

## Ogston SC Comet Open

Andy Dale's initial thoughts on his Ogston Open trip..

I travelled up to Ogston from Essex the night before and camped in the dinghy park, when I arrived it was so dark there I couldn't even see where the water was!

After pitching my tent by head torch I was joined by Ben Palmer who had driven up from Bristol, we decided to get the torches out and explore around the dinghy park to locate the water. From what we could see it looked like a great size sailing area and then we found a map of the buoys attached to a small hut where we realised we could only see a very small part of it as it stretched out around the corner.

I wanted to check out the venue as its where next year's National Championships will take place and the next morning as I opened the tent to reveal a fantastic view that certainly won't disappoint, with a great sailing area, camping on site and a very nice club house overlooking the race course. Three close races with lots of place changes and wind strengths it was a good day of playing on the water for all.

The OOD indicated that there would be two back to back races before lunch to complete the Challenger and General Handicap Open that was running alongside the Comet Open. He caused Martin Loud (WFSC) some consternation by announcing that although the start routine was 5, 4, 1 the Comet (SHSC) start would effectively be at 7 minutes after the first gun! Nigel Fern thought he had solved the issue by setting his watch at 7 only to find that his watch was set at 7 hours!!!

### **Race 1**

Martin Honnor (OgSC) had a good start and led for the first 2 laps. On the 3rd lap he was overtaken by Ben Palmer (BWSC) and Eddie Pope (OgSC). Eddie crossed in front of Ben on the final beat to the finish, but misjudged his approach to the line. Ben crossed the line just in front of Eddie, closely followed by Martin H.

Meanwhile in the mid field to rear of the fleet a running battle ensued throughout the race between Martin Loud, Chris Robinson (BuSC) and Nigel Fern with these three swapping places on a regular basis.

Just after Nigel crossed the line he felt no increase in wind strength but an increase in weight on his right hand and on looking back saw to his horror that the shackle pin holding the block to the horse had disappeared! As race 2 was to be back to back with race 1 he had no option but to return to the shore to refit the shackle. After sailing and paddling some 200 yards he was amazed to see the shackle pin rolling around the transom deck. A few seconds later he was back on the water but massively missed the Comet start.



## **Race 2**

Thankfully the race Officer kept the same course of a long beat with a gate followed by runs and reaches. Alan Bennett (SHSC) got his act together and started on time reaching the windward mark first, very closely followed by Martin H. Eddie was now threatening moving up to second. Martin H was getting away nicely but he found some light wind which enabled the leading four boats now including Steve Bellamy (WFSC) to close up ready for the final beat to the gate. Eddie won this race closely followed by Martin H then Steve and Alan in 4th. The rest of the fleet had close racing but at a distance from the leading group.

The competitors had a delicious lunch and then out for the final race.

## **Race 3**

A rather complicated course was set for the Comets but fortunately a lead boat took the competitors round for the first lap

Eddie, Alan and Martin H broke away from the pack with Eddie leading. Alan got into the lead but then had to try to remember the course! This worked out quite well in the end with some planing happening on the long reach across the lake. Martin H dropped back and took a third place. On the penultimate lap Eddie wanted the race to finish asking the Race Officer as we went behind the stern of his boat! Going into the final long reach almost to the finish Eddie had a narrow lead but Alan managed to pass him. The rest of the fleet again had close racing. Eddie won the event with Martin H and Alan tied on 5 points. The win in the final race decided the second place went to Alan.

Many thanks to Ogston Sailing Club and we look forward to returning for the Comet Nationals next August.

Report compiled by Andy Dale, Eddie Pope, Alan Bennett and Nigel Fern