

PERIHELION  **101**

Winter 2011

***Comet Class Association
Newsletter***



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NEWSLETTER NUMBER 101 Winter 2011 CONTENTS

Reports		Page
Chairman's Report	Clive Chapman	4
Secretary's Report	Nora Jagers	6
Editor's Report	Brian Welham	36

Notices		Page
Fate and Hossel Plates		10-11
Orbital and Aphelion results		12-15
AGM Minutes	Norah Jagers	16
CCA Joining form		20
Diary dates		23
Can you help		33
For Sale		38-39

Articles		Page
Staunton Harold	Alan Bennett	24
First year of Racing	Steve Gregory	26
20 Questions	Clive Chapman	30
Std vs. Xtra rigs	Keith Lamdin	34
Capsize Recovery	Brian Welham	35

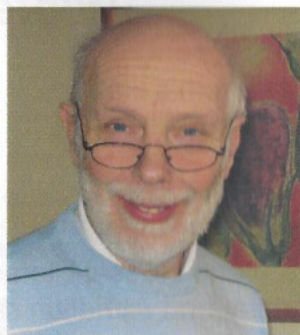
Information Comments Articles Results

Racing Results to Paul Hinde Money to Helen Leivers
Open meeting reports to Brian Welham and Sue Coppenhall
Newsletter articles and comments to Brian Welham
Racing rules Clinic to Keith Lamdin General information to Nora Jagers
Class Association Sue Coppenhall webmaster@cometsailing.org.uk
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Chairman's Report

Hello Comet people,

It's dark and wet outside and blowing fit to burst. Sailing couldn't be further from my mind but it is an opportunity to compile my report.



My last outing was at Staunton Harold on the 22nd of October. As a finale to the Open season it was a cracker with 24 helms, including past and present National Champions, as well as many quality experienced helms. A force three ensured we had some exciting racing. I came off the water buzzing having thoroughly enjoyed the cut and thrust of the three races, finishing ninth after being just beaten overall by Peter Mountford. Our paths crossed many times on opposite tacks only to end up duelling for position round the marks. It was great fun.

A new venue for me was Merthyr Tydfil. Another force three and some great sailing. I loved the Welsh cakes (my mother was Welsh and she frequently made us Welsh cakes and it brought back happy memories). The only race in which I gave a good account of myself was the final one. After a super start I was second to the windward mark and sailing well. On the final run carelessness resulted in a downwind capsizing. I got the boat back up and was so annoyed with my helming incompetence I sailed like a man possessed. On the final beat I overtook five of the six boats who had passed by admiring my swimming abilities. Why I can't sail with such determination all the time I don't know.

Severn was also breezy and very enjoyable. Sailing in flights on a narrow river tests your fitness and tacking ability. I don't have to tell the helms who attended Weymouth for the Nationals just how windy that was. Burghfield S.C presented a novelty, a complete lack of wind. This resulted in my worst finish of the open season. Having drifted around for some time in the first race I estimated that that I wouldn't finish before the cut off. So I retired. (First time ever in an Open.) Race two was better but I kept parking my boat on rafts of weed. Race three was a repeat of two. The bottom line is that I have to practise more in light wind conditions.

I have recently moved to a village in North Dorset. Previously at this time of year I would still be sailing every Saturday at Littleton S.C. My nearest club now is Shearwater S.C which closes between November and March. So I am not sailing at present. However, to get out from under Lesley's feet I have joined a local angling club and I am fishing their waters. A 4lbs carp is the largest so far, but I am getting better. Having fished the tidal Thames previously, it's a new experience fishing small lakes and rivers. No pleasure boats or rowing eights to avoid.

We have joined a local gym and trying to achieve two visits a week and cut down on the biscuits. Both of which are difficult targets to meet. Living in the country is very different to living in the town. I used to live very close to the A316 near Twickenham and under the main flight path to Heathrow. I don't miss the noise or the air pollution. It's great to see a sky full of stars and rainbows with seven bright colours. There are no street lights outside but we do have a local at the bottom of the hill. The journey back can be challenging.

As your Chairman, one of my main aims is to raise the profile of the Comet. In these challenging economic times it won't be through expensive ads in the sailing magazines, but to use the internet to our advantage. Our website needs upgrading. Do we have any webmasters who can help us out? A quick surf through the internet looking at other Dinghy classes and Class Associations shows it is long overdue. Does any member have video footage of Comets sailing we can upload?

Participation at high profile sailing events also helps recruitment. The Bloody Mary Pursuit in early January is just such an event. Six entries are enough for a fleet prize. We often have three or four entries; so if you fancy a sail with some of the finest helms from all over the country, in a fleet of over 250 boats come along. It is memorable experience whatever position you achieve. My aim this year is to try to get inside 150th. (Are there any other prestigious sailing events we should be targeting?)

I am very much looking forward to next year's opens and seeing old friends and meeting new helms. I hope Christmas and the New Year went well for you and your families.

Best regards

Clive Chapman C704

Secretary's Report

Notes from the committee:



1. Well, the dinghies are back in the front garden and the roof rack taken off the car, so I know that winter is on the way. However, so far the temperature has stayed unseasonably high although it feels as though there have been more gales and rain than usual (in Devon at any rate)
2. My first job must be an apology to John Sturgeon as I managed to miss him off the list of the Committee members in the last newsletter. Very remiss of me – sorry John.
3. The new Committee met for the first time at Staunton Harold when they agreed on the winners of the Hossell and FATE plates. You will find more information elsewhere in this edition of Perihelion.
4. Once again John Coppenhall is the worthy winner of the Pingewood Trophy which is awarded to the person who has travelled to the most Comet events during the season. This year John only missed 4 events which shows considerable dedication to the class, and enjoyment of class racing.
5. Your Committee decided not to have a stand at the London Boat Show, even if one is offered. The Show does not cater for dinghy sailors, and the commitment of volunteer time to be there isn't justified in terms of the potential for recruiting new members.
6. If the Battle of the Classes is reinstated as part of the London Boat Show, we will have representatives on the water.
7. We will have a stand at the Dinghy Show, alongside Comet Dinghies. John Sturgeon will be organising this, as he did this year. If you have any thoughts on presentation please let him know.
8. The Nationals 2012 will be held at Bewl Valley over the August Bank Holiday (25th – 27th) weekend. For those of you who don't know the venue, it is a large reservoir, built in 1975, on the Kent

and Sussex border, just south of Tonbridge on the A21. There is a large, well appointed club house and easy launching from wide slipways. For non sailors there are good walks in the area (it's about 16 miles round the lake!), bird watching, several National Trust properties within a 15 mile radius, historic Tunbridge Wells, Bedgebury Arboretum and many other attractions.

9. The Annual General Meeting will be on Sunday 26th August 2012 at 1730 or 1 hour after the end of the last race, whichever is later.
10. The Association Championships will be at Severn SC over the weekend of June 9th and 10th. The Club is a few minutes drive from the M5, almost opposite the junction with the M50 – so easy access from most parts of the country! The club is very friendly and family orientated, with plenty of space for camping. It's not far from Tewkesbury, Worcester and Evesham, all attractions for the non sailors.
12. The calendar for 2012 is taking shape with a proposed new venue at Attenborough SC. We are sorry that Littleton will not be offering an event next season as we have always enjoyed our visits there.
13. We hope that we have finally solved the problem with the bank which has lost our changes of Treasurer and signatories several times. As a result we have not been able to move any money out of the deposit account for a very long time! Thank you Helen for being so patient.
14. It has been good to see Comet No 1 – Numero Uno – on the water again, and your Committee has agreed to fund the materials for some minor repairs and replacements.
15. Don't forget the Bloody Mary – it would be good to have 6 Comets on the water again.

Happy Christmas everyone!

Norah Jagers Class Secretary

COMET SPARES, REPAIRS AND ACCESSORIES

Don't forget all spares and accessories are held in stock and can often be with you in less than 24 hours if you order in the morning.

New Dinghies A selection always in stock

Comet	£3550
Comet Xtra	£3650
Standard Sail	£300
Mino Sail	£270
Xtra Sail	£383
Xtra Conversion Kit & Sail	£403 (This includes halyard and parts needed to convert your top mast and shorten your bottom mast and boom). To continue to be able to sail as a Std Comet you will need a shorter Xtra bottom mast £155

(The original top mast **may fit**, and can have a block shackled on and still be used for a Std Comet Sail) If it doesn't fit then

(An Xtra top mast	£85
A shorter Xtra boom	£125 but the std boom can be used.

These prices include VAT at 20%

Repairs

Accident damage and refurbishing gladly undertaken.
Write, phone or e-mail but include a daytime phone number

Comet Dinghies : Horsepond Meadow
South Molton, Devon EX36 4EJ
Tel 01769 574358 Fax 01769 574358
e-mail cometdinghies@btconnect.com

Perihelion 102

Please send your contributions for the next issue of Perihelion by

March 5th 2012

To Brian Welham, Class Editor, 19 Lake End Way
Crowthorne Berks RG45 7LP e-mail bwelham@sky.com

The Halls of Fame

In Perihelion 100, I listed the "other" Hall of Fame winners for the last few years.

The following pages show the 2011 winners of the Fate and Hossel Plates plus the Pingewood Trophy.

I have also listed the qualifiers and winners of the five area travellers trophies and the overall Orbital winner. These winners will appear in the next "Hall of Fame" announcement.

Ed

The photographs in this issue were printed with the kind permission from the following.

Cover	Henry Jagers
P 24 and 25	Alan Bennett
P27 and 29	Angela Gregory
P28	Henry Jagers
P35	John Sturgeon

The FATE Plate 2011

The FATE plate was presented by Peter and Wendy Hayes in 2004, for Endeavour in the Face of Adversity.

This year the Committee decided to award the FATE plate in recognition to someone who is relatively new to the Comet scene.

They have taken part in a number of Open events as well as championships. At each event, this helm has enjoyed a considerable amount of time in the water. Over the last two seasons they have perfected the art of capsizing and almost perfected the art of righting the boat and getting back into it.

Every time this person comes ashore, regardless of the number of capsizes, they always have an infectious smile and a determination to do better next time.

The FATE plate 2011 is awarded to

Steve Gregory

The Pingewood Trophy

Just to confirm what Norah has told us The winner once again for the member who attended most Open events this year and only missed four of them is

John Coppenhall

The Hossell Plate 2011

The Hossell Plate was donated in 2002 by Liz and Phillip Hossell as an annual award to the person judged by the committee to have made the greatest contribution to Comet sailing, and to enhancing the membership of the Comet Class Association.

For 2011 the committee has chosen someone who isn't well known on the travelling circuit, choosing to attend a select number of Open events. This year they have competed in both Championships, doing well in both. Over the last few years, this person has worked hard to increase the number of Comets at their home club, which now has one of the largest fleets.

The size of the home fleet was one of the reasons why this person worked so hard to organize and promote the Association Championships 2011 at Cransley.

The winner of the Hossell Plate 2011 is

Nigel Austin

Well done to all those other members who continued to sail whilst injured or stressed and a thank you to all those who helped to promote the class at their own club or elsewhere but were not recognised with awards by the committee this year.

Ed

Eastern Aphelion 2011

Final Results

Rank	Sail	Club	Helm	Fishers Green	Crawley Mariners	Chipstead	Bewl Valley	Littleton	Points
1st	711	Maidenhead	Brian Welham	1	2	(8)	2	(DNC)	5
2nd	152	Maidenhead	Ian Stone	(DNC)	1	5	(DNC)	3.0 CanEvent	9
3rd	869	Crawley Mariners	Bob Dodds	(DNC)	4	4	1	(DNC)	9
4th	532	Hunts	John Coppenhall	2	5	(DNC)	(DNC)	3.5 CanEvent	10.5
5th	800	Beer	Henry Jaggars	4	(DNC)	(DNC)	3	3.5 CanEvent	10.5
6th	867	Burghfield	Chris Robinson	7	(DNC)	1	(DNC)	4.0 CanEvent	12
7th	84	Eyott	Micheal Ettershank	(6)	3	6	4	(DNC)	13
8th	323	Welwyn Garden City	Annette Walter	3	8	10	(DNC)	(DNC)	21
9th	704	Littleton	Clive Chapman	5	(DNC)	9	(DNC)	7.0 CanEvent	21
10th	400	Hawley Lake	John Sturgeon	9	11	(DNC)	5	(DNC)	25
11th	744	Littleton	Malcom Underwood	8	(DNC)	13	(DNC)	10.5 CanEvent	31.5

Littleton event has been cancelled due to weed.

All competitors that would have needed to sail at Littleton to qualify in the Eastern have been awarded points equivalent to the average of their scores so far in the series.

Northern Aphelion 2011

Final Results

Rank	Sail	Club	HelmName	Winsford Flash	North Staffs	Chester	Redesmere	Staunton Harold	Points
1st	532	Hunts	John Coppenhall	(2)	1	2	1	(10)	4
2nd	867	Burghfield	Chris Robinson	(DNC)	(DNC)	1	2	4	7

Western Aphelion

Final Results

Rank	Sail	Club	Helm	Shearwater	Sutton Bingham	Baltic Wharf	Merthyr Tydfil	Points
1st	804	Ogston	Eddie Pope	1	(DNC)	1	2	4
2nd	597	Baltic Wharf	Ben Palmer	3	1	(5)	4	8
3rd	800	Beer	Henry Jaggars	2	3	(8)	6	11
4th	532	Hunts	John Coppenhall	4	(DNC)	7	5	16
5th	654	Cotswold	Brian Weatherley	9	2	9	(10)	20
6th	843	Cotswold	Denise Weatherley	(DNC)	4	10	12	26

Southern Aphelion 2011

Final Results

Rank	Sail	Club	Helm	Maidenhead	Hawley Lake	Mudeford	Burghfield	Points
1st	152	Maidenhead	Ian Stone	2	1	(DNC)	1	4
2nd	323	Welwyn Garden City	Annette Walter	(DNC)	3	3	2	8
3rd	597	Baltic Wharf	Ben Palmer	4	4	1	(9)	9
4th	711	Maidenhead	Brian Welham	(5)	2	5	4	11
5th	867	Burghfield	Chris Robinson	3	8	2	(10)	13
6th	704	Littleton	Clive Chapman	1	10	4	(11)	15
7th	84	Eyott	Micheal Ettershank	6	5	(DNC)	8	19
8th	532	Hunts	John Coppenhall	7	6	(DNC)	6	19
9th	800	Beer	Henry Jaggars	(11)	7	6	7	20
10th	400	Hawley Lake	John Sturgeon	10	9	(DNC)	12	31
11th	57	Frensham Pond	Steve Gregory	(DNC)	14	8	15	37

Central Aphelion 2011

Final Results

Rank	Sail	Club	Helm	Hunts	Cotswold	Severn	Banbury	Points
1st	804	Ogston	Eddie Pope	1	1	3	(DNC)	5
2nd	668	Frampton	Peter Dalton	(DNC)	2	5	3.5 CanEvent	10.5
3rd	867	Burghfield	Chris Robinson	6	(DNC)	2	4.0 CanEvent	12
4th	532	Hunts	John Coppenhall	4	4	10	(DNC)	18
5th	711	Comet CA	Brian Welham	2	5	12	(DNC)	19
6th	597	Baltic Wharf	Ben Palmer	(DNC)	6	7	6.5 CanEvent	19.5
7th	800	Beer	Henry Jagers	5	3	13	(DNC)	21
8th	724	Cransley	Rhain Bevan	9	7	8	(DNC)	24
9th	400	Hawley Lake	John Sturgeon	8	9	(DNC)	8.5 CanEvent	25.5
10th	654	Cotswold	Brian Weatherley	(DNC)	8	14	11.0 CanEvent	33

14

Banbury event has been cancelled due to lack of water.

All competitors that would have needed to sail at Banbury to qualify in the Central Aphelion have been awarded points equivalent to the average of their scores so far in the series.

Orbital 2011

Final Results

Rank	SailNo	Club	HelmName	Open Meeting	ResultsAss	Nats	Points
1st	804	Ogston	Eddie Pope	1	1	1	6
2nd	867	Burghfield	Chris Robinson	1	2	2	9
3rd	711	Maidenhead	Brian Welham	1	2	3	14
4th	152	Maidenhead	Ian Stone	2	2	5	15
5th	532	Hunts	John Coppenhall	2	3	2	16
6th	597	Baltic Wharf	Ben Palmer	3	4	1	17
7th	800	Beer	Henry Jagers	2	4	5	20
8th	704	Littleton	Clive Chapman	6	5	1	27
9th	84	Eyott	Micheal Ethershank	6	6	4	31
10th	869	Crawley Mariners	Bob Dodds	5	4	1	46
11th	400	Hawley Lake	John Sturgeon	7	8	9	46
12th	654	Cotswold	Brian Weatherley	9	2	8	51
13th	724	Cransley	Rhain Bevan	9	7	8	57
14th	843	Cotswold	Denise Weatherley	4	10	12	78

15

COMET CLASS ASSOCIATION A G M
Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy
Sunday 28th August 2011

The meeting was attended by 37 members and the Builder.

Apologies:

Apologies were received from Brian Herring, Ros Stevenson, Jonathan Latham, Nigel Millar, Guy Wilkins, Mark Wilkins.

The minutes of the 2010 AGM held on 29th August 2010 had been circulated prior to the meeting and were agreed. Proposed by John Coppenhall. Seconded by Denise Weatherly.

Reports by Officers:

The Chairman, Chris Robinson reported on another successful year. A copy of his report is retained with these minutes.

The Secretary, Norah Jagers, once again thanked all the clubs which have hosted events over the past year. We were sorry not to go to Bexhill but hope to be back there before too long. Sutton Bingham was back on the agenda after an absence of several years. Unfortunately the weather forecast, a clash with Winsford Flash and a high entry fee resulted in poor attendance. Littleton and Banbury have both reported problems which may result in cancellation – Littleton has weed problem, and Banbury is low on water. It was good to see new faces at the Association Championships at Cransley – and more new ones this weekend.

The Results Officer, Paul Hinde, spoke to his report, a copy of which is retained with these minutes.

The Newsletter Editor, Brian Welham, although not an officer of the Committee, gave a short report asking members to tell him what they want to see in Perihelion. He noted that the newsletter continues to be expensive to produce. Brian asked for more reports on events, not just the results. The next edition will be No 100 and he plans to make it extra special.

Builder's Report:

The Builder, Andrew Simmons, was pleased to see several new, younger, faces racing in the Nationals, and to see the latest boats on the water. He has built 3 new Comets in the last year and will be building another one next week. He noted that 2 of the new ones have gone to previous Comet owners. Andrew has sold several new sails, and sold several second-hand Comets, including some Xtras. He decided not to do the London or Southampton Boat Shows, and concentrated on the Dinghy Show which is THE show which focuses on dinghies. Andrew has plenty of repair work and has a good stock of spares and accessories. He is now working on his own, building Comets, while looking for a suitable builder for the bigger dinghies. So far he hasn't found the right person. In the meantime, the office is open on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, when Karen is working.

Adoption of Accounts:

The Treasurer, Helen Leivers, spoke to the accounts, and explained the continued impact of falling membership and other incomes along with the increasing costs, particularly those of Perihelion. Helen thanked John Edwards for all his sterling work in supporting the Treasurer. The accounts were adopted. Proposed by Keith Lamdin and seconded by Rhian Bevan.

Consideration of Motions:

- a) *That the annual subscription be raised from £15 to £17 per year, with Associate Membership also rising to £17 and Family Membership rising to £23 (from £21).*
Proposed by the Committee

After discussion the motion was passed. Proposed by the Committee and seconded by Clive Chapman.

Election of Officers and Committee

Chris Robinson is standing down as Chairman, after his 3 year tenure, and is also standing down from the Committee. Keith Lamdin took the chair and thanked Chris for his chairmanship

which had seen a number of changes to the class, including an update of the constitution and measurements as well as having all the Comets racing as one fleet.

Clive Chapman was elected as Chairman, proposed by Chris Robinson and seconded by Michael Ettershank.

The rest of the Committee was prepared to stand and was re-elected en bloc.

Brian Weatherly was also elected. Proposed by Norah Jagers and seconded by Brian Welham.

Officers:

Chairman	Clive Chapman
Secretary	Norah Jagers
Treasurer	Helen Leivers

Committee:

Results	Paul Hinde
Trophies	Brian Weatherly
	Brian Herring
	Rhiain Bevan
	John Sturgeon

Appointment of Auditor:

The meeting recorded a vote of thanks to John Edwards for all his work as our Auditor. He has decided to stand down from this meeting.

Michael Thompson has agreed to act as Honorary Auditor. Proposed by Helen Leivers. Seconded by Chris Robinson.

Any Other Business: The meeting noted that people are not re-joining the association and requested that a further reminder is sent out via email in April.

There being no other business, the meeting closed with a vote of thanks to Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy. Chris Robinson was presented with a small gift in recognition of his time in office as Chairman, and his contribution over a longer period as a member of the committee.

Norah Jagers

15/10/11

Dates for your Diary

Shows

6th – 15th January

Tullett Prebon London Boat Show
at ExCeL, London Docklands

Sat 3rd - Sun 4th March 2012

RYA Volvo Dinghy Show
at Alexandra Palace, London

Events

January 7th

Bloody Mary pursuit race
at Queen Mary Sailing Club

Early Open Meetings

April 14th

at Shearwater SC

April 21st

at Fishers Green SC

April 22nd

at Hunts SC

April 28th

at Burghfield SC

(Note new time of year for this event)

May 5th

at Maidenhead SC

Championships

June 9th – 10th

Association Championships
at Severn Sailing Club

August 25th – 27th

National Championships
at Bewl Valley SC

Meetings

August 26th

Annual General Meeting

Comets at Staunton Harold 22nd October 2011

Nine SHSC boats and fifteen visitors from as far afield as Littleton, Beer, Tewkesbury and Winsford met for the final Comet Open of 2011.

The forecast was for southerly 14-15 mph which is what they got by launch time.

In race one it was very close at the first windward mark between the first four boats being Eddie Pope, Jonathan Latham, Nigel Pepperdine and Alan Bennett. Eddie and Jonathan went wide at the second mark not sure where mark three was. Nigel went high on the reach but capsized when he tacked after rounding mark three.

Eddie then lead for the rest of the race extending to a comfortable gap. Mark Coppenhall made his way into fourth later in the race but did a death roll on the final run to the finish losing two places to come in sixth.

Jonathan Latham was second, the new National Champion Chris Robinson third, and Nigel Pepperdine fourth.



After lunch the wind was still up and with a port biased line Alan tacked off and led for nearly two laps. His pursuers closed in and passed him by the end with Jonathan getting the win this time followed by Mark and then Eddie.

With the winner still to be decided the final race was very crowded at the first mark but Alan made his way into the lead holding on for two laps. This time he was only passed by Mark with Eddie again third.

Mark and Jonathan each had a first and a second but as Mark won the last race this made him the winner.

There followed presentation of the event prizes and also the regional travellers trophies organised by the Comet Class Association.

1 st Mark Coppenhall	Comet 427	Hunts SC
2 nd Jonathan Latham	Comet 349	Winsford Flash SC
3 rd Eddie Pope	Comet 804	Ogston SC

1 st Lady Hellen Leivers	Comet 857	Severn SC
-------------------------------------	-----------	-----------

Alan Bennett SHSC



My First Year of Comet Open Racing

Some years ago, I wrote an article for Perihelion describing how I had fallen for the Comet, while looking for a single-hander to replace my Wayfarer. Just to explain ; I still have the Wayfarer, but it is rarely used as my family have grown up and my wife is not too keen on sailing. So I decided to buy a Comet and try my hand at racing at Frensham Pond Sailing Club.

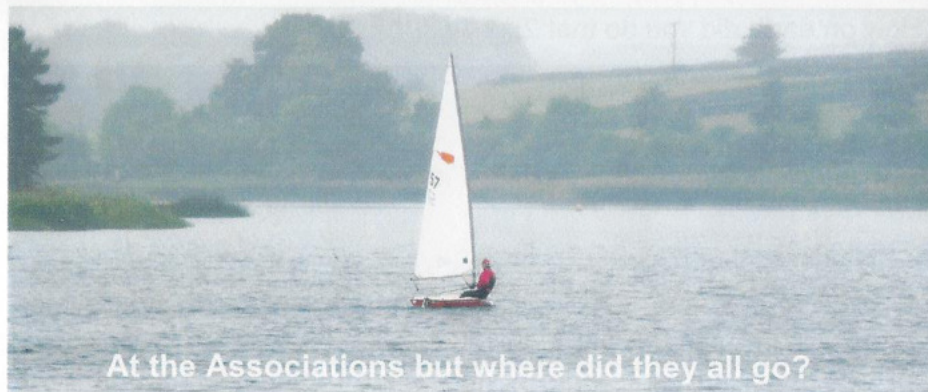
Frensham Pond is a delightful venue on the Surrey/Hants border, with quite challenging inland sailing. It used to be on the Comet circuit, with Richard Smallwood being a notable sailor at the club (Richard can now be seen gliding around in a 2.4), but that was years before I showed up with my beloved Beanz Meanz (C57). I believe I may now be the last Comet sailor at Frensham. During my first few years of learning how to race, I was therefore constrained to join the Handicap fleet , which is dominated by Lasers, Solos and (latterly) a growing contingent of Phantoms.

Despite some attempts by other members to persuade me to get a 'proper boat' (how very dare they!), I enjoyed sailing the Comet so much, that I stuck doggedly to handicap racing. The usual pressures of work and other interests meant that I was typically only sailing about half a dozen times a year. Coupled with the absence of other Comets to compete with, progress from the back of the fleet was painfully slow.

A year ago, I took the bold decision to try class racing and what a great year it has been. I was somewhat reticent about showing up for Opens, but was encouraged by XXXXXXX who chatted to me on the phone about how friendly and welcoming our class is. So in August 2010, I popped the boat on its road trailer and trundled down to Mudeford, for my first Comet open, on a glorious summer Sunday morning.

Having read Perihelion for some years, I recognised Chris Robinson immediately, offloading his boat from roof-rack as I pulled up to park near the club. Mudeford Sailing Club is an interesting venue, being based on a large sailing barge, pulled up on the mud in Christchurch Harbour. Facilities are basic and you have to park a couple of hundred metres away near the cricket green.

The day was a perfect introduction to open racing as the winds were F2 - 3 initially, although the last race had to be dramatically shortened, as the wind almost died. The day was punctuated by encountering several other of the well-known names in the association, including Henry and Norah Jaggars and Brian Welham. It was slightly strange meeting people who felt vaguely familiar from seeing their pictures in print. Everyone was particularly welcoming, so they seemed like old friends already!



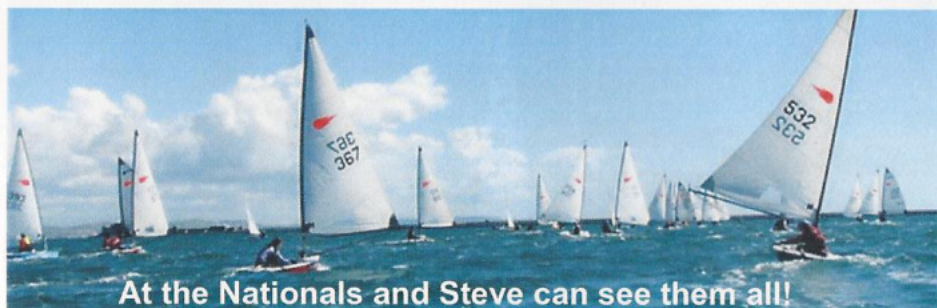
I remember the feeling of warm satisfaction, while trailing my boat back to Hampshire that evening, tinged with some regret that I hadn't got involved before. I resolved to follow on with further meetings and have since attended Littleton, Burghfield, Hawley Lake plus the Association and National Championships.

The Association event at Cransley was a superb weekend at the early May Bank Holiday. An idyllic, off the beaten track location, at a reservoir in Northamptonshire. The welcome by the club was tremendous. The first day was 'lively', to say the least (force 5 - 7 trees bending etc). Brian W spotted me on the balcony, hesitating, and came up with the memorable words of encouragement: "You'll never know unless you have a go!"

So I had a go and capsized four times in the first lap, before retiring. However, I was in good company and better for the experience - thanks Brian!

The return visit to Mudeford in July was again a lovely day, but with more wind (F3 – 4). I have earned the reputation over the year for being rather keen on swimming and Mudeford was true to form. The best race for me was after lunch, where I started to progress up the fleet and found myself gaining on Annette! This was just before , in clear water and hiked out, I learned the hard way that toe-straps need to be tightened before sailing. A gust hit and as the boat tipped, my feet slipped out and I literally fell overboard. Stood up in three feet of water ,holding my broken tiller extension - Annette glanced over her shoulder and exclaimed

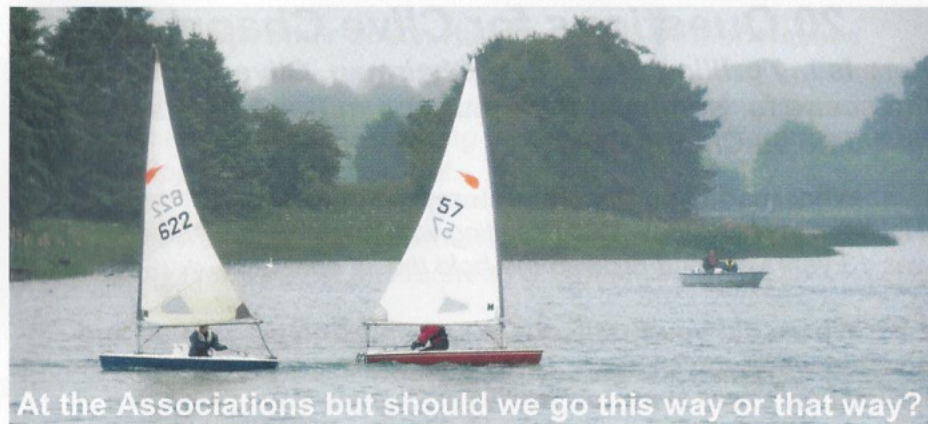
“How on earth did you do that ?!”



At the Nationals and Steve can see them all!

The high point of the year was the Nationals at Weymouth – what an event! The wind on the first day was – frankly – scary. I ventured out for the first race and realised I couldn't control it, so came straight back in. Actually plucked up the courage to start the second race, but was soon in the water, then retired for the day. My best performance of the year was race 5 on the second day. Starting the day with race 3, the wind was slightly kinder, but this didn't stop me suffering a complete wipe-out on the plane, while broad-reaching (thrown in, boat turned turtle, the lot !). But I got back in and managed not to come last. By the time of race 5, I was in the groove, didn't make any big errors and came 20th out of 30 finishers (well, I was impressed!)

The Saturday 25th Anniversary Dinner was a landmark event and made me realise what a privilege it is to be part of such a fantastic class. There are not many associations that could assemble all their previous Chairmen and the boat's designer at one celebration and the relaxed informal friendliness of the gathering, was the most memorable feature.



At the Associations but should we go this way or that way?

In the last year, I have met some great folks and learned a great deal. Although my progress is resonant of experiences at Frensham (perhaps I am just not a 'natural') if I can finish anything other than last, then I am happy.

The final Southern meeting at Burghfield was a quiet end to my season. Beset with weed problems and a distinct lack of wind in the morning, I lost patience at the end of the second race and turned back towards the clubhouse. Frustratingly, I found the best breeze of the morning and glided gracefully back to shore. Mind you, it was rather pleasant sat on the veranda sipping a quiet half pint, watching the rest of the fleet struggling to finish.

At the presentations, the awards for the Southern Aphelion were also made and I was delighted to pick up a personalised Comet memory stick/key fob. Norah politely pointed out that this was for just showing up to enough opens !

So looking forward to 2012, if you haven't tried opens, then why not give it a go ? It's the taking part that counts (so they say) and remember, if you are sailing along and you see C57 snapping at your heels, then Be Very Afraid !

Steve Gregory C57

20 Questions for Clive Chapman

Here is my grilling of our new Chairman. Clive has been on the scene for some years on our committee but this is his first time as Chairman.

1 What made you become interested in sailing?

Holidays in New Quay, Wales sailing with an uncle in a National 12. I was 13 years old and allowed to hold the jib sheet.

2 Where did you first learn to sail and who taught you and how old were you?

I learnt how to sail in my mid thirties at Thames Young Mariners. It had a small lake which was situated near the Thames at Ham. I went there and spent two years working through the RYA levels up to Instructor. The purpose was to teach pupils at my school how to sail. Ironically, the school changed the curriculum and timetabling which made it impossible to achieve this.

3 Where did you sail and what was your first boat?

My first boat was a Mirror Dinghy, bought with a legacy from an aunt, which I sailed at Littleton S.C. It was a great all rounder. With my family we sailed it; rowed it; put a motor on it; and fished off of it.

4 What is your first club and how long did you sail there?

Littleton was my first Club, although I visited three others before deciding. It was, and still is, a welcoming club and my ties with it go back 20 years.

5 Where did you first come across the Comet?

There were five Comets at the club when I joined.

6 Why did you buy a Comet, what is the number and what is the colour of your current Comet ?

It was in the balance whether I bought a Comet or a Lightning. Both suited my physique but Comet 209 came up for sale first. I bought it on Good Friday. Comet 622 soon followed. Now I sail 704. It has a white hull.

7 When was that?

I've had to check my records (Lesley, my wife) and it was eighteen years ago.

8 What about other boats. Have you sailed other classes dinghies?

I've owned an Enterprise as well as the Mirror and I now have a Miracle. In my pursuit of Instructing I've sailed many different classes. Even an Oppie and a Hobbie Cat.

9 What was your most memorable sailing experience?

Winning my first Open at Maidenhead S.C. last year.

10 What was your best racing result with the Comet?

Fourth at Instow Devon at the Association Championships.

11 What would you like to achieve in a Comet in the next few years?

A consistent top six finish in the Opens and a top ten in the Championship races.

12 What did you do to earn a living?

I've recently retired but I spent nearly 40 years teaching Mathematics to 11 – 16 year olds.

13 As a teacher did you ever extend your leadership skills to include sports such as sailing?

As I mentioned earlier I was unable to teach sailing at school so I did the next best thing and took parties of children to sailing bases. I started by taking a group to the Sailing Academy at Cowes. It was cold and wet but enjoyable. I progressed to taking parties with Sail France to Lake Biscarrose, SW France. It is a 6 mile long lake about a mile inland from the coast. In the mornings the wind was light but in the afternoon the sea breeze came in. The temperature was usually around 30C. The pupils were taught to sail by the Sail France Instructors while I was allowed to take out any of the boats that were left to cruise around the lake. It was hell but somebody had to do it!

14 Now that you are "retired" and moved to the country, what are your sailing plans for 2012?

I'm looking for a club. My nearest one is Shearwater but they don't start sailing until March. The Bloody Mary is on the radar. I've competed in it three times before and my best finish is 161st. Sailing with 250 other boats is quite an experience.

15 Do you expect to attend more Open meetings now that you are chairman?

In short, yes. Most of the venues I have not been to before are in the Central and Northern areas and these are ones I shall try to target.

16 Most previous chairman have purchased a new boat from Andy. Do you foresee yourself joining that select band and if so when?

If I thought getting a new boat would put me up there in contention with the excellent helms we do have, I'm sure I would have ordered one by now. Andy makes great boats and with the exception of Chris Robinson, usually Opens and Championships are won with a variety of boat numbers.

17 How are you (and your wife) finding the slower pace of life in Dorset after the noise and bustle (and aircraft) in Twickenham?

We have just got over the "holiday home" feeling and the house is truly feeling like home. We still have aircraft noise; a Tiger Moth flew over yesterday as have several microlites. A Chinnock nearly blew me off the shed roof while I was repairing it.

The pace is slower but the natives are friendly; the walk to the get the paper will usually result in me talking to more strangers in a day than I did in a year in Twickenham.

18 Do you have children of your own?

I have three children two boys and a girl. They have all flown the nest; but they and our three grandchildren visit us regularly.

19 What other hobbies or interests do you have?

I love all sports. I played rugby and refereed for the London Society. I enjoy cycling and have joined an angling club. Watch out Carp.

20 What question should I have asked you that you would have enjoyed letting us know about?

I have always enjoyed watching birds (feathered sort). I am not a twitcher but do like to observe birds. So far in our garden I have recorded 22 different species.

Thank you Clive that was really interesting. Ed

Do you have a video of Comets sailing or racing?

Are you willing to give the Comet fleet access to this film?

Give us a call or email and perhaps we can post it onto U-Tube or some such easily accessible web site so we can direct new or potential owners of Comets to see how they sail from our website.

Can you offer come help with redesign of the associations's website cometsailing.org.uk ?

This design has been there for some time and it needs a little work to up grade it.

Can you help?
Give us a call or email

Xtra versus Std rigs

I make no apologies for reprinting (edited) this note from our President first published in 2008 before we adopted the "one fleet" solution.

Attending The Nationals on the middle day, I listened to the AGM and was interested in the discussion in AOB concerning the role of the Xtra (and Mino) rig in the Class.

Some of you know I have been involved with the Graduate Class for many years and I see distinct links with the problems suffered by that Class from which it has never really recovered. They include: a sudden slowing of new boat sales after a period of rapid growth :a sudden reduction in the number of boats attending Open meetings and Championships.

Some of the Grad's problems were down to poor leadership and here the Comet Class has an advantage.

Much has been made of the "one-design" nature of the boat but this is illusory. There have been many minor changes to the boat most notably with four different sail-makers each with their own sail characteristics. I would argue that the effects on boat performance are minimal and far outweighed by the relative abilities of the helmsman. Now we have two more variables in the Mino and Xtra in strong winds.

I watched the Xtra carefully at the Nationals and, although I do not know the relative competencies, it seemed in those conditions there was little to choose between the rigs in up-wind speed. It was clear the (Std) Comet was quicker down-wind and markedly so on all legs when the wind eased to quieter conditions. I imagine, and have been told, the Xtra could be faster and easier to sail in stronger conditions. These quick impressions may bear out the designers' intention that the rigs be equal in overall performance.

Given all of the above, is the answer not simply to allow all three rigs to race together as one fleet on an equal footing with no handicap allowance? At a stroke you increase fleet sizes and probably encourage more members to join events knowing they can adjust their rig to suit conditions rather than expend money and effort only to find, for personal reasons, they are unable to compete.

Keith Lamdin

I think the results in 2011 have shown that the Xtra can hold its own except in very light conditions. ***Ed***

Unless you think otherwise!

Let us know!

Capsizing and recovering



I don't claim to be an expert, in fact I am poor at getting back into the boat if I am thrown into the water as my efforts at both Cransley and Portland have shown.

However, I was sent a set of photos that illustrate how to get back into the boat if you are agile enough to walk along the boom and climb over the hull from the mast onto the centreboard.

These were taken at Cransley during the Association championships where I was unable to continue after Race #1 but I must have recovered the boat at least once before disaster struck and I had to be rescued! You will note that C711 has 4 reefs in the sail which still didn't make it easy to control!

Ed

Editorial

Hi everyone

Well the Celebration year is now (almost) over and we have some fond (and not so fond) memories of Weymouth and the last year. I for instance had a terrible time on the water at Weymouth as the conditions proved too much for me so I missed the final prize giving. The following week at Severn, was not much better but I don't know why I did so badly. There were no waves but anyone who knows the river Avon at that point will know that it is very narrow. My excuse is that the banks kept getting in the way. However, the calm (but weedy) Burghfield was more my style where I managed a credible 4th.



My club sailing has been a bit sparse this autumn as Summerlease Lake used by Maidenhead SC has been very down in water level and despite treating with blue dye has been plagued by weed to the extent that we stopped racing throughout October. Some of the classes sailed at MSC were very critical of this decision as they had more powerful sails and swinging centreboards which could slide its way through the weed. However, the Laser fleet and the Comets felt it was right as the dagger boards made it impossible to sail. I note that we were not the only club to suffer from low water and weed. Burghfield have moved their Comet Open to April next year due to weed and I visited Boddington Reservoir in October which fully explained why Banbury SC had stopped sailing altogether since August. So maybe we were luckier than some clubs.

I now hope to sail though the Winter and see some of you at the first open meetings in April and May. However, there is one event that we should try to get at least 6 boats to and that is the 39th Bloody Mary at QMSC on Saturday Jan 7th. The race starts at 1200 and is a pursuit lasting about 3 hours with Comets going early onwards. This is your chance to sail against some of the best UK sailors and some of the fastest boats such as the foiling International Moths or the monster Thames A Rater. It will cost £20 on the day.

This month we have a 20 Questions contribution from our new Chairman and an very interesting article from Steve Gregory about how he is enjoying the challenge of the Comet Open circuit. I must

give my whole hearted thanks to Steve for such a contribution as it is this sort of thing that makes editing this magazine enjoyable. I NEED MORE OF YOU TO CONTRIBUTE as this is the only one I have for this issue. I have had a request from one of our newer members to offer some guidance on setting up the Standard Comet and the Comet Xtra and the differences and in what wind conditions. He is also convinced that one of these rigs is faster than the other. There is your challenge. It would be good if you "hot shot" Std and Xtra racers would pass on some tips. I look forward to being inundated with opinions and tips. Any thoughts would be appreciated.

What do you think about running the Mino, Std and Xtra rigs as one fleet now we have had time to test it out.

Just to update you on Comet Numero Uno. As far as I can ascertain it is still being sailed at Swarkestone having passed through the hands of Steve Bellamy, Andrew Evans, Dave Jobbling to John Hanson. If anyone catches it on camera then it might get included in the next issue.

You will have seen earlier in this issue that Clive has sent a plea for help in updating our website. I am told that it is difficult to modify and does not have all the features that other dinghy classes have. We have a very good webmaster BUT Sue is not skilled enough in IT to make the changes we need. Can you or do you know someone who can (for very little recompense) design a better website for us.

You should also have seen a request for video of Comets sailing, racing, capsizing, recovering and generally having a good time. We think that this is missing from our marketing campagne to encourage more people to take up Comet sailing. I remember, many years back seeing video of us at the Comet Nationals when it was sailed at Queen Mary SC. However, I am sure that this was on VHS tape and so it is not easily uploaded to U-Tube if that is where we end up putting it or even just onto our website. Can you help or can you organise for someone not sailing to film the next event with Comets at your club and gift the file to the CCA.

Brian Welham Comet 711

01344-761642 bwelham@sky.com

COMETS FOR SALE

For sale

Comet 319

Red hull, white deck. Not used for five years, stored in garage.
Launching trolley, two sails, blue cover, self bailer, praddel.
Located at Milford on Sea.
Good condition few marks.
£775 ono
Telephone 01590 644149

Comet 673 :

- Brambler combi trailer/trolley (bearings recently replaced)
 - 2 sails
 - Rudder and dagger board (recently rubbed down and polished)
 - Mast and boom (both clean and straight)
 - 1 Season old breathable polycotton top cover
 - Banks undercover
 - Banks mast and boom bag
 - New roller cam cleats for control lines.
 - All lines replaced beginning of the season with 4mm excel pro performance (dyneema core)
 - Also comes with home built spar holder (prevents wear and tear when towing)
 - Registration booklet (including measurement certificate etc)
- Contact - Tristan Cooper - tristancooper@live.co.uk

Comet 362. 1990 Grey hull, white top decking, keelband, toe strap, inspection hatch/storage bin.
New race rigging, telescopic tiller extension, praddel, little hawk.
Folding launch trolley, two covers.
In good condition, little used over the last few years.
Berthed at Littleton Sailing club. £995.00.
077 47 11 86 80 or 01344 845728.

Comet 433

Blue hull & white deck, full keel band, front hatch, 2 main sails, self bailer, launch trolley & blue cover.
Dinghy has had little use over the past 4 years.
£775.00 ono.
Call Jason on: 07985772806 Or Chester (01244) 571131

COMETS FOR SALE

Comet Mino 823 (PY 1193)

New in 2004 - hardly used.
With launching trolley, new cover in 2009.
Red hull, with integral small storage bin, praddel, padded toe strap.
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kenosborne34@googlemail.com.

Comet 376

MAUVE HULL WITH SILVER GREY DECK AND TOP COVER
BAMBER COMBINATION TRAILER AND LAUNCHING TROLLEY
FULL DOCUMENTATION. DAGGER BOARD PADDED BAG
EXTENDING TILLER HANDLE
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Double Stack Easy Load Road Trailer

Double Road Trailer has an easy lift winch mechanism for second boat; on top of this is the spar store like a roof rack system.
Suitable for Byte/Comet/Europe/ Topper type sized dinghies
It could also be used for Surf boards/windsurf equipment and a storage box could be put on the top fixed rails where we stored spars
Trailer has driven 20 miles from new and stored inside out of UV light
£450
Photos available
Call Nik on 01934 823250 or email nikkilinfild@yahoo.co.uk

Wanted

Standard Rig

Wanted, standard boom and Bottom mast section for comet (or complete standard rig)
as wife wants to sail standard rig as well as an xtra!!
contact
theweatherleys@btinternet.com
tel 07949 718640, 07810 141713, 01285 861472.
Brian & Dee Weatherley, comet's 843 & 654

COMETS FOR SALE



Comet Class Association
Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association