

Manx Sailing and Cruising Club

Watling Streetworks Winter Series - 18 November

Report courtesy of Jerry Colman

After a flat calm on the previous Sunday, racing for the Watling Street Winter Series finally took place on West Baldwin reservoir. The weather oracles promised this Sunday we would have both sun and breeze although the latter was to come from the East which can be problematic at Injebreck.

Easterlies tend to induce Southerly breeze at the South end of the reservoir, Northerlies at the North end and a rather unpredictable and sometimes quite violent area of conflict in the middle. On this occasion it was Northerlies at the South end and Southerlies at the North end with even more violent conflict in the middle (or sometimes nothing at all) where the start line is located. Thus three boats pointing in the same direction in close company could be going hard upwind, dead downwind or nowhere because they were becalmed, all at the same time. This is supposed to be fun and it is if your boat happens to be the one leaping towards the next mark while everyone else is going backwards.

All competitors had a taste or two of both experiences but it soon became clear that two boats were rather better at finding their way round, namely Simon Pressly in the Laser Radial (experience) and Peter Cope in the Tera Sport (youth). These guys were first and second in each race, in opposite order. Your correspondent was sailing his Finn round the bottom mark feeling pleased to have slipped inside the other Finn, always ably sailed by Keith Holden, when Peter's miniscule Tera shot past in the small gap inadvertently left to the buoy and passed as if he was standing still (which he probably was) demonstrating that a Tera with about 3 square metres of sail area can when properly manoeuvred somehow blanket a Finn with 10.

Following this shock there was a further rumpus when one of those rather violent squalls in the middle of the reservoir capsized Jim Whitelegg in the Gull! Jim's banana went overboard and the boarding ladder did not deploy properly so that was enough for Jim.

Andrew Dean in the D-Zero (third in both races) and James Penn in the Laser Radial (try following Simon) made up the rest of a thinnish fleet. There are 15 boats parked at the lake now so let's get all of them racing and there is plenty of space for more.

Manx Sailing & Cruising Club would like to thank our sponsor Watling Streetworks, Keith Poole for officiating and the patrol boat crew (Ralph Kee and Peter Hoosen-Owen) for their highly appreciated assistance. Full results and photos will be found on MS&CC's Facebook page and Website.