



NEWSLETTER NUMBER 45
WINTER 1997/98

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Front cover:

Close competition at the Littleton open meeting

(Photo: Anna Ludgate)

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Doesn't time fly! Alan has just phoned and reminded me that the next edition of Perihelion is about to go to press and my report is still awaited.

Since I first wrote, our 1997 Aphelion and Orbital series have reached their conclusions, all the trophies and other prizes have been awarded and mementoes allotted to the qualifiers. Well done to you all! Although the final number of qualifiers was down a bit this year, I think I am right in saying that more people than ever actually took part overall. Just think, make that little extra effort and go to one or two more meetings next year and we could end with a record number of qualifiers. You might also end with a prize! We are even thinking of ways to award you prizes if you do not feature in the usual winners' list as a way of marking your progress and encouraging even more of you to enjoy sailing on the circuit. Full results for this year are published later in this edition.

Whilst mentioning those who did not quite qualify for the series this time I must put in my own apologies. I was expecting to do most of my travelling towards the end of the programme but as some of you will know I had a little argument with my appendix which spoilt that plan! Never mind, I've every intention of making next year a full one and in the meantime I'm back enjoying the late season at my own club. I sometimes think the autumn and winter offers the best of sailing. Away from the many competing distractions of the summer we often get bigger race entries than we do in warmer weather! Cruising boats are on the water too with their owners making the most of these short days and enjoying a well earned break in the fresh air. Dress warmly and give it a try!

Norah is hard at work doing her usual good job of organising next year's programme. It is a difficult task negotiating with the clubs and making sure dates do not clash but, from the conversations I've had with her, it sounds as though things are progressing very well. It is most pleasing to have new clubs *asking us* if they can run a Comet open meeting and we should have one or two new venues coming up for 1998. The Nationals are already set for the Spring Bank Holiday (23-25 May) at Frensham Pond and I think I'm safe in saying the Tiduals will be at Brightlingsea although we haven't fixed the date yet.

We are exhibiting again at the National Boat Caravan & Leisure Show, 14th-22nd February at the NEC. This has become a regular event for the Comet Association and one which many of us look forward to. For those of you who have not been to this show before, we take a stand in the RYA area at about a tenth the cost of a commercial exhibit. Apart from existing Comet sailors who drop in for a chat,

most of the visitors to the show are not yet sailors and the idea is really to "sell" the sport of sailing. Naturally we are slightly biased! Stuart Gilder will be ringing round asking for help in manning our stand but don't be shy, give him a ring now (01457 861452) if you could spare us a few hours: you'll enjoy it.

As 1997 comes to an end, it is only natural to review the present position and to think to the future. This applies just as much to dinghy classes as it does to other aspects of our lives. These days there is ever increasing competition for people's leisure time and, even when persuaded into sailing, a bewildering choice of new and older classes of boat to consider. So you and I who already know the pleasures of sailing - whether in racing or cruising - must do all we can to encourage others, friends, relatives, and neighbours, to join us on the water, preferably in Comets. Talk to others about your sport, take them out for a spin, let them have a go and they might be hooked!

Wishing you all a very happy Christmas and a really great New Year,

Good Sailing,

Henry Jagers, Chairman

● MY COMET

Complete relaxation except when it blows,
Oceans of fun at the meetings and shows,
Many good friendships to last through the years,
Everyone willing to dispel my fears,
These are the things that get Comets my vote,
So long may my Comet, and me, stay afloat.

Anon (Comet Class Association member)



Henry at Redesmere, 1997

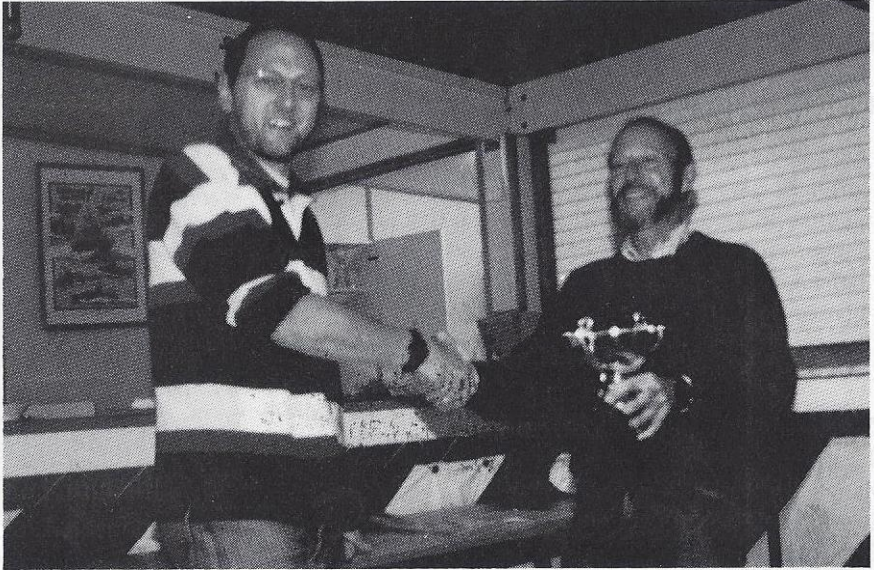
(Photo: Liz Hossell)

HAVE YOU GOT A GOOD EYE ?

In the Treasurer's accounts (Perihelion 43, pages 16-17) the word "deficit" appeared on two occasions. This is not true really. Your monies mostly come in during the first half of the year and most of it is spent during the second half of the year. As the accounts were from July 95 to December 96 there was a lot more going out during that period than coming in. In actual fact we are running about even, we are not out to make a profit but give a service for our members.

This is another reason that the accounts from now on will run from January to December, it should make more sense.

Derek Coleman, Treasurer



Phillip Hossell - winner of two Aphelion trophies

(Photo: Liz Hossell)

THE 1997 RACE RESULTS

This time last year John Windibank wrote a superb piece on the season's racing. As in previous years, John had received and collated the results himself throughout the season and had all the information at his fingertips. Indeed, having competed in 16 of the events he could see exactly how the competition was going!

It had not occurred to me until very recently that this year I would be asked to write the report. Phil Hossell has been our collator of results this past year and has been doing a very good job of it indeed. However, I may have the Orbital and Aphelion results in front of me, as you now do, but what I don't have at present is any record for those who did not qualify! Who was able to beat some of our listed winners without themselves qualifying? Who missed getting their names in these lists by just one event? Who could even have ended in the top 3 or 4 of a series if they had sailed at one more meeting? This year I can't even look to my own memory for help as I sailed at only 4 meetings including the Inlands and Nationals! So, if any of you would like to write something for the next Perihelion on how you saw the year's events, I'm sure we would all welcome your thoughts. Sincere congratulations to all our winners and to everyone who qualified.

I did manage to attend our last two meetings, Redesmere and Kingsmead, but sadly only as a spectator and to present the prizes. At least this gave me some opportunity to talk to the competitors and supporters, many of whom had been to quite a few venues over the year. I left with the impression that it had been a good season overall and that a great many Comet sailors had thoroughly enjoyed their racing in 1997... and what more can you ask?

Henry Jagers, Chairman

APHELION RESULTS - 1997

EASTERN AREA

	FGR	CRW	CHP	LIT	KMD	Pts	Posn
573 A Reeve		1	3	1	4	5	1
657 M Wilkins	2	14	4	5	2	8	2
188 S Thompson	1	2		7		10	3
700 J Windibank	3	5	5		5	13	4
707 D Coleman	4	4	6	8	6	14	5
711 B Welham	6	12	8	14	3	17	6
518 R Ballam	8	8	11	12	7	23	7
63 C Robinson			7	4	12	23	8
99 P Luttmann	9	10	10	10	10	29	9
117 M Thompson	10	9		15		34	10
621 G Flemons	14	14	13			41	11
247 B O'Herlihy		7	17	18		42	12
641 P Hinde	12			21	9	42	13
259 B Sandle	15	14	15	19		44	14
50 D Thompson	13	12		20		45	15
575 F Cauter			16	23	14	53	16

SOUTHERN AREA

	TAP	FRN	AYL	MUD	SEA	Pts	Posn
657 M Wilkins	2	5	2		1	5	1
573 A Reeve	3	2	1		5	6	2
711 B Welham	5		3		7	15	3
518 R Ballam		6	4		6	16	4
707 D Coleman	12	12	7	3	8	18	5
63 C Robinson	13	4	6			23	6
650 P Hossell	7	14	5			26	7

WESTERN AREA

	SHR	SBG	MRT	COT	PIN	Pts	Posn
650 P Hossell	5	5	4	3	16	12	1
707 D Coleman	6	3		6	7	15	2
25 R Presley	9		3	13	20	25	3
641 P Hinde	10			18	11	39	4

NORTHERN AREA

	CHS	GLS	CMB	ARD	RDS	Pts	Posn
650 P Hossell	2	4	2	2	2	6	1
670 P Hayes	4	2	1		5	7	2
633 J Edwards	3	5	3	6	1	7	3
331 S Heyes	6	1	4		10	11	4
641 P Hinde		9	8	3	4	15	5
508 M Smith	5		5		8	18	6
658 R Stevenson	9	8	7	8	14	23	7
643 K Appleby	8	7	9		13	24	8
411 W Ablett	10	6	11		9	25	9

ORBITAL RESULTS - 1997

							Inland	Nats	Entered	Points	Posn
573 Alex Reeve	1	1	1	1	2	2	8	5	12	8	1
657 Mark Wilkins	1	1	2	2	2	2	1	6	12	9	2
650 Phillip Hossell	2	2	2	2	3	4	23	9	16	15	3
159 John Challener	1	2	3	6	-	-	4	1	6	17	4
633 John Edwards	1	2	3	3	5	6	16	-	7	20	5
150 Robert Hamilton	1	3	3	3	4	-	7	7	7	21	6
700 John Windibank	2	2	3	5	5	5	5	14	9	22	7
707 Derek Coleman	3	3	4	4	6	6	-	29	11	26	8
711 Brian Welham	3	3	3	5	6	7	-	29	11	27	9
63 Chris Robinson	1	4	4	6	7	12	14	8	11	30	10
188 Simon Thompson	1	2	4	7	14	-	6	10	7	30	11
518 Robin Ballam	4	4	5	6	6	7	15	19	12	32	12
641 Paul Hinde	3	4	8	9	9	10	27	-	13	43	13
117 Mike Thompson	6	7	9	10	11	15	12	13	8	55	14
99 Paul Luttmann	9	10	10	10	10	10	22	20	9	59	15
658 Ros Stevenson	7	8	8	9	14	14	21	-	8	60	16
247 Barry O'Herlihy	6	7	8	17	18	-	-	21	6	77	17
259 Barry Sandle	9	12	14	15	15	18	-	26	8	83	18
50 Diana Thompson	12	13	14	19	20	20	28	24	8	98	19
575 Fiona Cauter	9	13	14	16	23	-	30	-	6	105	20

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.

1997 AGM MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, HELD AT HAMPTON PIER YACHT CLUB, Saturday 30th August 1997

The meeting was attended by Andrew Simmons, members of the committee and 35 members of the Association.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Margaret Hylton, Keith Lamdin, John Edwards, Guy Wilkins, Mark Wilkins, Errol Edwards, Miss H. Deans, and Nancy Gould.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on Saturday 25th May 1996

The minutes of the last AGM were agreed and signed. Proposed by Alex Reeve. Seconded by Heather Back.

3. Matters arising

The comments regarding a Class Flag [AOB] will be considered by the committee, with the possibility of a design competition.

4. Reports by officers

a. Chairman

The chairman's report is attached to these minutes (see page 11)

b. Secretary

The secretary reported on the proposed venues for the 1998 national events as well as the open programme. She also introduced a leaflet advertising the Association.

c. Newsletter Editor

The newsletter editor thanked contributors for their efforts and apologised for any mistakes. He reported that reprints of Keith Lamdin's articles are available.

A request was made for the date to be printed on the cover of Perihelion. Andrew Simmons to investigate.

d. Phil Hossell

Phil reiterated the request that all results be sent to him as soon as possible after an event. He drew attention to the current situation in the Aphelion and orbital series.

e. Henry Jagers

Henry reported that the photographic competition has been useful in providing new material for advertising purposes. The 1997 competition is open until the end of September.

5. Adoption of Accounts

The Treasurer presented the accounts (see Perihelion 43, page 16). The accounts were agreed and adopted. Proposed by Phillip Hossell. Seconded by Fiona Cauter.

6. Consideration of Motions

There was considerable discussion on the motion that "the Comet Class Association should approve the use of discarded racing results, should a tie situation arise between 2 or more competitors in a racing series. In accordance with the RYA racing rule 88.3, proper notification of the intention must be present in the sailing instructions."

The motion was carried after a show of hands. The committee will look to including it in the constitution, and will put it as a requirement for national events. Clubs hosting Open meetings will be recommended to adopt the motion.

7. Election of Officers

John Windibank retired as Chairman. Henry Jagers was elected as Chairman. Proposed by John Windibank. Seconded by Derek Coleman.

The rest of the committee was re-elected en bloc, and is as follows:

Treasurer - Derek Coleman	
Secretary - Norah Gould	(co-opted)
Committee - Fiona Cauter	(Trophies)
Alan Browning	(Newsletter)
Phillip Hossell	(Results)
Stuart Gilder	

8. Apoinment of Auditor

John Edwards was appointed as Auditor. Proposed by Fiona Cauter. Seconded by Phillip Hossell.

9. Builder's Report

Andrew Simmons reported that he is keeping busy and reported that the singlehanded market is currently tricky, especially in respect of strict one design boats. Although he sees the Mino as the way to increase sales, Andrew emphasised the need for information on the Comet to be disseminated to all sailors. He said that the Trio is selling better than the Duo at present. Andrew

ended by suggesting a Try a Comet Single Hander Day in April/May 98, which could include a second-hand market.

10. Any other Business

a. Milleniuium

The Committee felt that the Association should do something to mark the millenium. John Windibank suggested a joint event for all Comet dinghies, with serious and fun racing, and the possibility of a Champion of Champions event. Chipstead and Littleton were suggested as possible venues. Any further thoughts and suggestions to be forwarded to the committee.

b. Comet prizes

There have been several suggestions for a prize structure for helms not in contention for the top places. The committee to discuss.

c. Scoring

Diana Thompson commented on the new scoring system which awards the same points for a retirement as for a DNS. It was agreed that Hampton Pier YC should be approached to amend their scoring system. If that were not possible, the CCA would publish their own results using the old scoring system.

d. Quorum

Alan Browning pointed out that the meeting was not quorate.

e. Talking Point

Alan Browning asked members to take the opportunity to contribute to the Talking To... series. (Editor's Note: he meant then and there, nobody responded, but Heather Back, who had been approached earlier, said OK, see pages 24-31)

f. Website

The committee agreed to consider the suggestion further.

At this point the formal meeting closed with a vote of thanks to retiring chairman John Windbank, proposed by Keith Lamdin and seconded by Henry Jagers.

John was presented with a Mint set of coins and a crystal rose bowl in recognition of all his work on behalf of the Association.

Mavis was presented with a plant and some notebooks as thanks for her support.

CHAIRMAN'S AGM REPORT

I would like to thank you all for attending the AGM and the National Championship and especially as the weather is rough as is usual at the Comet Nationals.

At our last AGM I reported that it had been a difficult year for boat building and the Class, but since the last AGM at Glossop we have had string of very good news with possibly our best year as a Class and with more activity in the buying and selling market, and as everyone else is quoting the Spice Girls I would say that we have had a Very Very good year.

Thank you Hampton Pier for inviting us and organising our 3rd Championship here and our 2nd National Championship. As always we have had a very warm welcome and we are always pleased to come.

Review of the Year.

1996 was our best year yet for numbers attending our events and qualifiers in the Orbital and Aphelion Trophy events. We had a 100 more entries in our events and 20 qualified for the Orbital Trophy, 5 up on 1995.

Alex Reeve is our National Champion and John Challenger won the Association title. Mark Wilkins was the winner again in the Orbital Trophy, his 4th win, and he was also the winner of the Eastern Aphelion event. Steve Heyes was the winner of the Northern Aphelion and I was the winner of the Western.

This year Mark Wilkins won the association trophy for the second time and he was also first in the Eastern Aphelion. This trophy has only ever been won by a Wilkins and this is their 5th year in a row.

Exhibitions.

Our stands at the NEC and Alexandra Palace exhibitions were well attended and our thanks must go to Stuart Gilder for co-ordinating the manning of the stands and Henry Jaggars for setting up and the stand layouts and to everyone else that helped, their numbers are too numerous to name individually.

Championships 1998

Next year the Nationals will be at Frensham Pond SC. but the venue for the Tidal Championship has yet to be confirmed.

The Committee.

Behind every successful Class Chairman there is a first class secretary and our secretary is one of the best there is. Norah is so reliable and no one can complain that they don't know what's going on. Norah's daughter Nancy is, I understand, doing wonderful things in boats at the University of Essex and is the only Lady to win an Aphelion Trophy and the Junior title. But Nancy will have to watch out as I understand that Mums having sailing lessons.

Derek props us all up, if something needs doing he tactfully suggests that he will make a start or get on the phone for you, he is a great guy and we all trust him with our money.

Henry as always is thoughtful and everything we ask him to do he does with thought and flair.

Fiona continues to do the difficult trophy buying with wit and imagination and Alan keeps on getting better and I think he is fairly used to us now and keeps us on our toes.

Phil has done an excellent job with the results this year as you have no doubt observed and Stuart Gilder the great organiser is I understand under the weather at present so get well soon Stuart.

Finally thank you Andrew and Comet Dinghies and all the competitors and helpers that do so much to make our hobby so enjoyable.

John Windibank,

COMET HALL OF FAME

Past Championship Winners

National Champion

1983 Ken Potts
 1984 Bob Sandford
 1985 Stuart Ingham
 1986 Keith Lamdin
 1987 Jeff Penfold
 1988 Craig Moffatt
 1989 Chris Sinclair
 1990 Chris Sinclair
 1991 Guy Wilkins
 1992 Guy Wilkins
 1993 Guy Wilkins
 1994 Guy Wilkins
 1995 Guy Wilkins
 1996 Alex Reeve
 1997 John Challener

Lady Champion

Hayley Penfold
 Margaret Hylton
 Tracey Davies
 Tracey Davies
 Anne Brook
 Christine Stack
 Christine Stack
 Heidi Dodd
 Heidi Dodd
 Heather Back

Junior Champion

Nancy Gould
 Jake Sutton
 Ian Jubb
 Robert Hamilton
 Andrew Bowes
 Robert Hamilton

Association Trophy

1988
 1989 Damon Perrin
 1990 Guy Wilkins
 1991 Henry Jagers
 1992 Guy Wilkins
 1993 Mark Wilkins
 1994 Guy Wilkins
 1995 Alex Reeve
 1996 John Challener
 1997 Mark Wilkins

Orbital Trophy (National)

Craig Moffatt
 Andrew Pierce
 James Withall
 Henry Jagers
 Guy Wilkins
 Mark Wilkins
 Mark Wilkins
 Jake Sutton
 Mark Wilkins
 Alex Reve

Aphelion Trophy (Regional)

North

1992 Mark Wilkins
 1993 Errol Edwards
 1994 Richard Smallwood
 1995 Errol Edwards
 1996 Steve Heyes
 1997 Phillip Hossell

East

Guy Wilkins
 Mark Wilkins
 Mark Wilkins
 Mark Wilkins
 Mark Wilkins
 Alex Reeve

South

Jake Sutton
 Jake Sutton
 Alex Reeve
 Mark Wilkins

West

Nancy Gould
 Mark Wilkins
 Mark Wilkins
 Jake Sutton
 John Windibank
 Phillip Hossell

CUSTOMIZING YOUR COMET - PART 2

In the first of these customisation articles Colin Boys described some of the modifications he has done to his boat and reference was also made to ideas originating from Keith Bullock and Harvey Martin. This second article covers other thoughts from Colin, including details of the construction of his spinnaker which was briefly described in part 1. Also, Keith has responded by sending me details of other things he has done to his boat and other boats in his club, Kingsmead S.C.

Sometimes it is necessary to refer to modifications described in part 1. This is done by, for example, "item 1, page 7", the page number relating to Perihelion 44.

As before, each modification or idea is given a code letter::

A: Definitely within class rules

B: Believed to be within class rules, but may require a General Meeting resolution

R: Out of class, but can be removed for racing

Y: Believed to be out of class

Z: Definitely out of class.

First then, details of that Comet spinnaker:

Spinnaker (item 9, code R) (continued)

Colin Boys: As I said last time, with a sleeved sail you can only take the spinnaker off the top of the mast which means that you have a long halyard dropping down before you pick up the top of the spinnaker. This did make it difficult to shoot and set correctly. To attach the spinnaker to the mast I made a mast crane (figure 1) sticking out at the front of the masthead. This was mounted on a pin that went into the blind tube that I had made for the burgee (see item 1, page 7). The material was $\frac{1}{2}$ inch by $\frac{3}{16}$ inch steel, painted. The back end of the crane was simply bent to a right angle and I drilled a couple of holes in it so that I could tie it in place with lacing cord to the sail shackle eye. Off the front edge I dropped a double pulley block. These were for the spinnaker halyard and pole shock cord.



Fig 1 Mast crane

After my modification to the kicker (see item 4, page 7) I had a spare pulley and jamming cleat on the deck, and I used these for the spinnaker halyard. I clipped the

pole to the mast with one of the usual pole fittings and the uphaul shock cord went from the centre of the pole through the masthead pulley and was tied off at that pole fitting. To the saddle clip that holds my kicker ring I tied a small pulley which had a jamming vee on it. With that I could pull down the pole and cleat it. To store the spinnaker I attached a convenient sized bag by velcro strips, one strip to the foredeck and another on the top of the buoyancy tank. There was no engineering in that, it was easily removed and the spinnaker went nicely into it. That left the spinnaker sheet and guy to be dealt with. For these I used two more single pulleys with jamming vees. I tied them, one each side, by short pieces of rope to the aft shackles of my grab straps (see item 8, page 9). Then for each pulley I tied short pieces of line over the gunwale to one of the small holes there (referred to in item 7, page 9). Those kept the blocks in position without being screwed to anything (figure 2), all very removable afterwards. The sheet and guy were a continuous loop, passing through those pulleys and across the deck (figure 2). Once I'd got the sheet and guy where I wanted them I cleated them off. It worked very well.

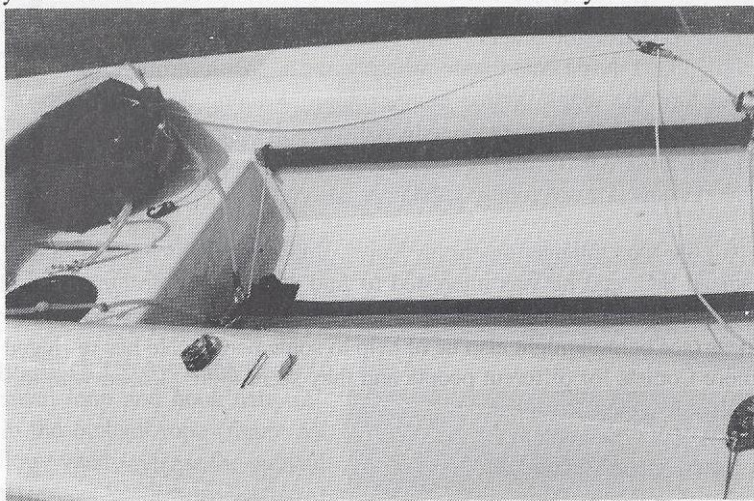


Fig 2 Spinnaker sheets and bag

For my first attempt at shooting the spinnaker, I chose a fairly light day. Normally you have a crew to help, but not this time! You usually fold back the tiller extension and steer with the tiller between your knees, while pulling up the spinnaker. You can't do that with a Comet because the tiller is too far away. You have to clamp the tiller extension very firmly between your thighs. Steering is then by some rather judicious moving of your backside, which created a great deal of mirth! **Alan:** The boat should be more stable than usual on a run shouldn't it? **Colin:** On a dead run, yes. It's exactly as if you were goose-winged a two-sail boat.

Clew tie down. (Item 12, code A)

One of the things that I found rather unsatisfactory with the Comet was the standard way of attaching the clew to the boom. It leaves the sail too high above the boom and the closer you can get it to the boom, the better the performance of the sail. I don't use a clip, I just tie the clew down, particularly if it's blowing. **Alan:** You're not alone, this has been discussed before (Perihelion 34, page 22), where David Foster described his method using a special knot, a special rope and liquid lubricant. The lubricant was essential. **Colin:** Yes, there's a danger of sticking when you've got it too tight, when you release the outhaul it doesn't come off. Perhaps instead of a liquid lubricant it might be possible to use a set of nylon discs on the cord around the boom, discs which roll as the sail moves in and out, something like ball bearing curtain runners. Tying the knot can be tricky too in a bit of a blow and even if I tie it tight when I start, when I get some pressure on the sail from a good blow, the gap gets bigger and bigger and I know I'm losing performance. I've not solved this one yet, I've tried various arrangements, and sometimes the



Fig 3 Clew strap

end of the rope has got caught in the pulley block! I've got in mind something like a duffle coat toggle, where you can post it through the hole and turn the toggle in the cringle. **Alan:** Printing a series of article like this might spur someone to write about a good method they've come up with. I remember Keith Bullock had a method with two clips and a strap (figure 3), but I don't know if it was totally satisfactory.

Now to the communication from Keith Bullock: Keith sails Comet 300 at Kingsmead S.C. and he was interested to find some of his designs from all those years ago still going strong and spreading further afield. He hopes that some more of his ideas (see below) might also be of help to some people. He has re-rigged quite a few more Comets for different people and they seem quite pleased with the results, especially the ladies. Read on!

Thin ropes (item 13, code A)

Throw away all the "large size" rigging and replace with 4mm² rope. It is quite adequate and jams much more easily.

Hand hold for mast setteping (item 14, code A)

My stainless steel kicker ring was described in Perihelion 29, pages 20/21 and is item 4, page 7 in this series of articles. It does allow all the lines to run freer but it also forms a very convenient hand hold when stepping the mast. You cannot buy this ring and if enough people are interested I might start making some more. They would probably work out at about £12 each, depending on how much I am charged for the stainless welding. This charge used to vary a lot, depending on who I got to do it. If you make your own, don't use ¼ inch rod, as I did at first, they become oval, it must be 5/16 inch diameter.

Doubling the kicker purchase on a standard Comet (item 15, code A)

If you tie a 4mm² or 6mm² rope from the base of the lower triple block, up through a pulley on the boom and then down to tie at the top of the upper triple block, this doubles up the purchase and makes the kicker very easy to use. (figure 4). I notice Colin Boys has not done this.

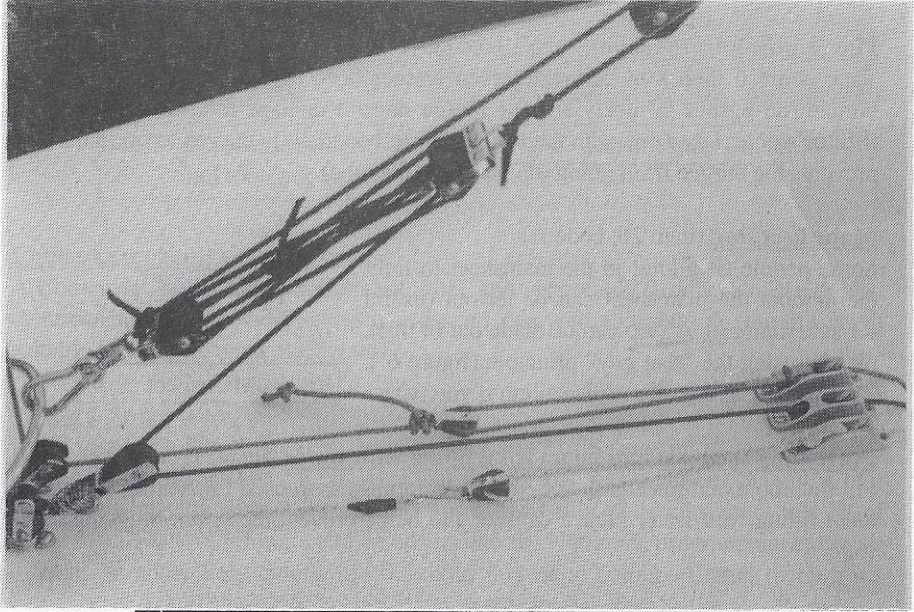


Fig 4 More powerful kicker, outhaul and Cunningham

Outhaul quick release hook (item 16, code A)

Put a small loop and hook half way along in the outhaul rope (figure 5). This allows you to release the outhaul quickly without having to stretch to the end of the boom. For security, stitch the loop. The hook I use is RWO 8420 or similar.

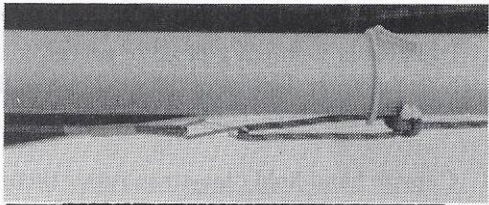


Fig 5 Outhaul quick release hook

Deck pulleys for increasing the outhaul purchase. (item 17, code A)

Tie a 4mm² rope through the top of the deck jamming cleat, run it along the deck and through a pulley and back through the jammer. Then from the front of the pulley tie a rope to pass up through the mast pulleys and along the boom as normal (figure 4). It is easy to rig and you don't have yards of rope in the boat. If you want even more purchase, use two pulleys on the deck. If you want to reef,

use a small piece of rope at the boom end between the clew cringle and the clew hook.

Deck pulleys for increasing the Cunningham purchase. (item 18, code A)

Use pulleys as in item 17 (figure 4 again).

Plastic tube burgee mount (item 19, code A)

Tape about 6 inches of car windscreen washer hose to the top of the mast. The burgee rod pushes in nicely and the mount doesn't damage the sail when rigging. (Editor's note: I saw one with the lower inch or two slightly curved to one side. This prevents the burgee from going too far down the tube)

Mainsheet stop (item 20, code A)

Some people tie a knot in the mainsheet to limit the amount the mainsheet can be let out (useful for safe running). A stop can be made out of thick plastic, using the "tent guy" principle (figure 6). You can adjust it easily while sailing if you wish.

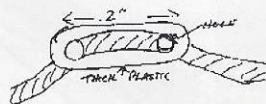


Fig 6 Mainsheet stop

Preventing the mast and boom from filling with water.(item 21, code B)

Fill the boom and mast with polystyrene chippings as is used in packing. This stops them filling with water after a capsized and helps prevent the boom dragging in the water..

Mast thrust bearing (item 22, code B)

Remove the plug at the base of the lower mast and fix there, with a (stainless) countersunk nut and bolt, a 2p piece. An old penny is better if you can get hold of one. Now put another coin down the mast tube and the two coins will rub together, not grind away the bottom of your boat! Fill the bolt holes with silicone sealant. Even better is to put a piece of rubber, about 1/8 inch thick, in the bottom of the mast tube first. This takes the shock out of the bottom of the boat when stepping the mast (Editor's note: couldn't this be done at manufacture?)

Capsized hand hold / toe-strap raiser (item 23, code A)

After a capsized it is far easier to come in over the back than over the side. Tie a piece of car seat belt to the bull's eye at the transom, pass it under the toe-strap and then back to the opposite bull's eye (figure 7, a photo taken of a capsized boat). This gives you a good hand hold when climbing in. It also keeps the toe-strap off the floor. A piece of rope would do as well. (Editor's note: Having had difficulty in grabbing the toe-strap after working my way along the rope described above, I have added a loop of thick rope tied around the rear of the toe-strap. I grab this and then the toe-strap (figure 8)).

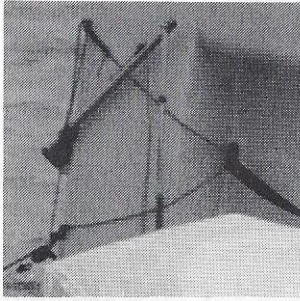


Fig 7 Capsize hand-hold and toe-strap raiser

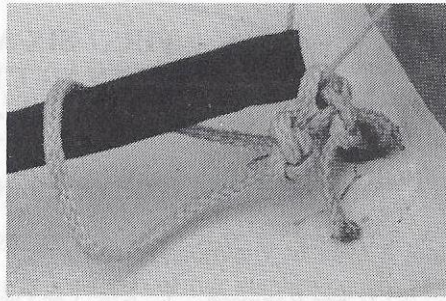


Fig 8 Capsize grab loop

Comet/Laser cross (item 24, code Z)

A Comet rig fits a Laser (centreboard too!), and very stably it sails too. (Keith also mentions building another successful cross: a Laser with a Fireball rig, but this is not suitable fare for a Comet magazine!)

Comet trapeze (item 25, code R or Z)

Keith mentions (Perihelion 29, page 20, Dec 1993) working on a trapeze for the Comet (more "Comet fun"), but I am not sure if that was a serious pursuit. Colin Boys is also saying similar things, but I know that Colin IS serious about that bit of fun. There is talk of a fun race to be added into the Nationals programme next year, to bring in some light entertainment, could this be a Trapeze Comet match race between Keith and Colin ????? Or if, unusually for a Comet Nationals, the wind is light, Colin could perhaps give us a demonstration of his spinnaker!

That's all on customization for this issue. Next time I will include some photographs I have taken, mostly recently, on restraining dagger boards in a capsized, floating little hawks (keep your Christmas wine bottle corks!), hawk and burgee lie detectors, a guard to protect plastic self-bailers from big feet, how to tow two Comets on one standard trailer etc etc

Compiled by the Editor

Note:

Any queries on the items in parts 1 & 2 should be addressed direct to Colin or Keith:
Colin Boys: 01252 326424, Keith Bullock: 01895 253840

● FIRST SIX AT THE OPEN MEETINGS

NORTHERN AREA

WESTERN AREA

EASTERN AREA

Arden

1	63	Chris Robinson
2	650	Phillip Hossell
3	641	Paul Hinde
4		Brian Herring
5	644	Nigel Ford
6	633	John Edwards

Pingewood

1	626	Len Dean
2	573	Alex Reeve
3	711	Brian Welham
4	150	Robert Hamilton
5	518	Robin Ballam
6	117	Mike Thompson

Littleton

1	573	Alex Reeve
2	353	Guy Wilkins
3	150	Robert Hamilton
4	63	Chris Robinson
5	657	Mark Wilkins
6	159	John Challener

Redesmere

1	633	John Edwards
2	650	Phillip Hossell
3	585	Brian Herring
4	641	Paul Hinde
5	670	Peter Hayes
6	648	Brian Hamilton

Kingsmead

1	626	Len Dean
2	657	Mark Wilkins
3	711	Brian Welham
4	573	Alex Reeve
5	700	John Windibank
6	707	Derek Coleman

Note: 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.

● VOLUNTEERS FOR THE N.E.C. SHOW

At a recent Committee meeting it was decided that once again we will be manning a stand at the National Boat, Caravan & Leisure Show at the N.E.C. in February 1998. The Show will run from Saturday 14th February to Sunday 22nd February 1998 inclusive. As usual, we will be looking for a minimum of four people each day to man the stand, that is two each for the morning and afternoon sessions.

Many of you have helped in the past (and some I know wild horses could not keep away!) but I am sure there are many Comet owners out there who have not yet experienced the enjoyment and fun of meeting the public and sharing with them the excitement of Comet sailing.

So, in an attempt to avoid the usual frantic activity in late January, running up enormous 'phone bills and harassing unsuspecting hibernating Comet sailors, **I am asking for volunteers to contact me.**

WE NEED AT LEAST 36 VOLUNTEERS TO COVER THE NINE DAYS.

With free parking and free entrance, it is a good opportunity to have a look around the rest of the show. Last year at least two of our number bought new Caravans, and no doubt many others went home laden with some new item of equipment.

So now it is up to you. You have the dates so please get out the diaries and then telephone or fax me on 01457 861452 with your preferred times. If the line is busy please keep trying, and if you leave a message on the machine make sure you leave your 'phone number so that I can reach you.

Many thanks and looking forward to hearing from you,

Stuart Gilder.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

JAN - MAR 1998

- January 9 - 18: London Boat Show, Earls Court
- February 14 - 22: Leisure Exhibition, NEC Birmingham
- March 7 - 8: Sailboat 98, Alexandra Palace, London

For your diary:

- May 23 - 25: National Championships, Frensham Pond
- July 25-26: Tidal. Brightlingsea

We have the following information from Brightlingsea: Hopefully some of your members may like to join in with the points series for the rest of the week. We have a Slow handicap start or if you can muster 5 or more entries then you can have your own start. Points racing is from Sunday to Friday sailing round club courses using fixed line starts, each course being specifically designed for any wind direction.

(continued on page 33)

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF COMET 27

(Editor's note: In my recent chat with Colin Boys his comments at times strayed from the customisation of his Comet to his experiences sailing the boat. It seemed a pity to ignore them and with Colin's permission I have made this short article from them)

Colin: I used to sail a Graduate at Frensham and after trying Alan's Comet a couple of times I eventually sold it and bought Comet 27. At first I couldn't convince myself that I'd made the right move. There were things about the Comet I didn't like, I wasn't used to how critical the position of your body in the boat was and how fast you had to respond to it. I'd tended to be a little bit laid back with my sailing, but now I'm in tune with the boat. I move when it wants me to move, most of the time. But on the downwind run, when you're really going, it starts to plane and it lifts and you move back, and it lifts, then it tends to get unstable. I've not really mastered that.

The other thing that took some time to get used to was that, when racing, you pinch on a mark and you get a windshift at the same time and you suddenly find yourself in irons. When I first started racing the Comet, I could blow a position in a race by getting myself into that situation and not being able to get out of it, the Comet does tend to clamp itself into irons and I think it's probably due to the length of the dagger board. Being so deep in the water it actually over-rides the rudder. You can get the situation where the classic "push-push-pull-pull" doesn't work. You can't get yourself out of irons. The trick is to pull the plate up so that the rudder becomes more effective. Then you do the "push-push-pull-pull" and it works. It's a very simple thing to overcome once you know how to do it, but for someone who's new to the boat getting stuck in irons can be very disconcerting. **Alan:** I noticed a boat doing just that just before the finish line in one of the races at the recent Nationals, he lost several places too.

Colin: It's a double edged sword, there is a plus side to it, in a capsized it clamps itself in irons waiting for you to get back in it. In that respect it's a very good boat. It doesn't try to sail off. In that respect it's brilliant.

I've learnt things about climbing in after a capsize. I've described my extra grab straps (Perihelion 44, page 9) but sometimes I can avoid getting wet altogether. I remember Alan when you first had Comet 361 you spent a lot of time trying to find ways of getting in. **Alan:** Yes, John Regnard said he had a good way (Perihelion 32, page 25), involving stepping on the mast. When I tried it the mast went straight down and hit the bottom, and in deep water the boat would certainly have inverted. **Colin:** Ah, I sail at Bala where it's very deep and I've found a way

similar to that but you have to be very quick. When you know you're going over, you step on the mast from the normal sailing position. Just grab the high side, step on the base of the mast, cock your leg over the gunwale and slide round on to the plate, before your body weight has had a chance to invert the boat. I've now sailed my Comet at Bala in gale force winds, with sometimes only two other boats out, and it's got to say something for the boat for me to be out in those conditions. But it must be said that while the winds were strong they were very steady. We didn't have that stirred up wind that you get at Frensham. I'm still very nervous about going out in very strong winds at Frensham because the stirred up wind hits you so fast, it catches you unawares. If the wind changes in strength but is steady in direction I can handle that, but at Frensham you stand on the shore and you watch the wind that comes from the south west, over the trees, drops down on the water and you see this black ring radiating out and it depends where you are what the apparent wind is!

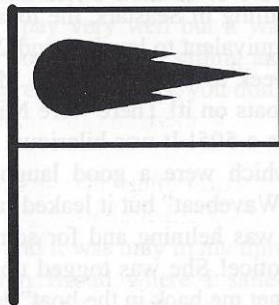
Colin Boys (Comet 27 Frensham Pond S.C.)

COMET FLAG COMPETITION

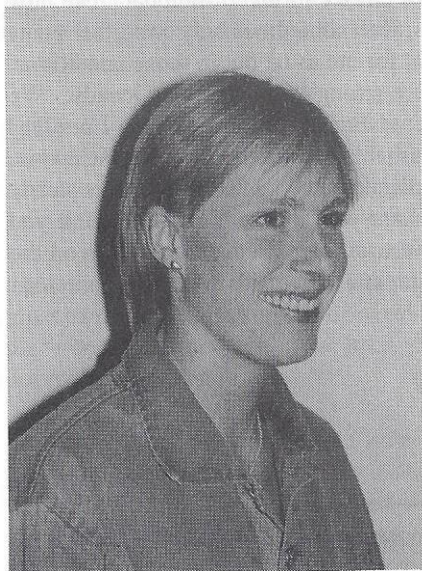
The question whether there should be an official Comet flag was raised at the AGM (item 3, matters arising). This has been agreed by the Committee and a competition for it's design approved. There are absolutely no rules for this competition, anyone may suggest anything, and the Committee will reward promising designs with small prizes. Send your ideas to me before Easter 1988.

To my knowledge the only flag that has been used so far for Comet racing looks like this:

Norah Gould, Secretary



TALKING TO ... HEATHER BACK



(Photo: Anne Browning)

Alan Browning: You recently carried off the Ladies' trophy at the '97 Nationals, in those horrendous winds, and last season you came 9th in the Orbital, 3rd in the Eastern Aphelion and in the Tidals you came 4th, behind only John Challenger and the Wilkins brothers.

Sailing Comet 95 for these two seasons, I had gained the impression that you had joined the Comet scene fairly recently, with an elderly second-hand boat, but Keith Landin told me that you have in fact had Comet 95 since new. When did you start sailing, where did you first see a Comet and what attracted you to the boat?

Heather Back: I started sailing when I went to secondary school, at about 11 or 12. Before that I went out a few times in my uncle's 29 foot yacht and a couple of times in a friend's Wayfarer too, but I didn't really do much until secondary school, where they had a sailing club. With them I had my first real experience of sailing, learning to sail in an Easter holiday in the Medina valley on the Isle of Wight. It was freezing cold, we wore no wet-suits, we got very wet and very cold, sailing in Seastars, the local class of boat. We did the RYA courses of the time, equivalent to levels 1 and 2 now, and when we got back we used to go out once a week to Thames Young Mariners, near Kingston, a tiny water with hundreds of boats on it! There were Mirrors, Toppers and the youngsters were even let loose on a 505! It was hilarious. We did the Surrey schools regattas, about five a year, which were a good laugh. I used to sail, with a girl friend, a Mirror called "Wavebeat" but it leaked rather and we referred to it as "Waveleak"! In one race I was helming and for some reason I fell out of the boat. My crew didn't even notice! She was togged up so much that only her eyes showed! I was shouting "get me back in the boat" but she just didn't notice. I couldn't believe it - - - mad. That sailing club operated in lunch times, evenings, week-ends and holidays, not in school time as is done in some schools nowadays.

It was after a couple of years with the school club that we bought Comet 95. I say we because my father and I decided we wanted to buy a boat (well he paid for it).

He had always wanted to learn to sail so we wanted something that you could just about fit two people in, with relative ease, and something that I could sail on my own, to improve my sailing. We went to the 1987 Boat Show but there wasn't really that much on the market at that time. There were Toppers and Lasers, but I didn't want either of those, I thought the Topper a bit small and there was no way I was going to sail a Laser, I would be totally overpowered in more than a light wind. The Laser Radial was around, but the cost was a bit high. There were also the Streaker and Lightning but we plumped for the Comet because it seemed a reasonable size to handle, it had a good deck size and I could get my dad in there as well, just about. We ordered it then and there, an impulse buy, without even trying one. I didn't know anyone who had one, nobody I met had heard of a Comet. We rigged it up in the garden, looked up at the mast and said "quite tall really" and at that age there was no way I could put the mast in by myself.

Alan: Where did you sail the Comet then ?

Heather: I took it quite a number of times to school events, sailed it quite a bit at TYM and I think this prompted them into buying a number of Comets.

Then I looked for a sailing club. It was difficult, Papercourt didn't want Comets because they didn't have any. There was a Comet at Walton-on-Thames so I joined there, but then A-levels came along and back the Comet went into the back garden , it's spent most of its life in the garden!

At school we did RYA qualifications each year, Seamanship II, Level 5 and the Instructor's certificate, which I did when I was 17. For 6 weeks in the holiday periods in my last year at school and first year at university, I went up to New Galloway in Scotland as a sailing instructor. It didn't pay very well but it was quite an experience. I've now decided that instructing doesn't do my sailing any good. When teaching you play very safe about how you're doing things, you don't take risks and your sailing becomes a bit like that as well.

Alan: And after you left school?

Heather: At University I didn't do much to begin with and it was only in my third year that I decided to sail again. Nearby was Oulton Broad where I sailed sometimes, but we never did any racing, it was always freezing cold too, being away from the Summer season. I did race in a Laser II in the Student Nationals down at Plymouth, that was quite exciting, really windy. There were two fleets, Larks and Laser IIs.

My dad had only sailed it a few times, he was away a lot on business and his enthusiasm hadn't lasted. I did it the right way, he paid for it and I've ended up with it, but it had my birthday engraved on the bow and how could I sell a boat that was built on my birthday! It seemed silly to sell it without really getting to grips with sailing it, so when I started work in Winchester I got out my Perihelion and looked up the list of events (I've kept up my CCA membership all along). The big problem was getting to the meetings. I didn't have a car and had to use my mum's car. That involved travelling to pick up the car and boat as well as travelling to and from the venue. Last season I had to do all my Comet sailing that way, and there was no wind at any of the events I attended except for Glossop.

Then in September of '96 I got my car! Just in time to go to one open meeting in it before the season ended. I did quite well that year, I think I was concentrating better than I am now. Doing quite well made me sail a bit more I think, and I was also getting fed up with doing a lot of crewing. I'd been crewing in a National 12, an ISO and a 505, including going to National Championships in them. I'm not very heavy and in the ISO fleet we must have been the heaviest helm with the lightest crew - a ridiculous combination! But the more experience you get in other boats the better off you are because you learn so much from sailing other boats, you see how other helms work.

At Glossop last year I had a perforated ear drum, gained by scuba diving, and was apprehensive of getting my ear wet. It had been so long since I'd sailed the Comet in a wind that at first I didn't enjoy it at all. As I've said, this season has not been so good, but I'm improving my ability in the stronger winds.

Alan: What about sailing the Comet, have you any sailing tips for us ?

Heather: You just have to get confidence in the boat. When it's blowing, you always know you're going to capsize at some point. **Alan:** Oh, ! **Heather:** My biggest fear is capsizing. I hate capsizing, and when I went to Glossop it blew hard and that was one of the reasons I was afraid of capsizing because I hadn't sailed it in a blow since I was little. I learned when I was younger how to right the boat. You can't get to the dagger board when you're small, because the boat floats so high in the water! I used to climb up inside, step on the mast step and get over. I'm sure it's not very good for the boat **Alan:** When I've tried that the mast goes to the bottom. **Heather:** It didn't do that with me, but at fifteen I was lighter than I am now. Now I don't have any problem at all getting it upright because I'm that much taller, I just reach up and grab the dagger board, it's really easy to flip up. To get in I just put my hands on the side and push down. I'm light and my arms are strong enough. In a capsize, my tip is to ensure you hold on to the mainsheet, especially downwind. In a windward capsize, if the boom sticks up in the air you can pull it down with the mainsheet.

The thing to learn about the Comet is how to control it downwind when it blows because they rock so much. I find that the best thing to do is to keep the boom in a bit. I let the kicker off a little bit but have the other controls hard on. And if you go for your gybes you will come out a lot better, but I'm not good at that. The key is to practise. I haven't done so well when there have been strong winds and for the Nationals this year I had to get my act together. I went with John Challenger and Glynn Jung out on the sea to practise running. It made a lot of difference, it just made me more confident when there are waves. The majority of Comet sailors sail inland and I think they get scared about going out on the sea. But it's actually a lot easier I think. It's a lot more pleasant than sailing inland, it's much more fun. The winds are much steadier and you know much more where the wind's coming from. OK, you have to worry about the tides, but you don't have to worry too much if the racing's organised properly. I always thought that Comets nose-dived a lot but I've had fewer problems with that on the sea than I have inland. I only did it once at Herne Bay. A problem I do have is on a run when I'm sitting right back, I find it difficult to control the rudder from that position. My arms give out. And I have a problem adjusting the controls when beating because the cleats come straight backwards. It would be nicer if they were angled. Because I'm small, I have to hike out so much and to adjust the controls from there is difficult. It would be really nice if the controls could be led to both sides.

Alan: What about light winds ? I find that off the wind the dagger board gets in the way.

Heather: Yes, most of the time it's easier with the board down but sometimes you go a bit faster if you lift it up a little bit. The trouble with light winds is that a lot of helms tend to pump the boat. It's rather frustrating. **Alan:** Yes, I believe that the race officers were concerned about this at Pingewood recently and from my position at the back of the fleet I did see some of the leading boats waving their masts considerably. **Heather:** The trouble is none of us are brave enough to say anything about it. It happens in all classes but as Comet sailors we're all too laid back about these things. We let certain people get away with it, nobody plucks up courage to do anything about it. **Alan:** Yes, I remember a few years ago I was watching a race at Pingewood, and there was a dead patch behind an island just in front of the clubhouse. Some of the leaders came up to the patch, waggled their sails a few times and sailed on at the same speed, I videoed some of it too. The rest of the fleet slowed up a lot. But the thing that worries me more is something that is, I believe, legal. This is where two boats connive and the one ahead sails to cover the one behind, who tacks frequently to avoid the cover. This makes it legal for the one ahead to tack frequently. So they both do almost continuous roll-tacking and pass through the fleet to the front. I don't know the answer to this one, but I do have a good video I took at a Graduate open meeting

at Chipstead when it looked as if that was going on, in fact many of the leaders were doing it. To me it is a pity that that is legal, but if it's OK for the leaders, so it is too for the rest of us. **Heather:** Last year I did well in light winds. I think I concentrated more than some other people plus I've got a weight advantage. I'm not a great one for seeing where to go when, my tactics are awful, I don't have any!

Alan: You're the ladies champion now, have you anything to say to other lady Comet helms, and there are quite a number now, to encourage them?

Heather: It's good to see that there are more of us now. We need to encourage more ladies to come to the Nationals. I think they get a bit scared off, but it's not something we should be scared of. We should be on fairly equal terms with the men, especially if the winds are light, there we've got a bit of an advantage. The only disadvantage is that we're not so strong in the stronger winds, we haven't got the physical strength. I'm all for encouraging the ladies to sail the Comet because it's that intermediate boat. If you go in a Laser you've got to be big and burly, if you go in a Topper you've got to be small and agile. It suits the majority of ladies to sail a Comet, and I think we need more ladies for the Comet, and we all stand as good a chance as anybody else. **Alan:** At Frensham, where the Nationals will be next year, a third of our Comets are owned by ladies. **Heather:** For me it's the ideal boat, unless I go to a double-hander, which is the other thing I'm thinking about. I think with a lot of ladies they need the confidence, they need to go out and sail a bit more and I think that the fact that there are a couple of us nearer the front than there have been might give more ladies the confidence that if we can do it - - -. I've got an outstanding respect for Diana Thompson because she's done amazingly well this year. I was very impressed that at the Nationals she went out, every race, and she didn't reef once. She's got her confidence now.

Alan: It has seemed to me that not a great number of Comet sailors can sail well in strong winds,. The Comet is nearly a Topper length and weight boat with a Laser sized sail. What do you think about this, do you think the Comet is over-canvassed?

Heather: I don't think there are many who can cope with it in strong winds but is that because of the group of people who are sailing Comets? The majority are older men. There's a lot of power in a Comet but if you can depower it well, you can control it. I think much of it is experience. By the end of the Nationals I felt more in control than at the beginning and that was after just four races. I wouldn't say that it's hugely over-canvassed but we don't get enough experience in stronger winds.

The Comet is not very easy to sail reefed. I think this is because of how the sail is wrapped around the mast. On one tack you have the sail flat against the mast but on the other side there is a bubble of dead air. If you're going out in a blow you want to flatten the sail but you can't because of its shape, it is always slightly baggy. I've found that for beating it is easier to sail full sail, with everything in tight, sailing it up into wind all the time, than with a reefed sail.

When it's windy I hardly hike out at all, because I get too tired. I spend most of my time edging it up into wind, pinching all the time. It does tend to stall quite a bit, and you are bearing away and heading up all the time. The other thing is that being so short I can't get my toe-straps sorted out to hike out properly. The problem in hiking in stronger winds is getting in and out from that position. If you've got good control of your quadriceps muscles to pull yourself in and out you can sit so that you're hanging on the edge. You're better off that way, but I find that when I sit on the deck I'm more likely to slide off when I hike out. **Alan:** What I've noticed is that a lot of people sail heeled 15 to 20 degrees and if they sail into a header, up comes the mast and the roll helps them come in. **Heather:** The boat obviously goes better the flatter it is, but it's hard work leaning out all the time. It does your stomach muscles and legs in. I'm sure it's better for your back if you're over the edge, but to do that, if you have short legs, you need the toe-strap to be loose. That may be all right on the beat but when you go downwind it's a nightmare with a loose toe-strap, you can end up disappearing over the transom! What I need is an adjustable toe-strap, adjustable on the water. I don't honestly know what the answer is to toe-straps.

Alan: We have heard how the Mino is easier to handle in strong winds, and in the recent Nationals, Elliot Willis showed what can be done with one. Can you see a future for the Mino in Comet racing?

Heather: I think the Mino is a very good move for the Comet class. I think it's a way forward in encouraging people into the class and it gives people more scope. It's exactly the same as having a Radial rig on the Laser and it should be thought of in the same way. I remember the argument at the AGM last year, people were very anti the Mino rig and I just didn't understand why because it's the way forward to get people into the class. The situation with boats at the moment is that there are so many boats on the market that they're crying out to a very small audience. So you need to keep your options open as wide as possible, you need to get people into the class, you need to get young people into the class, and for those of us who aren't quite so big and find it difficult, it is another option. I haven't sailed a Mino but on the strength of how Elliott did at the Nationals, it's obviously a very well-balanced boat, perhaps better than the Comet is. Having a smaller rig would make it an easier boat to sail, but are you looking for an easier boat to sail or a challenging boat to sail? That's the choice, easy or challenging.

With the Mino available we now have that choice. **Alan:** I'm a novice, and from my point of view I don't want to tackle a challenging boat until I can control an easier boat. When learning a musical instrument you don't tackle a concerto until you've played a great deal of easy music, in particular studies to bring in the difficulties gradually. **Then** having a high level of skill, challenges are fun. **Heather:** I think the Mino fills this gap. I think it's really good and we should promote it. **Alan:** The thing about it seems to be how it fits in administratively, the only question is whether it's an alternative rig allowed for the Comet or whether it's a separate boat. **Heather:** It should be like the Lasers do it, the Radial is a separate boat. We should be sailing together, as we're doing at the moment, but the Mino should be classed differently. We shouldn't be having Mino opens because we haven't the numbers to do that. Obviously you shouldn't be allowed to change rigs during a racing event. **Alan:** If the Mino is a separate class then it must have a different handicap yardstick. **Heather:** Yes, the Laser Radial has its own yardstick. **Alan:** Do you think there is any sense in separate starts for Minos in combined events? We do that at Frensham with novices and it means it's quite clear who you're racing against. **Heather:** It depends on how many Minos there are, with half a dozen or more it could make sense.

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

Heather: I think we should be starting to do joint events with the other Comet boats, the Duo and Trio, not just think about it for the millenium, but before that. For joint meetings a lot of space on the water would be needed, so they would probably have to be at sea venues. The Laser double-handed boats do meetings together and the Topper lot do the same, 3 or 4 opens a year. They are huge events. **Alan:** What do the manufacturers get out of it ? **Heather:** People intermingle and sail different boats, and if they change boat it is more likely to be in the same group, they are less likely to go and buy, say, a Lark.

I think we need to get more young people promoting the Comet. I would like to offer my services, perhaps assisting at the boat shows. At those shows you don't see many young people manning the stands.

Thinking of the social side, at meetings everyone chats to each other but we don't actually do much together. Most other classes do a lot of things in the evenings, nobody wants to do that in our class. At Staunton Harold for example, even when we were there on site, in the evening there were only 10 left at the club, all the rest went off, the karaoke was not well supported at all, it was very embarrassing I thought. **Alan:** I take your point. For next year's Nationals I am liasing with the

venue and hopefully Frensham will lay on something that we will want to support. One light-hearted suggestion, not accepted by the organising committee, was for everyone to have their first six pints free !!!!!

Alan: Thanks Heather for coming all that way to have this little chat. I hope our readers will find it as interesting and thought provoking as I have.

14 COMETS AT BANBURY, AND MINE'S A MINO

I find myself in total agreement with Tony Thomas in his reply to John Regnard (Perihelion No. 44) concerning the Mino.

Tony mentions the current 'unhealthy trend', where sailors feel constrained to buy boats which are over-canvased for their level of skill, weight and strength. This attitude is manifest particularly amongst youngsters. Teenagers often want unsuitable boats, and I have seen this result in an individual ending up not sailing at all, since he became totally discouraged at clearly not being able to cope with his chosen boat. It is my belief that the most important factor when choosing a boat is to tailor it as far as possible to the capabilities of the individual - obvious you might think ! - but considerations such as peer pressure or the desire to own a trendy boat often override good sense.

At Banbury Sailing Club we now have 14 Comets, which presently race within the Menagerie Fleet. We are endeavouring to raise the profile of the Class, and the Mino will be part of that process. For very light sailors such as myself the full Comet rig is out of the question in most conditions.

Growth at local club level is vitally important for the overall health of the Comet Class, and too purist an attitude from the top Comet sailors can be counter-productive in this respect. In spite of negative thinking my feeling is that the Mino will eventually play a lively role in Comet expansion.

Janet Mansfield Comet 218 (Mino)

KINGSMEAD OPEN

The final round of the Travellers Series took place on October 19th at Kingsmead.

A modest fleet of twenty boat owners signed on, fifteen visitors and five from the host club. The forecast of mist and widely spaced isobars may have influenced the lower-than-usual turn-out, and the weather behaved exactly to plan. The early mist gave way to a fine sunny day and the autumn colours of the surrounding trees reflected prettily on the lake, which was barely disturbed by passing breezes. Throughout the day Duty Officer Ken Price had a job on his hands.

Locals Nigel Price and Len Dean eased very slowly into the lead from the start of race 1, ahead of Mark Wilkins, Alex Reeve, Brian Welham and Derek Coleman, while a large part of the fleet were left struggling to reach the line. Len rounded the first mark 25 minutes later, 2 minutes ahead of Mark and followed by Nigel, Alex, Derek and Brian. Len kept the advantage as the race ran its allotted time and the other leading places did not change.

Fortified by a wide choice of home-cooked punches, race 2 provided drama in slow-motion for the home supporters club. Alex and Mark were first away from a very short start line under the clubhouse patio, followed by Nigel, John Windibank and Sue Laming. Len Dean bumped mastheads with Robin Ballam and was left, apparently dead and buried, doing turns from which he emerged eventually in 8th place. The leading duo opened an increasing lead on those following who traded places amongst themselves. The followers also showed Len where the dead holes were and, with the benefit of local knowledge, he gradually picked his way up the board until he was in 3rd place at the end of the third leg, two and a half minutes in arrears. Finally he eased into the lead and secured the day's honours just before the 4th mark. Speeded up ten-thousand fold, such action could have given Murray Walker a coronary! Mark Wilkins finished 2nd followed by Alex Reeve, well ahead of John Windibank, Nigel Price and Sue Laming.

Only seven boats came to the line for the final race. Brian Welham was the first to show movement in the right direction, but was overhauled by Nigel Price by the first mark. The other boats arrived there in a tight bunch, from which Derek Coleman and Sue Laming emerged in 3rd and 4th places. Brian again took the lead for a time until Nigel's local knowledge found him some favourable "pressure" under overhanging trees, returning him to the front until the finish, half a lap completed, followed by Brian, John Windibank, Robin Ballam and Derek.

The spectators enjoyed a relaxing day in the sunshine, the competitors had a cramped day crouched in the front of their boats, concentrating for all they were worth, and the duty team did their best in the conditions. Well done to all concerned.

Our new Chairman, Henry Jagers, recovering from appendix removal, presented the Travellers Series awards at the end of the day.

Geoff Kempton, Single-handers fleet captain, Kingsmead S.C.

Overall Results:

1	626	Len Dean	Kingsmead
2	657	Mark Wilkins	Chipstead
3	456	Nigel Price	Kingsmead
4	711	Brian Welham	Taplow Lake
5	573	Alex Reeve	Taplow Lake
6	700	John Windibank	Chipstead

1st Lady: 300 Sue Laming Kingsmead

1st Veteran: 711 Brian Welham Taplow Lake

Brightlingsea note: (continued from page 21)

Racing is on the Colne/Blackwater estuary with launching at any state of the tide, courses ranging from 3 to 16 miles in length and is organised by separating fleets for morning and afternoon starts, usually alternating from morning starts one day to afternoon starts the next day. If one race a day is not enough, you may be able to enter the handicap race sailed with the opposite group of fleets. This year 138 boats took part with starts for Lasers, Hornets, Contenders, Fireballs, Mirrors, Cataramans, ISO etc. plus fast, slow and cadet handicap starts. This year we hosted the Signet nationals during PYEFLEET WEEK having 6 points races, a single handed race and crews race. We expect to see some return next year after having a great time.

On the social side the emphasis is on good class family entertainment which is provided every night in the large clubhouse. This year the club booked a Karaoke, 2 live bands, jazz band, family disco and a cabaret night (not to be missed) For the too young to sail there was a pirates club each morning with a film each afternoon. The galley is open for breakfasts, lunches and an evening meal so you won't go hungry.

The real bonus for small fleets is cost. This years entry fee for the week was £40 for a two man boat and £30 for a single hander. Cadets can sail for £20 all for a fun family weeks sailing and discounts for 2 entries for the same helm.

● ARDEN OPEN

Twelve Comets competed at Arden (near Worcester) on 14th September. This was the second time Arden Sailing Club had hosted a Comet Open and thankfully there was more wind than last year's drift. Perhaps this is what happens when you become part of the Northern series instead of the West!

Helms travelled from as far as Cheshire and Northamptonshire to race on one of the most attractive and picturesque stretches of the river Avon.

Starting in two flights, down river into a brisk westerly which appeared to come from all directions at the distance mark the first race was won by Phil Hossell from Evesham with Chris Robinson of Tamworth 2nd and Paul Hinde, Middle Nene, 3rd.

By the second race the wind had started to drop, becoming decidedly fickle in certain stretches. Chris Robinson beat Phil Hossell into 2nd place with Paul Hinde 3rd. Although the forecast had predicted wind increasing during the afternoon it continued to lessen to a force 2 at best. In the third and last race of the day Paul Hinde came first closely followed by Chris Robinson and Phil Hossell coming third.

The overall placings were:

1 st	63	Chris Robinson	Tamworth
2 nd	650	Phil Hossell,	Evesham
3 rd	641	Paul Hinde	Middle Nene
4 th		Brian Herring	Winsford Flash
5 th	644	Nigel Ford	Chase
6 th	633	John Edwards	Chester

Clive Marlow (Comet 408)

● PERIHELION

The next issue of Perihelion will be circulated in March 1998. Contributions to me by the end of February please.

Alan Browning, Editor

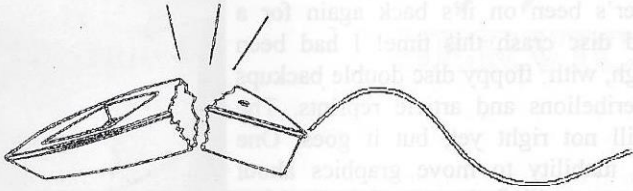
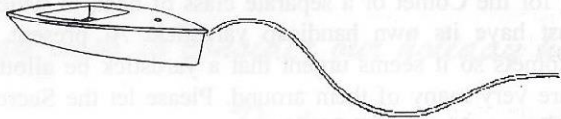
IDEAS PLEASE !

1. If you have a small leak in the hull, how do you find it? detergent and an air line ?
2. How do you get rid of odours in rubber boots, some use bleach etc

I know we have some boffins out there, so when you renew your subscription can we have the benefit of your knowledge on paper, please.

Derek Coleman, Treasurer

Editor's note: Replies to Derek's questions don't really come into the "Customising your Comet" category but perhaps can be collected under the heading "Comet helpful hints".



EDITOR'S NOTES

I apologise for this issue coming to you later than usual. All was proceeding well when I realised that having prepared the text for the quorum issue (page 38) I could not proceed further without having it vetted by the Committee. This was done and a ballot paper for this is on page 39, on the back of the membership renewal form.

You will find the Association membership renewal form as a part of the newsletter this time (page 40). This means that you can't mislay it, and I am sure Derek would wish me to urge you to renew your membership soon.

In this issue you will find another lot of ideas for customizing your Comet, including two rated "Z" this time! More next time. Thank you Janet Mansfield and Colin Boys for your articles, which are much appreciated. The results of the photographic competition will be in the next issue.

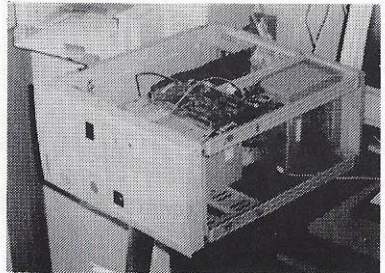
I had a very interesting chat with our ladies champion, Heather Back. She supports the Mino as a separate boat, like the Laser Radial is to the Laser, but sailing with Comet fleets. The Mino can only be one of two things, an accepted alternative rig for the Comet or a separate class of boat, in which case, like the Radial, it must have its own handicap yardstick. At present Minos are not accepted as Comets so it seems urgent that a yardstick be allotted to the Mino before there are very many of them around. Please let the Secretary know how Minos are handicapped in your club.

Alan Browning, Editor



P.S.

(My computer's been on it's back again for a week, a hard disc crash this time! I had been prudent though, with floppy disc double backups of all my Perihelions and article reprints. The machine's still not right yet, but it goes. One oddity is an inability to move graphics about accurately, so you will find most of the heading ellipses are the same size, I daren't change them!)



WE NEED A QUORUM !

At the 1997 AGM concern was expressed on whether we have been having a quorum of members at our AGMs. Our Constitution specifies (in paragraph 7f) that we must have one-third of the Association membership present for any decisions on changes to our Constitution or Measurement Rules to be valid. If not a postal ballot must be made of the full membership.

You should all have a copy of the Comet Class Association Constitution but, just in case, the relevant parts, paragraphs 5f and 7f, are reprinted opposite. These paragraphs are unchanged since the original Constitution (to be found in the newsletter issue 1, Dec 86), except that in paragraph 5f "National Association Rules" has been corrected to "National Association Constitution".

Attendances at AGMs

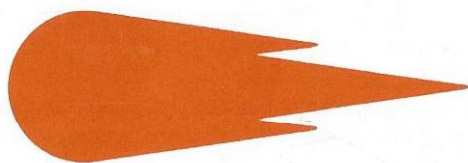
The number of members attending AGMs has doubled in the period from 1989 to 1997, from about 20 to about 40. The total membership was over 100 in 1989 and over 200 in 1997, so we have been getting no more than 20% of the membership attending AGMs. The Constitution, specifying a quorum of one-third, demanded at least 33 in 1989 and 67 this year. At the first two AGMs, 1987 and 1988, the total membership might have been as low as 60, but numbers then grew rapidly.

There have been no postal ballots, as is required by paragraph 7f of the Constitution, so that **strictly all of the decisions that have ever been made at AGMs that affect the Constitution and Measurement Rules were invalid.**

However, the meetings were conducted in good faith and all present treated the voting as binding. Most people have been very happy with the decisions that have been made and they work well as far as we know.

To regularise the position, the Committee have decided to make two simple recommendations to members, as we are permitted to do (see paragraph 5f). These are firstly that paragraph 7f be changed forthwith to reduce the quorum from one-third to one-tenth of the membership and secondly that the decisions made at past AGMs shall stand.

For these changes to the Constitution to be made they must be carried by a majority vote at a General Meeting (paragraph 7e). There being little likelihood of achieving a General Meeting of over 67 members at this or any other time, the Committee wish to go straight to a postal ballot of the full membership.



Comet Class Association

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association