

Nottingham Sailing Club Open Meeting Sunday 10th September 2023

This Open Meeting was re-scheduled from April 16th; when we were supposed to be holding the first Comet Open Meeting of the 2023 season. However, the April Open was postponed on the 15th when it was obviously a non-starter: the Trent was flowing very fast after a period of heavy rain and the Met Office were forecasting light winds. It would have just been a one-way trip down to the orange buoys in front of the sluice gates.

So back to September, and our re-scheduled event on Sunday 10th. This was the first day after the September heat wave, where the sweltering temperatures were replaced by just a nice warm day. Again, the Met Office promised only light winds, but this time we only had low flow on the river, so we could proceed.

21 Comets entered the Open Meeting. This consisted of 17 home boats (some club sailors from other fleets borrowing any spare boats) and 4 visitors. The Open was being run concurrently with a small Enterprise Open, with the Ents starting first and the Comets starting 3 minutes after. The morning brought light winds from the East/North East, up the river.

At the briefing our OOD, Phil Sheppard, suggested that instead of our normal format (1 race before lunch and 2 after), we swap to 2 shorter races before lunch and then a final race in the afternoon. This was because the wind forecast was more than a little dodgy for the afternoon, and thunderstorms were also forecasted. This idea received general approval.

The course was laid on lower half of our normal sailing stretch of river. There were two buoys, both to port.

The first race: 21 starters made for a busy start across our river. Eddie Pope (377) had an early collision with Roger Chilvers (887). Eddie rapidly volunteered to do his turns, but the turns could not rapidly be done due to the difficulties of finding clear space. This cost him heavily, position-wise.

It was a very busy first leg with lots of tacking to avoid other boats and lots of calls for water due to the bank. Clear air was at a premium. Who needs strong winds for exciting racing?

After the first buoy, where Ellie Kirkwood (351) also did turns, there was a run back upstream. Would those boats who you had worked so hard to overtake on the first leg simply get a gust before you did and catch you up?

After the first lap the positions were: 1st: Simon Limb (83 - NSC Laser helm in borrowed boat), 2nd: Mike Pritchard (839 – NSC Laser helm in borrowed boat), 3rd: Ben Palmer (597), 4th: Hazel Clark (685).

In the 2nd and final lap of the first race, the fleet had opened out sufficiently for many to be able to defend their positions – whilst also finding it hard to gain places. However, there were holes in the wind and nearby there were places where a gentle breeze never stopped. Your report writer managed to work her way up from 5th to 3rd, somehow keeping the gentle breeze on her sail whilst others were less lucky. By the second half of the last lap Mike Pritchard had taken over first position with Simon Limb in 2nd place. My boat was still moving forward in its never ending pocket of gentle air, whilst I was able to see where to avoid because that was where Simon and then Mike were sitting! Miracles sometimes happen, and I (Sue Jones – 835) took first place honours at the finish line. 2nd: Mike Pritchard and 3rd: Simon Limb. Hazel Clark was absolutely

delighted to take a well deserved 4th place, not being an Open meeting circuit helm.

After a short break for drinks, with enough time for Hazel to declare “I’m so happy with that 4th I don’t care if I finish last in the next 2 races; the new white Xtra sail is great”, we all set sail again for the 2nd race.

Again, the wind was light (but definitely sailable) and still from the East/North East. The course was unchanged. It was, again, a very busy start line. Peter Mountford (864) was over the line and found that returning behind the line was easier said than done against the massive flow of Comets towards him. Nick Baber later commented that maybe some planning could help with his own problems of: “Where do I go?? Where can I tack?? What on earth are all these other boats about to do??”

After a busy first leg, with again a lot of maneuvers for everyone to avoid other boats and get the cleanest air, the race settled down with Eddie Pope (377) in the lead at the end of the first lap followed by Mike Pritchard and Simon Limb. The race was shortened at 2 laps, with an unchanged finishing order for the first three boats. Ben Palmer (597) was 4th. For once, Hazel Clarke probably overtook Marie Marshall (452) in the simultaneous competition as to who could talk the most within the race. The race sounded very happy from my position within it!

It was 1pm, so lunch swiftly followed. We enjoyed jacket potatoes, together with a choice of beef chilli or a veggie Italian sauce, and a salad (thank you to the 3 cooks - 2 of whom were sailing - and also to Aldi for some great jacket potatoes!) When lunch was finished, we then surveyed the completely flat-surfaced river and glanced at the entirely vertical club flag. The weather forecast had been accurate.

A postponement followed and a while later I was sent out on the river as the guinea pig to check the wind. The answer: there was NO wind for sailing, at that time. A few minutes later, a light breeze sprang up, the postponement ended, a new start sequence commenced and everyone else headed for the river. Of course this wind entirely disappeared just before the Enterprise start and the race was postponed again.

Quite a few of us headed for the landing stage and tied up – well it was only about 10 yards away. Another wait, then the “wind” changed direction 180 degrees to the West. The race team moved the buoys to the upstream part of the river and yet again we commenced a start sequence.

This time the race started – hurray!! With various helms sensibly(?) deciding that early packing away would be the best option, 13 Comets raced. Let’s just say – it was slow. Easily as slow as the first day of racing at the Staunton Harold Association Championships last year. And then the



thunder started to rumble around, at a good distance, and the rain fell. However, we crawled around the course as best we could for a single lap. Nick Baber was sitting so far forward on his boat, with the wet deck he almost fell in twice! This time it was my turn to sit in a big hole, whilst quite a few others carefully maneuvered around me using tiny puffs of breeze. Oh well. Eddie Pope took winning honours at the finish, with Mike Pritchard 2nd and Martin Loud 3rd (705). Nick Baber came a well deserved 4th (904).

Time to pack away the boats and head to the clubhouse for a delightful afternoon cream tea with scones and a variety of cakes. Meanwhile the OOD was seen to be checking Appendix A of the RRS, so close were some of the results.



Final results:

- 1st: Eddie Pope (Ogston – 377),
- 2nd: Mike Pritchard (Nottingham SC – borrowed 839),
- 3rd Sue Jones (Nottingham SC – 835).
- 1st Junior: Rose Wilkinson (Nottingham SC – 199).

A special mention needs to be given to our regular club Comet helms who were competing in their first Open Meeting: Naomi Ringrose (590), Vince Hulland (402) and Richard Hill (97). And also my thanks to Nick Baber for getting together such a great Comet fleet for the day.

Sue Jones (835)

Club		Nottingham Sailing Club								
Date		10/09/2023								
Boat No.	Helm	Age Category	Club	Sail type	R1	R2	R3	Total	O/A	Pos
377	Eddie Pope	Ancient Mariner	OgSC	Xw	7	1	1		2	1
839	Mike Prichard		NSC	Xw	2	2	2		4	2
835	Sue Jones	Veteran	NSC	Xw	1	5	9		6	3
83	Simon Limb		NSC	S	3	3	7		6	4
597	Ben Palmer	Adult	BWSC	S	5	4	5		9	5
705	Martin Loud	Ancient Mariner	WFSC	Xw	8	12	3		11	6
864	Peter Mountford	Ancient Mariner	SHSC	Xw	6	10	6		12	7
685	Hazel Clark		NSC	Xw	4	19	11		15	8
784	Richard Tanner		NSC	S	9	6	DNS		15	9
904	Nick Baber	Ancient Mariner	NSC	S	15	13	4		17	10
119	Rose Wilkinson	Youth	NSC	S	11	7	10		17	11
397	Shad Jawad		NSC	S	14	11	8		19	12
887	Roger Chilvers	Ancient Mariner	NSC	Xw	10	9	DNS		19	13
402	Vince Hulland		NSC	S	12	14	12		24	14
452	Marie Marshall		NSC	S	18	8	DNS		26	15
601	Ivan Horrocks		NSC	Xw	13	15	DNS		28	16
351	Ellie Kirkwood		NSC	S	17	17	DNS		34	17
590	Naomi Ringrose	Youth	NSC	S	19	16	DNS		35	18
738	John Crowe		NSC	Xw	16	20	RTD		36	19
664	Jan Walsh		NSC	S	20	18	DNS		38	20
97	Richard Hill		NSC	S	21	21	DNS		42	21