

Manx Sailing and Cruising Club

Watling Streetworks Injebreck January Series 28th Jan 2024

Copes clean up in January Series

Peter and Max Cope took the Kara Cup for the January Watling Streetworks Series at Injebreck in style with two bullets on a very windy Sunday at Injebreck on Sunday. Anyone who completed the course deserves props for guts and skills and mostly for repeated recovery from multiple capsizes of all modes.

When your correspondent left Ramsey at around 0830 to prepare for the race it was blowing dogs off chains and any dinghy sailing seemed a remote prospect. However, it's never what you expect at Injebreck so on arrival at the dinghy park at around 0900 it looked manageable although with some quite strong gusts. At this point I realised that while worrying about the breeze (forecast 25 knots gusting 40 knots from the South) I had left the patrol boat petrol at home so sped back to Ramsey to pick it up. On return to the lake 5 boats were rigged and ready and the patrol boat was crewed up and waiting for its gas. A quick rig of the Finn had all 6 of us afloat for the first start just after 1000.

The Copes sailed the only 2 handed spinnaker dinghy, a Laser 2000, while a competitive fleet of 3 RS Aero 5s sailed by Will Osbourn, Tom Watterson and Roo Hyett showed off this very quick skiff-type single hander while Jason Hyett (Laser Standard) and Colman (Finn) showed that the older designs could do it too.

The strength and direction of the wind meant that powerful gusts ran up the dam and kept on going up after reaching the top, largely missing the dinghy park. However what goes up generally comes down again and this happened about a quarter of the way up the lake as we all discovered within minutes of departure. A couple of near capsizes before the start showed not only how strong the gusts were but also how big the shift in direction was when they hit. Watching those tell tale signs on the water together with the antics of any boats in front of you were essential to making efficient progress while remaining upright around the course.

The beat upwind from the start to no 2 mark, off the dinghy park, caught a few out and the mix up of the wind around that mark made rounding an issue for some but it was the gybe at no 3 that had the vultures circling. However most made it round ok and then set off on the crazy downwind run all the way up the lake to no 6. A firm grip on the helm is required for this but the performance of the boats is tested to the limit and some of the sound effects from the younger sailors showed how much they were enjoying it. The Copes handled their asymmetric spinnaker skilfully, putting in 3 or 4 gybes as they zig-zagged up the lake at high speed followed by the Finn which briefly edged in front of them but slipped back due to a bad tack on the next beat and couldn't catch them despite a rare Cope capsize on the beat.

The Aeros kept snapping at my heels but tended to trip up in the gusts while the inertia of the heavy Finn and its even heavier helm kept us more or less upright and we finished the race as the only boat not to have capsized.

After 3 laps of this I decided I'd experienced enough excitement for a septuagenarian and canned it for the final race remarking that with the busy time the patrol boat was already having I'd rather be

part of the solution than the problem. The rest however stuck it out and although I thought from the shore that the weather had reduced a bit they all assured me later that it was worse.

Full results (lowest score wins) available on the MS&CC website and FB (with pics) revealed a decisive victory for the Copes on 6 points from the 5 races sailed and Colman second with 20 points just ahead of Dave Batchelor on 23 and Tom Watterson on 24.