



**PERIHELION**  **116**

**Autumn 2015**

***Comet Class Association  
Newsletter***

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Class Association

Website:- [www.cometsailing.org.uk](http://www.cometsailing.org.uk)

# *Chairman's Report*

## *Chair's mutterings*

The open meeting season has now come to a conclusion with the final events at Staunton Harold and Redesmere. The last few months have seen the emergence of some new talent on the open meeting circuit in the person of Chris Hatton, he has yet to join the association so his results won't appear in the overall travellers results. For those who haven't been to the events since the open meeting at Severn he has won 3 events (Littleton ,Merthyr Tydfill, and Bristol Avon), come 2nd at Cotswold, and 3rd at Severn.



Back in August we visited Cardiff Yacht Club for the Nationals and AGM, many thanks to David and Rowena Bevan for organising another successful event. Also thank you to all those members of the yacht club and the class association who lent a hand in the running of the racing and social events during the weekend - without all these volunteers it would not have run as smoothly and been as enjoyable. On the Saturday evening, we held our class AGM and more details of the proceedings can be found in Norah's report later in this edition. All I will mention are the new members of the committee who are Nigel Austin, Mark Govier, and Steve Gregory, and thank them in advance for offering their time to the running of the class association.

The website continues to be a work in progress, we have recently had a problem with the calendar but this has been re-

solved. The new one is more functional than the original and caused a small amount of confusion over event start times when it was first upgraded.

There will be more updates to some of the pages during the winter months, if you have any suggestions about what you would like to see on the website or what would attract sailors to the class please let myself or Nigel Fern know.

Next year's event programme is already starting to be organised, we have already been contacted by a number of clubs offering events. These include a number of venues that are new to the Comet as well long established and old favourites. If have any suggestions about venues for open meetings or either of the championships please let Norah know.

***Paul Hinde C844***

**PS The Members page password on the new website is  
halleys2014**

### **Perihelion 117**

Please send your contributions for the next issue of  
Perihelion by

***1st December 2015***

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# Secretary's Report

## Notes from the committee:

1. Thanks to Cardiff Yacht Club for a wonderful weekend of sailing for the National Championships. David and Rowena Bevan worked extremely hard to ensure that we had an enjoyable weekend and we are very grateful to them and the club members who rallied round to help, some at short notice. A big Thank You to Sue Copenhall who spent the weekend tied to the kitchen sink!
2. Once again we had a mixed bag of weather, including thunder and lightning, and some very competitive sailing. The Race Officer decided not to run one of the races because the wind had disappeared, so the event was decided on 7 races, with 6 helms winning at least one race. Eddie Pope is our new National Champion, with Guy Wilkins and Michael Ettershank following close behind him. Guy won 2 of the races, while Michael showed consistent results without a win, losing out to Guy on count-back. Mark Wilkins, Ben Palmer, Bob Dodds and Dave Harris each won one race. Rhian Bevan is our Ladies Champion, with Izac Dodds taking the Youth Trophy.
3. Thank you to everyone who came to the Annual General Meeting. It is the one time when you can air your views and take a very active part in running the Association.
4. Clive Chapman and Brian Weatherley retired from the committee, and we have given them each a small gift as a thank-you for all their work for the Association.
- 5.
5. We had 3 nominations for new members. We agreed to co-



opt all three, which will be really helpful in sharing out some of the jobs which have to be done. Your new committee is:

**Officers:**

|           |              |
|-----------|--------------|
| Chairman  | Paul Hinde   |
| Secretary | Norah Jagers |
| Treasurer | Rhiain Bevan |

**Committee:**

|          |                    |
|----------|--------------------|
| Results  | Michael Ettershank |
| Trophies | Liz Hossell        |
|          | John Sturgeon      |
|          | Nigel Fern         |
|          | Steve Gregory      |
|          | Mark Govier        |
|          | Nigel Austin       |

6. The motion to amend Class Measurement Rule 26e was passed and it now reads:  
*“Sail outhaul system. Route of rope and purchase optional. Type and method of connection to clew is optional. Clew slider around the boom shall be of any suitable material (e.g. rope or Velcro) other than a solid metal ring.”*  
The amendment comes into force with immediate effect.
7. Thank you again to all of the clubs which have made a donation to the Association after hosting an Open meeting. The idea has had a very positive response. Thank you.
8. Please continue to make use of the website especially the members area. The “Big Debate” is hotting up, so make sure that you have your say!  
You can send reports and photographs to [cometresults@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cometresults@yahoo.co.uk).

***Norah Jagers Class Secretary***

# **COMET NATIONALS AT CARDIFF YACHT CLUB ON 21-23 AUGUST 2015**

Cardiff Yacht Club was an excellent host for the 2015 Comet Nationals, with on-site camping, tasty meals, a great stretch of water, and efficient organisation. Several attendees had fond memories of the windy Nationals held there in 2010, but these conditions were not to be repeated this time because winds were in the range of force 1 to 3 from various directions. There was also some rain, but this failed to dampen spirits in an event enjoyed by all.

There was a very good entry of 31, despite a few regulars not being able to attend. There were 4 previous Comet National Champions, and also several strong performers who would be bound to mount a challenge. The Comet fleet are a really friendly “family” and we had some great evening entertainment in the clubhouse organised by Dave Bevan from Cardiff Bay and our own Nigel Austin.

In the tricky and varied conditions it was important to be consistent, despite two discards being allowed. There were 6 different race winners in the 7 races held, and in the end consistency did count.

Multi-champion Guy Wilkins stamped his authority on the fleet by winning both races on day 1, which were held in a solid force 3. He was followed quite closely by Keith Bond and Jeffrey Smith in race 1, with Michael Ettershank 4th. Dave Harris (former champion) started well but managed to capsize spectacularly when challenging Guy Wilkins for the lead. In race 2 Guy led comfortably throughout, but behind there was a race-long battle between Eddie Pope (former champion), Michael Ettershank and Ben Palmer. Eddie Pope managed to break through to 2nd on the last beat just pipping Ben Palmer.

Day 2 dawned with very light winds. The Race Officer started race 3 on time, leaving quite a few helms still on their way from the launching area. Eddie Pope started at the pin end and led throughout, followed by Mark Wilkins in his new Comet, Michael Ettershank and the fast-finishing Bob Dodds. Race 4 was also light and shifty, and was a battle between the Wilkins brothers with Mark Wilkins just holding off Guy Wilkins. Some way behind Izac Dodds (son of Bob) sailed really well to hold off Eddie Pope. Race 5 featured an unexpected shift on the

first beat which left some of the front runners in the earlier races well down the fleet. Bob Dodds sailed brilliantly to win, with Michael Ettershank 2nd. Eddie Pope pulled back through the fleet to gain 3rd place by overlapping two outside boats at the last mark, and he was followed by Paul Hinde (class chair). In view of the lack of wind and impending thunderstorm and much to the relief of the fleet, the Race Officer then abandoned racing for the day, leaving the prospect of re-running race 6 on the final day. At the end of day 2, with one discard kicking in, Eddie Pope was leading from Michael Ettershank and Guy Wilkins.

So it was all to play for on the final day. It was decided to hold just 2 races and not to re-run the final race scheduled on day 2. The wind had swung around 180 degrees from the previous day so was coming from the land. The tall buildings around the bay produced some interesting wind bands and wind shadows. The breeze was mostly force 2, but great concentration was needed to get the best out of it. The fleet was very keen at the start of the penultimate race, leading to a general recall. Sense prevailed and the next start was fine. Ben Palmer seemed to spot every windshift and won, Jeffrey Smith found his form again to come 2nd, followed by Michael Ettershank and Mark Wilkins. With the second discard now kicking in Eddie Pope's lead had been reduced to a single point over Guy Wilkins with Michael Ettershank a further point behind. The championship would be decided in the final race.

The final race started without incident. Dave Harris led at the first mark closely followed by Guy Wilkins and Eddie Pope. Eddie Pope managed to pass Guy Wilkins in marginal planing conditions on the first reach and then overtook Dave Harris on the run. Dave Harris fought back and crossed in front of Eddie Pope on the beat. Guy Wilkins dropped back, and Michael Ettershank was buried on the fleet. The odds therefore favoured Eddie Pope to win the championship and he managed to finish in 2nd place behind Dave Harris. Izac Dodds pulled through to third followed by Mark Wilkins.

Eddie Pope C804

In his winner's speech Eddie Pope praised all concerned for such a memorable event. The coveted club prize for the three leading boats was won by Crawley Mariners SC.

***Eddie Pope C804***

# **Comet National Championships**

## ***A personal memory***

Arrived Thursday afternoon and told to park the van by the dual carriageway – it is too big for the main car park. Friday a.m. woke at 5.30 as usual! Had a cup of tea and then dozed until 7.15, the steady hum of the dual carriageway, the tinkling of the rigging plus the drip, drip of the rain must have lulled me back to sleep. Strangely, it only took 45 minutes to get the boat off the roof and set up whereas it took an hour and a half to put it on the roof! Made the decision, 'Full rig', but as the morning progressed the grey stripes in the water grew until flecks of white appeared, correct decision – only time will tell!

The briefing didn't hold any surprises other than the lack of an 'I' flag, they used a different one - blue and white squares like a chess board – but still we were told 'round the ends' if over in the last minute'. Two very slippery slipways were our access to the water, then onto a very bouncy pontoon, which was almost straight into the wind!

The course was a trapezium / sausage to port with through the gate on each beat. The buoys were small and to be honest I couldn't see them at all, so I guessed at the start! Chose the right end but the lead pack got away and I slowly made my way towards the back of the fleet! As I approached the leeward mark of the sausage I was alongside 343, both of us running on starboard. John Coppenhall and Chris Robinson having rounded the mark came towards us also on Starboard, we were windward so 343 attempted to head up to allow them to pass as did I, hoping that we would not come together. We managed to keep clear of John and Chris but in doing so ended getting tangled with each other! Neither of us was sure who if anyone was at fault so we called it quits and carried on. The next lap it all went to pot, nearly hit the leeward mark, the out haul came off the cleat and to make matters worse I hit the windward mark as I had to tack to avoid another boat and couldn't clear the buoy. A race to forget.

Race 2 – the same course in similar wind conditions – but the windward mark was moved further out and left. I had a much better start at the pin end and in the mid teens by the windward mark. Had several close tacking duels throughout the race and managed a reasonable finish. So a much better end to the day. No major errors, no 'moments' so the choice of 'full rig' was the right one!

Now for the BBQ and a few bebies! Saturday – early – what goes in eventually comes out but then I couldn't get back to sleep, even at really stupid o'clock the road behind the van was still humming! Tried reading but couldn't concentrate but eventually dropped off to wake at 7.15.

Race 3 – start at 10.30. By 10.25 only 2/3 of the fleet had assembled the rest very slowly drifting out, the wind was low but in the jetty area it was worse, so I have been informed. At 10.30 we started and for once I had a good start and was doing quite well battling with Izac and Brian until the latter stages when those to my left got a breeze that I didn't and I slipped back. Not sure where I finished as the results had not been published due to a protest by John Coppenhall about the start of the race.

Race 4 – by now all of the fleet had assembled and I chose the wrong end. Up the first beat I was about 2/3s back and caught up to the pack at the windward mark. Here there were many comings together and shouts and counter shouts for 'water'; the upshot being that I nearly got T-boned by a boat recovering from this melee causing me to brush into Paul Hinde's boat, holding me up further. The wind was very shifty and I always seemed to tack on a false shift and ended up right at the back. Also by now the pleasure power boats were open for business and at least 3 were making high speed runs near the race course. Several times I hit the wash of these boats and at least twice nearly came to stop with water breaking over the bow of the boat as I dropped into the trough of their wake.

Race 5 in many respects was a carbon copy of Race 4 without the melee at the windward mark. Again I found myself last but one, at least 45 yards behind the next boat and was feeling very despondent, had to do a 720 having clashed masts with Michael Ettershank. On the last run to the leeward mark I caught a breeze and past about 8 boats, catching John Coppenhall at the mark, gained 'water' and managed to pull away and nearly caught a large group at the line.

Race 6 was cancelled due the lack of wind and the approaching thunder storm – so it means 3 back to back races on Sunday! Deep joy!

The AGM followed with nothing contentious discussed. The motion to allow different clew tie downs was passed so the 'Velcro' type is now allowed.

Sunday – still woke early, but used the time to get the van sorted ready for the drive back North. The wind had picked up over night and *strangely* the whole fleet were on the water well before the committee boat! As we were to be accompanied by CYC boats it was decided that we would do just 2 races.

Race 7 – correct end and going well up the beat, approaching the windward mark I was in about 12th but on Port, no gap to get to the mark and not wanting to cause damage in the freshening breeze did a 360 turn by which time there was a gap but most of the fleet had passed!! Rules and timing issues!! Nigel Austin nearly came to grief as his horse rope came undone but he still managed to finish ok.

Race 8 – determined to do a better again, I got in the pack early but we were, mostly, over the line and a general recall followed.

2nd start – went too early and keeping clear ended up at the pin end when I should have been nearer the committee boat end. Got tangled up with 2 boats with me in the middle, the lead boat virtually stopped and in avoiding her tapped the third boat – yet another 720 – should have hit her and made her to the 720! I got ahead of Henry who like me was keeping to the left up the beat, slowly I opened the gap between us and began concentrating on catching those in front as we neared the windward mark, but in doing so drifted off to the right and not only didn't catch them but Henry slipped by us all keeping to the left!!

Overall 25th. ***Nigel Fern C845***

## ***National Championships Prizes***

### ***2015 Comet National Champion***

**Eddie Pope C804 Ogston SC**

### ***Runner up***

**Guy Wilkins C806 Chipstead SC**

### ***Third place***

**Michael Ettershank C84 Up River SC**

### ***Youth Champion***

**Izac Dodds C701 CMYC**

### ***Ladies Champion***

**Rhian Bevan C875 Cransley SC**

### ***Veteran Champion***

**Keith Bond C165 Merthyr Tydfil**

### ***Ancient Mariner***

**Jeffery Smith C31 CMYC**

### ***Best newcomer***

**Richard Steptoe C294 Baltic Warf**

### ***Team prize***

**Crawley Mariners YC**

## National Championship results *race by race*

| Pos | Helm               | No  | Club           | R1   | R2 | R3   | R4   | R5   | R6 | R7 | Pts   |
|-----|--------------------|-----|----------------|------|----|------|------|------|----|----|-------|
| 1   | Eddie Pope         | 804 | Ogston         | 11   | 2  | 1    | 4    | 3    | 8  | 2  | 12    |
| 2   | Guy Wilkins        | 806 | Chipstead      | 1    | 1  | 12   | 2    | 10   | 7  | 5  | 16    |
| 3   | Michael Ettershank | 84  | Up River       | 4    | 4  | 3    | 10   | 2    | 3  | 10 | 16    |
| 4   | Mark Wilkins       | 880 | Chipstead      | 10   | 10 | 2    | 1    | 14   | 4  | 4  | 21    |
| 5   | Ben Palmer         | 597 | Baltic Wharf   | 6    | 3  | 8    | 13   | 18   | 1  | 6  | 24    |
| 6   | Bob Dodds          | 869 | CMYC           | 9    | 11 | 4    | 5    | 1    | 5  | 9  | 24    |
| 7   | Keith Bond         | 165 | Merthyr Tydfil | 2    | 13 | 6    | 8    | 5    | 11 | 12 | 32    |
| 8   | Nigel Austin       | 875 | Cransley       | 14   | 12 | 5    | 6    | 6    | 15 | 7  | 36    |
| 9   | Jeffrey Smith      | 31  | CMYC           | 3    | 15 | 18   | 7    | 25   | 2  | 11 | 38    |
| 10  | Izac Dodds         | 701 | CMYC           | 15   | 21 | 9    | 3    | 9    | 14 | 3  | 38    |
| 11  | Dave Harris        | 711 | Severn         | 18   | 9  | 11   | 16   | 22   | 9  | 1  | 46    |
| 12  | Andy Dale          | 433 | Eyott          | 5    | 6  | 13   | 11   | 12   | 18 | 14 | 47    |
| 13  | Chris Robinson     | 867 | Burghfield     | 8    | 7  | 20   | 20   | 11   | 6  | 16 | 48    |
| 14  | Paul Hinde         | 844 | Severn         | 12   | 5  | 14   | 15   | 4    | 21 | 19 | 50    |
| 15  | Alan Watson        | 799 | Baltic Wharf   | 7    | 8  | 7    | 21   | 7    | 23 | 21 | 50    |
| 16  | Brian Welham       | 801 | Hunts          | 16   | 20 | 15   | 12   | 8    | 16 | 8  | 59    |
| 17  | John Copenhall     | 532 | Hunts          | 13   | 14 | 22   | 9    | 21   | 12 | 15 | 63    |
| 18  | Rhiain Bevan       | 724 | Cransley       | 17   | 16 | 26   | 17   | 15   | 13 | 24 | 78    |
| 19  | Henry Jagers       | 800 | Beer           | 24   | 23 | 21   | 14   | 19   | 10 | 18 | 82    |
| 20  | Steve Gregory      | 57  | Frensham       | 28.5 | 24 | 10   | 27   | 23   | 26 | 13 | 96    |
| 21  | Mark Govier        | 460 | Merthyr Tydfil | 19   | 18 | 17   | 18   | 27   | 28 | 25 | 97    |
| 22  | Michael Thompson   | 518 | CMYC           | 22   | 25 | 25   | 26   | 13   | 19 | 20 | 99    |
| 23  | Alun Bevan         | 420 | Merthyr Tydfil | 20   | 27 | 28.5 | 25   | 24   | 17 | 17 | 103   |
| 24  | Clive Chapman      | 821 | Shearwater     | 21   | 26 | 19   | 23.5 | 17   | 22 | 32 | 102.5 |
| 25  | Nigel Fern         | 845 | Staunton H     | 25.5 | 19 | 16   | 29   | 20   | 27 | 23 | 103.5 |
| 26  | Richard Steptoe    | 294 | Baltic Wharf   | 25.5 | 17 | 24   | 23.5 | 28.5 | 20 | 22 | 106.5 |
| 27  | Isla McNeal        | 484 | Baltic Wharf   | 30   | 29 | 23   | 22   | 16   | 25 | 26 | 112   |
| 28  | Clifford Webb      | 383 | Chipstead      | 27   | 28 | 30   | 28   | 30   | 24 | 27 | 134   |
| 29  | Helen Leivers      | 857 | Severn         | 32   | 32 | 27   | 19   | 26   | 32 | 32 | 136   |
| 30  | Paul Dean          | 51  | Baltic Wharf   | 23   | 22 | 32   | 32   | 32   | 32 | 32 | 141   |
| 31  | Haydn Perkins      | 654 | Landegfedd     | 28.5 | 30 | 28.5 | 30   | 28.5 | 32 | 32 | 145.5 |

***Some images from Cardiff***



***Cardiff Bay Lock Gates***



**Henry**



**Rhian**

**Nigel A**

**Mark**

# America's Cup – the year we nearly won....

*Just two years ago – with significant help from Sir Ben Ainslie – the Americans came back from 8 – 1 down to the Kiwis to win the America's Cup on San Francisco Bay. They also needed a comeback to stop the Brits from winning in 1934....the closest the Cup has ever been to coming home...*

June 1934, off Newport RI. Railroad tycoon Harold ("Mike") Vanderbilt is not a happy man. At 2–0 down and trailing by over six minutes half way through Race 3 it looks as if his J class *Rainbow* is about to lose the America's Cup to *Endeavour*.



Then, as now, the America's Cup was driven by big personalities and big budgets; Vanderbilt for the mighty New York Yacht Club – which had held it since 1851 – and Tommy Sopwith as the gallant British hero. And, in 1930, '34 and '37 it was raced in awesome 120 -135 ft. J class cutters.

Ever since she arrived in company with Sopwith's motor yacht *Vita*, dock talk has reckoned the British Charles Nicholson-designed cutter to be the more technically advanced and faster boat.

Now it's for real. *Endeavour* wins Race 1 by 2 min. 19 secs and Race 2 by 51 seconds. And it looks as if the aircraft magnate whose Hawker Hurricanes will later help to win a rather different contest could take the Cup back to Britain.

It never happened. *Rainbow* won Race 3 by over three minutes and a hugely controversial Race 4 – of which more later - by 1 min. 15 secs, bringing the scoreline level at 2-2. Race 5 was taken by *Rainbow* with a winning margin of 4min. 1 sec. – although she narrowly avoided a DSQ.

Poor calls by the *Endeavour* afterguard then gave the Americans Race 6, although by less than a minute; *Endeavour* may have been out-sailed at critical moments, but certainly hadn't been outclassed.

But it was game over: despite losing four out of six starts, the slower boat had simply been sailed better. The America's Cup wasn't coming home after all – and Britain has never come as achingly close to the “Auld Mug” again.

## Beginnings....

Tommy Sopwith had moved into J class racing in 1931, two years before co-founding what was to later become Hawker Aircraft. He had two seasons as owner of Sir Thomas Lipton's unsuccessful 1930 challenger for the Cup, *Shamrock V*.

*Shamrock V*'s designer Charles Nicholson – part of the Camper & Nicholson family – was then the go-to designer for big, fast yachts. He had also notably been responsible for, among many others, the admired 23m. class racing yachts *Astra* (1928) and *Candida* (1929) - and the J class *Velsheda* (1933). *Candida* and *Velsheda* are both still sailing – as is the 23m. class *Cambria* (1928), currently undergoing a 12-month refit at Southampton Yacht Services.

Nicholson and the Camper & Nicholson yard in Gosport were therefore the natural choices for Sopwith's intended challenger for the 1934 Cup, while C&N Gosport yard had already built two motor yachts for him.

In America, Cup defender *Rainbow* was hastily built from an updated 1931 design by Starling Burgess, originally conceived to face a potential sixth challenge from Sir Thomas Lipton.

In a country not yet fully out of the 1929-33 recession, campaign funds had been tight. Some sails, winches and other gear first used on Vanderbilt's victorious *Enterprise* in the 1930 Cup found their way aboard *Rainbow*. And, in the selection trials, *Rainbow* had only narrowly beaten the older *Yankee*.

By contrast, her challenger *Endeavour* was very much a state of the

art yacht: indeed, until *Australia 2*'s winged keel in the 1983 Cup, the 1934 match was unique in the modern era as the only time a challenger has come to the line with superior technology.

Innovative features included the first quadrilateral jib (copied by *Rainbow*), four-speed winches, an advanced backstay tensioner, electric windspeed indicator and rod rigging designed against a background of aviation technology.

In the run-in to the Cup matches, both syndicate bosses had crew disputes. Vanderbilt would solve his; by contrast most of Sopwith's well-honed professional racing crew would be replaced by amateurs and it will inevitably make a difference.

### **The crucial Races 3 and 4:**

Back on the water in Race 3, the clearly faster *Endeavour* is now half way round the 30-mile course, with a lead of well over six minutes at the final mark. Her afterguard know that if they can close out this third race to go 3-0 up, Tommy Sopwith will have a clear psychological advantage - and one hand firmly on the America's Cup.

Winner over Sir Thomas Lipton in 1930, Harold Vanderbilt on *Rainbow* is beginning to have doubts. In the first of two crucial moments in the series he gives the helm to Sherman Hoyt, wondering if he can: "... *Make the darned thing go*". Expecting to lose, he goes below.

Hoyt has raced Sopwith in England and knows he will always cover an opponent's move. He luffs. *Endeavour* follows suit, sails into a light patch, makes a couple of panicky manoeuvres – and loses the race by three minutes. (In the final race, with *Endeavour* leading, Hoyt will again successfully bluff *Endeavour* into a covering move that will ultimately cost Sopwith the race and give *Rainbow* a series-winning 4 – 2 scoreline).

### **Decisive:**

But the series – and the controversy for which the 1934 AC is always remembered – was all about what happened in Race 4.

Trailing by 23 seconds after the start, *Endeavour* had rounded the first mark on to the reaching leg 24 seconds ahead, but with *Rainbow* carrying more speed and reducing the challenger's lead. Sopwith then

luffed *Rainbow*, but Vanderbilt did not respond, despite Hoyt's cry: "Luff Mike, for God's sake luff".

Vanderbilt would maintain that he was under no obligation to luff; Sopwith that risk of collision forced him to bear away. How far apart were the yachts? That rather depends on which account you believe – pick a number of feet between 10 and 50. Was Sopwith in the right? Many commentators then and subsequently thought so.

What Sopwith definitely did NOT do was to "promptly" hoist a protest flag. The protest was disallowed; *Rainbow* won the race by over a minute to level the series at 2-2 and the famous quote: "*Britannia rules the waves but America waives the rules*" was born.

The near-collision and the controversy it triggered are certainly the most recalled aspects of the 1934 Cup. But it wasn't quite so simple. The Race Committee decided that *Endeavour* had fouled *Rainbow* in the pre-start of Race 4. *Endeavour* protested this pre-start incident as well as the near-collision. The Committee were minded to disallow the first protest, which would invalidate the second. But to avoid controversy they deemed failure to "promptly" protest in order to avoid hearing either.

Could Sopwith have won the Cup from a 3-0 or 3-1 scoreline? In 1934 he was a better starter than Vanderbilt and *Endeavour* was clearly the faster boat, albeit an advantage offset by evident tactical weaknesses – so yes, probably. Yet, *Oracle* came back from 8-1 down last time....

The concensus must be that Harold Vanderbilt "got lucky" in 1934. And he knew it. For the 1937 defence he would leave nothing to chance.....

( Part 2 of this article by **Roger Johnstone C840** will appear in *Perihelion 117* )

**Note:** Key sources for this article included Ian Dear's *Enterprise to Endeavour* (fourth edition 1999); *The America's Cup – An Informal History* (same author 1980) and Tony Fairchild's *The America's Cup challenge: There is no second* (1983). This also gives a highly readable accounts of the British challenges in 1958 (*Sceptre*); 1964 (*Sovereign*); 1980 (*Lionheart*) and 1983 (*Victory 83*)

For the 1986/87 challenge in Freemantle with *White Crusader*, see *Cudmore and the America's Cup*, by Malcolm McKeag (1987). This and both Ian Dear titles are currently (August) available via Amazon.

## *Hawley Comet Open 2015*

The weather on the morning of 25<sup>th</sup> July was a little off-putting with wind speeds forecast to be force 4 gusting to 5. In the event it was not too bad. The North-Westerly wind was gusty at first but not too strong. This direction was perfect for Hawley with a long first beat to the windward mark from the far end of the lake up to the clubhouse. For spectators, the windward mark just off the clubhouse was interesting, and for competitors tricky, as the wind direction varied through more than 90 degrees at this point.

This year the Duos did not have an event on the same day so we had the lake to ourselves. Eight competitors entered, five travellers and three local boats. Six used the full Comet rig and two used Xtra sails. During the first race the wind was gusty and the sky overcast. At the start Michael Ettershank gave everyone, except Henry Jagers, a head start by capsizing to windward in a gusty wind shift. Henry had to take avoiding action to prevent joining Michael, which delayed his start too. However, a capsize was obviously invigorating for Michael. He made the windward mark in the lead and never relinquished it. By the end of lap 2 Henry had made up to second place and he and John Coppenhall fought over this position to the end of the race when John just beat Henry.

The second race was held after lunch. The wind had dropped just a little and the sun was breaking through to make sailing pleasant. Just before the start sequence John Sturgeon tried to emulate Michael's earlier feat by capsizing. This did not have the same effect on John as, unlike Michael, he came in sixth. The first three helms in the first race fought out the first three places in this one. John Coppenhall reached the first mark in the lead followed by Henry and Michael but by the end of the second lap Michael had got back into the lead, which he never relinquished. John dropped back into third place on lap 2 but moved into second place ahead of Henry on lap three. Once again the top three, in order, were Michael, John and Henry. All the other competitors were in the same positions as the first race: Annette Walters fourth, Clive Chapman fifth, John Sturgeon sixth, Carol Butcher seventh and John Yarham, sailing his first Comet Open, came in eighth.

Race three was held after a short break. Now the wind and the gusts

had abated a little more and the sun shone. Clive Chapman had a good start to this race and at the end of lap 1 was leading followed by Michael and John Coppenhall. At the end of lap 2 Clive had slipped to third place with Michael back in the lead. Lap 3 saw John retake the lead that he held to the end. Michael was second, and John Sturgeon managed to slip in front of Clive to come third by a very tight margin with Annette following close behind.

The race officer noticed that the sailing instructions did not detail any discards so he counted all three races with the following result: first Michael Ettershank, second John Coppenhall and third Annette Walters. Tea and cakes, followed by the prize giving, finished off a very enjoyable day.

### ***John Sturgeon C400***

| Place | Helm               | Club       | Boat | R1 | R2 | R3 | Points |
|-------|--------------------|------------|------|----|----|----|--------|
| 1     | Michael Ettershank | Up River   | 84   | 1  | 1  | 2  | 4      |
| 2     | John Coppenhall    | Hunts      | 532  | 2  | 2  | 1  | 5      |
| 3     | Annette Walter     | WGCS       | 232  | 4  | 4  | 5  | 13     |
| 4     | Henry Jagers       | Beer       | 800  | 3  | 3  | 7  | 13     |
| 5     | Clive Chapman      | Shearwater | 821  | 5  | 5  | 4  | 14     |
| 6     | John Sturgeon      | Hawley     | 400  | 6  | 6  | 3  | 15     |
| 7     | Carol Butcher      | Hawley     | 614  | 7  | 7  | 6  | 20     |
| 8     | John Yarham        | Hawley     | 312  | 8  | 8  | 8  | 24     |



# *Comet Open Merthyr Tydfil Sailing Club 20<sup>th</sup> September 2015*



*Gossamer wispieness among the trees*

The gossamer wispieness twisting among the trees gave the glass smooth water a soft-focus surreal look as we arrived around 8 am. However, we were not disheartened, the forecast was for exactly this first thing, increasing to a gentle breeze by the time we planned to race.

I think we were lucky to get the visitors we did, as we had been entirely unaware of the Rugby World Cup when planning this event, and in a story reflecting the bible there really was no room at any inn unless you wanted to stay in Swindon! But the lack of a nearby bed doesn't stop the hard-core of the Comet constellation from orbiting...

Five local Comets were joined by eight visitors from as far away as Crawley Mariners Yacht Club and Hunts Sailing Club. The briefing was held at 11 am by which time the light wind had filled in from the south as expected. The course and starting sequence was explained and everyone headed out onto the water.

The first start was a relatively well behaved one with none over the line and the fleet heading upwind. The fleet started to split into those that favoured one side or the other and there were gains and losses on both sides. While some sailed a more radical lower number of tacks route. As the fleet bore away from the windward mark there was little clear advantage and then there was a little "bunching" and "negotiation" for position towards the gybe mark but I don't recall any crunching sounds or desperate cries before the fleet reached back across towards the clubhouse for the second gybe. The reach

had spread out the boats a little more and on the long run towards the bottom mark again there seemed to be two fleets, one either side of the centre line. After a little re-education in the subtleties of the rules for some at the bottom mark, the 1 km beat back up through the line began. This time the fleet did spread a little more as some could make full advantage of small puffs of extra wind. When it came to the finish after a second lap where the wind had dropped slightly and started to move more westerly, Chris Hatton (Comet 48 from Severn Sailing Club) had pulled ahead to finish first, followed by Bob Dodds (Comet 869 from Crawley Mariners Sailing Club) and Izac Dodds (Comet 701 also from Crawley Mariners Sailing Club).

All then came ashore for some lunch and drinks on the patio overlooking the lake. The baked potatoes with chili and salad followed by spiced apple and fruit crumble and custard went down very well. The second race of the day was also that designated to be the Bart's Bash race. The wind after lunch had turned a lot more westerly than the forecast had suggested. So the line was shifted and the course altered to suit as best the lake could accommodate. The course distance was measured as 1509m and the wind judged to be light. We returned to our boats...

This different course, with the relatively short beat may have been expected to have a similarly bunched fleet, but it seemed to spread the fleet a little better. Soon, Chris Hatton and Ben Palmer (Comet 597, Baltic Wharf SC) were battling it out at the front of the fleet. After three laps, four Comets were pretty much clear of the rest of the fleet, but Chris Hatton finished 43 seconds ahead of Izac Dodds who was just four seconds ahead of Ben Palmer with Dave Harris (Comet 711, Severn SC) only a short way back in fourth place.

The third race of the day was started as soon as the sailors and race officer were ready; we didn't want to hang around, people wanted to get away before the rugby crowds hit the road. This time there was a little argy bargy and shouting at the line but all was resolved on the water. Everyone made a fair start in the end. The same butterfly shaped course was sailed as in the second race. But this time the fleet was much closer for longer (apart from a few of us at the back, the author included). Once on the fetch back towards the line things started to spread out a little but places were changing regularly; was it just me or was the wind becoming a teeny bit lighter and fluky? The front of the fleet was this time taken by Dave Harris who managed to hold off Chris Hatton who could be heard to exclaim when the shorten course signal was given as the second lap headed to conclusion. Ben Palmer managed to hold on to third place in this last race.

Everyone was then helped to quickly recover their boats and get packed away for their journey home. The prize giving was accompanied by friendly

## Comet Open Merthyr Tydfil cont.

chatter over sandwiches, tea and cakes. Many thanks again to the visitors for making the effort to visit us and all those who helped at the club adding greatly to a great day in the light autumn mists.

I must apologise for the reduced level of detail in this year's report; I must try harder to stay nearer the front where the action is taking place.

### Mark Govier, Comet 460

| Place | No  | Club           | Helm            | R1  | R2   | R3  | Total | Nett |
|-------|-----|----------------|-----------------|-----|------|-----|-------|------|
| 1st   | 48  | Severn SC      | Chris Hatton    | 1   | 1    | -2  | 4     | 2    |
| 2nd   | 711 | Severn SC      | Dave Harris     | -5  | 4    | 1   | 10    | 5    |
| 3rd   | 701 | CMYC           | Izac Dodds      | 3   | 2    | -6  | 11    | 5    |
| 4th   | 869 | CMYC           | Bob Dodds       | 2   | -7   | 4   | 13    | 6    |
| 5th   | 597 | Baltic Warf    | Ben Palmer      | -6  | 3    | 3   | 12    | 6    |
| 6th   | 165 | Merthyr Tydfil | Keith Bond      | 4   | -5.5 | 5   | 14.5  | 9    |
| 7th   | 867 | Burghfield     | Chris Robinson  | -7  | 5.5  | 7   | 19.5  | 12.5 |
| 8th   | 844 | Severn SC      | Paul Hinde      | -8  | 8    | 8   | 24    | 16   |
| 9th   | 532 | Hunts SC       | John Coppenhall | -9  | 9    | 9   | 27    | 18   |
| 10th  | 420 | Merthyr Tydfil | Alun Bevan      | 10  | 10   | -11 | 31    | 20   |
| 11th  | 581 | Merthyr Tydfil | Robert Wookey   | -11 | 11   | 10  | 32    | 21   |
| 12th  | 460 | Merthyr Tydfil | Mark Govier     | -12 | 12   | 12  | 36    | 24   |
| 13th  | 694 | Merthyr Tydfil | Andrew Phillips | -13 | 13   | 13  | 39    | 26   |



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## *Cransley Open 1 Aug 2015*

We had Fifteen entries, although only 14 made it onto the water, with 8 visitors travelling from as far as Devon, Wales and Derbyshire – so there was no pressure on Cransley to deliver a day of racing to test everyone. Oh and there were 4 Comet Duo in their Nationals – but we'll come back to them later!!

Race One started with a good beat up the length of the reservoir in a Force 2-3, and after a few laps Eddie Pope (Ogston), Rick Whitehouse (Combs) and Cransleys very own Tom Bull broke away and raced at closely and swapped a few times, before Eddie drew on his experience to outmanoeuvre Tom and Rick in that order. The wind proved difficult to predict and places changed lower down constantly but everyone was still smiling when all headed for a tasty lunch.

Once all the stories of “if onllys/weed on the centreboard” were out the way, the wind built and the capsizes started, including yours truly on a dead run (with no daggerboard insight when upside down, so the excuses dried up!). Tom Bull just disappeared after a lap or two, with Eddie holding off Henry Jaggers for the remaining 4 laps. All was set for a thrilling last race with Eddie and Tom on equal points and Henry, Rick and John Coppenhall all eyeing up a podium spot.

Unfortunately there as a collision in the second race when a squall came through with Brian Welham and Peter Stein/William Grantham (Comet Duo) both having to retire- these things happen, but the Duo was badly holed (and it was part of the Austin fleet lined up for mackerel fishing off Salcombe later that week!). I am only mentioning it because it bizzarely changed my mental approach to the last race in which i led for half a lap before taking a fair few of the fleet to the wrong 3<sup>rd</sup> bouy. However i managed to creep back through the fleet to

| Helm            | Club            | Boat | R1  | R2  | R3  | Total | Place |
|-----------------|-----------------|------|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|
| Eddie Pope      | Ogston          | 804  | 1   | 2   | -4  | 3     | 1     |
| Tom Bull        | Cransley        | 18   | 2   | 1   | -8  | 3     | 2     |
| Nigel Austin    | Cransley        | 875  | -8  | 4   | 1   | 5     | 3     |
| Rick Whitehouse | Combs           | 780  | 3   | -6  | 2   | 5     | 4     |
| John Copenhall  | Hunts           | 532  | 4   | -5  | 3   | 7     | 5     |
| Henry Jagers    | Beer            | 800  | 5   | 3   | -17 | 8     | 6     |
| Rhiain Bevan    | Cransley        | 724  | -7  | 7   | 5   | 12    | 7     |
| Alun Bevan      | Cransley        | 420  | -9  | 8   | 6   | 14    | 8     |
| Nigel Fern      | Staunton Harold | 845  | 11  | -13 | 7   | 18    | 9     |
| Sarah Austin    | Cransley        | 718  | 10  | 9   | -17 | 19    | 10    |
| Andrew Beaumont | Attenborough    | 556  | -12 | 10  | 10  | 20    | 11    |
| Mary Starkey    | Upton Warren    | 754  | -14 | 12  | 9   | 21    | 12    |
| Julie Aves      | Cransley        | 417  | -13 | 11  | 11  | 22    | 13    |
| Brian Welham    | Hunts           | 801  | 6   | -17 | 17  | 23    | 14    |
| Pat Murphy      | Cransley        | 715  | -17 | 17  | 17  | 24    | 15    |

win from Rick and John – probably also something to do with the wind increasing to gusts of Force 4, but generally 3-4. The squalls unfortunately put paid to Tom Bulls chance of winning overall as he entertained the shore crowds with some dead run capsizes and swimming after his hat!

I forgot to say that the sun shone all day, but it always does at Cransley!! Thanks to the race officers for challenging and varied courses, the safety team and the clubhouse catering crew.

### ***Nigel Austin C875***

*Thank you Nigel for mentioning my mis-adventure on that day.*

I had just got the bit between my teeth and was determined to take the lead at the next mark when the incident occurred. Fortunately Nigel's Duo is now fully restored with a little help from my insurance and the skill of our builder Andy.

***Ed***

## *Attenborough Open June 20*

19 boats representing 9 clubs took to the water in light shifting winds. The first race was a triangle, sausage set using the centre of the lake to avoid dead areas close to the bank. The fleet got away cleanly and it was not long before the leaders started to pull away from the bulk of the fleet. Ian Coppenhall from Hunts SC was soon at the front and stayed there throughout the three lap race. Eddie Pope from Ogston SC stayed close for the first two laps but during lap 3 slipped to third whilst Mark Coppenhall from Seven SC gradually made his way from fourth at the end of lap one to second place at the end.

For race 2 the wind had filled in and the OOD used more of the lake. Two boats, including Ian Coppenhall misjudged the start and were over and had to return. This allowed Eddie Pope to gain a significant lead which was never challenged. Ian managed to come through the fleet to take second place by the end of lap one and stayed there to the end. Paul Jago from the local club came through in third place.

Race three started in winds of approximately 6 to 8 mph. The fleet got away cleanly with everyone taking a cautious approach to the line but soon Ian Coppenhall and Eddie Pope pulled away and had a race of their own with each of them covering the other at some stage throughout the race. Further back Henry Jaggars from Beer SC pulled clear to maintain third place throughout the race. Further down the pack positions frequently changed as the wind faded towards the end of the race. *Roger Day*

| Place | Helm                | Club            | No. | R1 | R2 | R3  | Total |
|-------|---------------------|-----------------|-----|----|----|-----|-------|
| 1     | Ian Coppenhall      | Hunts           | 636 | 1  | 2  | 1   | 2     |
| 2     | Eddie Pope          | Ogston          | 804 | 3  | 1  | 2   | 3     |
| 3     | Mark Coppenhall     | Severn          | 427 | 2  | 4  | 4   | 6     |
| 4     | Paul Jago           | Attenborough    | 798 | 6  | 3  | 9   | 9     |
| 5     | Bob Dodds           | CMYC            | 869 | 4  | 8  | 5   | 9     |
| 6     | Henry Jaggars       | Beer            | 800 | 8  | 7  | 3   | 10    |
| 7     | Izac Dodds          | CMYC            | 701 | 5  | 6  | 8   | 11    |
| 8     | John Coppenhal      | Hunts           | 532 | 7  | 10 | 6   | 13    |
| 9     | John Sturgeon       | Hawley Lake     | 400 | 9  | 5  | 10  | 14    |
| 10    | Chris Robinson      | Burghfield      | 867 | 11 | 9  | 7   | 16    |
| 11    | Andrew Beaumont     | Attenborough    | 556 | 10 | 12 | 12  | 22    |
| 12    | Rhiain Bevan        | Cransley        | 724 | 12 | 14 | 11  | 23    |
| 13    | Nigel Fern          | Staunton Harold | 845 | 13 | 11 | 13  | 24    |
| 14    | Jill Reid           | Attenborough    | 672 | 14 | 13 | 16  | 27    |
| 15    | Malcolm Davidson    | Attenborough    | 856 | 16 | 15 | 14  | 29    |
| 16    | Catherine Applegate | Attenborough    | 249 | 15 | 16 | dns | 31    |
| 17    | Catherine Applegate | Attenborough    | 648 | 19 | 19 | 15  | 34    |
| 18    | Saul Tendler        | Attenborough    | 441 | 17 | 17 | 17  | 34    |
| 19    | Roger Chivers       | Attenborough    | 488 | 18 | 18 | 18  | 36    |

## *Editorial*

**Hi,**

By the time you get this issue all the open meetings will have gone and we will be either sheltering from the winter weather or enjoying the exhilaration of the stronger winds and looking forward to the Dinghy Show.



On the cover this time is Nigel Austen going for it after the trauma of his Duo being put out of action by (someone!).

We have two reports from the Nationals this time and I am very pleased that we have a “report of the event” from Eddie and “this is what happened to me “ from Nigel. For those who missed a great weekend then I hope that these two accounts will encourage more to come next year. The photos show what a fine location Cardiff Bay is and for those who don't recognise the names can look them up in the results sheet.

Roger Johnson has done a splendid job reminding us that top level sailing was once the sole prerogative of the super rich and in '34 we nearly unscrewed the cup from the New York Yacht Club and brought it back. The concluding part of the tale will be in Issue 117.

As usual Mark Covier has provided a good report and pictures of the Mertyr Tydfil Open. One of these days I will get there to see what it is like in person.

The only thing missing from this issue is the words you have posted on the website about the use of different rigs during one event. I decided not to try to précis the comments as my own prejudices would come through. Please add more comments as soon as possible.

***Brian Welham C801***

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