

Comet Open at Cransley Sailing Club



Cransley Comet Open Competitors
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There's something predictable that occurs every summer at Cransley when the Comets arrive, just like swallows arriving back the same time every year from Africa - and that is all those who take part know they have been through the full spectrum of wind strengths and directions in the space of a few hours!

It is testament to this wonderful dinghy that so many love to sail them competitively long since the peak production period of the 80s and 90s. They are such a great leveller and despite the few rigs you could use, they all seem to be well balanced for each individual's choice and no advantage appears.

With a fiendish course set for the first race encompassing all the quiet and weedy areas to try and unhinge the 10 visitors (and give the 10 home club sailors some chance), the racing was spirited but the spritely Eddie Pope showed a clean pair of heels from a chasing pack that changed places as frequently as the wind shifts. Ben Palmer showed that sailing at Baltic Wharf was just as difficult as Cransley coming in 2nd, having started almost last, trying to remove weed from his boat. Annette Walter (Up River are you sure?) snuck in on the line to deal a blow to yours truly. There were lots of little battles going on throughout the remaining fleet (notable result for Astara Davies 11th beating her mother and twin sister) but these were all forgotten with the traditional Cransley lunch to weigh everyone down.

The second race saw the winds slightly increasing on the Force 2-3 seen in the morning - well occasionally, but because it was squally and gusting it did cause some capsizing - names withheld on request. Although Eddie decided to be anti social again the other podium places were strongly contested and after a lot of place swapping I managed to pip Alan Bennett at the end.

The highlight of the day was the safety boat delivery of ice creams between the races in an attempt to keep folk on the water for back to back races - as our home sailors do like a high

tea break usually. The low point of the day was the automatic timer and hooter running out of battery power (even though it is solar powered and it was a baking hot day) - still when it works, it works well! The Eddie Stobart lorry horn is quite good at breaking the tranquillity, although difficult to know whether the time starts at the beginning or end of the horn blast!

The third race was a good tussle between Eddie and Alan with Annette chasing for 3rd and Andrew Dale maintaining a very consistent 4th.

The overall results were apart from Eddie very close with discards counting for the 3rd to 7th places, showing the closeness of the competition.

It was great to hear friendly banter on the water with only an isolated raised remark, all in keeping with the perfectly wonderful setting on this 75 acre reservoir.

A sumptuous tea and prizes for everyone meant there were lots of happy folk heading either a few miles home or to Dorset, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Cambridge or Essex.



Alan Bennett, SHSC 2nd, Eddie Pope, OgSC 1st
and Nigel Austin, CrSC 3rd
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Thanks to all who made it another great day - sailors, race officer/safety crew and galley.

Long may we welcome the Comets to the wind shift capital of the world!

Nigel Austin
Comet 875