



NEWSLETTER NUMBER 40

AUTUMN 1996

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Front cover:

Margaret and Barrie Hylton with the vase commemorating their acceptance as Honorary Association members.

(Photo: John Windibank)

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Two happy sunny days at Mudeford reminded me once again of the reason I sail. Hot weather with gentle breezes blowing over the shallow water with probably thousands of birds, mostly waders, coexisting happily with hundreds of sailors. Using his local knowledge and sailing superbly, John Challener emerged as our new Association Champion. The Comet Class happily attracts friendly people and John continues this long tradition. Guy Wilkins was our last Association tidal Champion and was again the man to beat, finishing 3rd behind Mark Wilkins who lost by a whisker. Heather Back sailing to her full potential finished 4th and was the Lady Champion. We now have a remarkably high standard of lady helms in the class with eight entering the championship. Richard Smallwood, sailing his first event of the season, finished 6th and lifted the Veterans prize with Brad Bungad taking the Junior prize. There was marvellous support once again from Chipstead sailors with 8 entries at the championship and were by far the highest club entry.

Thank you Glyn and Mudeford SC for a most friendly and well run event.

Next years National Championship will see us return to Hampton Pier SC, they have always made us very welcome and we were pleased to accept their invitation.

You will see that the article on the Mino by Tony Thomas (in the Summer Perihelion) has sparked off plenty of interest, much to Alan's delight as a bit of controversy makes lots of copy for Perihelion. As John Finch explains in his article the Mino rig for the Comet is extending the useful range of the hull enabling more people to sail it younger, lighter and older. The concept is well considered and increases the sales potential for the builder. However as Chairman of the Comet Class Association I must point out the facts as they stand, to have the well informed debate that has been requested.

The Comet Dinghy is a Strict One-Design Class, this means that the hull, spars, foils and sail are manufactured to within very small tolerances. The purpose of One-Design dinghies is to render each boat as near the same performance as possible to enable the racing in the Class to be a true test of skill (Measurement Rule 1.a). Boats do not become outdated and second hand values are maintained. Andrew Simmons conceived, designed and builds the Comet to be simple and uncluttered and has even vetoed the use of a simple mast head bracket in order to keep the dinghy uncomplicated.

The Rules of measurement were largely drawn up by Andrew and he has a veto on any changes that the Class propose, and at present a Mino Rig is not a legal rig for a Comet Dinghy (Measurement Rule 23.a, f and 25).

The result of all this is that in any event where a Comet is sailed and you accept the measurement rules, any protest about the measurements of a Mino Rig would be upheld (Rule 10 c.) AT PRESENT A MINO RIGGED BOAT IS NOT A COMET DINGHY.

So what can the class do for the Mino? It must be in our interest to encourage Comet Sailing and a Mino is a Comet with a small rig and we should encourage Mino riggers to join in where they can and want to. If the Mino becomes a class with their own PY then it will be possible for them to share our venues and other activities with their own starts at opens and Nationals. But until that happens we can welcome them to events but it must be clearly explained that although they can race with us they will not be eligible to win events. We have had Minos sail with us at Sheppy and Glossop and they have been placed and given entry prizes, but they cannot be counted for official results.

There is of course nothing stopping a class member proposing a rule change, but any change that allowed differing rigs for a Comet would invalidate the one-design concept.

In the hands of an expert, the Mino rig would become increasingly competitive for lightweight helms above a force 4 and for them, two rigs would become a necessity and perhaps to even things up we should allow an even larger rig for heavyweights in light airs.

Its up to the Class but I personally won't be proposing a change in the rules.

To end my report on a happy note, we had a very good turn out at Aylesbury when we presented an engraved Dartington Glass vase to Margaret and Barrie to commemorate their acceptance as honorary members of the Class and we were pleased to see them at Mudeford, Barrie sailing and Margaret helping out and videoing.

Finally almost every event this year has seen an improved attendance with Chipstead improving by 10 boats, we have had over 30 at both national events and there are a lot of Comet sailors out there enjoying themselves.

John Windibank, Chairman.

FIRST SIX AT THE OPEN MEETINGS

WESTERN AREA

Cotswold

- 1 657 M Wilkins
- 2 650 P Hossell
- 3 555 J Windibank
- 4 625 A Best
- 5 25 R Priesley
- 6 506 S Hood

EASTERN AREA

Crawley

- 1 642 J Sutton
- 2 657 M Wilkins
- 3 573 A Reeve
- 4 314 H Dodd
- 5 160 B Welham
- 6 353 G Wilkins

SOUTHERN AREA

ICI Slough

- 1 657 M Wilkins
- 2 150 R Hamilton
- 3 549 M Vinson
- 4 573 A Reeve
- 5 314 H Dodd
- 6 303 D Coleman

Frensham Pond

- 1 573 A Reeve
- 2 159 J Challener
- 3 642 J Sutton
- 4 657 M Wilkins
- 5 150 R Hamilton
- 6 555 J Windibank

Aylesbury

- 1 555 J Windibank
- 2 370 R Kerry
- 3 160 B Welham
- 4 500 H Jagers
- 5 513 D Forsdike
- 6 434 J Johnson

Seafarers

- 1 353 G Wilkins
- 2 50 S Cook
- 3 657 M Wilkins
- 4 555 J Windibank
- 5 303 D Coleman
- 6 376 A Luxford

NORTHERN AREA

Chester

- 1 650 P Hossell
- 2 331 S Heyes
- 3 411 W Ablett
- 4 506 M Smith
- 5 643 K Appleby
- 6 633 J Edwards

Chase

- 1 331 S Heyes
- 2 619 J Orchard
- 3 670 P Hayes
- 4 650 P Hossell
- 5 644 N Ford
- 6 437 B Hardy

Combs

- 1 500 H Jagers
- 2 658 R Stevenson
- 3 633 J Edwards
- 4 650 P Hossell
- 5 331 S Heyes
- 6

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

● FORTHCOMING EVENTS

OCT - DEC 1996

Saturday 28th September	Pingewood Training day		
Sunday 29th September	Pingewood open		
		John Vail	01734 812174
Saturday 5th October	Redesmere open		
		Steve Heyes	01625 583290
Sunday 13th October	Kingsmead open		
		Len Dean	01344 772217

(Editor's note: In the previous issue of Perihelion, the date of the training day at Pingewood was incorrect, it will be on the Saturday before the open meeting.

Date for your diary:

Comet Nationals 1997

HAMPTON PIER YACHT CLUB

AUGUST 29TH, 30TH, 31ST 1997

Cost £15 per boat

Watch Perihelion for further details of the Nationals and AGM.

● PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

The judging for the photographic competition will be done at the Pingewood open meeting on 29th September. The deadline for entries is officially 23rd September, but Henry Jaggars tells me that any photos received by Pingewood will not be too late. So put your photos in the post **NOW**, or take them with you to Pingewood.

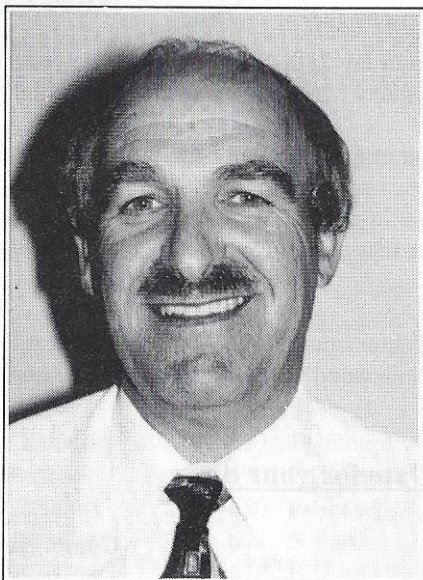
Details of the competition rules are on page 11 of Perihelion 38.

TALKING TO ... JOHN WINDIBANK

Alan Browning: My usual first question, would you please sketch out your sailing background, where did you first see a Comet and what attracted you to the boat?

John Windibank: My sailing career has been varied. I first tried sailing on holiday at Brighton in an Enterprise and while afloat, it bucketed down with rain. I remember the noise on the beach and how the racket died away as we sailed out between the piers, until all you could hear was the wind and the water past the bow. Not just hooked, I swallowed it. The thing about sailing Alan is that you're out there away from all the noise and bustle. It's just you and the wind and it's brilliant.

(**Alan:** Sorry to butt in John, but I can't help feeling that there must be some people like me, retired several years, living in a quiet area, who's idea of noise and bustle is 43 boats at a handicap race start line! Just me and the wind - ah bliss!). **John:** Racing, Alan, adds another dimension, it stretches your boat handling skills, but it's still you using the wind.



My early sailing was crewing for a variety of nut cases, which saw me sail Fireflies at The Welsh Harp, Day Boats at Gravesend, Wineglasses at Sheppey and Mirrors at Thamesmead.

My first boat was a Mirror Dinghy, which I inherited with a professionally painted face on the bow, which so impressed the class that they included a photograph in their year book that year and I was Mirror fleet captain at both Thamesmead and Gravesend.

The first time I saw a Comet was at the 1986 London Boat Show. I was sailing a Topper in those days and outgrowing it fast. I was looking for a slightly roomier one-design single-hander. The dinghies as usual at Olympia were tucked away in

a corner and walking down the aisle between the stands there it was, this eye-catching dinghy with everything in the right places.

I can't remember who I spoke to at the stand but they were extolling the build and handling qualities of the Comet and they must have thought they were talking to "Noddy" because I kept agreeing with everything and shaking my head.

I did not buy the boat that year although Jackie Hudson did, and as we both sailed at Thamesmead in those days, I was able to see how well she handled (the boat, that is!). Eventually I bought Comet 195 after trying one at Bewl Valley. The dinghy felt very Laserish up wind and was comfortable and responsive, just right in fact. After a lot of thought I chose the name Emma, as the original was the mistress of a sailor and this mistress has dumped me a few times if I push her too hard, Capsize Trophy winner on no less than two occasions.

I thought then that the Comet was a nice boat, had a good 'feel', and small enough to be easily manoeuvrable off the water. I feel the same way now, it's an excellent dinghy, a nice roomy cockpit, responsive, everything I want from a dinghy. I wasn't looking for a cruising boat, the Comet is not ideal as a cruising boat, I wanted to do an open circuit - I like racing and wanted a boat that I enjoyed whilst racing.

I've had two main clubs most of my life, Gravesend and Thamesmead, but I did sail at Sheppey for a while. My current club is Chipstead, I joined there because of their large fleet of Comets.

Alan: You deserve our thanks for your time and effort given to the Committee over the years, 6 years I believe, and if I may say so, the Association has developed considerably and is going pretty smoothly now. Are there any ways in which you would like to see it develop further?

John: It's been rather shaken up this year, losing Dinghy Leisure, so what we've got to do from now on is to develop our working relationship with Andrew Simmons. I wish him all success for I believe any successful class needs a successful builder.

What will happen in the future depends on how quickly the class grows. If it spreads out over the whole country I envisage regional committees, but at the rate it's growing at the moment that's a long way in the future. In the meantime, if we get a need in a particular area for 2 or 3 events, we can have a sub-committee dealing with it. Basically, we've got to respond to the members, for all of us, sailing is just a hobby, so we're trying to put on events that people want, currently open meetings and championships. We have had a request for training programmes and if there is a good response this year for the Pingewood training day, we will think of putting on

more of those next year. Perhaps one of the Committee could be the 'training manager' to arrange training days.

Alan: Have you any thoughts on ways the Committee can help Comet sailors more, in particular the non-racing owners.

John: It depends really on what they want out of sailing. For the non-racing person, obviously they can come and join in the atmosphere in all our open meetings, championships and exhibitions and talk boats. I am very keen to keep the exhibitions going because a lot of our non-racing people participate in those. Of course, the main thing that we do for our non-racing members is Perihelion, that's you isn't it Alan. They like to keep up with what's going on even though they're not racing. The other thing we could do is to produce more of those little booklets. If we don't we're rather wasting the opportunity of Keith Lamdin's articles. That will not only help the non-racing sailors, but all of us. I am hoping to get on with those soon and Henry Jagers has agreed to help me. I remember the Mirror class had a magazine called "Mirrormania" where the class secretary reprinted all the good articles they'd had, it was very popular. Maybe we should do the same. There are all sorts of things you can do, but it's limited by the amount of time everybody's got.

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

John: Getting the booklets out is I think the only thing we're not doing. Some might feel that we ought to do more with sponsorship and things like that, but I don't see why we need sponsors unless it is to get bigger prizes. I don't think people go to open meetings for big prizes and having big prizes would only make a marginal difference. If there is something we need money for then we'd think about sponsorship. If we were an international class we would probably need sponsorship to pay for attendance at events abroad, but we're not in that league yet. I'm glad to see that the class is still growing and I think that the clubs that have adopted Comets are pretty pleased with them.

Alan: You have been Chairman now for 4 years. For those who know nothing of the Committee work, would you describe briefly what the Chairman's position involves.

John: As Chairman, I see my job as helping the class achieve its objectives and give some order to meetings. I make sure that there is somebody responsible for each of the areas of activity that we are undertaking and just keep an eye on things. The Committee are all competent people and I am quite happy to leave them to get on with it. Sometimes they may need some help, might ring up and say "what about this - -" and we have a discussion to sort things out. I work that way with all the Committee and if I think we need a meeting I call one. We have two main meetings,

one at Pingewood in September or October and one in January to organise the exhibitions. We had an extra one this year because of the reorganisation of the Committee after the AGM. We correspond a lot, talk on the telephone a lot. I think it's running very smoothly at the moment.

The Class Chairman must of course represent the class when necessary, perhaps at RYA Class Forum meetings, or responding to questionnaires, but these are minor activities.

What I try to do is to achieve the targets we set ourselves, and I find that if you put people's backs up you don't do that. So it's better to be friendly about it, not be aggressive, it's just the way I am. I like to be effective, I think that's the right word. Now and again you have to do things that are a bit unpleasant, have to be a bit stern with people, but even then I don't do it in a way to put people down because that will just create antagonism, which I don't want. We're supposed to be enjoying it!

I do also act as a focus for the open meeting results, working out the Aphelion and Orbital positions and passing the information to Perihelion, but that is not necessarily a job for the Chairman, but one for someone who has suitable computer facilities available.

Alan: What would you say is the most difficult part of the job of Chairman?

John: Finding the time to do it properly!

Alan: What has given you most satisfaction in the Association, since you have been Chairman?

John: The friendliness of the class. When outsiders say "isn't it a friendly class" I am pleased about that. The other thing that gives me great satisfaction is that people are enjoying their sailing, which is what we set out to do. Hopefully it will stay that way.

Alan: Have you any grumbles about the Committee (heaven forbid!)?

John: Not really no. Unless you count the fact that Fiona may be giving up the trophies job she does so well. With a bit of luck she may decide to carry on.

Alan: Have you been lumbered with any peculiar jobs as Chairman?

John: I've never felt lumbered. I haven't yet been stuck with something I haven't wanted to do. Lucky aren't I!

Alan: One thing I think the CCA must consider in the future is the Comet Mino. Officially it's not a Comet because the sail regulations are not met (unless it can be considered to be a reefed Comet). How do you think the Mino fits in with the Association?

John: I think the Mino is an attractive boat for youngsters who will later take on the full rigged Comet and I am quite happy for Minos to join in our Comet events. Ideally they ought to have their own races or the results separated out for their own prizes. If nobody objects at the time, their results could count with the rest but of course if an objection is made they are out of class. There's nothing I can do about that unless we change the rules. If the number of Minos grows a lot, they could have their own committee member and be a sub-section of the Comet Association and eventually a separate association if they wanted that. It really depends on how many Minos there are.

However, the one-design concept is that the boats are all the same, that's why I bought a Comet, but if you start introducing different rigs, it's not one-design any more, more like a development class. It's adding a complication to a boat that Andrew wanted to be simple and straightforward.

Another point is that if both rigs are allowed, all of the really competitive sailors will have to have both rigs, so that in a blow they can set the Mino sail better than they could a reefed full rig. It's like spinnakers in a class, if spinnakers are allowed, all competitive sailors must have them. But of course if our members want to allow both rigs they may do so. Personally I wouldn't be in favour of it but I do want to encourage Minos to join in because I see the future of the Mino being with the Comets. Andrew will of course make his boats how he likes with a view to selling them, but we are running a class association for people who sail them, and it is up to us to decide what we want to allow for our members.

Alan: It seems to me that in a blow only about a dozen Comet sailors in the country can control the boat well. Do you think that the Comet is over-canvassed?

John: All single-handers are a handful in a blow and all of them will capsize if the wind is strong enough. When Andrew designed the Comet, he chose the rig to give a lively boat, it was a selling point to appeal to racers. The reefability was also a selling point. I don't think it is over-canvassed, the boat handles pretty well most of the time, even in light airs, and there are a lot of light airs about and a smaller rig would not be so good when a tide is running.

Alan: You've done pretty well in Comet competition over the years. Have you any tips for a novice like me? Just the most important things please, particularly on boat handling.

John: It took me a long time to learn to sail the Comet. In my early sailing days, I was so far behind I was in a different race. Absolutely everyone starts off at the back of the fleet when they start sailing. When I started I was hopeless and gradually became better and better as I sailed more. Improvement in sailing demands improvement on a lot of little things. After a while you might win a club race, but then in an open meeting come last again.

In the early days I capsized an enormous amount. I used to let the boom out too far on the runs. If you let it out in front of the mast it really rolls, you mustn't do that. I remember being terrified in strong wind runs, thinking that I was going to go in any second. And in the gusts I wasn't sheeting in enough, as the gust hits you on a run you want to sheet in and bear away. This gets the centre of effort a lot further back and it's much more stable, it doesn't roll. Bearing away also depowers the sail as well because it turns the back of the sail towards the gust. Bearing away too much could lead to a gybe, but you'll find that in a big gust, bear away and that will keep you up. I also had to learn to get the plate up on the gybes. Almost right up, especially in a blow. Then it will skid sideways and the boom won't dig in when it comes across. Get your weight across early, before the boom has actually swung round. Once you're across you can counterbalance it. You must be confident with it, and go for it. Keeping the boat flat is half the battle with the gybe. If you're frightened of it it will tip you in.

The mast being so near the nose, it is possible, in a strong blow, for the nose to dig in on the runs, especially on the sea. I've submarined a couple of times but if you sit at the back the nose comes up nicely.

Alan: Some people seem to sit on the bottom of the cockpit sometimes.

John: I kneel down sometimes, especially on a dead run when I want to be in the middle of the boat somewhere. To make that comfortable I wear knee pads. I find that if I sit down I can't react quickly enough but in very light airs I do sit on the bottom, but never when I am racing.

Alan: How about some tips on racing the Comet, things you find most important?

John: Again, it's a lot of little things that separate the good helms from the less good. Once the boat's going and the sail is set correctly, all Comets will go at the same speed and the only way you are going to pick up places is by handling or manoeuvring better than others do. And obviously being aware of windshifts and

tactics. You've got to get vary familiar with the boat and practise tacking, gybing, manoeuvring and so on, because you will drop back a little from everything you do badly. Learning to slow down deliberately is important too because to be in the right position, especially at a mark or on the start line, you quite often have to slow down.

Before you go on the water, make sure that your hull is clean. This includes not only dirt and grease but also trailing ropes and weed round the rudder! They all slow the boat down. And get a good watch for timing the start, that's absolutely vital. Get on the water early and do the first beat, you'll be able to check that there is wind on both sides of the beat and which is the favoured side.

Getting a good start is probably about three-quarters of the battle. You've got to practise your starts, but there's nothing like doing races. You can practise on your own all you like but it's only when you get to the race, with lots of boats milling about, that you learn how to start. Don't get too far from the start line in the last 5 minutes, it's absolutely vital to be on the line at the gun because if you're not you will be in all sorts of dirty air and immediately be 4 or 5 boatlengths behind. Get a good idea of where on the line you want to start, checking the bias of the line to show the preferred end. You may have to compromise and be away from the preferred end to be sure of being on the line at the gun. I've set my watch to give me a bleep 5 seconds before the start, and if I hear that I sheet in as hard as I can to accelerate towards the line, to hit the line flat out. That's the theory anyway, but you can't always do it because of other boats around.

Try not to commit yourself too early, you can be waiting near the line with sail flapping and another boat might come in under your lee so that you won't be able to bear off to accelerate. If that happens, move away and find another position. The worst you can do is to get into a bunch of boats that are getting in each other's way, I've seen so many good helms get snagged up that way, but usually only one of the bunch gets a good start.

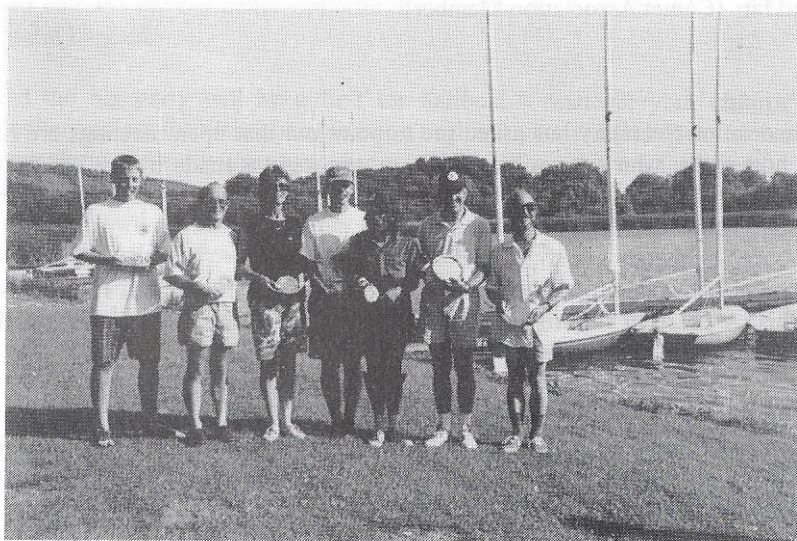
When beating to the windward mark it is usually best to keep to the middle of the course rather than going out to the laylines. This way you can take advantage of the shifts, most places are lost by people being on the wrong tack. Play the shifts and concentrate as much as you can, basically on the wind over the sail. Keep the boat going, that's where the concentration comes in. Don't let it stall and don't pinch too much. Try to keep a good sail shape, if you bend the mast and tighten the sheet you're making the sail so flat you're taking all the power out of it. You might point a millimetre higher but you'll lose a lot more on boatspeed. Of course, if it's a horrendous wind you bend the mast and flatten everything then because there's so much power there and you can't hold the boat upright. But sheet in without bending the mast too much in normal winds.

At a mark, if you take it wide you can lose a couple of boatlengths straight away. Try not to get on the outside of a raft of boats, you'll do better to slow down and be on the inside if you can, and wait for them to clear. It's nearly always a disaster to sail round the outside, except when it's totally jammed up.

Alan: Well, thanks very much for coming John, giving us the low-down on the Committee, and I hope that the sailing tips you've given me will help other members too. Maybe they all don't match what we will see in the sailing booklets, but as their author, Keith Lamdin, writes on page 13 of Perihelion 9: "Nothing is fixed so experiment to suit yourself".

Editor's note:

I have now finished my planned set of "Talking to . . ." articles, which have included a variety of kinds of person, a young sailor doing well (Jake Sutton), an older person very loyal to the class for many years (Henry Jaggars), someone coming into Comets after many years with other types (Richard Smallwood), unique people (the Thompson family with 4 Comets), someone involved with the Comet boat (Andrew Simmons) and a Committee member (John Windibank). The series seems to have been well received and, unless I receive any other interesting suggestions, I propose to use those categories of people again.



Prizewinners at the recent Aylesbury open meeting, winner: **John Windibank**

● EQUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL

On page 19 of Perihelion 39 it was stated that over the last few years the attendances at open meetings had fallen.

This I don't find too strange because at each open the same six or so will win. For the rest of us - nothing. We will never win or get a place.

In most other sports you would not expect the not-so-good to take on the best there is. If you would like to have a good turnout at opens then give the tail-enders a chance, we don't have one now.

May I suggest the last race be a pursuit race.

Say you have 20 boats out on race 2. Then in race 3 send out the 20th boat first and the first last, on the same time scale as they finished race 2.

As some of us are 45 years older than some of the youngsters and 50 or 60 lbs more in weight, would this be too much to ask?

Old and fat (Comet Association Member)

Editor's note:

Our Association Secretary has asked me to point out that open meetings are run by the host clubs, who are not bound by any suggestions made by us. The letter sent to their sailing secretaries does however suggest that prizes should be awarded to helms other than the first three.

I invite other suggestions on the above lines, and to start the ball rolling how about this: **A prize to the highest finisher in the last race, but any sailor "in the prizes" not to be eligible for this prize.**

Applying this to the results of the Frensham open, for which I have complete results, we would have had Alex Reeve, John Challener, Jake Sutton, Mark Wilkins, Robert Hamilton and John Windibank eliminated, the prize going to Brian Welham, who came 7th in the last race after an 11th and a 12th.

● SAILBOAT'97 AND THE BIG PARTY

It's going to be the biggest party of the year and you are all invited. So make a note in your diary now for Sailboat '97 over the weekend of 1st /2nd March at Alexandra Palace with the big party on the evening of the Saturday; the show closing later than usual at 7.30 pm.

Sailboat is the great annual extravaganza for dinghy sailors and windsurfers probably the biggest and most friendly gathering of dinghy sailors and windsurfers in the world. You can see boats from almost every class from the beautiful Norfolk Punts, first built in the 1930's to the very latest asymmetric flyers and the very latest in boards. You can watch stunning videos and join clinics run by top Olympic sailors and coaches.

Apart from being fun, Sailboat can also be the year's big shopping spree, indeed where better to choose that new wet suit or check out trailers, masts, sails or just the latest fittings, with many of the nation's suppliers and chandlers in one venue. You couldn't have a better opportunity to make the best choice or pick up the biggest bargain.

And the big party will be a first for Sailboat - whatever your club or class, whether you are the class champion or a beginner you will all be very welcome, so come along and enjoy the music, reduced price drinks and special events!

Travel too will be easier, cheaper and a lot more fun with a coach scheme from clubs everywhere direct to Alexandra Palace at very competitive prices. Full details will appear in Yachts & Yachting and will also be sent to clubs throughout England and Wales.

So watch for further details of Sailboat '97 and the Big Party.

DONALD FORBES
Show Manager

1996 AGM MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, HELD AT GLOSSOP AND DISTRICT SAILING CLUB, Saturday 25th May 1996.

The meeting was attended by Andrew Simmons, members of the Committee and 32 members of the Association.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Guy Wilkins, Mark Wilkins, and Norah Gould.

2. Minutes of the 1995 AGM held at Sheppey Yacht Club

The minutes of the last Annual General Meeting were accepted and signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Mike Thompson; seconded by Heidi Dodd.

3. Reports

a. Chairman's Report

(The Chairman's report was included in Perihelion issue 39)

b. Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer explained it was not possible to make a full report to this AGM because it was early and because the accounting year was changed at the last AGM to coincide with the calendar year in line with our memberships. The formal adoption of accounts was therefore postponed to the next AGM. However, he reported that our position was very sound despite the continual rise in costs. In particular he cited our RYA affiliation fees but explained that we receive good and invaluable service from them. Income from insurance had increased.

c. Newsletter Editor

Alan Browning thanked all who had sent articles to Perihelion, especially the last issue. However, so far this year there was a lack of reports being received from open meetings.

d. Photographic Competition

Henry Jagers congratulated the winners of last year's competition and thanked all those who had entered. However, the volume of the response had been rather disappointing and he hoped many more people would send in their photos this year.

4. Adoption of Accounts - postponed (see under 3b above)

5. Motions

a. New Measurement Rule 16.c.vi: "A foot rest may be permanently fixed to the floor ... "

Adopted without amendment. Andrew Simmons said he would accept this as a rule change but would not be supplying it as an option.

b. Measurement Rule 25.f: "Sail colour ... "

Amended to apply to new sails supplied after 1/4/96.

Adopted. Andrew Simmons explained how he had selected the new sailmakers (Hyde) for their superb quality but assured the meeting that the sailing performance of the new sail had been tested to be equivalent to the previous Rowsell & Morrison sails.

c. Constitution: changes to membership rules

The proposed changes to rules 4 & 10 were **adopted** without amendment.
(For 22, against 0).

6. Election of Officers and Committee

Duly proposed and seconded, the following were elected without opposition:

Chairman	John Windibank
Secretary	Norah Gould
Treasurer	Derek Coleman
Committee	Alan Browning (Newsletter Editor)
	Phillip Hossell (Northern and Western areas liaison)
	Henry Jagers (Posters and advertising)

7. Appointment of Auditor

The Treasurer explained that the change in our financial year would make this job much easier.

John Edwards (633) volunteered and was accepted by the meeting.

8. Any Other Business

John Windibank proposed that Margaret and Barrie Hylton be made Honorary Members of the association. Seconded by Norah Gould and many others present.

Passed unanimously.

Alan Browning suggested we should have an official class flag (like the one in present use?) item for Perihelion and possible adoption next year.

Diana Thompson thanked everyone who travels to opens ... especially theirs!

Derek Coleman asked if the AGM would be better held earlier, straight after the racing. Certainly the time needs proper notification.



Robin Ballam sailing in the Tidals at Mudeford.

(Photo: Margaret Hylton)

● TIDAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Sunny and virtually windless conditions greeted the 32 competitors who entered the annual Comet Tidal Championship at Mudeford Sailing Club in Christchurch Harbour on the 17th and 18th August. Entries came from all around the country, from Cheshire to Avon, Dorset to Kent and Essex.

Day 1: The first race was a frustrating event, with the middle of the fleet becalmed and drifting together to form a massive raft at Mark 5 on the first lap. By the time these boats had sorted themselves out, the front runners were way ahead and never to be caught. The Wilkins brothers, Mark (657) and Guy (353) had a close battle with Winchester sailor Heather Back (95) and Mudeford sailor John Challener (159). Final placings for race 1 were 1st Mark Wiikins, 2nd Guy Wiikins, 3rd Heather Back and 4th John Challener.

By the start of the second race a very welcome, slight sea breeze had arisen, cooling spectators and sailors and giving more fun to everyone. With a tightly-massed fleet at the pin-end of a heavily biased start line, Guy Wilkins was judged by race officer Peter Reid to be a bit over-keen and was disqualified at the end of the race. After a few 720s the middle of the fleet once again sorted itself out, whilst in the front runners John Challener worked his way through to take the lead, finishing ahead of Mark Wilkins, Heather Back and Richard Smallwood (565).

In the evening, Mudeford Sailing Club hosted an early supper for competitors and their support teams, to enable everyone to replenish the fluids lost in the searing sun (and then attend the Christchurch Regatta festivities and Fireworks Display on the River Stour at Christchurch Town Quay).

Day 2 started with a light south easterly breeze and blazing sunshine, which lasted all day. Race 3 started with a general recall, but the restart was successful. The breeze gradually lifted but still only to a force 2 to 3, giving very little clean air, especially with both Highcliffe and Christchurch Sailing Clubs holding races in the same stretch of the Harbour. David Forsdike (513), who had been on the fringe of the leading pack throughout Day 1, sailed a superb race, holding off all challengers to finish ahead of John Challener, Mark Wilkins and John Windibank (700).

This left Race 4 to decide the Championships. In a pleasant force 3 breeze newcomer John Challener just needed a place in the top 3, so long as he beat Mark Wilkins, in outstanding form again. In fact at the end of the first lap it was Guy Wilkins and Heather Back who led the fleet from John Challener. Mark proved unable to recover from a difficult first lap, but Guy (5 times Comet

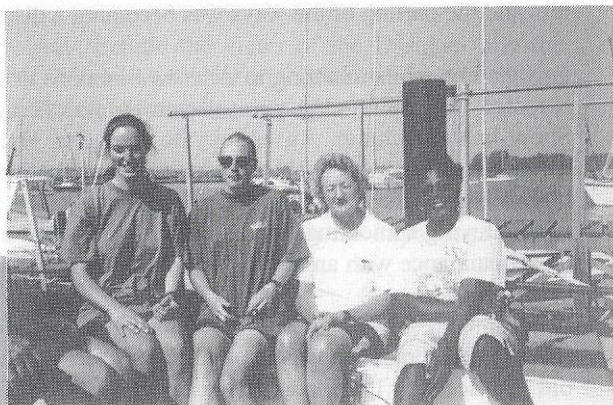
National Champion) proved he wasn't giving up without a real fight. Final placings at the end of race 4 showed Guy Wilkins 1st, John Challenger 2nd and Heather Back 3rd. This was enough to give John Challenger the trophy.

Championship Results

1. John Challenger, 2. Mark Wilkins, 3. Guy Wilkins, 4 Heather Beck, 5 David Forsdike,
6 Richard Smallwood 7. John Windibank, 8 Steve Cook, 9 Derek Coleman, 10 Phil Hossell

1 st Veteran: Richard Smallwood 1 st Lady : Heather Back 1st Junior: Brad Bunyard

Glynn Jung (Comet 554)



left to right:

Amy Luxford
Heather Back
Fiona Cauter
Beverley Franklin



214 Beverley Franklin
62 Emer Power

LADIES AT THE TIDALS

(Photos: Margaret Hylton)

● MINO-ING

As my three score years and ten becomes perilously close, I find that sailing a Comet in any sort of wind becomes very tiring when racing, although still as exciting as ever when sailing just for the joy of it. In an attempt to solve the problem I purchased a Mirror, sailed single-handed, which coped with the rougher weather, enabling me to think about sailing, as opposed to which muscle was going to rupture first. The Sailing Secretary was not too happy about my sailing boats in different classes in the same series, but doubtless regarded it as yet another idiosyncrasy of the wrinklies. The main problem was in selecting which boat to take, as the weather was always bound to change when the 'point of no return' had been reached. Being a pessimist, the Comet was being used less and less and the parting of the ways was becoming a distinct possibility.

Fortunately, whilst chatting to Andrew Simmons at the Comet Duo Nationals, he revealed that the new 5 sq m sail and rig was being shown at the London Boat Show in the Autumn. An enquiry to Margaret Hyton resulted in a long letter explaining that the new 'Mino' was more stable than a Topper, as its boom was higher and so didn't hit the sea so easily, and that it could be sailed 'flat' in a wind. Buying something from Margaret was always just an opportunity to renew an acquaintance with an old friend, who's absence from the class will leave a very big hole.

Having been persuaded and warned to check that the new stub mast fitted into the old top section, I waited for the right day and started rigging. The two mast sections still fitted, but there was no way in which the boom was going to fit into the new gooseneck. Fortunately the previously mentioned Sailing Secretary just happened to have an angle grinder in his van, and after a display of complete incompetence on my part, he had the boom fitted in minutes.

I have raced in the Slow Handicap Fleet, largely against Toppers, in varied sea conditions, and been delighted with it. It is as easy to handle as a Topper, but with all the advantages of a Comet hull: greater beam, a fine entry and above all, comfort. It is marginally faster than the Topper, but sails closer to the wind so giving it a considerable advantage. This is to some extent compensated for by a lower Portsmouth Rating. There is no official figure as yet so it is still a matter for investigation. Apparently when I do well it is due to the boat and when I don't it is due to my incompetence! There could be something in that!

It seems to sail best with all the sail controls slack. On the one occasion when it was really blowing and I tightened up the down-haul to de-power the sail, it did too good a job, and it wasn't really necessary.

It is now the Mirror that is about to be sold. The change is summarised by a conversation between myself and an old Laser fanatic and friend. He said that I seemed to be going as well in the Mino as I did in the Comet. The reason I said was obvious; "the designer has removed the 20 sq ft of sail that I never used anyway"!

John Finch (Comet 325)

● NOT A MINORITY (OF ONE)

Whilst not wishing to, in any way, belittle the views of the Designer and the Chairman (I should be so bold!), I feel I must raise my voice in support of Tony Thomas, following the rather sad tale of his experiences at the Nationals.

I have always been a strong supporter of the principle of Comet one-design and, some years ago, proposed the right of veto by Andrew to suggested changes to the boat in deference to his position as designer coupled with the importance of his commercial livelihood.

Having been involved with both development and restricted classes previously, I believe the one-design principle is essential to avoid any change which might outdate existing boats by giving new boats a speed advantage.

However, I am not convinced that this principle holds when the change is such as to provide a speed disadvantage, such as the Mino clearly has over a fully rigged Comet, especially when the rules already allow for reefing of the standard rig.

I must confess that, for the reasons above, it had never occurred to me that the Mino might be considered out of class although, clearly, the existing wording of the rules needs modification to incorporate the alternative rig.

I cannot see that the Mino sailor gains any real advantage over the reefed Comet sailor and the occasions when this practice will out-perform the full rig are few and far between.

There is perhaps a minor technical advantage accruing through the reduced mast height giving a lower CofE and the reduced all-up weight, with a lighter bottom mast, giving a reduced radius of gyration and less pitching motion but the effect must be minimal.

Equally, it might be argued that the current rig, and rules, allow for the possibility of adjusting sail area on the water to suit the conditions but, again, the times when this might be practical must be minimal.

All in all, nobody loses, and everybody stands to gain, if we readily accept the Mino as a valid form of Comet which gives a wider range of opportunity for sailors to join in and enjoy Comet class sailing and racing.

I agree with Tonys' views entirely and commend them to the Class.

In the meantime, I find his exclusion from the Nationals' results inappropriate for someone whose entry was gladly accepted and far short of the standard of Comet camaraderie established over the past ten years or more.

Keith Lamdin (Comets 55 & 241)

Comet Dinghies

Comet spares and accessories are available from:

Comet Dinghies,
Horsepond Meadow,
South Molton,
Devon EX36 4EJ

Telephone: 01769 574358

The complete **Mino rig package** is available at £350 plus carriage £12. This includes the Mino sail complete with logo, sail numbers the smaller bottom mast section and a standard upper mast section. There will be a reduction in price if your own upper mast section can be used.

The current price of a standard sail is £235 plus carriage.

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS REPORT

Glossop hides itself at the bottom of a valley in the rolling Peak District and I approached the town down a steep hill and everywhere the town seemed bedecked with Comet emblem signs posting our way to the championship. Turn left at the lights in centre of the town the instructions said and I dutifully followed the red comets, stuck on posts and gates up and over the high peaks following the narrow road as it twisted and turned following the contours of the hills. Looking down into the valley, more and more lakes appeared around every bend and there it was the club sheltering from the wind at the end of reservoir. The championship banner was displayed along a dry brick wall and there was lots of help when we arrived. The winds were leaving turbulent streaks on the water and the gusts were a good force 6, so lots of hot coffee was needed and perhaps Dutch courage was called for.

Our first experience of the race officer showed us that he was a jolly man with a clip board, but the smile on his face was the smile of the tiger anticipating a feed. The tiger made sure that the courses were a true test of skill and no concessions were made for the weather. It seemed to competitors that every mark was a gybe and a potential bath. Stuart Guilder was everywhere but the water board had let him down, there was 2" too much water in the lake which restricted launching but the only safe level of water would have been obtained if someone had pulled the plug out.

The first race was a practice and with trepidation we emerged from the partial shelter of the shore and found our rough weather legs. A race is a race after all no matter what the weather and some of us were relearning the lightning acceleration of the Comet in these conditions and some were experiencing it for the first time. We all needed to acclimatise and we kept our eyes on the leaders, Steve Heyes and Simon Thompson were going well along with Jake Sutton and Brian Hardy, and Heidi Dodd was not going to be outdone. David Forsdike won the race in fine style but everyone had that early bath and only 11 finished. The rescue boat crews were dashing about wondering what they had got themselves into and unfortunately one of the them added to the hazards of the day by colliding with me. Now being run down by a rescue boat at full speed is a bit like being assaulted by your mother! They are supposed to look after you in adversity. A planing rescue boat looks enormous with its hull clear of the water white foaming waves and the hull growing in size as it approaches. The impact was colossal, the nose of my Comet punching an expensive hole in the rescue boat's hull and my poor little dinghy shuddering from bow to stern with a cloud of white dust rising from the point of impact. As the Comet spun round the white faced rescue crew realised what they had done, shut off the power and then it was over. I was still upright and nothing appeared to have dropped off and with advice from Andrew Simmons and a borrowed heater from the club I was able to patch the hole in the bow and finish the championship. My repair bill was over £350 and the club found its new spar for their rescue boat was damaged again. Are

Comets well built or what!. I did not feel too bad at not finishing the practice race as 22 others joined me in retiring.

Race One. The Championships were on in earnest, this was the real thing and we hadn't come all this way to watch. All the big names were here and they all meant to win. The conditions ensured that frequent changes in position occurred and John Challenger, new to the class this year, relished the conditions. Simon Thompson also had his best race of the championship but Alex Reeve proved once again that in rough weather he has few equals. Heidi was as competitive as ever and was not going to give up her ladies title and showing most of us men how to handle the conditions. Light weight is supposed to be a disadvantage in this weather and going to windward it is, but off the wind they fly I could not believe what I was seeing as Heather Back planed through my lee, dirty wind and all. Everyone capsized at least once mostly on the gybes but the acceleration in the gusts caught a lot of us out.

1st Alex Reeve :2nd John Challenger :3rd Jake Sutton :4th Guy Wilkins :5th Simon Thompson

At the end of the race 30 tired, wet and bedraggled sailors were revived by the hot food and refreshments provided by the local scout group who served us well throughout the Championship.

Race Two. The wind looked just as fierce as we lined up on the second day but it turned out to be a little less savage with the result that there was only three retirements. The wicked gusts were back but mixed with enormous holes in the wind that had some of us foolishly easing our bar tight controls only to be assailed by assailed by a screaming gust. The battle at the head of the fleet involved Alex and Jake again but Brian Wellham had his best day as a Comet sailor. Defying his light weight Brian held off the challenge of the remarkably talented junior Andrew Bowes to finish fourth with Guy Wilkins, as brilliant as ever, winning in pursuit of his 6th title.

1st Guy Wilkins :2nd Jake Sutton :3rd Alex Reeve :4th Brian Wellham :5th Andrew Bowes

Race Three. The battle at the top continued unabated and Guy trying to recover a bad start slipped further back by picking the wrong side of the beat. Alex, Jake, Brian and Mark Wilkins were swapping places but Alex established a lead closely followed by Brian who, planing faster, established an inside overlap and went on to win.

1st Brian Wellham :2nd Alex Reeve :3rd Jake Sutton :4th Mark Wilkins :5th Andrew Bowes

Race Four. The last day saw the winds at last moderate and swing round to the east casting large wind shadows on the lake, which was going to cause problems on some of the marks. Helms found themselves entering a mark first only to become becalmed and swallowed up by pursuing boats and dropping sometimes 5 or 6 places. The championship position was tight with Alex and Jake separated by Alex's win in the first race. If anyone was to beat Alex they needed two wins and another win would clinch it for him, Guy and Brian had to count a 4th place and they also needed an Alex off day. But as Guy has proved, Championship winning can become a habit and Alex was not going to let this one go, he wanted this and Alex and Jake again battled for the lead with David Forsdike and John Windibank having his best race.

John slipped back and was caught by Andrew who promptly initiated a luffing duel that he conceded when he capsized and let the old man in. David in the mean time was not to be denied and forced his way to the front and winning from Alex who's second place won him the Championship.

1st David Forsdike:2nd Alex Reeve:3rd Jake Sutton:4th John Windibank:5th Andrew Bowes

Race Five. The Championship has been won but there's places and pride to defend and Jake achieved the win he deserved in the last event getting home ahead of Guy and of course Alex. Andrew Bowes who started with a retirement but improving all week was fourth just ahead of another talented junior Robert Hamilton who had his best result of the week with a sixth place.

1st Jake Sutton :2nd Guy Wilkins :3rd Alex Reeve :4th Andrew Bowes :5th David Forsdike

Alex now holds both National Titles and in this well deserved win he, like Jake, was never out of the top 3 in any championship race. Heidi retained her Ladies title with a very good series of races and Andrew is Junior Champion with a remarkable 4th place. Well done Brian for winning the Veterans title and a Championship race win in his campaign.

John Windibank (Comet 555)

CHESTER OPEN

Chester Sailing & Canoeing Club held their third Comet open meeting on the river Dee on Saturday 22nd June and welcomed five visitors who joined the home fleet to provide some keen competition in the blustery force 4 north westerly winds.

The first race saw numerous capsize as the helms fought for position on the tight and testing course. A number of competitors who tried to alter the course on the second lap, by missing out two marks, were unsuccessful in their quest and found themselves well behind. The race was won by Phillip Hossell from Steve Heyes, with John Edwards and Phil Taylor fighting it out for third place.

The second race was dominated by Hossell who won in convincing style from Will Ablett and Heyes.

In the third race, with the lower positions still to be decided, Hossell again showed the way home from Heyes and Mike Smith, to complete an excellent and enjoyable days sailing.

Overall Results:

1	650	Phillip Hossell	Evesham
2	331	Steve Heyes	Redesmere
3	411	Will Ablett	Redesmere
4	508	Mike Smith	Redesmere
5	643	Keith Appleby	Carsington
6	633	John Edwards	Chester

John Edwards (Comet 633)

PERIHELION

The next issue of Perihelion will be circulated in December 1996. Contributions to me by the end of November please.

Alan Browning, Editor

COTSWOLD OPEN

An entertaining day's racing with excellent course setting was provided by Cotswold SC for their annual Comet Open Meeting on July 13.

In glorious sunshine the first race started in a Force 2 breeze. A battle developed between Mark Wilkins, Tony Best and Phillip Hosell with all three together after the first round of the complex 8 buoy course. In fact after the seventh buoy a discussion took place between these three as to which was the last mark of the round. Fortunately, all three agreed on the correct buoy. Mark and Tony were vying with each other for the lead for most of the race whilst Phil lost ground as John Windibank (wearing his cap Norman Wisdom style) had the job of catching up after a poor first round. Mark eventually pulled away and won the race from Tony with Phil just managing to stay ahead of John.

After a substantial belly-filling lunch the second race started in Force 3 to 4 conditions. Again Mark took the lead, closely followed by John, Tony, Bob Priesley and Edward Priesley. By the end of the first round John managed to lead, followed by Tony and Mark. Phil closed up to the Priesleys after sustaining a couple of earlier capsizes. The wind strength became more blustery as the race went on causing Tony to capsize many times and eventually to retire. John led until the penultimate round when Mark managed to pass on a downwind leg and pull away for his second victory. John came in second with Phil again third.

Having won the meeting Mark elected not to compete in the third race. Conditions had deteriorated and an exciting race developed with Tony, Phil, Edward Priesley and John all rounding the first mark in close contention. Edward soon capsized, followed by Tony leaving Phil and John to fight for the lead. Phil led for 2 rounds when John passed him on the next beat. Phil soon regained the lead and managed to hold on from John and Tony, who could not quite make up enough ground after his earlier capsize. Excellent spectator entertainment value in this final windy race for the many spectacular capsizes was provided by Sam Hood and Margaret Boyce.

Thanks must go to Cotswold SC for their race organisation and especially to the rescue boat crew for retrieving lost sponges etc and clearing the thick weed from masts and booms after several capsizes had resulted in many a boat dragnetted the bottom.

Overall Results:

1st	657	Mark Wilkins (Chipstead SC)	1.5	points
2nd	650	Phillip Hosell (Evesham SC)	3.75	points
3rd	555	John Windibank (Chipstead SC)	4	points
4th	625	Tony Best (ICI [Slough] SC)	5	points
5th	52	Edward Priesley (Cotswold SC)	9	points
6th	25	Bob Priesley (Cotswold SC)	9	points

Phillip Hosell (Comet 650)

COMBS OPEN

The Comet open at Combs was the Saturday of what had been a sweltering July week. I'm sure that visitors expected to see the reservoir like a mill pond, but it was not to be. The rivulets danced in the sunshine as everybody rigged their boats.

The first race go off to a good start with Henry Jagers leading to the first mark and John Edwards a close second. Positions remained the same after lap 2 but at the bell, Henry won with Ros Stevenson 2nd and Phillip Hossell 3rd.

In the second race, Sue Pollard had an excellent start on port, narrowly escaping calls for "starboard" from the van, and held on until the end of the second lap. The eventual outcome was another win for Henry, with Sue second and John Edwards third.

Henry used his discard in the third race and Ros Stevenson sailed into a first lap lead and was never overtaken. John Edwards was again second and Phillip Hossell a close third.

It was a really enjoyable day and the OOD commented that he had never witnessed such good sportsmanship. Eleven boats competed which was good for a first open.

Overall results:

1	500	Henry Jagers	Staunton Harold
2	658	Ros Stevenson	Winston Flash
3	633	John Edwards	Chester

I would like to thank you all for coming and look forward to seeing you all next year.

David Hughes

AYLESBURY OPEN

Aylesbury Sailing Club had a very good turn out of 32 Comets for their Open Meeting on 21st July. 17 visitors joined the 15 home boats for a pleasant day's racing.

The weather was hot and sunny, with light shifty winds. John Windibank (Chipstead) led from start to finish in the first race with Brian Welham (ICI Slough) following him, and Emer Power (Chipstead) third.

In the second race a wind shift left most of the fleet rafted together round a mark. Rob Kerry (Aylesbury), the leader, who rounded the mark in clean air, was able to increase his lead. John Windibank maintained his second place and Judith Johnson (Aylesbury) was third. Michael Baxter (Chipstead) was able to round the stationary boats, and the mark, to put himself in fourth place which he kept to the finish.

There was no clear overall winner after two races so interest from the bank was high during the final race. Henry Jagers (Staunton Harold) came from the middle of the fleet to take the lead on the last lap and John Coppenhall (Lakeside) sailed a similar race to finish second. David Forsdike (Welwyn G. C.), who had led for most of the race had to be content with a third place.

Overall Results:

1	John Windibank	Chipstead
2	Rob Kerry	Aylesbury
3	Brian Welham	ICI Slough
4	Henry Jagers	Staunton Harold
5	David Forsdike	Welwyn Garden City
6	Judith Johnson	Aylesbury
1 st Junior	David Timson (13 th)	Aylesbury
1 st Lady	Judith Johnson (6 th)	Aylesbury

Margaret Hylton (Comet 687)



The scene at Aylesbury

(Photos: Mavis Fromour)



Presentation to Margaret and Barrie Hylton

SEAFARERS OPEN

The weather forecast promised light winds with an on shore breeze off the sea. So, like the old days of trips to the seaside, we collected at Seafarers with hundreds of holiday makers and dozens of sand castles.

The gentle breeze turned out to be a good force 4, for the 10 starters. Steve Cook, relishing the conditions, lead Guy and Mark Wilkins round the course and behind them capsizes were common with several retirements.

A depleted fleet started race two and Guy took a grip on the race with Steve capsizing on the start line and he was not able to recover in a short race in which Mark finished second from John Windibank and Amy Luxford.

The wind moderated slightly for the third race and at the first mark Guy rounded ahead of Steve with Mark third and Andrew Windibank fourth. On the second beat Steve got past Guy only to lose out later as Guy was faster off the wind. Behind the leaders Andrew held off a strong challenge from Derek Coleman and Brad Bungad.

Overall Results:

1st	Guy Wilkins	Chipstead
2nd	Steve Cook	Seafarers
3rd	Mark Wilkins	Chipstead
4th	John Windibank	Chipstead
5th	Derek Coleman	
6th	Amy Luxford	Welwyn
7th	Brad Bungad	
8th	Andrew Windibank	
9th	Brian Welham	ICI
10th	Fiona Cauter	Chipstead

● MUDEFORD WEEK, 1996

Mudeford week was cracking this year! A record 65 boats took part in the annual regatta, 7 Oppies, 15 Lasers, 24 in the fast handicap and 19 dinghys in the slow handicap fleet. There was a 50% increase in the Comet fleet.

Winds averaged force 3 to 4, gusting to a 5 at times. There were capsizes daily, although not necessarily by the Comet helms. Planing, good humour and exhaustion were the order of the day. There were no major breakages, although one Laser sailor did lose his mast mid harbour! To everyone's surprise, the rain held off and the sun came out more often than not.

John Challener (159) carried off 1st prize in the Week Trophy, 2nd prize in the Anchor Trophy, and 3rd prize in the Rodway Trophy, in his first season of sailing his newly acquired Comet. From my position at the middle of the fleet, he made sailing look easy!

Glynn Jung (554) failed to win the Phyllosan Trophy this year, but was 1st Master in the Rodway Trophy.

The Latchmore Pursuit race was dominated by Comets! Louise Cox (109) won the race, with Fiona Cauter (575) second, and Jim Robb (496) 4th. It was an enjoyable race to watch - I was fishing that afternoon from a local jetty, watching the flotila of dinghys chasing each other around the harbour in the light breeze.

The Ladies race was particularly memorable this year. The first race was abandoned as one of the marker buoy floats, floated off from it's mooring and some lady helms misguidedly began following it around the harbour, towards the lee shore. With a wind of force 3 increasing to a 4 to 5, the second race was somewhat eclipsed, not only with exhaustion, but with the Red Arrows aerobatic team, looping loops over Bournemouth, and providing the windward leg up to buoy 5 with a very enjoyable spectacle of red white & blue vapour trails. Had I concentrated on my sailing, rather than the free air show, I might have pulled my self up from 4th position overall.

We all enjoyed ourselves tremendously, both the hospitality and the sailing were warmly received by all the visitors (myself included), and as soon as next years dates are known, I for one shall be booking my annual leave to coincide with Mudeford Week '97.

Ann Hooper (Comet 43)

EDITOR'S NOTES

This issue is dominated by thoughts on how the Mino fits into the Comet scene. I notice that there are no views yet from younger Mino sailors, but I imagine that there aren't many of you yet. For the cover, it seemed an appropriate time to feature Dinghy Leisure, at leisure!

Future issues

For the next issue, how about some contributions from those of you who have just bought a Comet, you know, first impressions, how it matched up to what you expected from it. It doesn't have to be lengthy, half a page will do. Also perhaps more ideas on the lines of the contribution from "Old and fat", how to make open meetings more of a competition for those at the back, which is most of us.

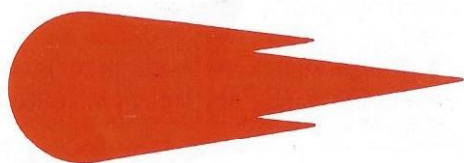
I would also be interested to hear from people who, like me, have tackled sailing a Comet at a relatively advanced age with virtually no previous helming experience. I am not visualising printing such contributions in Perihelion, for the simple reason that I am only expecting there to be one or two of you and we can pool our experiences over a drink without bothering the other members. A few years ago I wrote four articles in Perihelion from the 'raw beginner' point of view, and I will gladly send reprints of them to similar souls if it will jog their memories. In particular I am interested to hear your thoughts on any 'breakthroughs' in skill which gave a sudden increase in your ability, particularly in coping with stronger winds.

"New look" Perihelion

I hope you approve of the new appearance of the newsletter. Having my new computer facility, editing is easier for me, particularly because I can work with the typing at the reduced size from the start, and not have to traipse to and fro to the commercial photocopier for reductions. The character font (Times New Roman) is I hope easier to read and the new printer gives a more reliable blackness of print (it has no ribbon to wear out). A feature of the software that came with the machine is the ability to feed your typed contributions in without me doing any typing myself, which helps me and eliminates my typing errors.

I have had to use a different method for my astronomical graphics around the headings and have taken the opportunity to change it a little. To make the concept clearer, I have increased the size of the Sun, which means that the elliptical orbit is obviously wrong and my comet blatantly not at the nearest point, the perihelion, but I hope my artistic licence is acceptable.

Alan Browning, Editor



Comet Class Association

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association