

Comet Class Association

Carsington SC Comet Open 9th June 2024

Eddie Pope & Chris Robinson. Photographs by Roger Doyle (Assistant Race Officer)

Seven intrepid souls decided to tackle the strong wind forecast at the Carsington Open. It was a day where rig choices came into play. Andy Dale, Ben Palmer and Chris Robinson opted for the full Standard, Eddie Pope the Mylar Xtra, Alastair Stagg the White Xtra, and Jackie Stagg & Meg Warren the reefable White Xtra.

Carsington is a huge reservoir and the courses have much longer legs than we experience at our usual venues. We tested the Comet's top speed, there were waves, spray up to head height on the reaches, tricky gybes and unstable runs!

Race Officer Alf Hawksworth asked whether we wanted 3 or 4 races. We decided to see how we got on with the two back-to-back races in the morning before telling him.

The wind ashore was deceptive, because we were sheltered by the clubhouse with an offshore breeze. We were assured that there was plenty of wind out on the race course. We launched with some trepidation, but at the start the race conditions were OK. Jackie and Meg did not reef. However, the wind rose with some strong gusts as the race progressed, and Jackie & Meg did not finish. Chris sailed very fast up the first beat and extended his lead down the runs until the gybe mark, where he capsized as a big gust arrived at the same time as his gybe. Eddie sailed outside Chris and managed his gybe. Eddie was not in the lead for long before Ben (who always performs well in strong winds) overtook him. On the final run Eddie managed to get past Ben, but Ben in turn overtook Eddie on the following reach and led to the finish, while Chris caught Andy to get into third place. It was a close finish for 2nd to 4th between Eddie, Chris and Andy. Eddie and Chris followed Ben to the pin end of the finish line, but Andy spotted that the Committee boat end was closer and headed in that direction. However, he was unable to gain enough to catch Eddie or Chris and the places were unchanged. The wind was varying between force 4 and 6. There were also big shifts, especially approaching the windward mark.



Comet Class Association

The wind then went up another notch. Meg decided not to start the 2nd race, but Jackie came out with her sail reefed. Chris was first to the windward mark again, but this time he was caught by Ben on the downwind legs. They both chose to gybe on the run rather than at the wing mark, and both stayed upright. The final reach to the leeward mark was tight, but it was just possible to plane flat out while sitting right out. Upwind the Standard rigs were prone to going into irons in these conditions. First Ben went into irons and filled the boat up with water and dropped back. Then Chris went into irons too. This left Alistair in the lead followed by Eddie and Andy. Chris retired with boat worries - some cracking noises from the mast step area. Alastair won and Eddie was 2nd, followed by Ben. Over lunch Chris's boat was examined for damage using an endoscope down the mast tube. Everything looked fine, but Chris elected not to sail again until he had a second opinion from the boat builder.



It was an easy decision to let Alf know that we only wanted one race in the afternoon. Andy and Jackie along with Chris did not launch, but brave Meg came out to play in reefed mode. Alastair, Ben and Eddie could all win overall, and they all took turns in the lead in an epic final race, with just yards between them much of the time. Alastair death-rolled on the 2nd lap's run, but after recovery started to catch up to Ben and Eddie. After two laps Eddie was leading, but was disappointed when Alf sent us on a 3rd lap. Ben got through Eddie on the final beat and led to the finish, thereby winning the event. Eddie and Alistair were tied on points, but Alistair's win in race two broke the tie in his favour, giving him second and Eddie third.

Ashore Chris was asking "where is Meg?" Eventually she appeared in the rescue boat. Having missed out a mark she capsized while trying to understand the instructions from the Committee boat. While she went to warm up in the shower another rescue boat bought her boat in, but only as far as a mooring buoy as it had to rush back out to monitor the club racing. Eventually a rescue boat had some spare time to bring the boat ashore.

Comet Class Association

We won't forget this day in a hurry! In his opening address the Commodore invited us back next year - we have a separate start after the club start so we don't need much organisation. Can't wait!

Rig	Sail No	Club	Helm Name	R1	R2	R3	Total	Nett
Standard	597	Baltic Wharf SC	Ben Palmer	1	(3)	1	5.0	2.0
White Xtra	579	Bowmoor SC	Alastair Stagg	(5)	1	3	9.0	4.0
Xtra	377	Ogston SC	Edwin Pope	(2)	2	2	6.0	4.0
Standard	788	Eyott SC	Andy Dale	4	4	(DNC)	17.0	8.0
Standard	867	Burghfield SC	Chris Robinson	3	(DNF)	DNC	21.0	12.0
Reefing White Xtra	894	Bowmoor SC	Jacky Stagg	(DNF)	5	DNC	23.0	14.0
Reefing White Xtra	174	Chipstead SC	Meg Warren	(DNF)	DNC	DNF	27.0	18.0
	126	Staunton Harold SC	Alan Bennett	(DNC)	DNC	DNC	27.0	18.0



First Place – Ben Palmer

Comet Class Association



Second Place Alistair Stagg



Third Place Eddie Pope