

## Manx Sailing and Cruising Club

Watling Streetworks Injebreck December Series December 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> 2023.

Teddy Dunn stars in challenging conditions but Tom Watterson prevails overall.

And

### MS&CC Frostbite Regatta Boxing Day 2023

A forecast of rain, 25 knot Westerlies, gusting to 40 knots and increasing did not encourage a huge fleet to make the early start at Injebreck on Christmas Eve but eight boats launched to face the weather and work out how the shifts and gusts could be employed to their advantage while staying in control of the boat. With the wind coming over the hill from the west the gusts tended to lift boats going upwind on starboard tack (i.e. let them point more towards the west and so more directly at the windward mark). If you're strong and nimble then you might be able to turn the boat through the gust while keeping upright and fully powered up in the increased wind by sitting out hard, gaining boat-lengths on the more conservative sailors who ease the sails in the gusts to avoid taking a dip.

Teddy Dunn in the RS Aero 7, back on the island from college in the UK, put on a masterclass of this skill as well as demonstrating full commitment in the downwind legs thereby building up a big lead which he held to the end. The rest suffered the odd capsize and there were a few gear failures but youth star Tom Watterson in the RS Aero 5 (same boat as Teddy's, but with a smaller 5 square metre sail) put in a strong performance coming in 9 seconds ahead of Peter Cope and father Tim in the Laser 2000 on corrected time. Younger brother Jimmy Cope who hadn't seemed that keen before the start claimed an excellent 4<sup>th</sup> place in the Tera but decided enough was enough and left the next race to the rest of us in the increasingly strong gusts.

Andrew Dean, now in the Laser Radial rather than the Devoti D Zero made full use of the smaller mainsail (and hence more favourable handicap) to take 5<sup>th</sup> place despite taking a dip or 2 as did Dave Batchelor in the H2 who took an unaccustomed 6<sup>th</sup> just ahead of Jason Hyett in the Laser Standard and Roo Hyett in the RS Aero 5.

In the second race of the morning, with just 7 boats now out, honours again went to Teddy and with the exception of Peter Cope and Tom Watterson swapping places the rest came in as before although with the times a bit closer all round as the competitors learnt how to handle the tricks that Injebreck can throw at you.

Your correspondent dodged the proceedings by filling an empty place in the patrol boat alongside Helen Kee thereby gaining average points from the previous weekend's results so standings in the series now had Watterson in the lead with 11 points, Batchelor next with 16 points and Colman 3<sup>rd</sup> on 18 points. Still all to play for on the last day of the December Series on New Year's Eve which hopefully will round off a great year's sailing for so many of us yachters in 2023.

Between the last pair of series races was the MS&CC's traditional Frostbite Regatta held at Injebreck on Boxing Day. With gales all around, most with names denoting their storm status, it looked like we might be disappointed but the heavens smiled upon us and sunglasses were the order of the day (together with drysuits and warm gloves) with the sun low in the South over the number 3 mark.

The race was run as a pursuit, with the slowest boats starting first at 1100 hrs and the rest of the fleet following at pre-set times so that according to their handicaps, they should all be level at 1200 hrs making whoever was in front at that instant the winner. So the Tera's of Jimmy Cope and George Pearce set off first followed by Laser Radials, Eric and Joe Whitelegg's Enterprise, Aero 5s, Aero 7s and the Finn and finally the Hadron H2. Guess who finished in front in the more gentle conditions? Yes Teddy again but by only the smallest of margins from Andrew Dean in the Laser Radial. The Enterprise was close behind in third so well done Joe and Eric. The rest were to be found admiring the scenery in various bunches around the lake where the flukey wind had deposited them and then stopped for a bit but it does show that the cream still comes to the top. At the prizegiving at the boat park afterwards, where Yogi Quayle presented the Stan Quayle Trophy for the event to Teddy, Mr Dean was heard to enquire when Teddy was heading back to college again!

Special thanks are due to the Hyett family who served up life-saving hot chocolate and sweets after the race from their camping kitchen in a selection of MS&CC prize mugs as won by their racing members over the years. More to come I'm sure.

Also thanks to May Shiu Chan and Emily Kee for manning the Frostbite patrol boat and Andy Dunn who also took the water with them to get some cracking photos which can be found on the MS&CC FB page.

The final races of 2023 took place on Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> December with the first start as usual at 1000 hrs. The forecast again was not that encouraging at around 12 to 20 knots from the Southwest with rain but this did not put off those looking for podium places or some practice in winter sailing. The lake however looked benign in between showers so eventually a fleet of 10 set off downwind in moderately gusty and dampish conditions towards the start line. Shortly before the 5 minute gun (actually a hoot from a horn but sailors prefer the more emblematic description) a black line was seen moving rapidly up the reservoir just as the rain increased in intensity and moments later its orientation as it turned horizontal driven by a 30 knot squall (some say 40 knots or even more at its peak). The overpowering effect not to mention the sudden drop in temperature sent young Jimmy Cope back to the dinghy park but by the 1 minute gun it had blown through and the rest of the fleet was remarkably still upright and ready for the start gun. Thanks to May Shiu and Jade Leach in the patrol boat for seeing us through this short but sharp 45 knot drama. Pictures again from the floating photographer, Andy Dunn.

The relief felt in surviving the 50 knot event seemed to have led to some forgetting about the rules and hence a bit of a tangle of boats on port and starboard tacks at the windward mark which left a gap just big enough for your correspondent's Finn to slip though unimpeded and latch onto the lead boat's wake (Teddy again) and hold it to the end of the race gaining a second place and keeping that podium place within the realms of possibility.

The next race, the last in the December series, was sailed in more gentle conditions with a bit of sunshine (low and from dead ahead to windward of course) and although it was Teddy again taking the bullet a well-deserved second place for Tom Watterson in the RS Aero 5 gave him the series from Teddy (who carried 2 no shows from earlier in the month) and with Jerry Colman just hanging on to third by half a point from Pressly (Laser Radial with 2 bullets in races 1 and 2) and Batchelor despite counting a 6<sup>th</sup> place.

So even with the winter weather, the December series provided some great close racing and we look forward to January's offerings and hopefully a few more boats on the water for those 1000 Sunday morning starts.

Again I must remark on how helpful all the competitors and their families have been by helping to retrieve all the boats (especially the quite heavy Finn) and then by pulling the patrol boat ashore.

Thanks to OOD Keith Poole for the usual excellent race management throughout. Full results and great pics and some video on MS&CC FB.

Jerry Colman