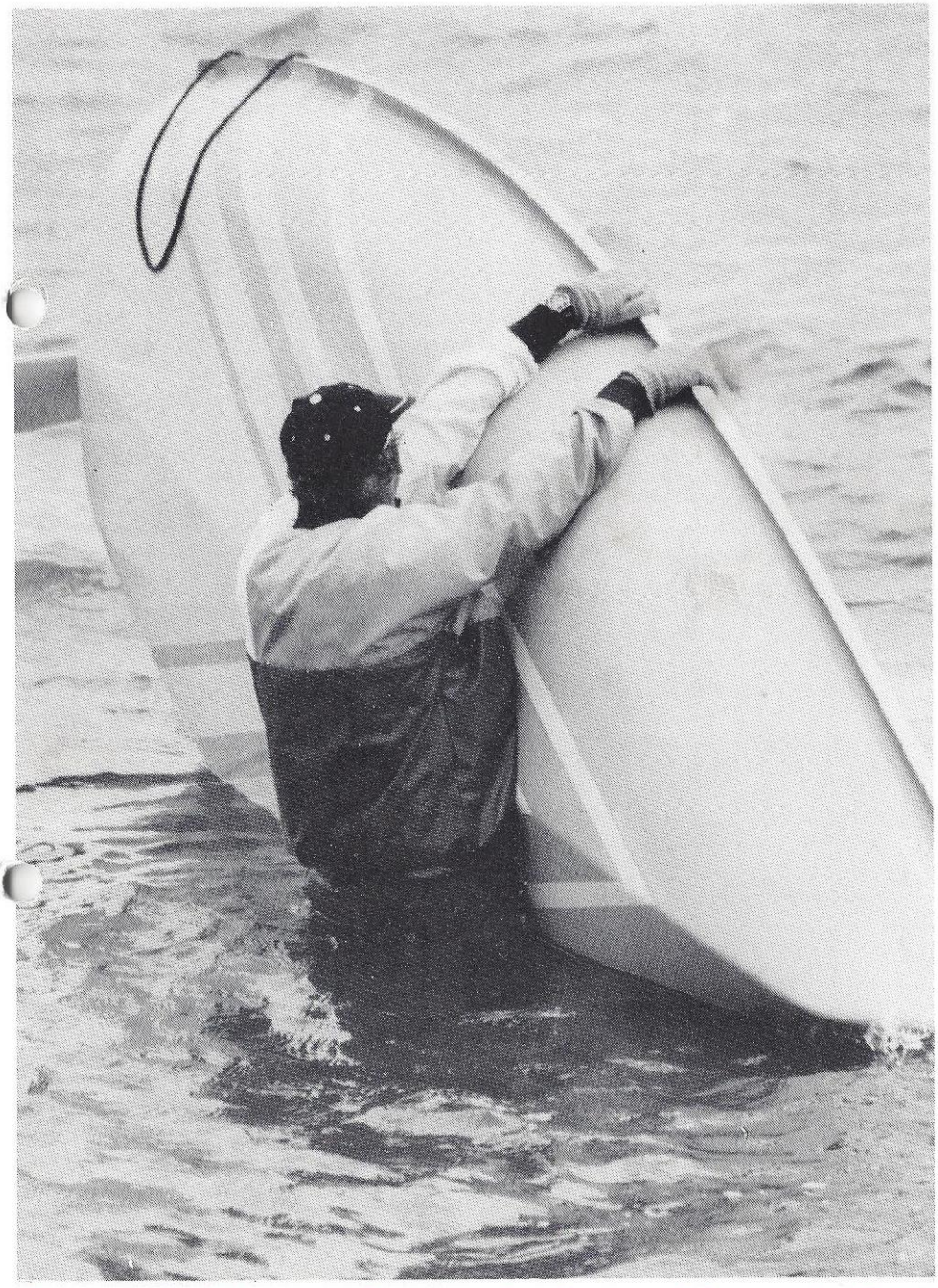
PERIHELION 32



Comet Class Association Newsletter

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 32
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Front cover: John Windibank at the Nationals

(Photo: Anne Browning)

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

In anyone's language this has been a year of milestones for the Comet Class. The first milestone was undoubtedly the awarding of the primary yardstick to the class, this confirmed our opinion that there is a lot of club activity and that the Comet is now raced extensively. Not all of us want or can travel to open meetings but everywhere there are top class racers who are quite content to race at their home club. I know that when I race at Chipstead my home club that I will always have a good race with the club racing regulars. We receive reports from some club sailors and Alan would be delighted to hear about your club activities.

The second milestone was the enormous success of the National Championship where the entry exceeded 50 boats. This now moves us into the 50+ select group of classes with entries at their National Championship above this figure.

The Comet Dinghy deserves its success and the class is supported on the solid foundation of a quality product, as each boat is produced with obvious pride by Andrew Simmons.

We had a very good attendance at the AGM and the members sat patiently at we worked through our rule changes. The rules have now been updated and when I next report to you I hope I can tell you when they will be reissued. The committee was asked to look at special prizes for competitors who don't finish at the top of the fleet and the committee will look at this at our next meeting.

The Tidal Championships were another success which everyone attending enjoyed, the weather suited everyone and the friendliness of the members and the organisation of the activities was first class.

Entries at the other Open events continue to be a little down on last year except Aylesbury, whose attendance actually went up by seven. Our new tidal event at Seafarers had a good turnout, the racing was close and the day was very enjoyable. Two of the Northern Aphelion Opens have been staged with good support and Richard Smallwood has had two good wins with Henry Jaggers runner up in both events.

Finally I must confess that the results from the Sutton Bingham Open Meeting have been mislaid. We have the positions of the first 4 places but the other entries and positions have been lost. If you were at Sutton Bingham would you give me a ring as an unrecorded entry may effect your qualifying for the Western Aphelion.

John Windibank Chairman

FIRST SIX AT THE OPEN MEETINGS

SOUTHERN AREA

ICI, Slough

1	530	B Robson
2	657	M Wilkins
3	472	J Sutton
4	625	T Best
5	174	M Baxter
	555	J Windibank

Aylesbury

1	472	J Sutton
2	500	H Jaggers
3	573	A Reeve
4	160	B Welham
5	188	S Thompson
6	625	T Best

Seafarers

1	472	J Sutton
2	555	J Windibank
3	565	R Smallwood
4	642	S Monks
5	174	M Baxter
6	657	M Wilkins

EASTERN AREA

Chipstead

1	657	M Wilkins
2	472	J Sutton
3	573	A Reeve
4	353	G Wilkins
5	174	M Baxter
6	555	J Windibank

Gunfleet

1	353	G Wilkins
2	657	M Wilkins
3	642	S Monks
4	513	D Forsdike
(only 4 entries)		

NORTHERN AREA

Chasewater

1	565	R Smallwood
2	500	H Jaggers
3	648	B Hamilton
4	644	N Ford
5	274	P Hayes
6	633	J Edwards

Chester

1	565	R Smallwood
2	500	H Jaggers
3	508	M Smith
4	274	P Hayes
5	633	J Edwards
6	331	S Heyes

Notes:
These results are those that count towards the Traveller's Trophies. Results accrued by sailors who are not mambers of the Comet Class Association are omitted.

SUPPORT YOUR NEWSLETTER

The newsletter is a most beneficial asset and should be supported by all members no matter how trivial a subject may appear. I've been sailing for over 50 years with reasonable success in many dinghy classes and my experience is that the more trivial a thing seems the more it is another person's problem or triviality as well. So members, help the class, help members and the Editor ... pass on your trivialities or major problems, queries and so on, let us all hear and if possible advise as necessary ... the lifeblood of any newsletter is the response and support of its readers. Well done Alan and keep up the good work.

John Regnard (Comet 534)

WARNING! COMETS CAN SERIOUSLY DAMAGE DOMESTIC HARMONY

When I met my boyfriend Martin 5 years ago, I hate to admit that even though I had spent the previous 23 years of my life living on the Isle of Wight I knew nothing about sailing. Martin had a Topper at the time and it was in that I had my first sailing adventure and although it was a bit cramped with two up it was still most enjoyable. Martin's brother had not long acquired a Comet (314) and when we heard that one of his acquaintances was selling his Comet (133) it did not take much persuasion for Martin to buy it.

At this point I acquired the use of the Topper and set about learning to sail it properly. We both took a sailing holiday in Salcombe where I obtained my RYA level 1 and 2 and Martin his level 3. Back at our sailing club (Littleton), I joined in a series of Topper familiarisation courses and also started racing. With fairly long legs, I soon began to realise that the Topper was not the most comfortable craft and so when Martin's brother most unfortunately broke his leg and decided he was not going to be able to sail his Comet for some time, I gladly stepped in and bought it from him.

It took me some time to master the Comet, especially with the fluky wind conditions that Littleton offers, and having experienced some spectacular death rolling incidents right in front of the club-house, I gradually came to grips with it. As the season went on I was finding that during the races I was beginning to keep up with Martin and also on the odd occasions I was beating him. It was at this point that the tension in the household started increasing. We were finding that each Saturday after a day's racing one of us would be sulking in the car on the way home, whilst the other would say encouraging things like - "it was just a fluke" or "I was just lucky to have a good start" - neither of which helped.

We did however come to an agreement, whereby the winner between us had to prepare the dinner that evening, which always took the edge off a good race. This seems to work quite well, and although we are even now neck-and-neck each week, I still have to make doubly sure that when Martin has offered to rig my boat he has not "accidentally" twisted one of the shackles or left the bung out. I also have to be careful when I see him talking to some of the more experienced dinghy sailors at the club because he picks up some very useful tips which never seem to fine their way back to me (nor me, Ed).

We entered our first Comet open last year at Slough and apart from the nerves we had a thoroughly good time. Everybody was so friendly and encouraging, and although we have not managed so far this year to get to any, it is still our intention to get more experience with class sailing.

Martin's recent acquisition of Comet 549 led to a spate of victories which made me think that a newer boat was becoming essen-

tial for me too. However I did have one good race which boosted confidence in both my boat and my abilities - but that may have been a fluke!

On a positive end, the old Comet 133 was sold within our club, boosting the number of Comets at Littleton to 17. It is rare ever to get more than about 4 boats on the water at any one time but I am working on Martin to try to get him to take over the responsibility of getting more Comets out and racing, which should mean that he will have less time to study his tactics manual. You never know, there may even be a Comet open at Littleton one day - watch this space.

Heidi Dodd (Comet 314)

COMET HANDICAP SAILING ON THE SEA

I am one of the rarer breed of Comet sailor, in that most of my racing takes place on the sea. I thought I would write a few words on my experiences and results which I hope will be of interest.

I sail the Comet at two clubs on the Isle of Wight where the waves can be very large at the wrong combination of wind and tide. At one club I sail in a slow handicap fleet of PY 119 and above, in which I have had the most success. Normally I manage to finish in the top 3 in a fleet of 10 to 15 boats. However, I have rarely been able to win a race unless the Solo is not sailing. I have found it impossible to beat the Solo in heavier weather. He pulls a long way ahead on the beat. Normally I have little trouble with Miracles, Toppers and Mirrors unless the wind is strong. In heavy weather the Comet becomes pretty tricky downwind and its short waterline length leads to poor upwind speed.

At my other club I sail in an open handicap fleet with a big mixture of boats. I can be fairly competitive in light winds where I've often beaten the slower Lasers on the water. However, once the wind picks up I find that to win I would need a PY of 138 !

Despite those problems I have won one series and come second and third in some others. However, to have the best chance of success on the sea you need to sail in a slow or medium handicap fleet with the wind not above a force 3 (preferably lighter).

Pete Brodie (Comet 587)

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS REPORT

The National Championships were held on 17th, 18th and 19th June under the burgee of the Queen Mary Sailing Club. Fifty one visitors braved the varied conditions of our vast open waters unlike the 'ponds' that many are used to sailing on.

The Race Officer, in his wisdom, introduced the fleet gently into the swing of things by running a practise race followed later in the day by a relatively short first points race using the new IYRU Olympic Courses. Places changed little after the first l and last year's champion Guy Wilkins showed the fleet the wa home.

Saturday morning dawned with sun and breeze. What more could the sailors ask for? Once again the dominance of Guy Wilkins prevailed followed closely by Alex Reeve and Steve Monks.

The afternoon's race was slightly more lively - gusting winds around 16 to 18 knots. Some spectacular capsizes kept the interest of the onlookers and gave some pause for thought. The race was eventually won by Alex Reeve ahead of the youngster Ian Jubb and Guy Wilkins.

The fleet held a lengthy AGM followed by a sumptuous bar-b-que and retired for the evening feeling exhausted after a hard and long day's racing.

Sunday morning brought lighter, shiftier conditions. This allowed the Chairman of the Class Association, John Windibank, to read the shifts to near perfection and win comfortably ahead of Alex and Bill Robson after a lengthy race, with the minor places changing almost to the end.

A short lunch break gave the fleet time to reflect on their weekend and work out the order in which they needed to finish in order to take home the silverware.

Bill Robson, fresh from completing his A-levels, had obviously worked out the way to go. He shot off the line and never looked like being caught. Guy followed him home with Ian in 3rd place.

Prizegiving was a unique experience for many. All 51 competitors were called up in turn to receive their awards. A nice touch though for what must definitely be one of the most popular up-and-coming smaller classes.

Shy Talk (Queen Mary SC)

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS RESULTS

National Champion 1994/5: 353 Guy Wilkins
Runner-up: 573 Alex Reeve

1st Lady: 453 Christine Stack
1st Junior: 400 Ian Jubb
1st Veteran: 565 Richard Smallwood
Special award: 50 Diana Thompson (for entertainment)

Complete results:

1	353	Guy Wilkins	Chipstead
2	573	Alex Reeve	ICI, Slough
3	400	Ian Jubb	Kingsmead
4	555	John Windibank	Chipstead
5	513	David Forsdike	Welwyn
6	657	Mark Wilkins	Chipstead
7	530	Bill Robson	Kingsmead
8	334	Errol Edwards	Chew Valley
9	472	Jake Sutton	Frensham Pond
10	642	Steve Monks	Steeple Bay
11	565	Richard Smallwood	Shearwater
12	625	Tony Best	ICI, Slough
13	188	Simon Thompson	Crawley Mariners
14	518	Robin Ballam	Crawley Mariners
15	492	Ian Beaumont	Crawley Mariners
16	650	Philip Hossell	Evesham
17	587	Peter Brodie	Royal Victoria
18	303	Derek Coleman	Sutton Bingham
19	174	Michael Baxter	Chipstead
20	274	Peter Hayes	Redesmere
21	300	Keith Bullock	Kingsmead
22	644	Nigel Ford	Chase
23	160	Brian Welham	ICI, Slough
24	500	Henry Jaggers	Staunton Harold
25	548	Mark Taylor	ICI, Slough
26	209	Clive Chapman	Littleton
27	247	Barry O'Herlihy	Chipstead
28	626	Len Dean	Kingsmead
29	474	John Bradburn	Elton
30	453	Christine Stack	Aylesbury
31	436	Nancy Gould	Pingewood
32	117	Michael Thompson	Crawley Mariners
33	427	Keith Moody	Crawley Mariners
34	285	Chris Beaumont	Crawley Mariners
35	370	Rob Kerry	Aylesbury
36	240	Brian Hunt	Walton-on-Thames
37	575	Fiona Cauter	Chipstead

Non-qualifiers:
3 races: Bill Boyd, Rob Ellis, Diana Thompson
2 races: Geoff Kempton, Ian Battey, Alec Wolcox, Barry Sandle
1 race: Andrew Simmons, Barrie Hylton, Geoff Sutton, Emer Power

NATIONAL SURVIVAL ?!!

It all started one Sunday at Aylesbury Sailing Club when Barry Hylton approached me and asked if I would be entering the National Championships. Having only been sailing for five years, and never "away from home", the thought of entering the "National Championships" was quite a daunting one. I told him I would think about it.

A few weeks went by and I was having some success in our club class racing - although most of this was in light to moderate winds. I have always been a bit wary of heavy wind conditions, whether it's through lack of experience or lack of weight, I am always terrified of that downwind run, like so many other Comet sailors I think! I tend to spend my time sitting totally rigi[d] dreading the start of the "death roll" and practising the inevitable capsize drill yet again.

Barry once again approached me, a little more forceful this time and said "You are going to the Nationals, aren't you". In an attempt to get myself out of the situation I told him that I couldn't transport my boat - no roof rack and no trailer. His immediate reply was "I'll get your boat there, you get yourself there" - OK so I was talked into it.

Arrangements were made to move the boats on the Thursday evening. For any of you who know Aylesbury, by the time we had dragged the boats through the woods, up highbank and down the other side, loaded them onto Barry's trailer, almost every muscle in my body ached and the thought of sailing the next day seemed totally out of the question. (The other boats belonged to Christine Stack and Barry, who said he was going to sail!). We arranged to meet at the Queen Mary Sailing Club the next day and parted company.

Christine and I had arranged to travel together and despite taking a couple of wrong turnings eventually arrived on time. Having climbed the steps from the car park and seeing the very wide expanse of water in the distance, the wind strength looking just about right (for me), things didn't look too bad. We unloaded the boats from the trailer, rigged them, got changed and attended the briefing for the practice race - OK, easy course [to] remember, half an hour to go before the start - this is it, he[re] we go!! The first major obstacle to overcome was getting the boat onto the water - Comets everywhere and the gradient of that bank - what a nightmare, however, with the help of the very friendly Comet fleet we all managed to get afloat and off to the start line. Being used to a small fleet of Comets at Aylesbury, usually about 6, the sight of all of those boats jockeying for position on the start line was quite frightening - I decided to stay out of everyone's way and not get involved at this stage!

The 10 minute warning went - I grabbed for my watch to start the countdown - Blast - I had forgotten to reset it from 6 minutes - Oh well, trust to luck and follow the fleet. My luck wasn't very forthcoming - wrong end of the line and a wall of Comets coming towards me, all on starboard!! I carried on and somehow managed to find a slot to tack into - we were off! Looking around, I was

quite pleased with myself, it looked as though I was about half way through the fleet - not bad. This, however, was not to last. By the time we had reached the first mark there were only a handful of boats behind me - OK, what's going wrong, how do they do it? Concentrate and get on with it. Having stirred myself up I was quite pleased to have made up a few places by the end of the race.

The afternoon arrived, this was it, this race counted, I must get myself together. This time I remembered to reset my watch and made a reasonable start. With the wind strength to my liking I was making quite good progress, tacking on the wind shifts and actually gaining places. My final position of 20th (this was to be my best placing of the weekend) was quite an achievement and I was feeling quite pleased with myself.

Saturday morning arrived, up at 7, left home at 8, - here we go again!! Climbing the steps from the car park it was obvious that the wind strength had increased, and seeing the state of the waves on the reservoir, it was going to prove an interesting day!

Having seen the state of "the sea" I decided that wet suit and waterproofs were the order of the day, so get changed, attend the briefing, get onto the water and - Help - planing conditions at Aylesbury are usually few and far between but on leaving the pontoon the boat took off like a rocket. My worst fears were founded. This was not going to be a day for tactical racing but a day of survival!

After a disastrous start and following numerous capsizes, I actually managed to finish the race (36th), totally shattered, but things were not over yet, I still had to get back to the shore. I made a very fast and what I thought was a controlled approach to the pontoon, managed to swing the boat round head to wind and for some unknown reason promptly capsized onto two other boats! Having righted the boat, secured it to the pontoon, I looked up only to find that Margaret Hylton had videoed the whole sequence! Must see that film to find out what went wrong.

After the events of the morning, I decided to sit out the afternoon race to recoup my strength for Sunday, hoping that the wind would drop a bit for I now needed to sail both races to qualify. I enjoyed the afternoon sitting on the patio, sipping a pint of beer, nice and dry and watching everyone else struggling to survive!

Throughout the journey on Sunday morning both Christine and myself were trying to convince ourselves that it was a good idea to carry on. The wind strength hadn't eased and it was going to be another hard day, however, we decided that having paid our entry fee we would carry on.

Having considered the "numerous" possibilities - to sail or not to sail - I decided to put in a couple of reefs and take my chances. To my surprise I was not the only one who had made this decision, however, it was, in a way, the wrong decision - yes OK the boat was slightly easier to handle but it didn't go anywhere and it still had this terrible habit of lying itself down, espe-

cially at the gybe mark! I had a steady race up until the last leg to windward when I actually made up three places, only to hit the mark on the finish line! Oh well, back again, take my 360 degree penalty and end up in 36th place again.

I decided that the afternoon race was going to be the one to "go for". No reefs this time as I wanted the boat speed (or did I?). Again I started near the back of the fleet and really made some effort to the windward mark. The big surprise after bearing away from the mark was the acceleration as the boat literally took off onto the plane. Here we go again - hang on, sit well back and push down the dagger board to try to stop the rolling. Having progressed about half way to the gybe mark I realised that my feet were actually under water! I was very reluctant to take my eyes off the horizon but I had to find out what was going on. Looking down I could see a torrent of water spurting up through the daggerboard housing and slowly but surely filling up the cockpit! The self bailer was open but it didn't have a chance! By now I was almost at the gybe mark so my total concentration had to be transferred to this very precarious manoeuvre. To my total surprise, and following a few on board acrobatics, I survived the gybe and by the time I reached the next mark the boat was almost dry again. After a couple more laps of hard work and, yes, I did capsize a couple of times and I actually had to take a 720 degree penalty - all that water and I had to hit someone ! Still, I had enjoyed the race and even managed a smile and a wave as I crossed the finish line - Yes - Margaret was in the committee boat with her camera again!

Having put the boats onto the trailer and changing into some nice dry clothing I had time to reflect on the events of the last few days. I was glad Barry had "persuaded" me to enter - it was an experience I shall remember for a very long time. It was an opportunity to meet other Comet sailors who turned out to be a very helpful and sociable group of people (I think they all dread the downwind run!), I was very pleased for Christine who actually retained the trophy for "First Lady" and I learnt a lot from the three days of racing. As for Barry, I saw him sail the practice race on Friday but I didn't see him again until the Sunday evening - must find out where he disappeared to!

I am looking forward to attending the next 'local' open meeting at Aylesbury - yes Aylesbury - I won't even have to move my boat out! My final position - Oh yes 35th and I even got a mention in our local paper!

A very successful and enjoyable weekend all round.

Rob Kerry (Comet 370)

WE CAN COMPETE WITH THE BEST OF THEM

Referring to Robin Davies' article "We can beat the best of them", I think that articles on club level racing successes need to be considered in context with the local conditions. Whilst every credit and encouragement must be given to the winners of trophy collections, acknowledging their enthusiasm and success, we must never forget the rest of the fleet who turn out to make a race, without whom winners and trophies would not exist. These sailors deserve credit for making a competitive series possible.

Turning to the context aspect, it is my experience that club racing in mixed fleet handicap and pursuit series tend to span a season and comprise a generous amount of discards to qualify for a trophy. On a single day racing for one trophy, wind conditions may be ideally suited to a particular class which wins that specific trophy. In a series spread over many months consistency in results helps but the over-riding requirement is to ensure partaking in every race in the series if a trophy is to be obtained.

The large majority of the club racing fraternity tends to be sporadic in attendance and many members fail to qualify in particular series leaving those who do a very good chance of collecting the pots. This arises in the clubs where turnouts are in the 5 - 15 boats in a handicap fleet and the regulars obtain a distinct probability of being on the rostrum at the end of the series..

I am not knocking the trophy collectors. I have been very successful myself over a very great number of years, but what I do want to get across is that we should not be saying "we can <u>beat</u> the best of them" but rather "we can <u>compete</u> with the best of them. The Comet is a challenging and competitive class but let us keep the trophy aspects and the opposition in perspective. Someone will collect the trophy, but it's the competing that matters. To antagonise other Comet owners and other classes of dinghies over who is the best is not the way to success and friendly club members!!!

John Regnard (Comet 534)

A confession by the Editor: I must admit to being the originator of the title "We can beat the best of them" of Robin Davies' article in Perihelion 30. Robin wrote me a letter and on my request for more information another one. From those letters I concocted the article, mainly verbatim but of course re-arranged, adding a suggested title before obtaining Robin's approval. In my covering letter to him I wrote "I picked a sentence of yours for the title, it seemed to summarise the main part of the text and is encouraging to other Comet owners (like me!)". Thus I had no intention to antagonise anyone, rather to encourage those (like me) who often find themselves at the back of a handicap fleet that, if sailed well, the Comet can be up with the rest, sometimes with the best.

IMPROVING YOUR RACING - PART 3
COMET SAIL CONTROLS

For a sailing boat to sail efficiently, it has to be controlled effectively. Controls that optimise the sail on the Comet are very basic, but wrong settings can make the Comet a beast to handle in strong winds or very inefficient resulting in you remaining at the back of a racing fleet.

The Comet rules are quite flexible in allowing experimentation with control lines, purchase etc. A well thought out system of control lines will make a Comet easier to control, therefore making the boat slightly faster by virtue of the sail being more of the time well matched to the conditions.

Kicking strap

The kicking strap is the most important control that effects sail shape. It is the one which I adjust most an the one I deem to need additional purchase to facilitate ease of adjustment. * N.B. additional purchase on the kicking strap should not be used to apply extra tension. Too much tension will only bend or break your boom or mast.

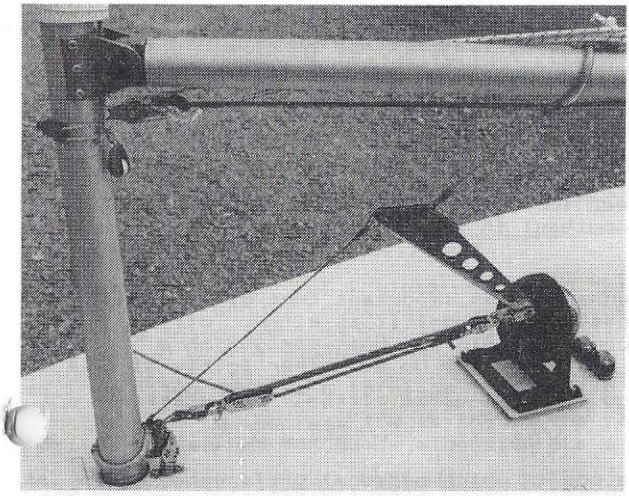
On a standard rigged Comet, the kicker system has a flaw in that boom angle affects the kicker tension, ie when the boom goes out on a run, the kicker tension increases slightly. In light winds the boom won't stay out if there is any tension applied to the kicker.

The way to solve this problem is to have all components of the kicker attached to the boom and mast strop only. The jamming cleat should be integral with the lower blocks in the pulley purchase. Harken part numbers 231 + 229 or 095 + 086 are examples of a 6:1 pulley system with an integral jammer.

A much more effective method is to use a lever kicker, as I do on my boat (see figure 1). The lever is much more powerful, mine is 27:1, but the range of tension that can be applied is much less than a pulley system. My lever system is powerful enough to be constantly adjusted on some points of sail, especially the run. On the run the kicker should be fairly tight, especially when strong gusty winds prevail. A loose kicker will enable the sail to twist at the top resulting in the "death roll". The Comet is a fast boat on the run, when the sail is correctly set. Play the kicker, slowly ease the kicker until the boat just starts to roll and then apply tension to stop the roll. On all other points of sail there is a minimum kicker tension. The sail luff has an inbuilt curve. The mast bend must always match this to obtain correct sail shape. Mast bend is achieved with kicker tension.

Outhaul

The outhaul is the second most important sail control and this controls the camber or 'fullness' of the sail. The Comet sail has a fairly flat cut to enable reefing, so sailing with the outhaul tension loose is not efficient. When conditions allow you to handle the power available on a reach, the maximum camber (ie the



(Photos: Anne Browning)

Figure 1. Kicking strap

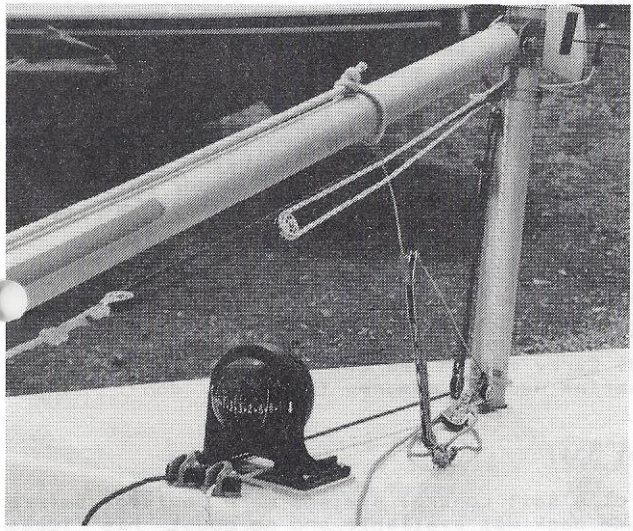


Figure 2. Outhaul

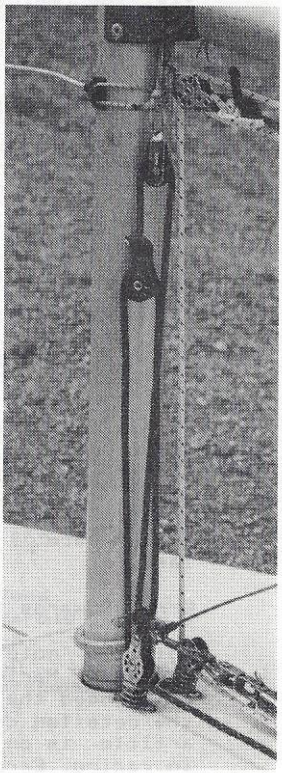


Figure 3. Cunningham

distance between boom and sail at the mid-point along the boom) should be no more than 10 cm. This should be reduced on beats and runs and also when the wind gets very strong or very light.

On my boat my outhaul is an 8:1 cascade purchase system (the 4:1 system along the boom is shown in figure 2). The sail is tied directly to the boom, as on a Laser, and a strong length of shock cord attached between the kicker fitting and the outhaul hook helps to release the outhaul in light winds.

Cunningham

The Cunningham or downhaul is an important control line, but one that I tend to use least. On my boat it is either 'off' or 'on'. Once I start to struggle to hold the boat upright on a beat or close reach, I apply the downhaul. On all other points of sail it is released. I use a 4:1 system, again of a cascade purchase type (see figure 3).

Mainsheet

Mainsheet choice is one in which personal preference plays an important part. Some people like a thick 10mm rope, others like myself prefer a thinner 6mm rope. A rope which absorbs a lot of water becomes heavy and you lose the feel of the sail transmitted via the mainsheet. One that absorbs little water is a good choice, but these do have a limited life, two season's use and they need replacing. Ensure that your mainsheet is of the correct length. You want the length to enable the boom to go out slightly forward of 90 degrees and still have enough for you to hold it comfortably whilst sitting at the front of the cockpit.

Efficiency and reliability

To enable the efficient working of multipurchase systems, it is important to use good quality ball bearing blocks from manufacturers such as those from Harken and Ronston. To complete these systems, good quality rope is also vital. The new Spectra and Dyneema ropes are excellent as they don't stretch and allow you to use a thinner rope for the same, if not more, strength than standard ropes. Kevlar is another good rope if used appropriately. It does have a vice in that it can snap under high load without notice. Think twice about using it as a mainsheet horse or traveller.

Finally it is important to check that all your control lines and pulley blocks are working properly and are in good condition. Before open meetings and championships, check your ropes for signs of damage. Take a screwdriver and make sure your fittings are tightly secured. Carry enough spares. Starting and finishing every race in a series usually ensures that you don't finish last.

Errol Edwards (Comet 334)

Editor's note: Errol's sail control systems were devised before the AMS Marine race pack was available and no doubt his ideas influenced the design of the race pack. He has already described the detailed construction in Perihelion and the emphasis in this article is on how the controls should be used to best advantage in racing. Errol's earlier article was in 1991, Perihelion issue

19, page 3, reprints of which can perhaps be made available if required.

AYLESBURY OPEN

Sixteen visitors from 7 clubs joined 10 home boats at Aylesbury SC for their annual Comet Open Meeting on Sunday 24th July. Many visitors travelled from far afield, including Tom Todd of Staunton Harold SC, Derbyshire, who was a member at Aylesbury when the club was in its infancy. Much of the spade work done by Tom in the Sixties still benefits members today. One of the tasks he had contributed to then was the laying of the railway sleepers which still form a ramp for boats alongside the steps at high bank.

The work of the race officer, Brian Percival, in setting a course was made difficult by the weather conditions; they were excellent for sunbathing but not so good for sailing. There was very little wind and what little there was came and went at random during the first two races. Large gaps formed in the fleet, then as a little puff of wind came the leaders forged further ahead and those at the back were pushed along to join the bunch in the middle.

Jake Sutton (Frensham Pond SC) won the first two races, challenged only by Alex Reeve (ICI, Slough) and Alex Gobell (Aylesbury) in race 1. In the second race Sutton was clear ahead the whole time and Henry Jaggers (Staunton Harold) second. Brian Welham (ICI, Slough) gained places each round to finish third.

For the final race the wind was more constant and Jaggers led all the way, challenged only by Sutton and Reeve. Sutton retired and Tony Best (ICI, Slough) took third place having worked his way through the fleet. Welham again gained places on each round and got ahead of Simon Thompson (Crawley Mariners) just before the finish to take 4th. Thompson, who had consistently good results in all races, finished 5th.

The best placed home boat was Rob Kerry in 7th position and the first lady was the Commodore, Judith Johnson, 12th. David Timson, a club junior, sailed 3 good races to finish 10th overall. Tom Todd, now over 3 score and 10 years, finished in the middle of the fleet.

Results:

1	472	Jake Sutton	Frensham Pond
2	500	Henry Jaggers	Staunton Harold
3	573	Alex Reeve	ICI, Slough
4	160	Brian Welham	ICI, Slough
5	188	Simon Thompson	Crawley Mariners
6	625	Tony Best	ICI, Slough

Margaret Hylton