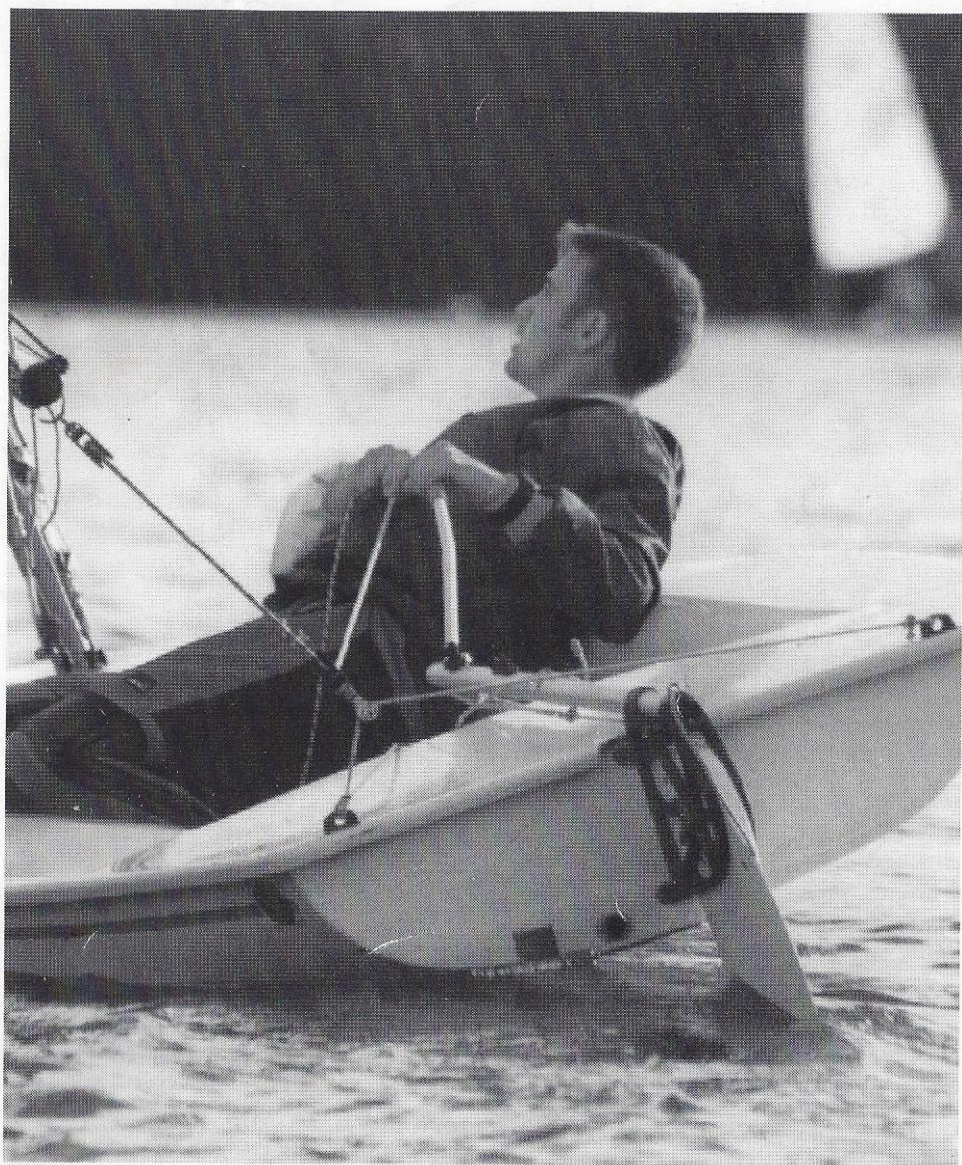


PERIHELION

 46

Spring 1998



Comet Class Association Newsletter

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 46 SPRING 1998

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Front cover:

Simon Thompson at the Kingsmead open meeting, 1995

(Photo: Anne Browning)

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

A very Happy New Year to you all!

By the time you read this, that may seem an inappropriate greeting though it seems right to me. After all, whether racing, cruising, or just messing around in boats, it will be the start of the year for most of us. Let's make it our best one yet!

We have a really bumper programme organised for you with more open meetings than ever, including a couple of new venues and the welcome return of others. Please give them your support, they all deserve it.

Our National Championship will be a very good excuse to get away for the Spring Bank Holiday. It's an inland venue and easily accessible for most of us: Frensham Pond. As you will see from the enclosed details, the club is putting on an excellent three day programme both on and off the water. Please join us there and help make this our biggest and best Nationals ever!

The Tidal Championship at Brightlingsea should be well worth a visit at the end of July. Most of us don't get enough practice on the sea in our Comets but it's always great fun to have a go. This year we have more opens on tidal waters - Chester (it is a river but believe me the state of the tide has a major influence), Hillhead, Hampton Pier, and Mudeford - so perhaps Comets are becoming more popular for sea sailing, I certainly hope so.

I am hoping to attend many events myself this season. It's hard to think of a full day out which costs less or offers better value for money than an open meeting, even including the travelling. Most venues have very agreeable settings, some indeed are in areas of outstanding natural beauty, and often there are other attractions nearby if your family, or you, don't want to spend the whole day at the club. Look forward to seeing you there! I have produced a pocket programme (credit card size if folded) for you to remind you of the dates, a copy should be enclosed with this issue.

We had a very good time at the National Boat Caravan and Leisure Show. It's a big undertaking but more than worthwhile. We all enjoyed meeting old, and new, friends, and chatting over news of our various clubs, etc. We took a few membership subs, had quite a lot of interest from prospective Comet sailors and newcomers to the sport, and I have just heard that at least one new boat was ordered as a direct result of our efforts. Well done everyone and many thanks for your help! I'm writing this just before our exhibit at SailBoat weekend which I will report on next time.

This Perihelion includes the notice for the AGM. I would be particularly pleased to see some non-racing members present and hear any ideas you might have to promote your interests further. You will see that this year we have a proposal for a minor change to the Measurement Rules and also that the Committee have felt it right to grant a dispensation for you to try out the change before the meeting should you so desire: full details will be found later in this issue. Do please try to attend even if you are not taking part in the Championship. Also remember that if you really cannot attend, but would still like your voice heard, you can appoint a proxy by notice in writing to the Class Secretary prior to the meeting.

What can we do to encourage new people into sailing and to keep them interested? It's a question you hear all too often round the clubs and class associations these days. Yes, there may still be waiting lists at a few favoured clubs but most have to work very hard to maintain their membership numbers. And as for the bewildering choice of boats these days, need I say more. Also with such a wide choice of other activities available, even when people try sailing they all too often drift away after only a year or two. So what can we do? Well I'm looking to you for ideas as much as offering them myself. At my own club, we find the most effective way to sign up new members is through our Sailing School. Of course, all our instructors, myself included, give their time on a voluntary basis so they are not always available but it's great fun and I would recommend it to anyone. Indeed, I suspect we could all find someone to share our own sailing pleasures and skills with, whether they (or us) are complete newcomers, novices, or seasoned racers/cruisers. Certainly we must be as helpful and friendly as possible at all times, both on and off the water. Generally speaking, Comet sailors are very good at this.

Good Sailing,

Henry Jagers, Chairman

COMET CAM CLEATS

Proposed change to Class Measurement Rules

A proposal is to be put to the AGM for an amendment to Rule 16.a.iii of the Class Measurement Rules. The change would give slightly more latitude for the placement of the three deck mounted cleats whilst retaining the original aim of the rule.

Intention of the change

The intention of the proposed change is to allow a wider choice of cleat types. In

particular it would provide enough space to fit small camcleats. Note that, to comply with the new rule, any type of cleats used must, as now, have an integral fairlead which will retain the rope even when uncleated.

Committee comments

The clamcleats currently fitted are often criticised in that their grip deteriorates rather rapidly with use and even when new they do not hold reliably on some types of line. Although in the present Rule it is stated that there is a free choice of cleat type, the measurement restrictions in the same Rule do not actually allow room for other than clamcleats.

The builder has already fitted camcleats instead of the original clamcleats on some recent new boats and has retrofitted them to others. The cleats he has used and recommends are RWO Servo Cleats, model SC11, on angled wedges, with front and rear mount fairleads. They hold the lines securely yet can be operated over a wide range of exit angles: both aspects contributing to the overall safety of the boat. However, the minimum space needed to mount three of these cleats fails outside that permitted by Rule 16.a.iii.



Camcleats

These new cleats appear to be very effective and have the approval of the Committee subject to amendment of the Rule by the AGM.

Dispensation

In view of the present situation, the Committee, acting under Rule 6.b. of the Class Measurement Rules, grants the following dispensation to any owner who wishes to try these, or similar cleats. The dispensation applies until midnight on 25th May 1998 (the end of the last day of the 1998 National Championships). The Committee will accept no liability for the cost of any such modification or of the necessary reversal should the proposal be not accepted by the AGM.

If you already have the new cleats, or intend to fit them or something similar, your modification shall comply with the following, a copy of which should be attached to your Measurement Certificate:-

The Comet Class Association grants the following dispensation valid until midnight 25th May 1998: In Rule 16.a.iii. of the Comet Class Measurement Rules, "40mm" be replaced with "75mm".

Norah Gould, Class Secretary

BALLOT ON THE QUORUM QUESTION

Results of the national ballot.

You will recall that the question of the percentage of members needed to create a quorum was raised at the AGM, and that you were asked to vote on the subject when returning your membership renewal forms.

The results for each resolution were as follows:

1. That the quorum referred to in paragraph 7f of the Comet Class Association Constitution be altered from 'one-third of the current membership' to 'one-tenth of the current membership'

46 in favour, 2 against

2. That this alteration is to apply retrospectively to all past General Meetings up to and including the 1997 AGM

44 in favour, 1 against

There were 8 abstentions.

The new rules will be included in the constitution. This result does not include the views of all members as only those forms which were returned within the two weeks allowed by the constitution could be counted. However, it does indicate a strong feeling that the change was needed.

The original Committee of the Association set the figure at one third to prevent a vociferous minority of sailors from ruling the class, possibly to the detriment of the majority of Comet sailors. The current Committee feels that there are already sufficient safeguards in place. All motions to be considered are circulated to members in advance, and no tabled motions can be voted on at General Meetings. Even if a member is unable to attend a meeting, their views can be expressed if they wish to write to the Secretary.

Elsewhere you will find the notice of this year's Annual General Meeting. I hope that as many of you as possible will take part in it.

Norah Gould Class Secretary

REVIEW OF 1997 RESULTS

PLUS WHO AND WHAT TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN 1998.

My thanks go to Henry who put together a 1997 results summary in the last issue of Perihelion as my commitments prevented me from putting pen to paper, or rather fingers to keyboard prior to that issue's publishing deadline.

Anyway, enough waffle and tell us what sort of year it was, I hear you say. 1997 proved to be yet another successful year for Comet racing. The total number of competitors that entered the events throughout the year was 435, slightly down on 1996, but the average per event increased to just short of 20 as there was one less event. Fortunately for me, but probably unfortunately for you (the readers of this article), yours truly does feature more than his fair share. So, where you see the initials, "PH", that is me.

Who did the most travelling ? Derek Coleman competed at 16 events, as did PH. Next highest in the mileage stakes was Paul Hinde (or more to the point his Mum or Dad drove whilst Paul only had to sail !) with 13. Attending 12 events were Alex Reeve, Mark Wilkins and Robin Ballam, followed by Brian Welham and Chris Robinson making 11.

Littleton had the highest attendance again (36) even though down on the previous year, as were Chipstead, Crawley, Aylesbury and Kingsmead. However, attendances increased at several of the previously not so well attended venues - Cotswold, Pingewood, Chester, and Combs. Attendances are on the increase for the North and West areas - watch out all you sailors in the East !

NORTH

Five events and five different winners. Well done to the winners who were, Henry Jaggars (Chester), Steve Heyes (Glossop), Peter Hayes (Combs), Chris Robinson (Arden) and John Edwards (Redesmere). The area was not decided until the last event when PH with his consistency having achieved four 2nd places won the area by one point from Peter Hayes (2nd), with John Edwards (3rd) and Steve Heyes (4th). If Henry or Chris Robinson had managed more events, who knows who would have won ?

SOUTH

Like the North, this area produced five different winners, with again the area decided at the final event. Robert Hamilton produced a devastating piece of sailing at the Taplow Lake event. With having to sail five shorter races and four to

count, Robert won four of them to leave the fleet in awe at his domination of the event. It's a pity that Robert only managed one other event (3rd at Frensham) in this area. Other winners were, Jake Sutton (Frensham), Alex Reeve (Aylesbury), John Challener (Mudeford) and Mark Wilkins (Seafarers). With Jake and John only competing in the events that they won, the area battle was between Alex and Mark. With Mark's win at the final event, he beat Alex by one point with Brian Welham in third and Robin Ballam in fourth.

EAST

Only four different winners in this area. Simon Thompson kicked off with a victory over Mark Wilkins, thanks to the new rules, at Fishers Green in the opening event. Then came victory for Alex Reeve over Simon Thompson and Robert Hamilton at Crawley Mariners. A notable name popped up to win at Chipstead in the form of Guy Wilkins, with Andrew Bowes second and Alex third. Alex responded by winning at Littleton, ahead of Guy in 2nd and Robert in 3rd. Come the final event at Kingsmead, the only ones able to catch Alex in his quest for the area trophy were Guy, Simon or Robert. Kingsmead was won in conditions ranging from wind strengths of zero to nothing by Len Dean from Mark Wilkins (2nd), Brian Welham (3rd) and Alex (4th). Alex duly won the area, with Mark in 2nd, Simon (3rd), and John Windibank (4th).

WEST

49 different members entered this area (a record I believe). Just like the North and South areas, there were five different event winners, Jake Sutton (Shearwater), Alex Reeve (Sutton Bingham), Paul Govier (Merthyr Tydfil), Mark Wilkins (Cotswold), and Len Dean (Pingewood). All the winners except Alex and Paul (who did two each) only competed in the one event. It was disappointing that there were only four qualifiers for the area. Winner was PH, followed by Derek Coleman (2nd), Bob Presley (3rd) and Paul Hinde (4th).

ORBITAL

The Orbital Trophy was already won before the last event at Kingsmead, for his first time of possibly many by Alex Reeve. Although his championship results were not up to his usually high standard, he did achieve four victories (Aylesbury, Crawley, Littleton and Sutton Bingham), and two 2nd's (Frensham and Pingewood) and won the Eastern Aphelion Trophy. Runner-up, a point behind Alex was last year's champion, Mark Wilkins with wins at Seafarers, Cotswold and the Inland Championships at Staunton Harold plus the Southern Aphelion Trophy champion. In 3rd place was PH, a consistent performance without any victories but including four 2nd places plus winner of the Northern and Western Aphelion Trophies.

John Challenger, our 1997 National Champion, came 4th overall. This was a remarkable result considering that he only took part in six events. His only other victory was at Mudeford where he seems to be unbeatable. Next came John Edwards from Chester in 5th place who only entered seven meetings but showed great consistency in all races that he took part in. Robert Hamilton, our youngest qualifier, was 6th, but who knows where he could have been if he had entered a couple more events.

“You do not have to be young to do well,” as the next three will testify in the shape of John Windibank (7th), Derek Coleman (8th), and Brian Welham (9th). In 10th and 11th spots were Chris Robinson and Simon Thompson, both of whom achieved one event win each. Robin Ballam had an excellent season in 12th position showing great resolve to survive when it blows and great patience when it doesn't.

Paul Hinde (13th) had an improved season that got better as the season went on, recording a 3rd at Arden (plus a race win) and a 4th at Redesmere. Crawley was next represented in the form of Michael Thompson (14th) and Paul Luttman (15th). Paul was the most consistent sailor of all in achieving one 9th, and five 10th positions.

Top lady was Ros Stevenson from Winsford Flash in 16th. Well done Ros ! The two Barrys were next, O'Herlihy (17th) and Sandle (18th). Two more ladies, Diana Thompson (19th) and Fiona Cauter (20th) made up our total of twenty qualifiers, the same number as 1996.

Top club representation went to Crawley Mariners with six qualifiers, followed by Chipstead with four and Taplow Lake with Three. As I mentioned earlier, the North and West are becoming more competitive with five qualifiers this year as opposed to three last year. You have been warned !

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR 1998 ?

We did not have as many lady qualifiers in 1997. Come on ladies, let's get back to the 1996 levels and see you pushing those men. Two of our recent Ladies Champions, Heather Back (1997) and Heidi Dodd (1995/6) will have represented the Comets at the Draycote Silver Salver (along with John Challenger and Chris Robinson) by the time you read this article. We hope they did us proud.

Who should we look out for in 1998 ? Obviously, top of the list must be John Challenger. After winning the Tiduals in 1996 and Nationals in 1997 he will be posing a threat everywhere he goes. Robert Hamilton, the current Junior Champion, showed that with his magnificent display on home soil (sorry, water) at Taplow Lake that he is capable of beating the best.

John Edwards is capable of showing us the way in the light airs as is of course our illustrious chairman, Henry. Don't forget our other "golden oldies" in the form of Derek Coleman and Robin Ballam who always seem to "lock horns" whenever they are on the water together. Keep apart guys and good racing.

Chris Robinson, Simon Thompson and Paul Hinde are my tips for a better season. All three showed excellent form at some stage of last season and with more consistency they will be there or thereabouts.

Alex Reeve and Mark Wilkins probably can't wait to recommence battle in 1998. Strong competition for them both may come from the likes of Jake Sutton, Len Dean, Guy Wilkins or Steve Cook if they all compete in a few more events.

Four extra Open Meetings are on the 1998 calendar. Each area will have six events with four to count for each Aphelion area plus of course the Nationals at Frensham Pond and the Tidals at Brightlingsea. In order to keep the results up to date, can I please appeal to all open meeting venue contacts to send me their event's full results as soon as possible to my home address (see inside cover).

May 1998 be our best ever season, and good luck to everyone. Good sailing !

Phillip Hossell (Comet 650, Evesham S.C.)

MINO HANDICAP AND MARKING

My club, Glossop S.C., very sensibly, lets me sail in handicaps with either rig at the normal Comet handicap and I would not wish it otherwise.

I was sorry to see in a recent photo that Andrew is marking the hull as a "Comet Mino" when he sells one with the Mino rig. What happens when the owner fits the full rig and starts mixing it with the macho boys! The hull is a Comet, whatever the rig!

Tony Thomas (Comet 527, Glossop S.C.)

● CUSTOMIZING YOUR COMET - PART 3

Here are some more ideas for making your Comet suit you better. This time a few photographs I've taken, mostly in 1997, and one non-racing idea.

Sometimes it is necessary to refer to modifications described in parts 1 and 2. This is done by, for example, "P/H44, page 7, item 1".

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

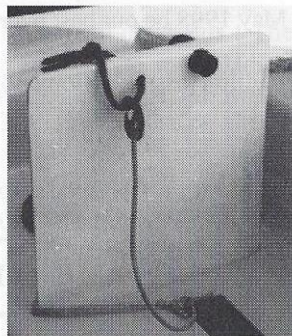
Y: Believed to be out of class

Z: Definitely out of class.

Restraining dagger boards in a capsized (item 26, code B)

Tony Thomas has written in about this, but the photograph is of Colin Boys' version. Tony writes:

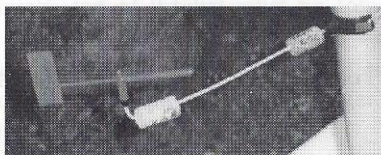
"My board happens to be one of the rather loose brigade and would unhelpfully fully retract in a turn turtle capsized, leaving you nothing to get hold of. My solution is a short piece of light line, fastened to the eyelet which holds the board-retaining shock cord, terminated by one of the smallest available snap shackles (a miniature version of the boom end outhaul one) which hooks on to the board carrying cord. The total length is 18 inches which prevents



the board from ever retracting more than the amount which leaves about a couple of inches protruding: enough to get a grip on and pull it out in a capsized righting operation. The grip quick release snap shackle makes it very easy to release when you come ashore and need the board out in a hurry.

Making little hawks float (item 27, code A)

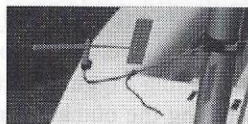
Little hawks currently cost about £10 and I for one have lost one overboard after a collision. The solution can be as simple as two wine bottle corks with holes drilled in them so that they fit tightly on the hawk. The



photograph is of Derek Coleman's boat, though he says he got the idea from the Thompson family.

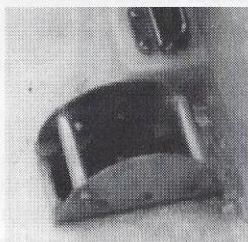
Hawk and burgee lie detectors (item 28, code A)

In very light wind hawks and even burgees can lie, if the wind is not sufficient to move them. Lubrication can help, and so can choosing a large burgee. In an old book I found a solution: lighting up a cigarette, but being a non-smoker I have added a tell-tale to both my hawk and burgee, a short length of wool or spinnaker cloth. On the hawk I have mine on the horizontal arm, but alternatively it can be on the tail. Smoke is of course best, for I have known a wind so light that my wool said "no wind" but my Comet was moving!



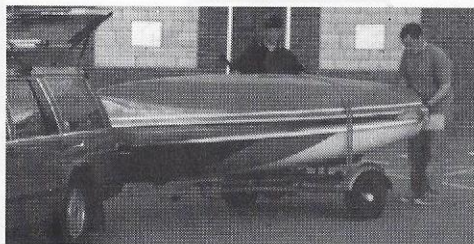
Protecting plastic self-bailers (item 29, code B)

This is another one from Keith Bullock, I photographed it some time ago on his boat. The idea is self explanatory, and I would imagine the construction is of stainless steel sheet with stainless steel bolts and tubes. Using rather thicker aluminium sheet might also be satisfactory. (sorry the photo is a bit out of focus)



Towing two Comets on one standard trailer (item 30, code A)

This was used by Alex Reeve and Robert Hamilton at the 1997 Nationals, Where I took this photograph. As you see, they are strapped together like an oyster, with an old mattress between them to protect from damage. I believe both were tied to the trolley at the stem, and maybe the stern too.



Alex told me that it worked just fine. I can tow one Comet with my Reliant three-wheeler but towing two I'm sure needs a more powerful car.

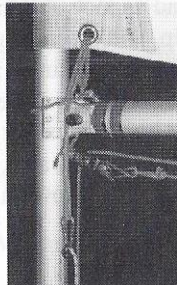
More on the boom mainsheet connection eye (PH44, page 8, item 5)

Tony thomas writes: "I was surprised that Colin Boys found Evostick effective. I have always found it rather too water soluble. My solution, which I have been using for the last three years or so, is exactly the same, except that I use a short piece of shock cord - more resilient than ordinary rope - and secure it by the old fashioned method of a few turns of whipping twine at each end. It works fine and I have never had to replace it". Brian Welham (Comet 711) uses a short piece

of plastic tubing instead of rope or shock cord, affixed with sticky tape (photo of it on this page). He also uses two strips of carpet tape on the deck where the boom eye might rub.

Hitching the outhaul rope to the mast with a snap shackle (item 31, code A)

On Brian Welham's boat (711) at Sailboat were some other interesting rigging ideas. One was replacing the bowline hitching the outhaul rope to the mast by a snap shackle (see photo). This reduces the time needed to rig the boat.



8:1 outhaul (item 32, code A)

Brian has fitted a second pulley along the boom, with the rope tied to the first pulley and the kicking strap fitting. The snap shackle at the mast (item 31) is essential to avoid a long length of rope inside the boat. When fitting the clew hook he can take off the snap-shackle which allows the hook to move along the boom toward the mast. The free end of the outhaul does not come through the first pulley because of the shackle.

Avoiding hitching the downhaul rope to the boom (item 33, code A)

A short rope is permanently tied to the outhaul fitting just below the goose-neck, passing up and through the cringle, down the other side and is attached by a snap shackle to a free pulley (see photo above). When de-rigging, you just undo the snap-shackle and free the rope from the cringle.

Tight clew downhaul (item 34, code A)

Also on Comet 711, Brian avoids a shackle above the boom by doing exactly the same as he has done with the downhaul (item 32), but with the cord passing round the boom and back to the snap-shackle. In the photo you will see another loop. This is also tied to the shackle but only to retain it when the sail is removed.



Avoiding lateral instability on the run (item 35, code R)

This is only an idea, based on the aerodynamics of parachutes. Parachutes will be very stable if they are either very porous or have fairly large holes in them. Our sails are not porous but they could have holes in them. Parachutes can have holes in the crown, in rings round them or even slits down the sides, it is not critical, but they must be fairly large, at least 10% of the area. With a Comet sail you could probably make holes in it without the weave coming apart by using a large soldering iron. You would need a considerable number of holes, they could be in a pattern of your choice, but should be reasonably evenly spread over the sail. This should do wonders for you downwind runs, but may ruin the beats, I haven't

tried it. However, I would expect reaching to be reasonable. Unless you are very artistic it would probably look horrible, and I think you should remove the Comet logo, unless of course you covered up all the holes with white muslin preserving both the white colour of the sail and the porosity. Porous sails could be a sensible idea for training, reducing the heeling as well as removing some of the difficulties in running. A sailmaker could of course achieve this by making the sails from porous fabric, like many parachutes.

Compiled by the Editor

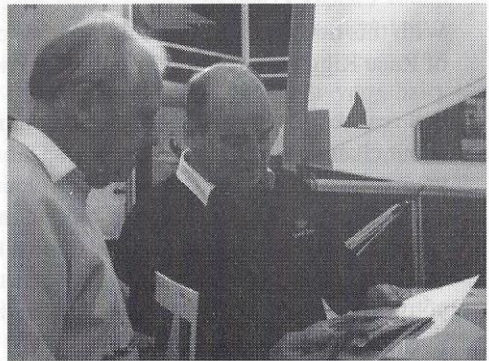
● GLIMPSES OF SAILBOAT 98



The Class display



Class Secretary
Norah Gould



Andrew Simmons and the Editor
discussing the possibility of a colour
photograph on the Perihelion cover.

(Photos: Anne Browning)

BUILDERS REPORT

I'm writing this at the beginning of March, so despite the weather being not terribly great, people are looking ahead at the forthcoming season with more enquiring phone calls to Comet Dinghies.

London Boat Show in January was the best for Comet sales for a long time with a couple more sales since. The latter part of last year wasn't great, although all the ex-demonstrators were snapped up.

I didn't exhibit at Birmingham this year but the Class borrowed a nice green Comet which was well received. In fact, I've just sold another Comet to Cotswold S.C., or to be correct, a Comet Mino and the customer saw it at Birmingham, so a big thanks to the owners who manned the stand!

At London and Birmingham (and at Sailboat) the Comet has featured three Camcleats on the foredeck instead of the usual Clamcleats. These are now part of the race rigging pack but can still be fitted with standard rigging.

The advantage of these new cleats is that they can be cleated and uncleated from about a 45° angle i.e. whilst sitting out on the sidedeck. I tested all the different makes of this type of cleat and the Servo cleat brand seemed the best. The only disadvantage at the moment is that they are not "in class", hence my proposed rule change. The current rule states the three cleats must be positioned within 40mm of the deck centreline. This was to stop twin controls either side of the foredeck being fitted. This was to keep the Comet as simple and inexpensive as possible. I feel the new cleats are well within the "spirit" of the class, but a rule change is needed as the new cleats need a space 150mm wide.

With this newsletter you should find our current spare parts price list, with details of Race Rigging Pack options and these new cleats.

I've realised that some people might want to convert to Mino rigs and not worry about changing back to the full rig. This can be done in a cheaper way by cutting your original bottom mast and pop-riveting the gooseneck back on. There aren't any worries about whether your old top mast fits the new Mino bottom so you can convert to a Mino rig for just the cost of the sail. Full instructions and rivets etc., can be supplied. If and when you want to sell your Comet with the full size rig, you will need to buy a new bottom mast though.

That's all for now, so I hope to see you around and hopefully, lots of you at the Nationals at Frensham.

Andrew Simmons, Comet designer and builder

P.S. Stop press !

I've just returned from Sailboat 98 where, as usual, there was a terrific demand for second-hand Comets and an equally terrific shortage of them.

You might be surprised what your old Comet might fetch and of course I would be happy to sell you a new one !

I could also consider part-exchange deals. For the record, a new Comet is £2100 with a special offer of a free launching trolley (folding or combi trolley) if there is no part-exchange.

Andrew Simmons

(Editor's note: See the inside of the back cover, you might have a ready buyer !)

FIRST IMPRESSIONS - COMET 731

I am 51 yrs old, and have sailed Enterprises, Wayfarers and Lasers and recently bought a new Comet, number 731. Last sunday I took it out for the second time on Grafham water. As a total newcomer to Comets I thought I would see how I was able to handle her in heavy winds. Bearing in mind I had no previous experience in Comets I found the wind force 5, gusting to 6 & 7 very exciting. After five minutes I capsized. The waves combined with heavy gusts blew the boat away from me even though it was on its side with the sail in the water. However I had no trouble getting back in over the widest part pulling on the toe strap and sheet. After that I began to feel very secure sailing her even in those conditions. Even though I had to let the sheet out most of the time because of heavy gusts, I found myself planing up and down Grafham beautifully. I sat right back, and I was really flying on the plane. The boat felt awkward to steer for a while, it seemed to have a mind of its own, but after two and a half hours of rough very hairy conditions I felt much more confident. I did not find the automatic block supplied powerful enough in those conditions, and I have now fitted a Harken ratchamatic. I have now joined Stanborough sailing club in Welwyn Garden City where there are about seven Comets and the other members are very helpful and friendly. I will be sailing her on the Norfolk Broads too.

I would like to say that after months looking at many other designs I made the right choice in buying the Comet because it is comfortable, and a delight to sail. Incidentally, my dear wife has insisted that I name the boat "RUTHY" after her so that I don't forget her when out sailing.

David Schwartz (Comet 731, Stanborough S.C.)

COME TO THE NATIONALS AT FRENESHAM

A letter from Chris Ellis, the Commodore of Frensham Pond Sailing Club



To all Comet Sailors,

I would like to invite you to the Comet National Championships, being held over the Bank Holiday weekend of 23rd, 24th and 25th May. We are particularly pleased to be hosting these Championships and have planned a full weekend sailing and entertainment for all.

Frensham, often referred to as the 'Home of Champions', is situated just south of Farnham, in beautiful surroundings. All the racing will be able to be seen from around the 'pond', particularly the clubhouse, making it an ideal venue for those supporting the sailors!

Launching is particularly easy, with berthing and parking within yards of each other.

Full catering facilities are available all weekend. This will include breakfast, lunch, tea, Championship Dinner and Barbecue. We of course have a bar!

I look forward to welcoming you, to what will be a really special championship.

Regards

Chris Ellis



Chris Ellis
Commodore



Graham Howlett
Race Officer

The entry form is enclosed with this newsletter. There will be 7 championship races but, as usual, the Association wishes to encourage Comet sailors of any standard to take part and if not take part; to come to Frensham for a chat. The club have very kindly allowed us the exclusive use of the pond for the whole Bank Holiday week-end.

Frensham Pond Sailing Club uses the larger of two ponds, the other being several miles away. Those who have been members for two years or more will find an introduction to the club in Perihelion 38, page 26. The sailing water is approximately circular, about 1 km across (100 acres) and in a recent depth survey the maximum depth of the pond was found to be less than 3 metres, so that **Comets cannot invert!** The clubhouse has excellent changing rooms with hot showers and four powered rescue boats are available, with radio communications. However, beware, if the wind is light, there will be no opportunity to hide behind islands to engage in illegal propulsion, we haven't got any islands, just trees and some permanent wind bends (and some keen race officers!).

There have been two successful, but windy, open meetings at Frensham, won by Alex Reeve and Jake Sutton. Our local Comet fleet has doubled since then, we now have 16 Comets, including Ray Baker, the Club Secretary; Steve Hill, the Training Chief; Geoff Sutton, Captain of the Handicap Class; his son Jake and, recently joined, Richard Smallwood. The club assistant bosun is Colin Boys, who featured on the cover of Perihelion 44. Another recent Comet owner, but long-time Frensham member, is Ted Jefferies, who runs the club bar!

How to get to Frensham ? Frensham (Great) Pond should be easy to get to for the majority of members. The Surrey/Hants border actually passes through the pond which is to be found 4 miles south of Farnham, 10 miles south west of Guildford and 6 miles east of Alton. The Grid Reference is SU 845400 and the clubhouse telephone is 01252 792859.

Motorways ?

The **M25**, junction 10, will get you swiftly to Guildford.

From London the **M3**, junction 4, now links up with a new road, the A 331, which will get you quickly to Farnham.

From the South West you can use the **A 31** to Farnham or the **M3** again, (but that way you get off at junction 5 (Hook), the A287 is a good road).

PRIZES

Championships. There will be prizes for the overall Championships, depending on the number of entries, down to at least 7th, possibly down to 9th.

Individual Championship races. This year for the first time we are introducing a 1st 2nd and 3rd prize for each Championship race. As a class we would eventually like to have a perpetual trophy for each Championship race!

Team prize. There will be a team prize this year, to go to the club with the highest placed three boats in the overall championships.

Veteran's prize. For the highest placed helm over 50 at the start of the championships.

Junior prize. For the highest placed helm under 18 at the start of the championships.

Ladies' prize. For the highest placed lady helm in the overall championships.

Newcomer prize. For the highest placed helm attending their first ever National Championship in any class of dinghy.

Race Committee prize. A prize awarded at the discretion of the Frensham Pond Race Committee.

Mino class. A prize for the highest placed helm sailing in the Mino class races. Incidentally, there is a Mino resident at Frensham and there may be an opportunity to try it.

So much for the competition. We intend the event to be enjoyable for all and I have persuaded Frensham not to apply strict time limits to the races. The limit which may be applied will be 30 minutes after the winning boat. This means that generally the whole fleet will be able to finish the races, and we can enjoy competitive sailing all the way down the fleet.

I should perhaps remind you that the championship races are open only to Comet Class Association members, but of course we will be very pleased to see other Comet owners from your club. However, if your friends wish to bring their boats and join in the racing, they must join the Association (£10). Tell them they may do this on the spot.

This will be a week-end to show off the Comet to a very competitive club. I'm sure we will have a very friendly but competitive Bank Holiday weekend.

Please send in your entry forms as soon as possible.

The Editor (Comet 361, Frensham Pond S.C.)

Programme highlights:

<u>Friday</u>	1500	Club open	<u>Sunday</u>	1030	Third race
<u>Saturday</u>	1100	Welcome & briefing		1830	AGM & BBQ
	1200	First race	<u>Monday</u>	10.30	Sixth race
	2000	Candlelit dinner		1600	Prizegiving & tea

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS

PERIOD FROM 1ST JANUARY 1997 TO 31ST DECEMBER 1997

RECEIPTS	NOTES	95/96	97
MEMBERSHIP FEES	1	2460	2375
COMET DINGHIES NEW BOATS	2	210	190
NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP REVENUE	3	250	-
COMMISSION ON INSURANCE	4	1162	1203
B/SOCIETY INTEREST	5	72.35	63.34
SALE OF INSERTS FOR TROPHIES ETC.	6	10.50	33
DONATION RE	7	-	10
FISHERS GREEN OPEN	7a	-	3
PAYMENTS MADE INADVERTENTLY	7a	-	-
		4164.85	3877.34
PAYMENTS			
PRIZES ANO ENGRAVING	8	1870.45	761.52
PERIHELION AND EDITORS COSTS	9	2181.76	1667.44
EXHIBITION CHARGES AND ELECTRICITY	10	813.58	518.58
R.Y.A. AFFILIATION FEE	11	38	57
ADVERTISING	12	498.21	416.06
EXPENSES	13	156.24	204.14
ADHESIVE MEMBERSHIP LABELS	14	10.10	5.80
'DUO'S' COMMISSION	15	-	100
PAYMENTS MADE INADVERTENTLY (SEE 7a ABOVE)		-	3
		5568.34	3733.54
TOTAL PAYMENTS	3733.54	BALANCE IN B/SOC 96	1506.38
TOTAL RECEIPTS	3877.34	BALANCE IN B/SOC 97	1683.32
Prizes + P/cash float	143.80		176.94
	48.06	PETTY CASH	14.92
	191.86		191.86

D. COLEMAN
(HON.TREASURER)

W.J.EDWARDS
(HON.AUDITOR)

NOTES

1. Membership 246(96) 233 (97) including 9 family members
 Slightly down again this year but Committee are working on it
2. New Boats 21 (96) 19 (97) still sluggish
3. A different format, so no revenue this year
4. We pay out, we receive back
5. Not a good rate, but it's the type of account
6. Comes in dribbles
7. Donation
- 7a Paid to us inadvertently
8. Fiona does a good job here
9. Our biggest outlay, but it's our newsletter. (My expenses are less than 2% of this. Editor)
10. Keeping a balance in difficult times
11. It's our lifeline really
12. We are watching what it costs with what we get
13. Ask the Committee what I am like to get money out of
14. Our annual membership labels
15. Due to Noble Marine oversight, we were paid 'Duo' commission, we have paid 'Duo' Association
16. Payments made to us inadvertently, see 7a above.

We are keeping pace with the situation, if something needs to change or increase I will advise you of it.

Derek.

COMET CLASS OPEN MEETINGS 1998

<u>Date & day</u>	<u>Club</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
18 April, Sat.	Shearwater	WEST	Nic Cross	01373 822258
25 April, Sat.	Fishers Green	EAST	Peter Seger	01279 433851
3 May, Sun.	Sutton Bingham	WEST	Gordon Parker	01458 223058
9 May, Sat.	Chester S & CC	NORTH	John Edwards	01829 781234
10 May, Sun.	Crawley Mariners	SOUTH	Diana Thompson	01737 552482
16 May, Sat.	Glossop & District	NORTH	Stuart Gilder	01457 861452

Sat/Sun/Mon NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

23 - 25 May	Frensham Pond SC		Graham Howlett	01483 421035
30 May, Sat.	Frensham Pond	SOUTH	Geoff Sutton	01420 475918
6 June, Sat.	Chipstead	EAST	Roger Norman	01814 628739
13 June, Sat.	Taplow Lake	SOUTH	Mark Taylor	01628 602663
20 June, Sat.	Naseby	EAST	Chris Weston	01858 545564
27 June, Sat.	Merthyr Tydfil	WEST	Mark Govier	01222 778459
28 June, Sun.	Hillhead	SOUTH	Gary Aiken	01489 574696
4 July, Sat.	Combs	NORTH	Sue Pollard	01457 862694
11 July, Sat.	Staunton Harold	NORTH	Mike Heaney	01332 574146
18 July, Sat.	Cotswold	WEST	Bob Presley	01761 232487
19 July, Sun.	Aylesbury	EAST	Mike Palmer	01296 436414

Sat/Sun TIDAL CHAMPIONSHIP

25 - 26 July	Brightlingsea YC		Dave Youngs	01206 823925
8 Aug., Sat.	Hampton Pier	EAST	Geoff Gambrell	01227 361156
22 Aug., Sat.	Mudford	WEST	Peter Reid	01202 477281
12 Sept., Sat.	Littleton	EAST	Martin Vinson	01483 538149
13 Sept., Sun.	Arden	NORTH	Clive Marlow	01684 562808
20 Sept., Sun.	Chew Valley	WEST	Errol Edwards	01179 354494
27 Sept., Sun.	Pingewood	SOUTH	Alison Walker	01189 819974
10 Oct., Sat.	Redesmere	NORTH	Graham Day	01625 529174
18 Oct., Sun.	Kingsmead	SOUTH	Geoff Kempton	01753 885782

TRAINING DAYS

Sat. 18 April	Crawley Mariners YC	Diana Thompson	01737 552482
Sat. 26 Sept	Pingewood SC	Alison Walker	01189 819974

Orbital Trophy

Qualification for the Orbital Trophy requires entrance at one championship and meetings in at least two of the four areas. Six events to count, ties decided on results at National or Tidal Championships. Prizes to be presented at Kingsmead on 18th Oct, awards to all qualifiers.

Aphelion Trophies

Four Area Trophies will be awarded. This year, with six meetings in each area, area qualification will require results from 4 events.

COMET CLASS ASSOCIATION

APHELION TROPHIES 98

EASTERN AREA

Fishers Green
Chipstead
Naseby
Aylesbury
Hampton Pier
Littleton

Four events are needed to qualify & the best four results from the six available will count. If only five events take place, then three will be needed.

Ties will be decided by discards or the last head-to-head result.

Prizes will be presented at **Littleton SC** on 12th September and will be awarded to all Qualifiers.

NORTHERN AREA

Chester
Glossop & District
Combs
Staunton Harold
Arden
Redesmere

Four events are needed to qualify & the best four results from the six available will count. If only five events take place, then three will be needed.

Ties will be decided by discards or the last head-to-head result.

Prizes will be presented at **Redesmere SC** on 10th October and will be awarded to all Qualifiers.

SOUTHERN AREA

Crawley Mariners
Frensham Pond
Taplow Lake
Hillhead
Pingewood
Kingsmead

Four events are needed to qualify & the best four results from the six available will count. If only five events take place, then three will be needed.

Ties will be decided by discards or the last head-to-head result.

Prizes will be presented at **Kingsmead SC** on 18th October and will be awarded to all Qualifiers.

WESTERN AREA

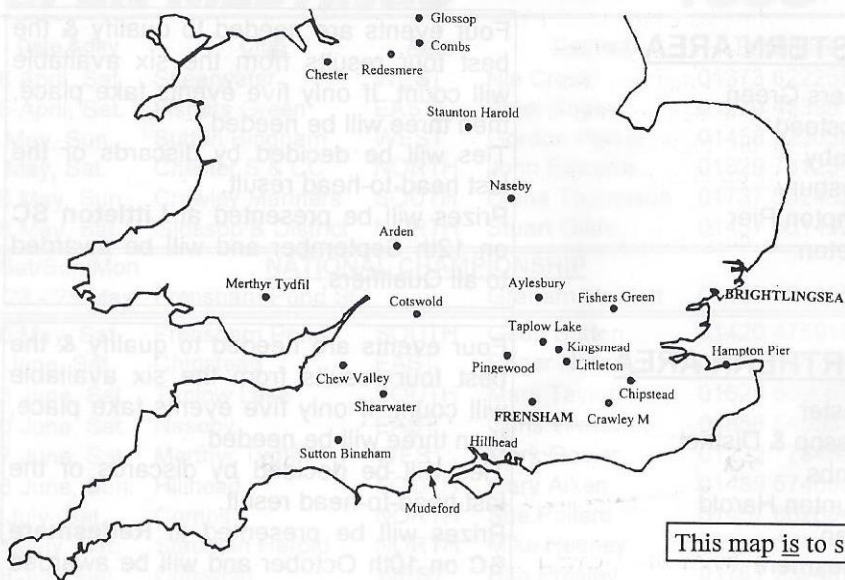
Shearwater
Sutton Bingham
Merthyr Tydfil
Cotswold
Mudford
Chew Valley

Four events are needed to qualify & the best four results from the six available will count. If only five events take place, then three will be needed.

Ties will be decided by discards or the last head-to-head result.

Prizes will be presented at **Chew Valley SC** on 20th September and will be awarded to all Qualifiers.

OPEN MEETING AND CHAMPIONSHIPS LOCATIONS



EDITOR'S NOTES

I have been "Talking to . . ." our Treasurer this time, but not just as Treasurer, for he is one of our most frequent travellers, as Phil Hossell reminds us in his review article on last season's Aphelion series. Anne and I visited Derek at his delightful home overlooking the sea near Chichester harbour.

Many thanks to contributors this time, David Schwartz on first impressions with his new Comet, Ralph Rowe on useful knots and more from Tony Thomas. On top of that there are two one-page articles introducing clubs, Naseby S.C. and Hill Head S.C. who are having Comet open meetings for the first time.

There are a number of very simple ideas this time for part 3 of "Customizing your Comet", mainly derived from photographs I took of things I noticed at clubs and boat shows. I have heard the comment that "I've been using some of those ideas

for years”, but I am happy to include well-known ideas for I remember feeling a bit alone when I had the only Comet at Frensham. New members are joining all the time who might appreciate even the simplest tip.

On the “Novices Club” idea, I have now contacted about a dozen Comet owners who both took a copy of my “Raw Beginner” booklet and indicated from their communication that they were fairly new to sailing as well as to the Comet. If I have not contacted you and you are interested in this idea, please give me a ring. This has the blessing of the Association Committee and at the moment any postage incurred is to be considered as part of the expenses of the reprint sales.

Alan Browning, Editor

NOTICE OF AGM 1998

The Annual General Meeting of the Comet Class Association
will take place on
Sunday 24th May 1998
at
Frensham Pond sailing club
at 18.30 hrs.

Items for inclusion on the agenda should reach the Secretary
no later than Saturday 25th April 1998.

Motions for consideration should be sent on the appropriate
resolution forms, available from the secretary, and signed by
two members of the Association.

The AGM IS YOUR meeting, YOUR opportunity to say how you think
things should be done. Don't leave it all to someone else -
speak for yourself!

Norah Gould, Class Secretary

TALKING TO . . . DEREK COLEMAN

Alan: I first saw you at the Kennet Valley open meeting in 1990 winning the third race ahead of Peter Adlington in Comet 361, the boat I bought a year later. I imagine you bought your first Comet, number 303, in the late 80s but you did sail other boats before that didn't you? What were they and how come you bought a Comet?

Derek: I started sailing in the early 70s, when I lived at Uxbridge, at the IPC (International Publishing Co) Sailing Club. I did the sailing course there, as did my three children, and the boats commonly in use there were Mirrors and Miracles. Then I made a Mirror from a kit, a boat that is still in use at Kingsmead, and we sailed that for a number of years. We went to the first World Mirror Championships in Holland, not in the competition fleet but in the "entertainment" fleet, and had a marvellous time. The children learned a lot too. Then IPC had lease problems and most of the dinghy sailors moved to Kingsmead, as I did. We used to sail handicap races on Wednesday evenings and quite often the wind died and in a Mirror we'd be left out there last, and I began to think what other boat would be better. I went to all the boat shows and looked around. Apart from the Comet, the only other boat that seemed to fit the bill was the Lightning, but it was considerably dearer and didn't have so much racing as a class. The Comet suited my build, there was plenty of room in it and it had the advantage of the main sheet being at the rear. Since then it's enjoyment I get, I thoroughly enjoy myself. I joined in the open meeting circuit, it was fantastic, I got involved, got to know people, their different ideas, things to watch, a Comet open meeting is a nice enjoyable day, no hassle. I moved to Datchet and then, in 1993, to Devon and when I was in Devon I used to watch the Laser Masters at Beer and Lyme Regis, and, oh dear, they spent a lot of the time off the water trying to sort out the results! That's not for me! I think the Comet's the best boat you probably could get at the price. As for Comet sailors I race against at the meetings, it's nice to see everybody, they're courteous, no problems there. The Comet's an enjoyable little boat to race and when I race I want to go out and have a day's enjoyment as well as racing against the others. I don't want to try to beat the elements, when the

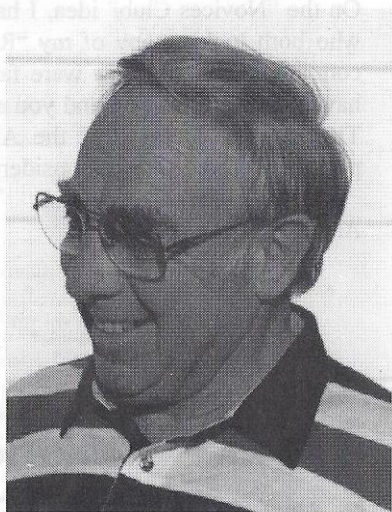


Photo: Anne Browning

weather gets that bad it's not so enjoyable, I want a day's competitive sailing with a nice group of people.

Alan: How does the Comet compare with the Mirror ?

Derek: Well, of course if you move up you're a lot faster and that appealed to me at the time. You certainly haven't got as much maintenance to do and as for rigging, I reckon that, apart from a little tweaking, from the time I touch the cover, 5 minutes and I'm ready for the water. Slightly more with the racing rig on but not much. It's even quicker if you leave the mast up. Now I live by the sea at East Wittering and I do that in the summer. Without the burgee it just misses the telephone wires between my house and the sea. When I go out on the water, within a mile I'm in Chichester harbour if I wish to, it's thoroughly enjoyable.

Alan: How long did it take you to get to grips with the peculiarities of the Comet ?

Derek: Some while. It has got peculiarities, so have all boats, there is that problem getting in irons for a start and everybody has trouble at first with running in stronger winds.

Alan: You've sailed your Comet on lakes, rivers, reservoirs and the sea in various places. Which kind of water do you find most enjoyable to sail the Comet on ?

Derek: . I enjoy all the venues. Reservoirs, lakes, the sea, they're all different things. I enjoy sailing on the sea but it's a bit of a problem when you're on the heavier side, I'm around 15 stones. When I come off a wave I'll go in a lot deeper than somebody who's around 9 stones. Their boat will sit on the water, mine sits in the water. You've got to be more aware on the sea than inland and it worries the daylighters out of you when you first go out because it's pitching. Even when you go out in reasonable weather it takes a while to relax.

Lakes and reservoirs are quite good because you've got level water, but there often are trees. For example at Shearwater, three-quarters up the beat the wind changes direction due to the trees, you're liable to get a slap in the face from the boom. On the sea and large expanses of water, if there's a reasonable wind, everybody can scream round and the lightweights, provided they can stay up, will just be gone from me. I haven't sailed my Comet on a river for a long time, I'm not too keen on that because river sailing is very restricted.

Alan: You've done pretty well in Comet competition over the years. I would say that you are more consistent in your results than most. Have you any tips you are willing to divulge?

Derek: You have to watch what's coming. At Kingsmead recently I was in the lead, and everybody was saying "oh, not again", when I bent down to see to the bailer - there was a gust and "whoosh" I was in - - I came third. You've got to pay attention to where the wind's coming from.

Alan: You seem to do particularly well in light winds, any comments on that ?

Derek: Yes, I do do myself quite well in light winds, some people say I'm illogical, with my weight I should be further down the fleet. You've got to look to see where the best wind is. Wind going round trees can act in your favour or against you. Sometimes I can make up some ground on the others, by stealth you might say, by using the wind that's there, perhaps going next to a bank or following up something that takes my eye regarding the wind. Sometimes the wind's not there but I'm inclined to get away from the others, go away from the crowd scrabbling for one bit of wind. If I can get away from them, whatever wind I can find is mine and will propel me forward. That's especially true near a mark, and with my weight I need more wind to get me round. It also applies just after the start, where everybody is on starboard, if I stay with them I'm liable to be in dirty wind, I've got to get away from that. There's always a chance of good luck, and experience has a great deal to do with it too, knowing what to do and where to do it. It's natural for the wind to be stronger next to the side of a lake, you've got to use your burgee and hawk to watch for windshifts and the like, watch ripples on the water, look for wind bends and watch for any birds about, anything like that. It seems daft in some respects but you've got to look out for those things. Some birds soar using the wind and that's an indication for you. You've got to weigh up what wind is there and what's liable to be there.

There's no doubt about it, you've got to heel the boat to leeward to reduce the wetted area. Doing that also gives you a better line of view to where you're going. The rig is heeled to leeward but the bow is tipped toward the wind and you'll come up higher to the wind that way than if the boat was not heeled. But when the wind is not light, and you're beating, there's no doubt really that you've got to keep it flat if you can. In light winds concentration is very important. I know one lady who starts well but two-thirds round the course I skate past her, she needs to concentrate more. Some people get despondent if there's not much wind about. You've got to be patient and ready in case a little bit of wind or a puff comes your way. You've got to grab it, otherwise you'll lose it.

Alan: Do you have any thoughts on capsizing?

Derek: It's best to avoid the capsize if you can, sometimes, as it tips over, you can swing the tiller over to keep the boat under the sail and get away with it. Because the Comet comes up dry after a capsize, when there's water in the

cockpit sometimes it's better to let it capsize and bring it up again. I try to climb on to the dagger board of course but if I go in, what I do depends on where the mainsheet is. It is annoying if it wraps itself round the boom or something. When you're in the water, one of the things you must do is to kick your feet to bring them up to the top of the water so that when you go back in you slide across the boat rather than up and over. I find it better to come in at the middle rather than at the back.

Alan: I notice that when the wind blows hard only about a dozen people in the country seem to be able to handle the "full size rig" Comet well. Do you think the Comet is over-canvassed?

Derek: I've noticed that those who do cope well normally sit further back so that when the wind increases it brings them level, whereas if you're level and the wind increases you're going to tend to nosedive. The last thing you want is water coming in over the front! If you get a nice run it's quite exhilarating, it really is, absolutely gorgeous. **Alan:** Most people say keep the sail flat on a run but I've heard you say that you let the outhaul out so the sail acts like a parachute. **Derek:** In certain circumstances yes. When the wind is not too strong I heel the boat 45 degrees to windward, so the boom is up at 45 degrees too, let off the downhaul and outhaul which makes it more like a spinnaker, holding the wind, pushing me forward. I surprised Mark at Sutton Bingham some years ago with what I was doing, but it was very effective, it kept me up there with the leaders. **Alan:** Do you have a knot in your mainsheet? **Derek:** Yes, normally to limit the boom to 90 degrees out. But you can gauge it of course, remember that the knot is in your hand at some stage so you know you've got that distance to the pulley and you can control it from then on. There are times when it's really windy when there's no way I would let it out that amount and I'm better off on a broad reach, sitting at the back and enjoying the exhilaration of speed, but it's controlled speed. Some people are not in control, they're not sitting at the back there balancing the boat. **Alan:** Because, as I understand it, the "death roll" oscillation is a light wind phenomenon, where the rig moves sideways at a similar speed to the wind, I would not expect you to suffer from that in strong winds. **Derek:** No, not very often. If this starts I put the dagger board down slightly, but of course the further it is down the more its drag and that might make all the difference between planing or not, and look how much faster you go when you plane. **Alan:** I would expect you to have trouble sometimes with capsizing to windward heeled like that. **Derek:** I haven't done so badly with that. Perhaps my 15 stones gives me better stability than lighter helms get. (see Editor's note at the end of this article). **Alan:** Do you ever reef? **Derek:** Not very often. I prefer to sail fully rigged. If the wind becomes too strong then it's not enjoyable and it's time to go. **Alan:** It seems that Andrew Simmons chose the Comet sail area to make it an exciting boat to sail for the weight of helm he had in mind which means that some

light helms might find it too much. **Derek:** Many light people seem to do quite well out of it, they scoot along. Generally there are more light winds than heavy winds so they do well. I'm not complaining.

Alan: You go to very many open meetings don't you, have you any comments on the practical aspects of that, for example on car-topping your boat ?

Derek: Yes, I always car-top my boat, when it's on top you don't notice it's there. Another advantage is that speed limits are higher than when you tow. With my Easi-Loader I can put the boat on and off on my own if necessary, but it is nice if someone helps.

Alan: We know that Mark Wilkins has had trouble with a leak in his boat. You mentioned small hull leaks in the last issue, do you have trouble too ?

Derek: Yes, 303 has a small leak. I've had words with Andrew Simmons and Barrie Hylton about it and you responded to my plea too didn't you Alan. I'll get somebody locally to help me on this. I wondered if mobile leak testing equipment might be a good idea, for at meetings buoyancy testing is in everybody's interest. As you know I have contact with all of the members and you never know what expertise they might have. At Kingsmead there is Keith Bullock, a great fellow, who has done a lot for the Comets, sorting out things. The race pack, to a certain degree, was his and he's done a lot more than that. Everybody's different and through Perihelion we can use members' expertise.

Alan: We now have the Mino coming along. Officially it's not a Comet because the sail regulations are not met. How do you think the Mino should fit in with the Association?

Derek: We want Mino sailors to enjoy their sailing like the rest of us but on the other hand you can't allow them to take over. Primarily it's a Comet Association, not a Mino Association. Strictly speaking it's a different rig isn't it, Andrew designed it to satisfy a market. Sometimes, when you're flying along, you come up to a mark suddenly and you have to make decisions quickly and if you're not careful, over you go. With the Mino rig you would be going slower, decisions would be less rushed and no doubt balancing would be a lot easier too.

Alan: You deserve our thanks for your time and effort given to the Committee as Treasurer over the last 5 years, and I imagine that you spend quite a few hours on that job. For those who know nothing of the Committee work, would you describe briefly what the Treasurer's position involves.

Derek: As Treasurer, I take in all your monies on behalf of the Association and keep an eye on the finances in collaboration with the Secretary, Norah, and Chairman, Henry. The main outgoings really are for prizes, Fiona's field, and I give her a free hand with that. I watch the expenses on stationery carefully.

Renewal and lists of members

I get the renewal forms and send the information to Comet Dinghies at South Molton, and so records of membership are kept in two places Their records are kept on computer disc. For many years this was done by Karen Symonds, and extremely efficient she was too. The data is kept in boat number order and I communicate frequently with Comet Dinghies to keep the records up-to-date. In particular they confirm the paid-up members in March ready for the sailing season and I send this information to Liz Hossell who provides a list of the current members for use by Phil Hossell who looks after the results throughout the season. In this way the results of any non-members who sail in open meetings can be dis-allowed. Liz keeps two lists, one in boat number order and one alphabetically by member's name.

Checking information

In December, Comet Dinghies send me a list of all Comet members ready for the renewals with members highlighted who have bought new boats, for Andrew pays for their first year's membership. Then I keep tags on things that happen during the year, changes of address, change of boats owned, and members who have paid after 1st August, for they need not pay the next year. All this I do by annotating my sheets. Comet Dinghies also prepare the address stickers for me to send confirmation of membership to members. The first thing I have to do when a renewal comes in is to check the cheque for signature and date (ie not last year), and check that the address, telephone number and boat number are correct. I highlight any changes in particulars when I send information to Comet Dinghies, it helps them that end. The system works very well.

Contact with members

I try to keep the papers up-to-date as much as possible. I might write a little piece on the confirmation slip, commenting on something, for example, to a new member: "if you have any trouble, give me a blow and I'll get someone to help you", or to a member with an old boat at Chipstead: "might be an old number, but if the sail's good it will give a good account of itself, see you in June". It's just something that breaks the ice with them and hopefully gets them to the open meetings. I don't know what standard they are, we like to encourage everybody, open meetings can be a very enjoyable day out and an opportunity to chat and learn something even if you're not racing.

Contact with the RYA

I chat reasonably often with the RYA about Sailboat, sorting out the payments, the queries and marrying it all up. I do this with Andrew Simmons, because we sort it out together. Incidentally, Quite a lot of people want a single-hander when they can't get a crew for their double-hander and the RYA refer them to us, it's an interesting point that you don't think of, but they do.

Time

You don't realise how much time it takes, I spend quite a few hours at it, but I get enjoyment out of it at the end. I can juggle with the hours I spend, if I had a full-time job I would be committed to the hours to do it. **Alan:** Yes, If I wasn't retired the Perihelion would be rather thinner, and it would be quite a stressful business. **Derek:** I hope everybody's satisfied, I enjoy doing it, it keeps me in contact with the younger members. There are always little problems that crop up, perhaps someone forgets to renew. In that case we'll send them a reminder.

Auditing

Then at the end of the year there's the auditing of the accounts, I just post the papers to the auditor, John Edwards of Chester. This also is a very friendly business, last year he wrote: "Your record keeping is excellent and simple to follow - - keep up the good work - - see you on the circuit and at the Championships"

Perihelion costs

We worked out the cost of a copy of Perihelion and it came to £1-51, for a year's worth, four copies, this works out at over half of the membership subscription, but it's the members' newsletter, it's their voice, we're there for them. **Alan:** Perhaps I should remark that that costing is almost all for the printing and distribution, my Editor's expenses are only about 5p per copy. If I charged for my time - -Wow! **Derek:** For someone coming in new to Comets Perihelion gives them a good idea of what's going on and a lot of information can be gleaned from them. In particular, issue 33 had heaps of information on heavy weather sailing. We do keep our costs to a minimum really, and I know a lot of classes are envious of our newsletter.

I enjoy being Treasurer

I volunteered to be Treasurer, members put their trust in me and I'm trying to look after everybody, not only those who race, but on behalf of all the members. At the National Championships in particular, we are trying to choose locations so that everybody can come, not only those who are fanatical, but those who come mainly to enjoy it. Fortunately, my wife Beryl is very forgiving about my sailing, as I am about her hobby, which has taken us as far away as Houston, Texas. Perhaps I should give someone else a chance of being Treasurer, maybe I'm denying someone else who is a budding Treasurer, who knows. But it will be a sad day for me when my health finally gives up and I have to pack up. But I'm OK at the moment, nobody

enjoys the Comet more than I do, I enjoy sailing it and racing it and I enjoy the company. That's what I want.

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

Derek: It's very difficult because they're quite a laid back group, it's very difficult to motivate them. And of course they're all round the country. Some only want to sail on their own lake and are quite content with that, and we go along with that. If someone complained or came forward, we'd address the situation as a Committee. We're not at all trying to make everybody race, but meetings are an opportunity to get together.

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

Derek: No, I don't think there is, what we do know about we are addressing.

Alan: In GP14 racing at my club there is a ladder competition and personal handicap scheme, but this sort of thing is not easy to do on a National basis.

Well Derek, Anne and I have been very pleased to visit Beryl and yourself today, and, both being "Men of Kent", having grown up not far from the sea, we envy you the position of your home within sight of it. Thank you for your hospitality and giving us, like your Comet sailing, a very enjoyable time. While we've been chatting, our two dogs have been enjoying themselves along the sea front too.

Editor's note: The weight of a Comet hull, rudder and dagger board total about 9 stones (57kg) so that light helms weigh about the same as their hull. Derek speaks from the point of view of a helm weighing near 15 stones (95.5 kg), over 50% more than the hull weight. For this reason Derek's comments on boat stability and balance may not match the experience of lighter helms. .

● PERIHELION

This issue of Perihelion has been delayed to early April to match the last day for renewing membership. The next issue will be circulated in June 1998. Contributions to me by the end of May please.

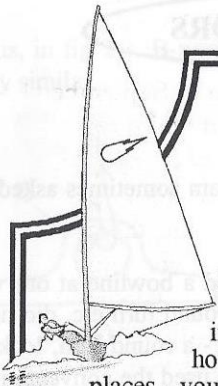
Alan Browning, Editor

● THE 1997 PHOTO COMPETITION

This photograph, taken at the Arden SC open meeting in September 1996, wins the Comet Racing category. I fear the black and white reproduction you see here may not do justice to what, when suitably cropped, is a very striking colour composition. The sailing may not look particularly exciting, at least in terms of the wind strength, but there is much concentration and determination depicted here which very much brings the subject into the race category! The picture was taken by - well unfortunately we do not know - but it was made with Chris Weston's camera and he submitted it to us. So well done and thank you, Chris (Comet 211), and a cheque for £15 is on its way to you.



There can be no more prizes this time because once again there were hardly any entries! However, in the hope that you will all be more enthusiastic, the competition is running again this year: see details opposite. I just know there will be lots of new photographs out there, any of which could be the winners, so please send some in as we would like to be handing out those £15 and £10 cheques (or cash) in the autumn. We really need your photos if we are to keep up the quality of Comet publications and exhibition displays!



1998 ...PHOTOS PHOTOS... PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

Send us your photographs! They should have some identifiable connection with Comets or Comet sailors but the interpretation is yours - racing, cruising, winning, losing, holidays, parties, action shots, artistic compositions, people, places - your choice. There are cash prizes and you may also have the satisfaction of seeing your work on display or in print.

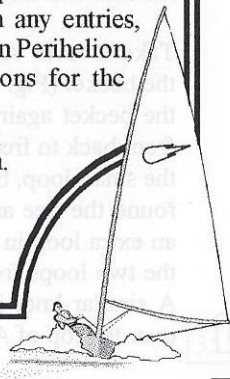
HOW TO ENTER:

1. Entry is free and is open to members of the Comet Class Association (CCA), their families, and friends. Judges will be appointed by the CCA Chairman. People on the Judging Panel will not be eligible for the prizes. No entrant will win more than one prize.
2. Each entrant may submit any number of photographs to be judged for each of the categories "Comet Sailing" and "Comet Fun".
3. Photographs must have been taken between 1st September 1997 and 21st September 1998.
4. **Entries must be received by Henry Jagers on or before Friday 25th September 1997.**
5. Please send prints (colour or b&w) and do not mark them in any way although annotation by means of 'Post-It' slips would be appreciated and is recommended. Photos must be packed to ensure receipt in good condition. Negatives or transparencies should not be sent but should be available if requested at a later date. Entries remain the property of the entrant but the CCA can accept no responsibility for lost or damaged photographs. Reasonable efforts will be made to return entries that are accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope or stamped return label.
7. The CCA shall have the right to use and publish any entries, without fee and in whatever form it deems appropriate, in Perihelion, at exhibitions, and in any other displays or publications for the benefit of the Comet Class.

PRIZES: Winners will receive £15 and runners-up £10.
Winners and runners-up will be published in Perihelion.

All entries to be sent to:-

Henry Jagers, *Kingswood Riggs*, Moira Road,
Shellbrook, Ashby de la Zouch, LE65 2TU
01530 563030



KNOTS FOR COMET SAILORS

1. Horse security (fisherman's bend, fig 1)

'How is it that your horse never seems to need re-tying' I am sometimes asked, 'it never seems to work loose'.

My horse is Kevlar and when I first started using it, I had a bowline at one end and a round turn and two half hitches at the other. The round turn etc. did need tightening-up regularly. Then I discovered the right knot - a round turn, locking hitch and half hitch (Fig. 1). Drawings follow, and I have used the convention of 'A' for the attached end and 'B' for the short free end.

Pass 'B' through the eye of the fairlead from front to back and adjust it to the required tightness of horse. Then pass it through again but loosely this time (Fig 1. 1). Take 'B' round the back of 'A' and then right round until you can feed 'B' through the (loose) round turn (Fig. 1.2). Pull this tight and finish the knot with a half hitch, by taking 'B' round 'A' again and tucking it through the loop so formed (Fig 1.3). If you want, you can then make a second half hitch but it is not necessary.

You can use the same knot to tie your hull down to staples or half buried car tyres. It is secure because as you pull 'A', it tightens the round turn on the fairlead thus pinching the locking hitch and preventing it coming loose.

2. Mainsheet wear (double bowline, fig 2)

I mostly use a light polypropylene mainsheet (it floats), but it is susceptible to wear where it is attached by a bowline to the becket of the mainsheet block.

This wear can be slowed down dramatically by using a double bowline (Fig 2).

Take 'B' over 'A' as shown in Fig.2.1, to make a small loop. Then pass 'B' through the becket (Fig. 2.2) and over 'A' again just above the small loop. Pass 'B' through the becket again in the same direction as before and the through the small loop from back to front (Fig 2.3). Take 'B' round the back of 'A' and then down through the small loop, but this time from front to back (Fig. 2.4). (it's the old "bunny goes round the tree and back down the hole" bowline bit, but this time you've secured an extra loop in the area between the tree and the hole). Tighten it up and adjust the two loops from the knot to the becket so that they are equal, and tighten hard. A similar knot is the French Bowline in which, in fig 2.2, instead of passing B over the top of A, above the small loop, it actually passes through the small loop.

Thus, in fig 2.3, B passes through the small loop twice. Otherwise the knots are very similar.

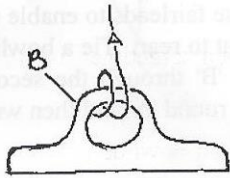


Fig 1.1

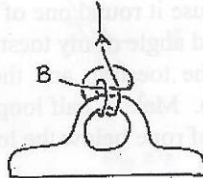


Fig 1.2

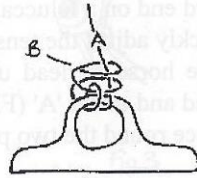


Fig 1.3



Fig 1



Fig 2.1



Fig 2.2



Fig 2.3

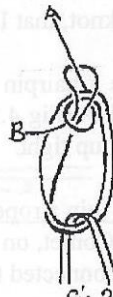


Fig 2.4



Fig 2

3. Toestrap tension (rolling hitch Fig 3).

A rolling hitch is a slip knot that only moves along the rope when you want it to. It is good for securing a painter to a long mooring line and I've seen it used as a halyard end on a felucca, but I use it round one of my horse fairleads to enable me to quickly adjust the tension and angle of my toestrap, front to rear. Tie a bowline on one horse fairlead under the toestrap and then feed 'B' through the second fairlead and under 'A' (Fig 3. 1). Make a half loop tightly round 'A' and then wrap 'B' twice round the two pieces of rope below the loop.

Finish the knot off by making a half hitch in 'B' around 'A' (Fig 3.2). Try this (and all the others) out on a bit of rope during the long winter nights and note how the knot can be slid along 'A' but if you try to pull it in either direction holding only the rope ends, it is very hard to budge. (Ideal for a makeshift halyard end when your jamming cleat has busted).

4. A stop knot (name unknown other than 'stop knot', fig 4).

I have often had a figure-of-eight knot in the end of my mainsheet shake loose. This knot, that I learnt from my first Topper instructions, is much less likely to.

Make a hairpin shape (Fig 4.1); hold the top of the 'hairpin' and wrap 'B' twice round 'A'(Fig 4.2). Finally push 'B' through the loop of the 'hairpin' (Fig 4.3) and pull it up tight.

5. To join a rope to a shock cord (double sheet bend, fig.5).

On a Comet, on the rudder blade of some boat numbers, there is a length of shock cord connected to a rope, that secures the blade in the down position.

It has been known for the shock cord to somehow work its way out of the sheet bend normally used to join them. A double sheet bend is more secure because an extra turn of rope provides much more friction, discouraging slippage.

Make a 'hairpin in the shock cord and pass 'B' through the tip of the 'hairpin' from back to front. Fold 'B' round the back of the 'hairpin' leaving a loose loop above the 'hairpin'. Push 'B' through this loop and wrap it round the back of the 'hairpin' again and push it through the loop again (Fig 5.1). Pull it tight and away you go. If, on your boat the shock cord is double, just make a double hairpin and tie it up otherwise in exactly the same way.

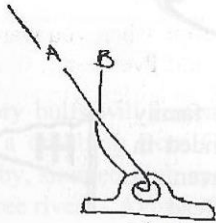


Fig 3-1

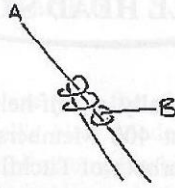


Fig 3-2



Fig 3



Fig 4-1



Fig 4-2



Fig 4-3



Fig 4

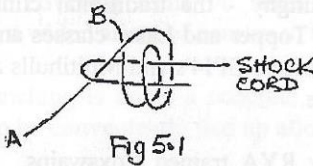


Fig 5-1

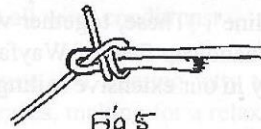


Fig 5

All knots depend for their working on the friction between the various components of the knot. A reef knot is ideal for tying up the foot of a sail that is reefed round its boom because, in use, it is always under tension. If you use a reef knot where it is not under tension, it is liable to come loose, particularly with modern, slippery, synthetic ropes. In such a case you need to use a knot which stays done up because of its own internal friction.

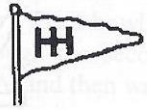
If anybody has any difficulties with these or any other knots, I shall be pleased to try to help you get properly knotted.

Happy sailing,

Ralph Rowe (Comet 346, Chipstead S.C.)

INTRODUCING ... HILL HEAD S.C.

Hill Head Sailing Club is essentially a self-help and family orientated organisation with about 400 Members. Founded in 1930, we are based by the small harbour of Titchfield Haven, on the estuary of the River Mean at the western end of Hill Head.



The Clubhouse used today was built by members and opened in 1975. Excellent Facilities include changing rooms with showers and toilets and an attractive lounge with commanding views of the Solent.

Members operate a bar seven days a week and also produce light lunches in the 'galley' at weekends.

There are two dinghy parks with slipways into the harbour. Ample car parking arrangements adjacent to each compound make easy access to the club and shingle beach running along the foreshore.

The Club has its own unique class of dinghy - the traditional clinker built "Jacqueline". These, together with Mirror, Topper and Laser classes and a wide ranging handicap fleet of Wayfarers, Enterprises, GPI4's and Multihulls are raced regularly in our extensive sailing programme.

The club has two safety boats manned by RYA trained Coxswains. All club racing has full safety coverage and members are advised to wear adequate personal buoyancy when afloat.

A variety of social events are arranged throughout the year. The traditional fitting-out and laying-up suppers are complimented by more informal evening gatherings, discos and barbecues, many of which are coupled with sailing events or seasonal activities such as carnivals, firework displays and open days.

Hill Head Sailing Club, (Grid Ref: SU 530025)
The Club House,
Cliff Road,
Hill Head,
Fareham,
Hampshire PO14 3JT (Tel: 01329 664843)

INTRODUCING . . . NASEBY S.C.

History buffs will remember Naseby as the place where King Charles the First took a drubbing from Cromwell's New Model Army in 1645. The village of Naseby, situated high up in the Northamptonshire Uplands, is near to the sources of three rivers - Avon, Welland and Nene (Grid Reference: SP 665778).

In 1814 a canal was opened which was the final link in the chain of waterways linking the Thames with the River Trent. This canal (originally called the Leicestershire and Northamptonshire Union Canal but later to become the Leicester Section of the Grand Union) at once began to suffer from a shortage of water supply. A reservoir was therefore constructed at Naseby and came into use in 1821. The capacity was increased in 1834 and again in 1836. The reservoir was a favourite place for fishing from its early days but nowadays the traffic on the canal is all for leisure.

The sailing club was formed in the 1960's. It is a small family club, there is no restriction on what classes can be sailed and there is a friendly racing scene. The reservoir, covering some 90 acres, is free of islands or other obstructions, allowing a wide variety of courses to be set to suit all wind conditions.

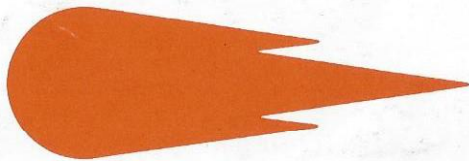
Boat launching is down a concrete slipway. There is a floating jetty to which boats can be conveniently tied up afloat between races, making for a relaxed day's sailing.

Our clubhouse has a covered patio from which the non-sailors can watch the racing or just admire the very pretty surrounding countryside. A grassy area in front of the clubhouse is good for picnics and camping as well as safe for children to play,

Naseby SC first saw a Comet in 1995. Since then the fleet has grown steadily and the boat seems to be able to hold its own against the Laser in handicap racing. 1998 will see 9 Comets at the club although to date I am the only one who has ventured out into the wider world of the open meeting circuit.

A warm welcome awaits all who visit us on June 20th. Come and "do battle" at Naseby - without coming to blows of course!

Chris Weston (Comet 211, Naseby S.C.)



Comet Class Association

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association