

Vane A Club Racing, Sunday 26th February

Storm Doris had been lashing the country in the days before this scheduled second vane A club racing. The Saturday evening was damagingly windy, and pouring with rain. Sounded like a normal club vane racing day! But the Sunday morning saw just a stiff, squally breeze, from a south westerly direction. And with only occasional rain to remind us that the sooner we got down to racing, the sooner we could enjoy the Lakeside Cafe's hot sausage and black pudding sandwiches. Yum! With Bob Pearson and Mervyn Cook as race officers, skippers were kept sailing throughout the morning.

Five boats and crews were ready to race: the fleet including designs with displacements varying from just over 28 lbs to just under 30. Part of the fascination in racing A's lies in the ever-present issue of whether a good lightweight can really hold its own against a good heavier yacht. To further complicate the mix, Malcolm and Paul's Hollom *Secreto* design boat was back, renowned as a great stronger wind boat, resplendent in a superb new coat of epoxy varnish. Conditions gave a real drag-race on the windward boards, so there was to be no hiding the real potential of the boats.

The breeze made for fast sailing, and a well behaved fleet led to only a minimal number of re-sails, so one round was completed by 12.20. By which time the rain had re-appeared! Deserved winners by 3 points were Anthony and Lester, sailing their heavier Bantock design *Shield* consistently well. Second were Jacque and Eric sailing their Simpson *Lightening* the lightest boat of the fleet and only three points behind. Just a single point behind them were Peter and Andy, sailing a light Hollom *The Minstrel* boat. Both lighter boats looked very effective, even on the beats. Fourth and fifth were Malcolm and Paul, and Graham and Ray, neither boats showing their usual sparkling form on the day, although they just missed out in some very close finishes.

It was interesting to observe how close the racing was, with lighter boats snapping at the heavier designs and sometimes capitalising on the vagaries of the breeze in the lulls. Points were scored through skill and experience, and all boats were sailed really well. The next episode will be this Sunday, the 5th of March, when the A's meet again to try to redress the balance! The long-range forecast is for a very similar day to last Sunday, so I hope to see you there.

Mervyn