

## **Burghfield Comet Open 22 April**

Fifteen Comet sailors arrived at Burghfield Sailing Club for the Comet Open on Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> April to find a becalmed reservoir with mist on the water. Race Officer James Anderson postponed the start until after an early lunch. This was a good decision as at the start of the race the wind filled in on cue to provide a steady breeze across the water. A square course was set which neatly avoided the islands.

The committee boat end of the line looked to be the most favoured end, but just before the start there was a wind shift that favoured the pin end. Those that spotted this and sailed down to the pin got the best start. The early leader was Henry Jagers followed by Eddie Pope. On the second lap Eddie took the lead and Henry was then caught by Peter Mountford and Ben Palmer, although Henry was able to regain third place on the last lap.

A third of the fleet were women and in the first race the first two ladies to the first mark were Jackie Light and Jacky Stagg. However, Jacky S was on port and had to give way to Jackie L on starboard giving her the lead. Jacky S caught Jackie L on the second lap but her lead was short lived as Jackie L quickly regained the lead position.

In the second race the committee boat end was favoured and Chris Robinson started at this end, pushing John Sturgeon out in the process. However, it turned out that the route up the first beat determined who would be first to the windward mark, with the left-hand side of the beat being favoured. Eddie was first, followed by Peter and then Ben. A little rain appeared bringing with it some more wind. Ben caught Peter by the end of the first lap. There were no further changes in the top five who pulled away from the rest of the fleet.

Carol Butcher was on course to be the first lady to the first windward mark, but a wind shift put her below the lay line and a line of boats to windward prevented her from tacking to get around the mark. Jacky S followed by Jackie L took advantage and passed Carol. Jacky S got into the lead group and finished fourth overall ahead of Jackie L.

After two races Eddie had won the event with two firsts. Peter was second with a second and third, but he could easily be caught by Ben who had a second or Henry who had a third. Jacky S was the leading lady with a fourth and sixth, but Jackie L with a fifth place could easily beat Jacky S with a good result in the last race.

The fleet had a short break ashore before race three. On their return to the water they found the wind beginning to lighten. A wind shift during the start sequence resulted in a heavily biased pin end. Ben went for a port tack start at the pin which paid off as he cleared the line cleanly and made the windward mark without tacking. The wind shift remained more or less permanent resulting in a very biased beat with the first reach becoming close hauled. As the wind dropped on the downwind legs of the first lap Eddie got past Ben and took a substantial lead. Ben was holding off Peter with Jacky S, Henry, Tim Higgs and Chris behind them. On the second lap these formed their own lead group following Eddie. The Race Officer elected to shorten the course at two laps before the wind died further. Approaching the final mark the lead group began to bunch. Eddie's lead was enough that he retained first, while Ben was able to keep ahead of Peter. However, there were place changes amongst the others in the lead group, with Tim rising to fourth place ahead of Henry.

Amongst the ladies Jacky S got into the lead group, finishing sixth, which ensured she

finished ahead of Jackie L who led the rest of the fleet to the finish.

Overall, Eddie's three firsts gave him the win, while Ben's win over Peter in the last race ensured he took second place ahead of Peter in third and Henry in fourth. The good result by Jacky S in the last race ensured she won the ladies prize, but also propelled her to fifth place overall. The two Burghfield boats, Tim and Chris, were tied on points, but Tim's good result in the last race broke the tie in his favour and he was first Burghfield boat with sixth. Jackie L was second lady, with her good result in the last race giving her eighth overall ahead of Steve Gregory and John. These two tied on points and with equal placing the tie was broken on the last race which gave Steve ninth, with John tenth.

Chris Robinson



Eddie Pope receiving the winner's spoils from Chris Robinson.

©Steve Gregory