

## Silver Wing Comet Open

Saturday 17th June saw Silver Wing SC hold its second Comet open meeting. We welcomed fourteen competitors from as far away as Ogston SC (Derbyshire), Baltic Wharf (Bristol Docks) and Beer SC.



Comet Open meeting at Silver Wing © Phil Bergquist

The forecast was for a light wind from the East, but on arrival it was very light, and from the North. The plan was for four races - two 40 minute races back-back either side of lunch. With the wind not looking like shifting the course was set with what we had.

The wind however, had decided to be sneaky. It shifted right just as the fleet started, allowing the fleet to almost lay the first mark on starboard. Eddie Pope in 377 led round the first mark, followed by Carol Butcher in 614 and Ben Palmer in 597. By the end of the first lap Henry Jagers in 800 had pulled up into third after a poor start and was in second place by the end of lap 2.

By this time Eddie Pope had pulled out an unassailable lead. We did, despite the wind's best efforts still have a beat - just not on a leg that had originally been set as a beat. This, plus the instability of the wind, kept the rest of the fleet close together and gave lots of place changing, Steve Gregory in 231 and Carol Butcher in 614 gaining many places by sailing over a number of boats in a gust.

By the end of lap 3 it was Eddie Pope first, Henry Jagers second and Peter Mountford in 864 third. With that done it was time to shift the entire course by about 60 degrees. With the AP up the committee boat escorted the fleet to the new leeward mark while the rescue team shifted the two windward marks. This, with luck, would be the course for the rest of the day.



Comet Open meeting at Silver Wing - photo © Phil Bergquist

This time the first beat decided to stay a beat. Eddie Pope was first round the windward mark again, followed by Peter Mountford and Annette Walter in 323.

The wind promptly went soft on the first run, but then filled in on the second beat. This kept the fleet nice and compact, and Eddie Pope was not able to pull out anything like the lead he had in the first race. The front of the fleet stayed pretty much as it was for the second lap, at which point it was decided it was time for lunch. Eddie Pope won again, Pete Mountford second and Annette Walter third.

After lunch we re-convened for race 3 at 2pm. The wind appeared to have settled in overall direction, but was still patchy and shifty. The committee decided to keep the same course as race 2.

Jolly good as they say, however the wind was still unstable, resulting in a rather annoyingly port biased start line. Pete Phillips in 695 was observed doing a 720 as a result of the bunch at pin end. The wind then settled back giving a nice even first beat.



Comet Open meeting at Silver Wing - photo © Phil Bergquist

Once again Eddie Pope was first to the windward mark, followed by Peter Mountford, Ben Palmer and Helen Evans fourth in 868. A gust then filled in from the left side of the run, shuffling the middle of the pack and creating a nice bunch at the leeward mark. The wind then backed right making the second beat rather one sided.

With the wind settling in strength if not direction we were able to get 3 laps and 40 minutes out of this race.

Eddie Pope won his third race, Henry Jagers second and Ben Palmer in 597 third. As soon as the last boat had finished the committee boat team, keen to use the wind, were straight into the start sequence for race 4.

As with race 3 the line was port biased, but with the wind veering back to its mean direction during the beat. For the first time during it was not Eddie Pope round in first, that honour went to Peter Mountford. This didn't last long, and by the end of the first lap Eddie Pope was back in first.

The wind had appeared to settle, giving everyone two good beats, however it died towards the end of the 3rd lap so it was decided to call it a day and send everyone in for an afternoon tea of scones and cake. Eddie Pope won the race and the event with four firsts.



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