



NEWSLETTER NUMBER 37 **WINTER 1994/5**

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Front cover:

Jake Sutton and Alex Reeve, neck and neck at the Cotswold open meeting

(Photo: Andrew Simmons)

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

After the Christmas pudding, Christmas crackers, Queens speech and all, I always search through the wrapping paper for that invaluable little present that one or two relatives always send me, a next years Diary. My diary has a habit, if not carefully watched, of filling up with work dates and meetings so I particularly appreciate Norah's efforts on our behalf in arranging next year's sailing programme as early as possible. So here are two important dates for that Christmas diary. The National Championship will be at Glossop SC from 25th to 27th May and the Tidal Championship will be at Mudeford SC on 17th and 18th August.

Glossop SC is just south of Manchester and Mudeford is on the south coast near Christchurch. Both clubs are looking forward to our visits which I am sure will be enjoyable. With the growth of membership in the North, the Committee has been keen to hold a championship in the area and were delighted to accept Glossop's offer. Norah has almost completed next year's programme and this will be published in the next Perihelion. There are two new venues: Arden SC near Stratford and Warwick SC, both river clubs.

Inevitably we look back on a marvelously warm summer with lots of good things and some sad ones. One conversation overheard in the men's locker room at Sheppey particularly pleased me, (ladies need not avert their eyes as men's locker rooms are not what they used to be?) Question: "You sail lots of dinghies, so why do you sail Comets?", Answer: "I like getting the best from a boat but the Comet Class is very friendly and I enjoy the racing". This sums it up for me; sailing and racing my Comet is a pleasure because of the people who sail them. Comet racing is not a soft option as anyone trying to pass Jake to windward will verify, but the air is not full of bad language and there is a definite sense of proportion about it all.

Congratulations to all our winners and thank you members for your support at all our events including the exhibitions. The committee enjoyed the Photographs submitted for our competition, which was a close contest between a vertically compromised Phil Hossell submitted by Liz Hossell or a similarly compromised Jake Sutton submitted by Alan Browning and a split decision finally plumped for Liz.

I would like to thank very sincerely all the committee members for their efforts this year. With difficult personal problems they have all done the class proud, not one has let us down and I am proud to be associated with them, thank you all.

Finally you racing demon's watch out this year, I tracked down Jean Wilkins and by threatening to give her another sailing trophy, she confessed the secret of the Wilkins racing success. It seems it's all down to greens and fresh vegetables?? so Popeye was right !!

So from all the Class Committee, have a HAPPY CHRISTMAS and NEW YEAR.

John Windibank, Chairman

FIRST SIX AT THE OPEN MEETINGS

NORTHERN AREA

Redesmere

1	334 E Edwards
2	500 H Jaggers
3	670 P Hayes
4	437 B Hardy
5	331 S Heyes
6	650 P Hossell

EASTERN AREA

Stamford

1	500 H Jaggers
2	555 J Windibank
3	518 R Ballam
4	650 P Hossell
5	532 J Coppenhall
6	641 P Hinde

WESTERN AREA

Pingewood

1	642 J Sutton
2	650 P Hossell
3	188 S Thompson
4	555 J Windibank
5	150 R Hamilton
6	500 H Jaggers

SOUTHERN AREA

Kingsmead

1	657 M Wilkins
2	642 J Sutton
3	500 H Jaggers
4	160 B Welham
5	573 A Reeve
6	188 S Thompson

Notes:

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

ORBITAL RESULTS

Discard Nats Points Posn

642 J Sutton	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	4.5	1
334 E Edwards	1	1	1	2	3	3	3	6	10.25	2
573 A Reeve	1	1	2	2	2	3	5	9	10.5	3
500 H Jaggers	1	1	2	3	3	3	5		12.5	4
565 R Smallwood	2	2	3	3	3	4	5	3	17	5
650 P Hossell	2	2	3	4	4	5	5		20	6
555 J Windibank	2	2	2	4	4	6	7	7	20	7
188 S Thompson	3	3	4	4	4	4	8	13	22	8
625 T Best	2	3	4	5	6	6	11	17	26	9
518 R Ballam	3	4	6	7	8	10	10	14	38	10
303 D Coleman	5	5	5	6	7	11	11	25	39	11
160 B Welham	1	4	8	8	10	11	26	26	41.75	12
626 L Dean	4	8	9	10	13	28	-	28	72	13
117 M Thompson	11	12	13	14	15	17	19	15	82	14
50 D Thompson	16	18	20	21	23	25	28	28	123	15

Qualification for the Orbital Trophy series required attendance at one Championship and meetings in at least two Areas.

The six best results to count and ties decided by the position at the National Championship.

ORBITAL AND APHELION TROPHY EVENTS

The Comet Class rounded off their 1995 Sailing Season with another successful event at Kingsmead Sailing Club. This year however Kingsmead were pipped as the top open event other than the National Championships, by Crawley Mariners S C. Crawley attracted an entry of 30 boats, which was more than Aylesbury S C with 29 and Kingsmead with 28 entries.

The Class this year ran four regional Aphelion Trophy events and the national Orbital Trophy.

Orbital Trophy

Jake Sutton of Frensham Pond SC dominated the Orbital series with 9 wins and achieved his first National Comet Class title. Jake narrowly failed to win the series last year and has progressed to a national title from his junior title in just 2 years.

With a welcome return to form Errol Edwards of Chew Valley SC had a his best season for a few years, was runner up with 3 wins and was the winner of the Northern Aphelion Trophy.

Two wins and the National Inland championship put Alex Reeve of ICI Slough SC in third spot to round off a very successful year.

Henry Jagers of Staunton Harold SC finished 4th with 2 wins and this was his best position since winning the title in 1991.

Fifth spot went to Richard Smallwood with a string of good consistent results including 3rd at the National Championship and a worst position all year of a 4th.

Phil Hossell, improved all year and showing good skills in the heavy weather, was 6th, with the Chairman John Windibank having an in and out season 7th.

Simon Thompson had another good season and achieved 4th in the Inland Championship and was 8th in the Orbital, one place ahead of the consistent Tony Best. Robin Ballam, who has a well deserved reputation for never giving in and is always competitive in any weather, was 10th ahead of Derek Coleman, who must be very high on the list of those who most enjoyed their season. Derek, who popped up everywhere with a smile and words of encouragement, qualified 11th just ahead of Brian Whelam who has improved throughout the year, achieving a win at Seafarers and a very good 4th at Kingsmead.

Len Dean always sails well at Crawley Mariners and this year was no exception, at our best supported open he had his best result with a 4th place and a lot of good scalps. The mention of Crawley Mariners leads on to the Thompsons of course and Mike and Diana qualified 14th and 15th with Diana being our only lady qualifier this year. Generally we have had good support from the ladies this year but a series of injuries and misfortunes has restricted the numbers who qualified.

John Edwards completed 6 events and a championship but all his events were in one area and strictly he needed to do events in

two areas, but we had a few qualifiers scarves over and hopefully one has found its way to him. John's points would have made him 13th qualifier. Other near qualifiers with 5 events include Mark Wilkins with two wins and the Govier brothers who were both within the top 10 finishers at the Inland Nationals.

There were 21 Orbital events with 342 entries, an average of 16 per event. Five events saw a turn out of less than 10 which is a poor reward for the club's efforts, so if you can, support your local events.

Top travellers this year were Jake Sutton and Phil Hossell with 13 events. Errol Edwards, Henry Jagers, Robin Ballam and myself all managing 11, with Derek Coleman and Tony Best 10.

Aphelion Trophies

The Aphelion Trophies were again very competitive with the Northern and Eastern Trophies only decided on the results of the last events. The Eastern event hung in the balance until the last race of the series where John Windibank needed a win to beat Mark Wilkins for the trophy, but he was pipped on the day by Henry Jagers and had to settle for second place in the series with Robin Ballam third qualifier.

The tables were turned on Henry for the Northern event where he was denied by Errol Edwards, giving Errol his second win in this event. Phil Hossell finished third with Brian Hardy and Peter Hayes fourth and fifth.

Jake Sutton won both the Southern and Western Aphelion Trophies to round off his trio of wins. Errol Edwards was in 2nd spot in the Western event with Richard Smallwood 3rd and Phil Hossell 4th.

The Southern Trophy achieved 13 qualifiers and 113 competitors in the 5 events, Alex Reeve was runner up with Tony best 3rd and Brian Whelam 4th ahead of Simon Thompson.

The Southern area event was an overwhelming success and averaged over 22 boats per event and ICI SC providing 3 of the top four qualifiers.

The Northern Area averaged 14 entries and with 70 competitors and has established itself as a very successful event which is growing in popularity as the number of Comets in the north increases.

The Western area struggled with an average below twelve but the loss of Sutton Bingham to the Tidal Championship inevitably meant a loss of participants in the event.

Eastern Area qualifiers were down to three this year but with only four well spread out events perhaps it was not surprising. The participating clubs all make visitors very welcome, so if you did not manage it this year why not try an open event near you I'm sure you will enjoy it.

John Windibank

APHELION RESULTS

EASTERN AREA TROPHY

	CAM	FISHR	CHIPS	STAMF	Points	Posn
657 M Wilkins	0.75	2	3		5.75	1
555 J Windibank	2		2	2	6	2
518 R Ballam		6	7	3	16	3

NORTHERN AREA TROPHY

	REDDCH	CHEST	GLOSS	CHASE	REDSM	Points	Posn
334 E Edwards	0.75	3		3	0.75	4.5	1
500 H Jagers	3	0.75		8	2	5.75	2
650 P Hossell	4	5	3	2	6	9	3
437 B Hardy	2	8	6		4	12	4
670 P Hayes		6		5	3	14	5
648 B Hamilton		4	4		7	15	6
633 J Edwards	5	2	10	12	9	16	7
644 N Ford	9	6		6		21	8
474 J Bradburn			2	7	13	22	9
508 M Smith		10		9	8	27	10
411 W Ablett		9	8		12	29	11
643 K Appleby	10	14	9			33	12

WESTERN AREA TROPHY

	SHEAR	MERTH	CHEW	COTSW	PINGE	Points	Posn
642 J Sutton	0.75		0.75	0.75	0.75	2.25	1
334 E Edwards	2	0.75	3	3		5.75	2
565 R Smallwood	3	2	2	4		7	3
650 P Hossell	11	5	6	5	2	12	4
460 M Govier		4	4	8		16	5
419 P Govier		3	5	9		17	6

SOUTHERN AREA TROPHIES

	CRAWL	ICI	AYLES	SEAFR	KINGS	Point	Posn
642 J Sutton	0.75	0.75	0.75	6	2	2.25	1
573 A Reeve	2	3	2		3	7	2
625 T Best		2	3	6	10	11	3
160 B Whelam	8		8	0.75	5	13.75	4
188 S Thompson	3	4			7	14	5
555 J Windibank	10	7	4	6	8	17	6
303 D Coleman	14	5	11	5	15	21	7
626 L Dean	4		9		9	22	8
518 R Ballam	11	10	10	4	14	24	9
150 R Hamilton	16	11			12	39	10
209 C Chapman	15	14			18	47	11
117 M Thompson	17	13			19	49	12
50 D Thompson	25	18			23	66	13

The Aphelion Trophy series required entry in 3 events to qualify and the best 3 results counted.

COMET HALL OF FAME

Past Championship Winners

Year	National	Ladies	Junior
1983	Ken Potts		
1984	Bob Sandford		
1985	Stuart Ingham		
1986	Keith Lamdin		
1987	Jeff Penfold		
1988	Craig Moffatt	Hayley Penfold	
1989	Chris Sinclair	Margaret Hylton	
1990	Chris Sinclair	Tracey Davies	
1991	Guy Wilkins	Tracey Davies	
1992	Guy Wilkins	Anne Brook	Nancy Gould
1993	Guy Wilkins	Christine Stack	Jake Sutton
1994	Guy Wilkins	Christine Stack	Ian Jubb
1995	Guy Wilkins	Heidi Dodd	Robert Hamilton

Association Trophy

Orbital Trophy (National)

1988		Craig Moffatt
1989	Damon Perrin	Andrew Pierce
1990	Guy Wilkins	James Withall
1991	Henry Jagers	Henry Jagers
1992	Guy Wilkins	Guy Wilkins
1993	Mark Wilkins	Mark Wilkins
1994	Guy Wilkins	Mark Wilkins
1995	Alex Reeve	Jake Sutton

Aphelion Trophy (Regional)

	North	East	South	West
1992	Mark Wilkins	Guy Wilkins	-	Nancy Gould
1993	Errol Edwards	Mark Wilkins	-	Mark Wilkins
1994	Richard Smallwood	Mark Wilkins	Jake Sutton	Mark Wilkins
1995	Errol Edwards	Mark Wilkins	Jake Sutton	Jake Sutton

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

JAN - MAR 1996

January 5 - 14:	London Boat Show, Earls Court
February 17 - 25:	Leisure Exhibition, NEC Birmingham
March 2 - 3:	Sailboat 95, Alexandra Palace

For your diary:

May 25 - 27:	National Championships, Glossop
August 17 - 18:	Tidals, Mudeford

EDITOR'S NOTES

6	14	30	32	34	39	48	66	74	84	85	91
95	108	110	111	113	125	128	131	138	140	147	148
154	155	156	157	166	172	175	180	181	183	185	189
192	195	196	210	214	216	217	218	232	235	236	239
242	250	254	255	259	261	264	266	269	271	280	282
291	292	293	295	299	305	307	309	315	323	325	330
335	336	341	343	347	349	351	354	356	360	362	366
371	381	382	391	397	398	400	401	404	405	408	411
412	413	420	421	423	424	434	435	439	443	445	448
462	466	467	471	475	483	493	503	505	506	512	514
520	521	523	524	525	526	529	530	533	535	537	538
540	541	550	552	553	563	564	567	569	572	576	580
581	583	584	595	587	589	590	594	595	596	599	601
602	605	609	612	614	621	627	634	639	641	643	646
647	652	653	654	655	656	658	659	660	662	663	664
665	666	667	668	671	672	673	674	675	676	677	678
679											

Lottery entries? no, that is a list of the sail numbers of about 200 of our members. The point is, there are about 70 other members who regularly attend open meetings or Championships or write articles for Perihelion, but the 74% shown above do not join in the activities of the Association in this way.

I would be very pleased to see the next issue, number 38, deadline the end of February, filled with articles from the members listed above. Tell us, for example, what you do with your boat, how the Association can help you more, whether you can think of any improvements to the boat, or whatever you like. Just a letter will do and we can work from there, my address is on the inside of the front cover. If you want a bit of lottery psychology in it, I did ask my computer to choose at random from the list, and it came up with contributions from members owning boats 271, 91, 264, 420, 254 and, perhaps, a "talking to" article featuring 347. (Don't take me seriously, but it is one way to elicit articles!)

The AGM minutes will be in the next issue. Now is the time to be thinking of any proposals for the next AGM, but remember that if they relate to the specification of the Comet, they must have approval by both a vote at a general meeting and also by the builder. (That's an idea, I wouldn't mind something more to sit on in light winds, particularly a couple of inches more behind the dagger board, and perhaps a seat near the stern too . . .)

Alan Browning (Comet 361)

PERIHELION

For those who aren't already members for 1996 a membership form is enclosed. Please re-join by 1st March '96 to be sure of receiving the next Perihelion.

The next issue of Perihelion will be circulated in early April 1996. Contributions to me by the end of February please.

NAME THE ASSOCIATION

I would like you as a member to consider a possible change to the Association's name.

For instance if it was THE COMET DINGHY ASSOCIATION outsiders would or should understand what it means.

So let's have your views on the subject, it is being mooted now so that all the members can say something and not only those who are at the A.G.M.. So when you renew your membership to the treasurer there is something else to go in your envelope, no charge.

Derek Coleman (Comet 303) Treasurer.

MAST SLEEVE

I have received the following letter:

I was interested in your suggestion of using a mast sleeve to cover the sail so that there is no need to remove the mast. Sovereign Sailing use these for Lasers and Toppers. The boats are kept on racks in the water. In the Mediterranean it's no problem to capsize the boats to get the covers off: I wouldn't be so enthusiastic about an English lake in February. They don't bother with covers for the boats but I would expect that a specialist boat cover maker would make one with a velcroed slit along the front similar to a Comet Duo cover. As Sovereign Sailing have just changed their name maybe there are some surplus covers with the old name on them.

Christopher Richards (ex-Comet sailor)

My friend at Frensham, Ann Hill, who was enquiring about the mast sleeve has not only bought Comet 175 but within a week fitted it with a mast sleeve. She made it of robust black plastic and made the joins with strong waterproof fabric adhesive tape bought at the local Chandler. She says that if any members would like her to do the same for them, it would cost about £50. She can be contacted by telephone on 01420 477777.

Alan Browning (Comet 361)



Ann Hill removing the mast sleeve

COMET 687 FERRAGUDA S.C.

Ever since we bought an apartment in the Algarve earlier this year plans have been under way to get a Comet out there, and on the last day of October the exodus began.

We had enquired about the cost of putting the boat on a furniture van, but it was expensive and inconvenient. So we decided that the solution was for us all to go out on the ferry, me, Barrie, boat, car and all.

In the week before the off, David Lihou, Comet 574 who lives in Spain, rang to enquire about a video. So I used the opportunity to pick his brains about the route from Santander to the south. By return of post David sent me a comprehensive briefing with not only the marks of the course, but added advice on hazards. Not of weed or shallows, but shifts into the right hand lane at crucial times, rights of way when the N623 joins the N627 just north of Burgos and the wisdom of doing a 360 (well certainly a 180) if we missed a mark: better to retrace your steps David told us than enter the nightmare that awaits traffic in the centre of Seville.

With the car loaded not only with everything we thought we needed, but with all those items we never use at home as well, and which might just come in useful in the Algarve we set off on the last day of October to collect our new Comet from Andrew in Devon. After an overnight stop there we joined the ferry at Plymouth for a midday sailing. A man in the next lane nodded at the Comet as we waited to board and commented that we seemed to be taking full precautions for the crossing. I told him that we had our own buoyancy aids too.

Once aboard and settled, we set out to explore the ship. Looking at our watches at 12.05 we both commented that we should have been on our way by then. Then, glancing out of the window we saw that we were; Plymouth was certainly clear astern.

The crossing, which took 24 hours, was uneventful. The sea was like a millpond. So we were well rested, bored and eager to be on our way at 13.00 hours the next day. I carefully inscribed important features of the course on the back of each hand, 'L' on one and 'R' on the other. By 18.00 we were rounding Madrid together with the working population of the city, but we knew when we had water and we didn't give way. We held our course, kept the tall brown tower blocks to starboard as advised, and slipped on to the road to Ocano without a hitch.

I would not want to mislead you into thinking that the whole course ran without a hitch though. There was the question of retiring or finishing the race. I was all for retiring, but Barrie preferred to finish. We did . . . in 13 hours . . . next year the Southport 24 hour race ? . . . well perhaps not!

The roads were good and after 20.00 there were times when there was nothing to be seen ahead and nothing to be seen astern. Oh to be a champion with no-one ahead, and everyone else far behind. When we were nearly home I did make the inevitable error. Towards the end of a race concentration lapses, over confidence overwhelms, mistakes are made and places are lost. The instructions were clear: tack at the N431 - leave Huelva to port, but we

didn't. Have you ever found yourself in the lead and then not known where the finish line was? Well then you will know the feeling. We had to gybe round, retrace our steps, re-round the mark and the helm was not pleased. I never liked being the crew! In motor racing they wave a flag in front of the first over the line; in sailing the line is not a line at all and you only know you have crossed it when you hear the bell. We were so near the end of our race that I expected a big signpost saying 'Portugal' - the Finish! But there wasn't and by then I could not make out the course written on the back of my hand.

At 01.14 we crossed the border. Two officials were chatting and one broke off the conversation to come to our open window as we drew to a halt. He looked us up and down, from the tyres of the car to the keel of the boat, then he brought his eyes down to me and asked with a grin 'Ingleesh?' He knew the answer and with a 'Boa Viagem' he waved us onwards.

We had arranged to leave the Comet in the care of Ad at his Windsurfing Centre on Ferraguda Beach, near Portimao. On Tuesday



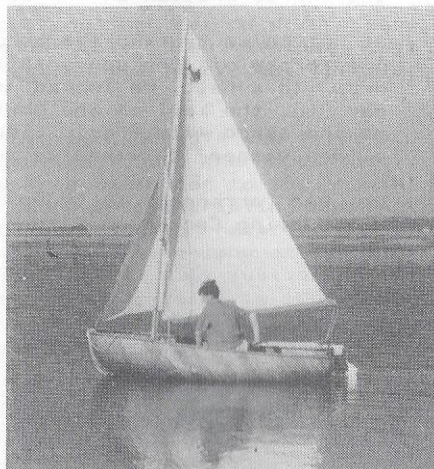
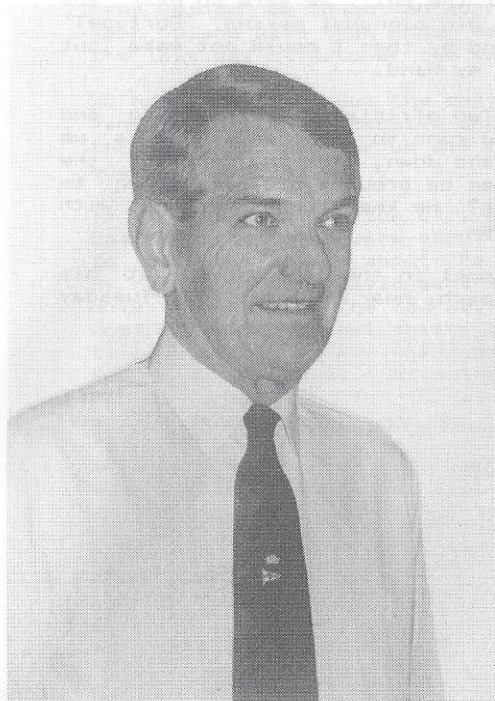
at 11.00 we arranged to meet him there. The Comet had by now been on the roof rack for a week. That was no problem, but inside the car we had sails, foils and trolley; the lack of boot space was restricting our shopping expeditions. We carried the boat down the steps at Ferraguda and pulled it along the beach. Ad arrived the long way round, but the easy way - by jeep. The spars were locked away in the store, together with the sails, foils and trolley. The boat was placed upside down on a bed of mesembrianthemums at the foot of the cliff. Ad recounted sailing horror stories and we tried to match them with tales from the sailing clubs of home. Then Ad's wife, Wilma, phoned to see what was keeping him so long and we went our separate ways.

The Comet waits there now for someone to use it. We have told Ad that we will fax him details of anyone staying in the apartment who is likely to want to sail the boat. Could it be you? For further details contact us on 01494 863082.

You may be thinking that having off-loaded the Comet we drove home lightly loaded - we didn't!!!

Margaret Hylton (Comet 669, and now 687)

TALKING TO . . . RICHARD SMALLWOOD



Sailing solo in the Duckling

Alan Browning: I wanted to talk to you because you have come into the Comet scene after many years of sailing, including I believe a number of dinghy classes and with considerable success, and have now done well with your Comet too, most recently achieving 3rd place in the Nationals. Would you sketch out your sailing background, and tell me what other classes of dinghy you have sailed? (Once I realised just how extensive Richard's sailing background is, it was obvious that this article was going to be a long one! To make the answer to this first question easier to read I have inserted headings, and to spread the article out a bit, a commercial break)

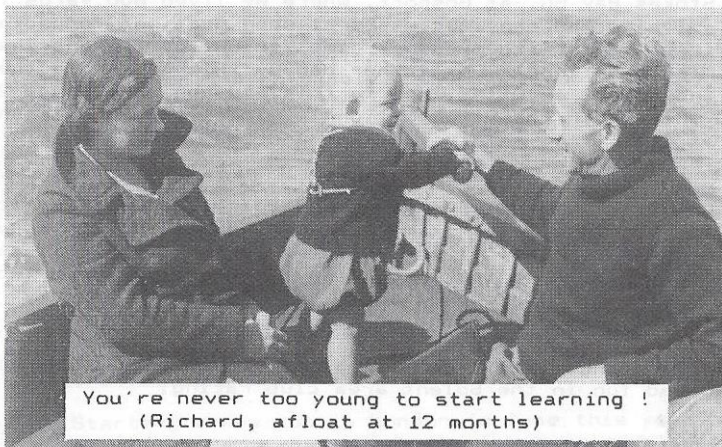
Richard: I have to admit to being a sail-aholic virtually all my life, sailing anything that floats, though not having much success with sailboards.

Early days

Most of my early sailing was from my grandparent's cottage in Anglesey by the Menai Strait and my first club was Port Dinorwic. I first set foot in a sailing dinghy in Anglesey in 1942 aged 12 months (father's National 14). There were no such things as children's lifejackets and I was in a small harness secured in with a bit of line. Those boats don't capsize, and I was tied in so that I couldn't fall over the side. When that boat was sold my water activities were confined to rowing a heavy clinker dinghy.

In 1954, the family acquired a 12 foot lugsail dinghy and in 1956

a 9 foot Fairey Marine Duckling, completed at home from a kit, a super little dinghy. It was in the lugsail dinghy that I first went "solo". My father wouldn't allow me to do that until I had learned to swim. With my thin build I had difficulty floating, but he insisted I learn; once I had learned to swim I was away. After that I would get up at 6.30 or 7 in the Summer, if the tide was right, carry the sail to the lugsail dinghy and set off for a couple of hours, just playing on the water. Then I would come back for breakfast with the rest of the family.



You're never too young to start learning !
(Richard, afloat at 12 months)

First racing

I was competitive from an early age and my younger brother and I were racing the Duckling when I was 16 or 17, in handicap races in the Menai Strait. At school I was a mathematician and later had an engineering training so I learned about vectors and, in general terms, the mathematics of what makes boats go. I could understand articles about the science of sailing and that helped me to become reasonably successful early on.

In the Royal Navy

I joined the Royal Navy in 1959 and at Dartmouth was classed as a competent sailor, very soon being allowed to sail the divisional whaler. I joined the Royal Naval Sailing Association (RNSA) and sailed the RNSA wooden 14 foot dinghies, 32 foot open cutters and 27 foot, two masted, whalers. In 1960, the family bought an Albacore which was my first modern planing dinghy experience.

In the 60s I sailed a 14 foot Bosun dinghy getting much team racing experience up to Inter-Service level. For a short while I owned an old Enterprise, and my father bought a much younger Albacore which I sailed a lot including the National Championships at Llandudno and Stokes Bay, Gosport.

The mid-60s were an interesting period for me, when I was into team racing. That's another type of sailing altogether. You're not going out to try to win, you're into wrecking other people, I mean slowing them down to let your team-mates through. I did some match racing too.

In 1968-70 I sailed Fireballs with some success, gaining open meeting prizes, and in 1969, coming 7th out of 100 entries at a windy Southern Area Championships in Christchurch Bay.

Abroad

The years 1971-73 saw me abroad sailing GP14s from Port Dickson, Malaysia, and winning a few pewter mugs.

Gosport, a lot of sailing

In 1973 I returned to the UK and bought a Mirror and a Laser which was an excellent combination for a keen fit dad in his 30s weighing 12.5 to 13 stone, with young children. These were sailed from Stokes Bay SC, at Gosport, where we lived 800 yards from the Club. I also had many successes at open meetings, especially in the Mirror, and, with my son, came 7th out of 140 entries at the 1976 Mirror Nationals. My father had by this time sold the Albacore and bought an Otter, and in this, my son and I came 2nd out of 30 entries in the Otter Nationals. There was more Bosun sailing at that time, mainly training and team racing and in 1977 I built another Mirror from a kit.

In the 70s I got my instructing and coaching qualifications and started giving a lot of time to teaching sailing, in Bosuns and later on in yachts too. In the Summer my wife wouldn't see much of me, I would be on the water 5 days a week, training two evenings, racing on two more evenings but I tried to keep my sailing down to only one day at the week ends.

In 1978 I changed the Laser for a half share in a twin-hull Dart 18 and had fun in the Solent area club racing.

Plymouth

For four years I lived in Plymouth (1980-84) but in that period I didn't race dinghies. I bought an Albacore and cruised that and the Mirror in the Plymouth area. I rigged the Albacore with aft sheeting because it made the boat so much more versatile for cruising, we could cruise with 4 or 5 people aboard. Centre sheeting gear always seems to get in the way! All my early boats had aft sheeting. At Plymouth I also took up racing in Naval yachts. I was a member of the Royal Plymouth Corinthian YC during this period.

Wiltshire

For the next six years we lived in Wiltshire, sailing with Shearwater SC, my first inland club! It was there I started racing the Albacore, and bought another Laser. I have to say that it was a bit of a shock sailing inland, learning how to handle the wind-shifts and so on. I eventually had club racing success with both of these boats, once I had sorted out the amazing wind shifts and different techniques needed inland. The local training boat was the Otter and in 1978 I borrowed one and again came second in the Otter Nationals.

In Rome

Another move saw us living in Rome from 1990-93, with virtually no sailing for 4 years. While I was away the club replaced their Otters with Comet Duos, a class of boat which I quite like. Those Duos are very well utilised, sailed 5 evenings a week in the Summer, by a different group each evening.

Alan: You bought your Comet about then didn't you, what attracted you to the Comet?

Richard: In 1993 I returned to Wiltshire and sought a suitable single-hander. I found the Solo too heavy, the Laser was boring, because I had owned two already and I decided that I didn't like the centre sheet lead. It's not so good for quick tacking now that I am less supple! We had a couple of Comets at the club and

I tried one. To me the Comet looked like a "kids' boat" and unlikely to carry my 13 stone easily. Surprisingly I found that I could get results in club racing so I talked to Andrew Simmons at the Southampton Boat Show and took delivery of Comet 565 in October 1993, in time to get some late season racing.

Alan: Then you tackled the Northern circuit last year

Richard: Yes, retiring from the Royal Navy in 1994 gave me time to sail quite a bit.

I started by combining a visit to my brother in Cheshire with the Chester Open. A good result there, after a close battle with Henry Jaggers, and a wish to visit my other conveniently placed relatives in the North, whom I had not seen much whilst in Rome, led me to tackle the rest of the Northern circuit. The close competition with Henry Jaggers continued with another tight battle at Chase. I managed to gain three wins and a fourth to win the Northern Aphelion Trophy. It's interesting that the first three names on the Northern Trophy are all southerners, Mark Wilkins, Errol Edwards and myself.

At the Nationals I came 11th, though I had rather hoped to get into single figures, and carried off the veteran's prize, thanks to the kindness of the Class Chairman.

Alan: And this season?

Richard: Starting a new job in London in June this year has restricted my sailing somewhat. However, I have had successes at Shearwater, enjoyed the Western circuit and the Nationals. In the Nationals I had a nice feeling because I managed to beat everybody in at least one race. But it was hard work, I was jolly tired after those races, stretching my long body outside the boat for the long beats.

I was disappointed that we didn't get very many entries on the Western circuit. At Merthyr, Chew and my own club Shearwater there were only about 6 boats. Merthyr is a nice sailing venue, a lovely lake as is Chew Valley and both deserve more support.

(continued on page 17)

TALKING TO . . . RICHARD SMALLWOOD

PART 2

Alan: Have you done much sailing just for fun?

:Richard: Certainly, when I lived by the sea I did a lot of sailing for fun, I liked going out in a boat and just exploring. Stokes Bay was wonderful for that as we lived half a mile from the club. For example, in the Mirror I'd take an outboard motor and sail 12 miles with the tide to New Town Creek. To do that sort of trip you must be "self-safe" and self supporting. You've got to have a number of options, I took oars as well as a motor so I had two other means of propulsion as well as my sails. I don't ever wish to be a burden on the rescue services. I have been towed in three times, when gear failures have happened in competitions, but 3 times in 40 years is not too bad. You've got to aim to be "self-safe", and I've tried to bring up my children the same way.

We undertook quite long cruises in Anglesey, far more cruising than racing. We cruised to both ends of the Menai Strait from my grandmother's cottage opposite Port Dinorwic. Our sailing was controlled by the tide, which was 2.5 knots at springs. If you go to the centre of the Menai Strait it runs at 9 knots at springs! In fun sailing I once sailed an Otter against a 7 knot tidal stream there by working my way up the edges, in the back eddies, with my mother as crew! That was 15 years ago.

I found the Mirror to be a nice little cruising boat, I don't rate the Comet as a cruising boat at all, it's a racing boat. You might find a rare Comet cruiser, but the Mirror is a cruising boat. You can pile on food and safety items, an outboard motor, oars and things and you can go off cruising and you'll be safe. All you can do with a Comet is take a praddle or go with an escort. The Comet can be a training boat, a good racing boat but it's not a cruising boat and never will be. My only experience of cruising a single-hander came when I sailed my Laser a couple of times across the Solent and back alone in settled weather, but that's really on the limit of safety.

Alan: Those experiences in tidal water must have helped when you race on the sea, for example in the Sheppey Nationals

Richard: Yes, Racing in the Menai Strait in strong tidal conditions really did teach me a lot. Also at Stokes Bay where I raced for 10 years. The strongest tidal streams were only 1.5 knots at Stokes Bay, but especially in light winds that can be very important. All the boats I've owned, bar the Dart and the Comet, were at some time taken up to Anglesey and raced in the Menai Strait.

Alan: You've done pretty well in Comet competition over the last couple of years. Have you any secrets you are willing to divulge?

Richard: In my experience, not many of the top Comet sailors are particularly shy about how they succeed. What I'd like to say is pick up tips from all sources, get as fit as possible, keep your

weight down below 12 stones, watch how the successful sailors sail their boats and talk to them about techniques. Also you should read the articles in Perihelion and try out the ideas proposed there and take advantage of any training sessions that are offered.

I was well taught by my father, including tacking on windshifts and how to deal with the tide. They had an odd saying in the old boats "sail on half centreboard on a foul tide". A foul tide is wind and tide together, and they used to sail their heavy clinker boats on half plate in the belief that the tide wouldn't push it so much. I don't think that would work in a modern dinghy, now we know that we've got to have full plate to go to windward effectively.

Early on this season I realised that my two-year-old sail had been flogged quite hard in 1994 and was not performing very well, so in June this year I bought a new sail. I am quite sure that without my new sail I would not have achieved the success that I did at the Nationals. I had noticed at Chew that in the strong winds the old sail was distorting, flapped a lot, and was beginning to curl up at the trailing edge. It didn't have the same drive as the new sail. The moral is that if you're going to be serious about sailing you've got to be prepared to buy a new sail from time to time.

People ask me what I was doing at the Nationals this year, because I was beating people I don't usually beat. I felt that I was sailing a bit freer, and I've got the weight to do that, going for speed and pushing the boat through the waves. I was aware that I was deliberately doing that, sitting a bit further back in the boat and trying to get speed through the waves. It was a technique I learnt in the Laser on the sea, but I've got the weight and length to do it (a bit over 12 stones and 6ft 2ins). A lighter person wouldn't be able to do the same, they've got to find a different technique.

Alan: What comments have you on the comparison between the Comet and other single-handers you sailed previously or still do sail?

Richard: The only other single-hander of which I have significant experience is the Laser (1973-78 and 1985-89). Both the Comet and the Laser have the convenience for a busy family man of being very "one-design", with minimum maintenance and few tuning options. For someone who was over 6 feet, weighed around 12.5 stone and was fit, the Laser was a very good boat for me in the 70s and 80s. It gave me a lot of fun, especially on the sea.

I tried the Solo, but found that you spend a lot of time on your knees. It has centre sheeting and it's got all the things I don't like.

The Comet, when sailed on inland water, has a good all-round performance and this combined with aft sheeting make it a very satisfying boat to sail. My own experience at Shearwater is that it's a very good handicap boat on lakes sailing against all sorts of classes. I have had excellent battles against Lasers, Enterprises and other two-handed boats.

I don't see the Comet as a particularly successful boat on the sea. Many people have said that it doesn't seem to do well on handicap in sea conditions, I put that down partly to the fact that it has an unbattened sail. A battened sail keeps its shape better when you're sailing in a chop and gives you more drive through the waves.

I suggest the Comet is more difficult to sail downwind than the Laser in very strong winds, as we all found at the Nationals this year. I think that's just because it's not quite as much flat area at the stern, it's a bit lighter too. What was interesting at Sheppey was that when most people were having a lot of trouble, the lad sailing the Mino with us was actually handling his boat without too much difficulty at all; he sailed past us as if he was out for a Sunday afternoon sail! He was light and when gusts hit him he accelerated very quickly, whereas if a gust hits a heavier person in a full-rigged boat, the nose dips and it starts becoming unstable.

After the last race at Sheppey I could not get downwind the mile back to the clubhouse. I finished up releasing the mainsheet, letting the sail go round in front of the boat, but I found that was a bit slow and got bored with it, and it wasn't doing my nice new sail much good. Eventually I tried again with the sail pulled in but capsized a couple of times before I got back.

Alan: Comet sailors come in all shapes, sizes, weights, sexes and ages. How well do you think the Comet suits older sailors?

Richard: You have only to look around the fleet to realise that many older sailors find the Comet meets their requirement very well indeed. We have at Shearwater a mixture of sailors from teenagers to pensioners and the experience of the older sailors offsets the fitness and suppleness of the younger ones very well.

Alan: What do you think of the way the Comet Class Association runs things, compared with your experiences with other class associations?

Richard: Although I have been a Class Captain, a Sailing Secretary and Commodore of Shearwater SC, I have not served in a Class Association capacity. The Comet Class Association is at least as good as any others I have belonged to and better in many respects than most. This is possibly due to its smaller size and southerly concentration and I find the class exceptionally friendly.

I've found the Aphelion competition well organised and I appreciate the chance to sail the Nationals on the sea in alternate years. The turnout is clearly smaller when they are on the sea, but almost all the top people attend. It's a pity there aren't more sea open meetings.

Alan: Have you any suggestions for things the Comet Class Association is not doing but could do?

Richard: Other Class Associations do organise training days, when some of the top sailors give up some time to put over to others the basics of setting up the rig, techniques on the water and other tips. Some of this can be done through clubs, but a couple of Comet Class sessions in carefully chosen locations with reasonably true winds could be very handy. Being new to the Comet Association, I don't know how much of this sort of thing may have been tried in the past.

For a training session I think open water is preferable. To do good training exercises you need a true wind, with everybody in the same conditions. Flukey winds, like we get at Shearwater, are not good for serious training sessions. Of the clubs I've been to recently, Cotswold is as good as any. The land is level, there are a few trees but essentially the wind comes across the water quite well. Chasewater would also be suitable.

(Note: Richard went on to talk at some length on the detail of training sessions. This is omitted here, but will be passed to the Committee)

Prizes

We try hard at the Nationals to encourage people to enter, giving a middle-of-the-fleet prize, and a prize for trying hard and so on. We have a veteran's trophy, but what about a "super veteran's" trophy? That could be over 60, there are quite a lot of over 60s sailing Comets, and you will note that whilst I encourage that, I personally would not be eligible for a few years yet. A super veteran's prize could also perhaps be offered at open meetings with a large entry.

I wonder too whether there's scope for new prizes aimed at getting more people on the water at open meetings. At Shearwater we have novices races in which only people who have never won a club trophy are allowed to join in. For Comet opens we could have a prize for people who've not been in the top three in an open meeting. For that of course we would have to keep good records of past results.

Juniors

We don't get a lot of juniors sailing Comets. A few juniors are at the front of the fleet anyway, but there's not much incentive for those that are not. Perhaps the junior's prize could be restricted to those who qualify as "novices" or don't get one of the prizes at that open meeting.

Ladies

I would dearly love to see more ladies sailing Comets. Very serious female competitors will sail Europes or Lasers, but I think the Comet is a super racing boat for the ladies.

Alan: What of the future of Comet sailing at Shearwater?

Richard: The number of Comets at Shearwater is growing; it's between 10 and 15 at the moment, but getting 4 or 5 on the water on a Sunday is pretty good. At the club we have class prizes within the handicap racing if enough turn out. It's really only the Comets that get class prizes. I would say the class is very healthy at my club.

Future plans

I'm still going to sail my Comet regularly but I have a second love now, a Sigma 33 yacht, an expensive bit of luxury shared between 3 members of my family. Since the 70s, in addition to dinghy racing I've had a parallel interest in yacht cruising and racing. You'll notice that I've stuck with the one-design principle; the Sigma 33 is one of the best one-design yachts with 30 out in the series every Sunday. Nevertheless I hope to race it every other Sunday. But I expect to turn out next year in the Comet, and am looking forward to the Nationals at Glossop and, closer to home, the Tidsals at Mudeford.

Alan: Thank you Richard, your sailing life has been much longer and far more varied than mine, though this is not surprising, for I did not even begin to sail until 4 years older than your present age. I wish you luck for the future.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ACCOUNTS

COMET CLASS ASSOCIATION

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

PERIOD FROM 25th MAY 1994 to 22nd JULY 1995

RECEIPTS	NOTES	93/94	94/95
MEMBERSHIP FEES	1	1985.75	2708.00
COMET DINGHIES BUILDER'S FEES	2	416.00	244.00
NAT. CHAMP. ENTRY FEES	3	130.00	362.00
COMMISSION ON INSURANCE	4	1006.00	1085.00
BUILDING SOCIETY INTEREST	5	75.86	86.95
SALE OF INSERTS FOR TROPHIES ETC	6	16.25	39.55
DONATION RE FISHERS GREEN OPEN	7	-	6.50
		3629.86	4532.00

PAYMENTS		
PRIZES AND ENGRAVING	8	325.00
PERIHELION AND EDITOR'S COSTS	9	1841.27
EXHIBITION CHARGES	10	482.58
TV AND VIDEO INSURANCE	11	35.99
PURCHASE OF TV	12	229.00
RYA AFFILIATION FEE	13	32.00
ADVERTISING	14	383.06
SHEPPEY/DRAYCOTE EXPENSES	15	25.00
EXPENSES	16	40.00
COMET STATIONERY & CAR STICKERS	17	190.27
CAPCORDER AND VHS TAPES	18	240.95
ADHESIVE LABELS	19	53.79
PERSONAL ORGANISER	20	3.75
INLAND NATIONALS		-
		3842.66

TOTAL RECEIPTS	£	4532.00	BALANCE IN B/SOC (93/94)	£	3117.87
TOTAL PAYMENTS		4591.98	BALANCE IN B/SOC (94/95)		2945.73
DEFICIT		159.98			172.14
PETTY CASH (94)		.04	PETTY CASH (95)		12.20
		159.94			159.94

DEREK COLEMAN
HON. TREASURER

BARRIE HYLTON
HON. AUDITOR

Notes

- Membership: 248 in 93/94, 274 in 94/95
- Membership (new boats): 52 in 93/94, 28 in 94/95
- Fees for Nat Champ: £130 in 93/94, £362 in 94/95
- Insurance commission on Comet members
- Building Society interest charges, slight improvement
- Sale of inserts for trophies
- Donation from Fishers Green re open meeting in 1994
- Prizes (National and area) including engraving
- Perihelion: 5 issues 93/94, 5 issues 94/95
(Editor's note: my costs are £10 to £15 per issue, about 3% of the total cost of Perihelion)
- Fees for exhibiting at Alexandra palace and Birmingham shows
- Very expensive for insurance
- At least no expense this year
- No change
- No change
- This depends on our representation
- Not so heavy, but we have to communicate to you and pay the bills
- We are still using last year's purchase of Comet stationery
- Margaret has not got an 'exclusive' yet
- Cost increases if not in black and white
- It was felt that we would have to organise our secretary, so a personal organiser was purchased. Seriously though, its purchase assisted the secretary's work

FLUID FLOW PART 4: WAVE DRAG AND PLANING

This is the last of my little efforts on fluid flow, probably they haven't helped your boat speed any but maybe you have found them of some interest.

Waves

What is a wave? It is a disturbance that moves along in the water but the water itself does not move as a whole, but each little bit moves only a little way from a mid position. The water does not move along but energy does, as the east coast found in 1953 when so much damage was done. Waves that concern us arise from the wind or from moving boats.

There are three types of wave:

Tidal waves which are waves of long length compared with the water depth. Those on the sea are caused by gravitational attraction of the moon and sun.

Gravity waves which are waves of short length compared with the water depth, but not too short.

Ripples which are very short waves and are controlled by the surface tension of the water.

The most important for us are gravity waves, for they set a limit to the speed we can go ("hull speed") unless we can plane. Ripples are so small that they can hardly contribute to wave drag, but are useful to show gusts and indicate boat speed in very light wind.

Length, height and speed of waves

All waves have three properties, their length (crest to crest), their height (crest above trough) and the speed they move. Generally, the height of a wave does not affect its speed, unless the depth changes.

Most of the time, waves have independent lives and two waves can go right through one another and come out the other side unscathed. Usually the height of a wave is quite small compared with the wave length, so the slope of the surface is small. Sometimes this is not true, for example on a surfing beach waves can build up very steep fronts as they come in (which is what the surfers want of course).

Tidal waves

I will not dwell very long on tidal waves. They are very long waves, usually much longer than a dinghy because, except near the shore, the depth of the water is likely to be more than a couple of feet. In our normal sailing the waves we see most of the time are the shorter, gravity waves, so I think we can forget all about tidal waves. That is unless you sail on the river Severn or Parrett which occasionally get "bore" waves coming upstream. The locals will tell you all about those.

If you want to play with small tidal waves though, try half-

filling a wallpaper water tray, and carry it up some stairs! You might sometimes make tidal waves in your bath too.

Gravity waves

Gravity waves are the most important ones for us and they move at a speed proportional to the square root of the wave length. At sea we might meet waves of varying length, generated by the wind and large ships, and the long ones will be moving faster. Examples of the wave speeds are:

Wave length	Wave speed		
2 feet	2.9 knots	=	3.2 ft/sec
6	3.3	=	5.5
10	4.2	=	7.2
12 (Comet length)	4.6	=	7.8
14	5.0	=	8.5

These are the speeds the waves would go if left to themselves, carrying their energy with them and only dying away gradually. If you could find a Comet-sized wave you could stay in it and go along at nearly 5 knots without any wave drag. The trouble is that you have to push a great mass of water if you try to go any faster or slower. Usually it is your boat that is making the wave, and the length of the wave you make is determined by your speed, as indicated above. At slow speeds you will get several waves visible along your hull but above about 5 knots you only get the front part of a wave, and quite a big one too, you get no help from the aft crest because it will be aft of your transom. You have to push along the crest in front of you, you hit the "wave barrier".

The waves your boat generates are quite complicated in shape. But I hope the previous paragraph gives some idea of what is happening. I recommend that you watch wave patterns, they can be quite interesting (and hopefully you will be so distracted that you will capsize and I can sail past you. I did just that a few weeks ago!)

Ripples move at a speed inversely proportional to the wave length (ie proportional to $1/(\text{wave length})$). The wave speeds are:

Wave length (mm)	Wave speed (cm/sec)
2	49
6	30
10	25
14	24
18	23

(longer waves than that will be gravity waves)

Ripples are small, note the units in the table, millimetres. Their length will be no longer than the length of the end joint of your little finger. Being small they will have little energy and will soon die away due to viscosity. Watch out for ripples when you're bored in a light air day, they will often tell you whether you are moving forward (or sideways or backward!). Also, when a gust comes, we know that the water darkens with ripples

that persist as long as the wind does, taking their energy from the wind.

I'm afraid that, unlike vortices and wakes, with waves the scale of things does matter, you can easily demonstrate ripples in a teacup, but not tidal or gravity waves. You need containers at least the size of wallpaper trays and baths.

Planing

The principles of planing are much easier to understand than wave drag. It's a bit interesting though because at first sight Bernoulli's theorem would lead you to conclude that at the middle of your hull, where the water flows past the fastest, the pressure will be least, sucking you down, the opposite of planing! This is quite true too, go into a swimming pool and play with a large ball, if you throw it slowly it will clearly be sucked down, but throwing it faster, it will bounce. The designers of flying boats had this trouble too, solving it by building a "step" half way along the hull, which caused separation and increased the pressure.

It appears that small dinghies do not need steps, and will plane readily if they go fast enough, like the ball. Compared with the water around them, both the ball and the Comet dinghy are light in weight and above the planing speed the force required to push the water out of the way in the normal floating position is more than the weight of the boat and its occupant. The boat rises, pushes less water out of the way and the weight matches the reduced force. This happens more readily if the bottom is nearly flat, as it is at the stern half of the Comet.

Concluding remarks

I will stop writing articles about fluid flow now, to make way for contributions from that list of 200 members.

What I have been trying to do is to encourage you to observe what fluids actually do, rather than just taking other people's words for it. For example, not knowing a great deal about waves, I watched a lot of waves before I dared write about them. Watch waves at the seaside and at the swimming pool, how long are they, how fast do they move? Make ripples and gravity waves with your arm. See how quickly ripples die away, and, particularly on the sea, gravity waves don't.

Goodbye,

Alan Browning (Comet 361)

NOTICE BOARD

FOR SALE

Comet 316. Sky blue hull, extensive racing kit, launching trolley, grab rails, anchor with storage box and cover. Very good condition. £950 ono

Val Bell 01227 374628 (Herne Bay, Kent).

Comet 558. Peacock blue hull, white deck. Bramber combi-trailer, race pack, keelband, storage bin, praddle, sail windows in two very good sails, grab rails, telescopic tiller extension, cover. £1350

Rodney Evans 01582 715196 (Harpenden, Essex)

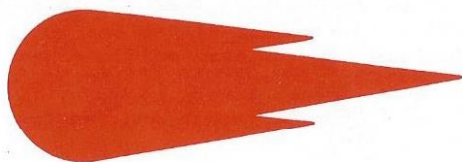
This list contains only items which have been requested for inclusion in this issue of Perihelion. Normally boat advertisements will only appear in one issue, unless a specific request is made for a repeat, ie we assume that 3 months is long enough for you to sell your boat.

There may be other second-hand Comets for sale, the owners of which may be contacted through Dinghy Leisure (01494 863082), Comet Dinghies (01769 574358) or Yachts and Yachting (fortnightly publication from newsagents).



Ad by his store-room,
with cat, dog and Barrie

(see page 10)



Comet Class Association

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association