

French Nationals 2011, Moisson Lavacourt

Report

Three sailors from Frensham made up team GBR for the French Access National Championships held at Moisson Lavacourt, together with Mac Stowe from Rutland (using a local 303 and crew). The venue is situated in a loop of the river Seine in a former quarry, about 40 miles northwest of Paris, and covering about 240 acres in the heart of 'Monet' country.

For two of the team, Lindsay Burns and Tessa Watkiss the French adventure began in a most inauspicious fashion and, in fact, was more like last tango in Paris! We left Woolverstone TT in wind and rain and arrived NW of Paris at 1.30 in the morning in wind and rain, to be told there had been a mix up in our hotel booking. Appropriate accommodation was found for Tessa, whilst Lindsay was taken to a room containing a naked man in a compromising position, resulting in a swift exit and, since no other room was available, a night in the back of the car wrapped in a boat cover. Welcome to France!

By the next morning (Thursday) the weather had improved as did everything else. We arrived at the venue, which is in a truly stunning location, and from then on were treated in the most efficient, friendly and hospitable manner, with an army of helpers offering assistance without anyone ever needing to ask. Congratulations to all concerned!

Racing began on Friday afternoon with two races back to back, held in sunshine and force 2 wind. The Race Officer used a windward/leeward course, with very shifty conditions for the top half of the beat, which was very much to the liking of all the GBR visitors and Barry Coates from Australia.

Repeat conditions on day 2 allowed 4 races to be completed, with Lindsay (2.3) and Tessa (303 single) adding four more wins each to the two each gained on Friday. Mac was having a very close tussle in the 303 doubles with two of the French boats, whilst Ali Grant was having her own battles with the local boats. Saturday was completed with an excellent regatta dinner together with a seemingly endless supply of wine!

The series should have included two more races, but Sunday morning dawned sunny, hot and with not a breath of wind. Racing was postponed until midday, when a light breeze came in, which was enough to run one more race. Because of the wind direction, the start and finish were close to the Clubhouse shore, allowing good viewing for the spectators and an enthusiastic greeting to the finishing sailors. Lindsay and Tessa led home their two fleets once again, with Mac just losing out to the two French boats in a close finish in the 303 doubles.

The outstanding memory of this event is the warmth of everyone involved, who were as enthusiastic about the British success as they were about the performance of their own sailors. It was the first time that a Sailability event had been held at this venue and everyone agreed that a return visit is a must. The facilities for disabled users were excellent, allowing everyone to get the maximum enjoyment from the Event. A huge thank you to the Organisers from everyone taking part.



