

Report by Andrew Dean

Despite there being 19 to 20 knots of wind in the Irish Sea, there were calm patches at the West Baldwin reservoir when the fleet arrived to rig the dinghies on Sunday morning for the latest round of the Watling Streetworks Winter Series. Fortunately the wind filled in during the morning, reaching sufficient strength to cause at least one capsize before sailing ended at 1140hrs. A healthy fleet of 16 boats launched consisting of 4 RS Aero7's, 2 Finns, and one each Laser standard, Laser Radial, Fireball, Aero9, Aero5, RS Feva XL, RS Tera Sport, Gull and Devoti D-Zero grey rig and blue rig. Quite a variety to watch.

The course for the first race was 1 to 5 giving a beat and run and little in the way of reaching with the wind across the boats. There were premature starters, who were required to go back to re-start, and much congestion on the short first leg, but little in the way of voiced disagreement. Ffinlo Wright, returning from Uni and sailing his Aero9, took the lead on the water to finish first, but the following 4 boats were close enough to demote Ffinlo to 6th. Indeed only 8 seconds separated 2nd and 5th-placed Teddy Dunn Aero 5. Peter Cope Aero 7 won on handicap with Jerry Colman Finn 2nd, Simon Pressley 3rd Laser Radial and Dave Batch Aero 7 4th. 7th was Ralph Kee Laser and 8th Andrew Dean D-Zero Blue Jim Whitelegg Gull was 9th and young Ivan Nichols a creditable 10th in his RS Tera.

The second race featured a general recall where so many were over the line at the start that individual sinners were un-identifiable, the entire fleet having to re-start. The congestion resulted from a competitive fleet all trying to start at the same point, a good start being helpful for a good result, but the re-start was clean. Again Ffinlo led the fleet with Peter second finisher, close enough to take his second victory of the day. Dave ended 2nd ahead of Ffinlo, Teddy pipped Jerry by just 3 seconds for 4th, with Ralph, Simon and Andrew filling in the next 3 places. The one capsize I saw was Phil and Chris's Fireball, but the recovery was so quick most missed it.

After 4 races Peter leads the series from Teddy, Dave Batch and Jerry, who is tied on points with Simon. On Boxing Day there is the one-off Frost Bite Regatta pursuit race at 1100hrs finishing at 12.00. The December series will be decided the next day Sunday, weather permitting of course.

Thanks to Keith Poole for race officer duty, and the Patrol boat crew of Andy Dunn and Peter Hoosen-Owen. Thanks also are due to sponsors Watling Streetworks, supporting sailing in our lucky Island.