

Eyott SC Comet Open

Saturday 20th May saw Eyott sailing club run its first ever Open event in the clubs 73 year history!

The event was put on the day before our neighbouring club Up River YCs Comet open to encourage people to travel and to have two days racing run from different clubs without having to pack boats up and travel in between as Up River had kindly let us use the club to launch and camp over on the Saturday.



Seven visitors joined the five club boats for racing on the tidal river Crouch.

Sunshine and wind was ordered in advance and that was delivered perfectly on time.

As most of the travelling Comets sail on still water having water that moves took a bit of getting used to, to start with, but they soon got the hang of it.

Due to Eyott being very tidal not much time is available so two back2back 45 minute races were put on by Eyott and what two races there were!

Race one started with an incoming tide in a decent breeze, Ben Palmer (BWSC) and Mike Ettershank (EySC) nailed the start to lead the fleet around the top mark's with Bob Dodds, Eddie Pope (OgSC) Chris Robinson (BuSC) and Alexander Gore (EySC) all fighting to chase them down on the windy run/reach down the course. Mike and Ben were slowly being caught by the chase group until a bit of bumper cars at the leeward mark put pay to any hope of catching the first two so Ben took the win followed by Mike, Bob and Eddie.

Race two was going to be a change of scenery for the Comets and sail up the creek and finish on Eyott's club line, the further up the creek you go the narrower, shallower and muddier it gets.

The race started off by doing one rounding of the same course for the first race then up the creek to Eyott.

Everyone started on the safe but boring starboard tack across the river apart from Andy Dale (EySC) and Alexander who crossed the line on port and headed inshore to the shallower water to get out of the strong current. This worked out well for the two of them as they got to the windward mark first and second with Mike close behind.

A lap of the river then up the creek, the creek is fairly narrow with muddy banks so plenty of opportunities for the centre board to dig in and taste a bit of Essex mud, Nigel Fern (SHSC) found one of the shallow spots and slowed down losing a bit a distance on the other Comets.

Andy, Mike and Alexander were the leading boats all the way up to the club where the course took them past the club round one more mark and across the line.

Andy did his best to throw the win away as he ran aground a boat length from the finish line ...(he should know better as been sailing there for 45 years!).

Andy held on followed by Mike and Alexander.

As the boats finished one by one they all came along side the grassy bank, we pulled the boats up on the grass and sat in the sun catching our breath having a very well deserved cuppa before jumping back in the boats catching the out going tide heading back to Up River for a beer.

Andy Dale
C788

