, followed by Eddie. Ben was caught in dirty air, but managed to extricate himself as the beat progressed. Chris led for about half the race but Eddie eventually overtook him on a run. However, Chris rounded just behind Eddie at the final mark and sailed a better course to the finish, beating Eddie by a couple of feet. Ben was a comfortable 3rd.

It is fair to say, especially on Sunday, that the races were of two halves, the top 8 or so in close competition whilst some distance behind the trailing group were also at each others' throats throughout!

The range of helms at the Championships was amazing, from junior to 70+, with weights from circa 8 to 13 stones plus and heights from circa 5 feet to over 6 feet. It was good to see the 3 ladies on the water too. All having fun and loving the boat! As at most Comet events the banter and camaraderie was first rate

A special note must be made that Andy Simmons was racing his latest immaculate boat, Comet 900, and he is still making minor changes (within the rules) to improve the boat.

It was a great event. Staunton Harold Sailing Club was pleased to welcome sailors from all over the country to share its water and facilities.

The first 3 were – 1st Eddie Pope (C377), 2nd Ben Palmer (C597) and 3rd Bob Dodds (C869).

The other awards were to

- First Veteran - Andy Dale
- First Ancient Mariner - Steve Bellamy
- First Youth - Tobias Hancox
- First Lady - Mary Starkey
- First Newcomer - Steve Boud
- First SHSC - Nigel Fern
- Committee Prize - Andrew Simmons - for having a boat that was usually and respectfully kept a good distance from any other as nobody wanted to scratch it!!

Report contributors – Eddie Pope (C377), Steve Boud (C740) and Nigel Fern (C845)



Eddie receiving his prizes from Steve Boud.
©Nigel Fern

HelmName	Club	Sail	SailNo	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	Tot al	Nett	Rank
Eddie Pope	OgSC	Xw	377	1	1	2	-6	2	12	6	1st
Ben Palmer	BWSC	Std	597	-4	3	1	2	3	13	9	2nd
Bob Dodds	CMYC	Xw	869	2	5	-8	1	5	21	13	3rd
Izac Dodds	CMYC	Std	701	3	2	-4	4	4	17	13	4th
Andy Dale	EySC	Std	788	5	4	5	3	-6	23	17	5th
Chris Robinson	BuSC	Std	867	-10	6	7	5	1	29	19	6th
Steve Bellamy	WFSC	Xw	311	6	8	3	7	-9	33	24	7th
Henry Jagers	BeSC	Xw	800	7	-14	6	8	7	42	28	8th
Tobias Hancox			358	-12	7	9	9	8	45	33	9th
Nigel Fern	SHSC	Xw	845	9	-12	11	10	10	52	40	10th
Martin Loud	WFSC	Xw	705	11	11	10	-14	14	60	46	11th
Dave Waymont	SHSC	Xw	527	16	-19	14	11	11	71	52	12th
Mary Starkey	UWSC	Std	754	-20	15	15	12	12	74	54	13th
Steve Boud	SHSC	Xw	740	17	-18	13	13	13	74	56	14th
Joanne Hill	SwSC	Xw	522	14	16	12	-17	15	74	57	15th
Steve Dale	EySC	Std	433	-19	9	17	16	DNF	78	59	16th
Sue Jones	NSC	Xw	835	8	10	(DNC)	DNC	DNC	84	62	17th
Andrew Simmons	OgSC	Xw	900	13	(DNC)	16	15	DNC	88	66	18th
Lee Purslow	OgSC	Xw	190	15	13	(DNC)	DNC	DNC	94	72	19th
Nick Baber	NSC	Xw	402	18	17	(DNC)	DNC	DNC	101	79	20th