

Report by Jerry Colman

A slightly depleted fleet turned out on Sunday morning (no youngsters as otherwise engaged in hopefully wholesome activities) for the Watling Streetworks Winter Dinghy Series to find that the fabulous sunshine up at Injebreck was complemented with some gentle westerly lulls interspersed with howling gusts generally going in some other direction. Jim Whitelegg helpfully volunteered to crew the patrol boat rather than sail releasing your correspondent to go out in the Finn with the rather large sail area. The competitors made sure the patrol boat saw plenty of action to keep them warm.

Keith Holden also ventured out in his Finn so a bit of competition there. Three Lasers (Ralph Kee, standard rig, Simon Pressly and James Penn, radial) fought it out and the two full rig Devoti Zeros of Stu Brew and Mike Swales gave everyone someone to race against.

Race officer Keith Poole set a short course (so plenty of mark rounding manoeuvres to get right or wrong) with a beat to the first mark which is quite close to the start so everyone arrives there at about the same time. The mark also sat in an area of large wind shifts which made one think until the very last moment that rounding the mark was definitely on but then it wasn't so it was possible to finish up stopping pointing dead upwind usually in contact with buoy then going backwards toward the rest of the approaching fleet. Your correspondent noticed this after a less than perfect start so put in a quick tack and sailed round the whole fleet to take a useful lead over the other Finn which was maintained to the finish. It was a run from the first rounding and this can be a bit of a white knuckle ride in gusty conditions in any of the rather frisky single handers we were sailing. Penn put in a good range of the types of capsizes possible in the Laser and both Brew and Swales demonstrated some further options in the D Zeros. Both Finns managed to stay upright despite kicking strap failure on the correspondents old boat (vintage about 1965) which allowed the boom to kick up on any of the downwind legs.

Pressly (laser radial) and Kee (Laser Std) finished ahead of the rest of the fleet – the Laser accelerates and planes faster than the Finn and once ahead at Injebreck they are hard to catch if they stay upright which these two did. The D Zeros should have been up there but Stu was badly stymied at the first mark – D Zeros don't seem to go too well backwards – and they both did more than their duty keeping the patrol boat busy. Although Kee was first (just) on the water the win after correction went to Pressly with your correspondent in 3rd.

For the second race your correspondent unaccountably made the same mistake at mark one that everyone else had during the previous race and in touching the mark put himself at the back of the fleet. As in the first race the Lasers of Kee and Pressly pulled ahead with Kee increasing his lead on the water, whilst Pressly took a swim. A nasty calm, of all things, stopping him from getting a large enough lead to take the win on correction, 2nd again, Pressly first with Stu Brew (D Zero) in 3rd.

There was some fine sailing when the gusts stabilised into a steady 20 – 25 knots especially on the broad reach up to the top of the lake – champagne sailing they call it.

Many thanks to the officials – Keith Poole, Dr May Shiu Chan and Jim Whitelegg and sponsor Doug Watling. Next Sunday is the last of the season at Injebreck and then it's the Easter Regatta in Ramsey on 20th April.

Some photos and the results are on the club Facebook [age]. They were remarkably close again despite the variations in the wind etc. Looking forward now to next Sunday.