

Second Downriver series at Frostbites

With a fine day and good north-easterly breeze 7 Frostbite crews set off downstream from C line under the supervision of David Yapp as Officer of the day assisted by Julia Deary as timekeeper and flag puller. Newcomer John Bayldon helming B61 "Echo" and crewed by Bernie Woodcock made the best start followed closely by Sam Woodcock in B20 "Kelpie" crewed by Pat Woodcock and also Danny Tyrrell sailing "Egret" sporting sail number B53. Geoff Evans in B71 "Wild Duck" crewed by Geoff Coulthard had problems rigging and were a little late starting. The wind direction provided a good beat at the start and also all the way through the Whitlingham straight which made for exciting sailing. By the time the fleet were passing the boatyards and moorings on the north shore, and approaching the Southern Bypass Viaduct, Woodcock was well out in front with Ray Johnson sailing B54 "Coot" crewed by Wendy Bush some minutes behind. Stephen Ellingham followed in B30 "Willa" crewed by Shirley Hagger. Owing to the speed of the fleet the OOD decided to carry on through the windless "grove" of trees leading to the Bramerton straight of more open water and finished the race a short distance up. Woodcock finished first in 35 minutes, Johnson second 4 minutes later and Ellingham third 2 minutes after Johnson.

After a quarter of an hour break the return race was started very competitively between Tyrrell and Bayldon at the midpoint of the line but Pat Woodcock now helming "Kelpie" crewed by Sam Woodcock started further to windward and put the former two boats about they having tacked onto port off the far bank. Woodcock held her starboard tack well and crept up the leeward bank before finally tacking out and back again nicely in the lead. She progressed well ahead into the "grove" which in this direction lived up to its name and stopped the fleet for some time. Woodcock's position was threatened but she managed to keep just ahead sufficient to leave the grove and sail away and was under the viaduct by some distance before Mike and Jess Readhead emerged in their Enterprise followed by Ellingham and Tyrrell. On entering Whitlingham straight the Woodcocks poled out their jib and powered on a lovely run to be overtaken only by the safety boat crew who just managed to reach the finishing line at the Clubhouse in time to record their finish. Woodcock finished in 45 minutes and it was over 7 minutes before the Readheads followed and Ellingham 2 minutes later. On handicap (boats only) Woodcock was first, Ellingham second and Tyrrell third. The Readheads fell back to sixth position.