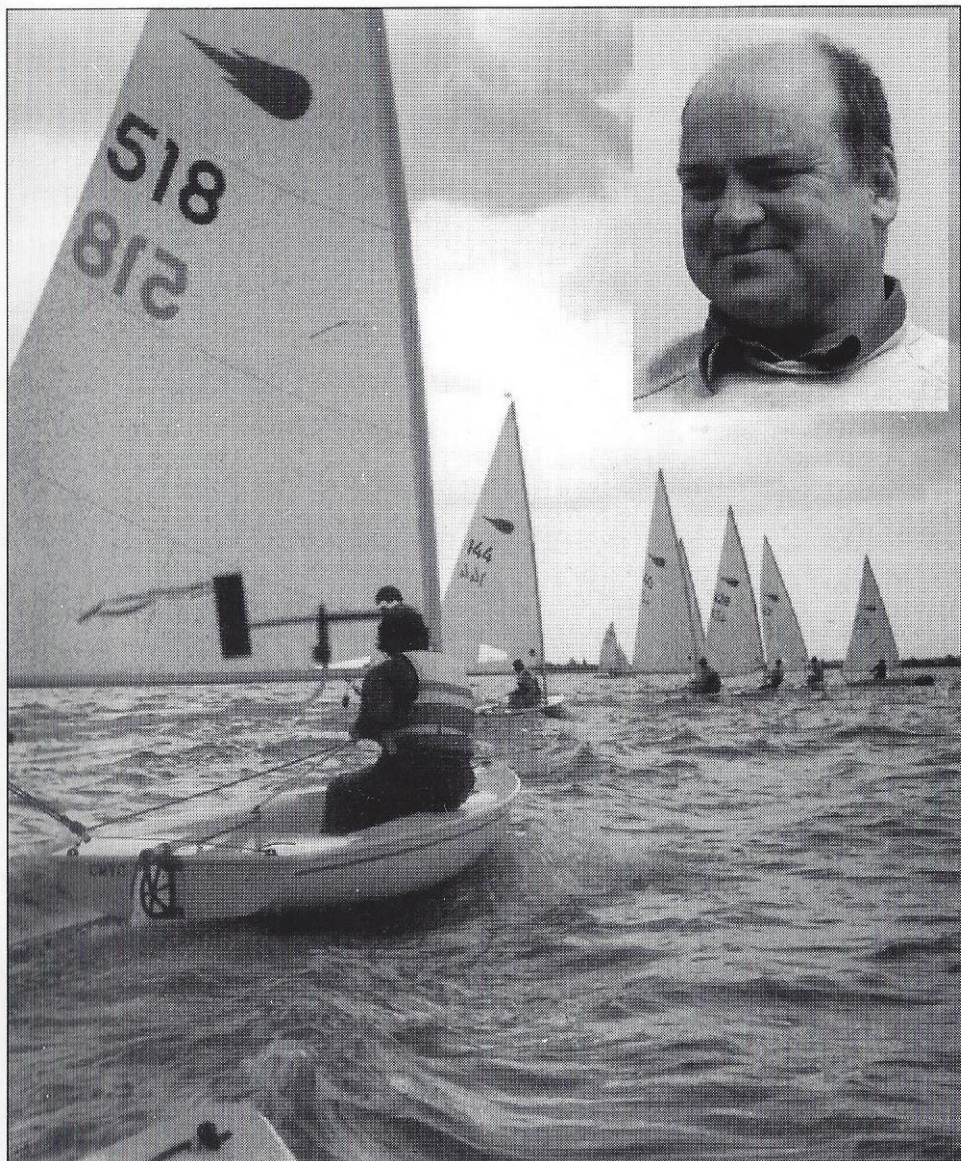


• PERIHELION 50



Spring 1999



Comet Class Association Newsletter

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 50 SPRING 1999

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Front cover:

For the 50th edition of the newsletter, we feature Andrew Simmons, Comet designer and builder.

(Photos: Andrew Simmons by Anne Browning
Comet fleet by David Hudson)

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Here we go again! If, like me, you have been off the water for the past couple of months, the prospect of sailing the Comet again has an irresistible appeal. Apart from the need for fresh air and exercise, I really start to miss my sailing. Thoughts of ghosting lazily across the water in the spring sunshine or of battling against the elements in a March storm hold equal magic. But the water is so cold this time of year that it may take some effort to get going again. I will make that effort before long though and I hope you do also!

This is the 50th edition of Perihelion and that is something to celebrate. What is more, the great majority of editions have appeared on a regular, quarterly basis which puts us a cut above most of the other classes. I've been skimming through some back numbers (most of which I seem to have) and am impressed by how much the Association's activity has grown and how professional the magazine looks now compared to its tentative beginnings. I also feel a deep gratitude to the people who started the whole thing off and everyone who has served the Class Association so well over the years.

Two more things to celebrate! First, with 51 entries at Frensham last year, we had the fourth highest National Championship entry of any single-handed class. Second, we are currently one of only five single-handed dinghies with a Primary Yardstick which means the RYA continues to recognise the Comet as a well-established racing class.

I have mentioned our membership drive before but I make no apology for mentioning it again simply because it has been so successful. A warm welcome to the 51 new members it has produced to date. May you stay with us and get even more pleasure from your Comet sailing. Norah and I really do seem to have struck the right note!

While on the subject of membership, many thanks to those who wrote comments on the back of the renewal form as requested. Your remarks were generally very friendly and constructive (surely there must be some sterner critics out there somewhere?) but there were a couple of points which came up quite often. One was how to find clubs whose names bore no relationship to their geographical location! Yes, this can be difficult, but I can supply a map reference and even quite detailed approach directions for most of the main Comet clubs or if the club is in our current programme you could always phone the contact. Our editor may be publishing some map references, he often does in this Spring edition (see page 16 - Ed). The other question was "is it not time we were on the Internet?" Well we are although it seems to be a closely guarded secret! The address is something very like:

<http://www.btinternet.com/~tony.ellison/comet/comet.htm>

Many thanks to Tony Ellison of Littleton SC for arranging and managing this site, it will be interesting to see how it develops.

Still on membership, renewals have been coming in more or less to schedule but if the copy of Perihelion you are reading is not your own it probably means you have not yet sent your cheque to Derek. Please do it now, otherwise you may find yourself a target for our next drive!

Many thanks to Norah for arranging our programme: as big as ever with open meetings and championship meetings to appeal to all. We have the Orbital trophy which is our nation-wide travellers' series, and have decided to introduce a fifth area, "Central", to add to the North, South, East, and West Aphelion series. So with even more trophies to win why not have a go at qualifying in at least one of the areas? We have two new venues this year, Winsford Flash and Banbury, both of which have established Comet fleets, and also welcome the return of Redditch. The Association Championship is inland at Staunton Harold where I hope to welcome many of you personally, while the National Championship is at Hampton Pier, Herne Bay, where we can hope for some varied sailing in tidal waters but with courses set reassuringly close inshore. Race training is on offer at Cotswold and more general training, depending on the wishes of the participants, at Pingewood. For all the dates and details see the Comet Event Diary on page 18. I have again produced a pocket programme (credit card size if folded) to remind you of the dates. A copy should be enclosed with this issue.

Don't forget the Photographic Competition, this time the rules are minimal. So minimal that I have not done a separate advert for it: perhaps there will be a reminder in the summer edition. This year all photos submitted to Perihelion will be considered as well as any sent directly to me. Just ensure we get them one way or another before 24th September.

So that's about it for this time as I still have some polishing to do on my Comet before I take it back to the club. I look forward to meeting many of you and renewing old friendships all round the country. If you normally, even just occasionally, race at your club, why not make this the year to venture out and broaden your horizons. You will find a warm welcome at any of our venues and there is bound to be at least one not too far away. If you never race, I still expect to see you on the water flying the flag for Comets, the ideal boat for all.

Good Sailing,

Henry Jagers, Chairman

CELEBRATING 50 ISSUES OF PERIHELION -PART 1

Here you are reading the 50th issue of Perihelion, not as much of a milestone as 20 years of Comets will be, but perhaps time to look back.

Editors

Perihelion has had three Editors, the first was Keith Lamdin, a real hard worker for he was Chairman as well and did much to set the Class Association on its feet. He encouraged clubs to arrange open meetings and sailed in most of them too, all this while in full-time employment and engaged in at least two other hobbies. Keith was Editor for the first 12 issues, from Winter 1986 to Autumn 1989. Then Stuart Lines got involved, in the layout and graphics for issues 11 and 12 and then as Editor for the next 15 issues, Winter 1989 to Summer 1993. Stuart also had a full-time job and I am in great admiration of those two who did the editing job in relatively limited "spare time". When I took over in 1993 I had been retired for two years, having bought my Comet as a retirement hobby. I must admit that to keep up with the standard of the newsletter at that time I had at first to spend many, many hours on each issue, but I managed to get them out on time, and persuade quite a number of members to contribute too!

The first 22 issues

The first nine issues were simply typed, reduced to the A5 format and photocopied on to paper. Issues 10 and 11 had thicker paper covers and from issues 12 to 22 the covers were thin card. These were classic issues though and during this time Keith gave to members his articles on "Setting your Comet sail" (issues 5 & 6), "Sailing your Comet" (issues 8 to 12), "Racing your Comet" (issues 14 to 17) and "Know the Rules" (issues 18 to 22). I can imagine the effort required to write those articles and as you know I have re-issued the "Sailing" and "Racing" series as booklets for members who have joined more recently. There were other articles by members of course, on all sorts of topics, reports on championships and open meetings and some interesting articles by Andrew Simmons and Margaret Hylton. But the highlight of almost every issue was an article by Keith Lamdin.

It was clear to me that after Keith had completed those articles the newsletter was likely to be rather thin. For example issue 22 had barely more than half the pages of issue 50 and Keith's article was 8 sides of concise text with drawings, nearly the length of the "Talking to . . ." article in this issue. Accordingly, I tried to help the girth of the newsletter a little by providing some articles on the "Raw

beginner's point of view" (issues 23 to 27) because earlier articles, and many sailing books, didn't go back to the lowest levels of competence. I am pleased to say that since then members have become more and more keen to contribute articles.

Improvement in photographic reproduction

The early issues were reproduced on an office photocopier which coped with text and drawings well but was not designed to copy photographs. The Association from the start has been keen to include photographs in the newsletter but in those issues when copied they were very contrasty and many a Comet sail came out as a logo and a couple of sail numbers floating in mid-air! There were many photographs of people, and quite right too, but unfortunately few were really recognisable.

Then, from issue 23 onwards, a professional printer was brought in to run off the copies. They used a modern machine to print on slightly glossy paper and the result was an immediate and dramatic improvement in the quality of reproduction, particularly in the photographs. The covers now had not only a good quality black & white photograph but the red text and Comet logo as we have today. Not a word was said about this change inside issue 23, but the centre-fold was one large photograph of the 1992 Nationals prize-winners, and everyone was easily recognisable.

I think the improvements in visual quality have improved the newsletter as a whole in that photographs showing minute detail can be included, we can now show small things like the design of new cleats, rope layouts and even the cat picture on the Chairman's boat!

Alan Browning, 3rd Editor. (To be concluded in Perihelion 51)

EDITOR'S NOTES

50 issues in 13 years, coming to you as regularly as clockwork, and still going strong! I've been responsible for 22 of them, and there's been at least one error in every one! I have enjoyed it though, and still do, despite the panics.

We are soon to pass that magic calendar number 2000 and some may ask how Perihelion might mark that occasion. I have no plans at all to make changes to the format of Perihelion, but some people concerned with the Internet are trying to!

Publishing Perihelion

Until recently Perihelion has been a private periodical with circulation only to members, though some copies have been given to interested members of the public at boat shows to encourage the sale of new boats. As the Chairman and Secretary have mentioned (pages 2 and 11), Comet news can be found on the site of one of our members, Tony Ellison (Comet 645, Littleton S.C.). Now this gives public access to information that is printed in Perihelion, for I have seen Internet terminals for all to use in a café, and this is effectively publication of those parts.

Now I think I am right in saying that the Committee are unanimously in favour of anything of a factual nature being available on the Internet. Norah has indicated the sort of thing we mean (page 11, item 7) and of course if the Internet were as ubiquitous and easy to use as the telephone, then this issue would not need to have in it the Committee members list, the list of boats for sale and pages 8, 9, 13-19, 29 and 36. Possibly also pages 7, 1, 11, 12 could also be available on the Internet, the Committee communication to members. So for the second time in its history, Perihelion could become rather thin, if all that information were to be transferred to the Internet.

What would be left would be articles that contain members opinions, and it is not at all desirable to publish those. Until now I have not censored the content of Perihelion in any way and members have sometimes criticised each other, clubs, catering, training advice, the Committee and even the boat. I have always assumed that their words would go no further than other members and hence have encouraged honest opinion to be expressed. For the foreseeable future I plan to continue as though the Internet did not exist, including information and Committee communication, but of course reminding members that they can probably get what they want faster by interrogating Tony Ellison's site.

E-mail and Fax

Of course E-mail and Fax affect me too. I possess neither but some members might more readily contribute to Perihelion by these means. For example, a meeting report E-mailed or Faxed to Yachts & Yachting could very easily be sent to me, too but at the moment, as far as I know, to reach the Committee this way you can only E-mail to Stuart Gilder or Fax to Phil Hossell. Now, if the Association paid my Internet and E-mail bills !

This issue

What of this issue? Well, the Committee thought it fitting that for the 50th issue Andrew Simmons should appear on the cover.

The main item is the chat with Heidi Dodd and Martin Vinson which I hope you enjoy. Articles introduce two clubs offering open meetings for the first time, Banbury and Winsford Flash, and there is another look at Redditch who are "back in the fold" after a few years without an open. John Regnard has put pen to paper again, this time on the scoring system and tie-breaking, which has caused the Committee to scratch their heads a bit. A hearty thank-you to all those contributors.

Alan Browning, Editor

BUILDER'S REPORT

The Southampton Boat Show was particularly good for Trios and almost as good for Comets with two more boosting the Cotswold S.C. fleet.

It was good to see some of you at London in January, it was our biggest ever stand at 80sq m and looked impressive with 2 Trios, a Duo and 2 Comets. It has to be said that you do not get the sailing club people there like you used to, probably due to the growth of the Sailboat show. This year Topper were absent so there were even less classes of dinghy in display. However we had a reasonable show, have already done some demos and recent Comet sales have added to the Littleton fleet, one to Bosham in Chichester harbour and an addition to the slowly but surely growing fleet at Winsford Flash. Let's hope they have a good turnout for their first open meeting.

Those who went to Sailboat '99 could not have missed it, but for those that did not go, here's the details of our new special edition "Comet Club":

It is available in four new "all over" colours (ie. same hull and deck) to suit all tastes. A pale minty green, a light shade of lilac, a mellow daffodil yellow and a new pale blue. All this with some new graphics, black tiller & spars and a new variation of race rigging. There is no guarantee that it is any faster than "normal" Comets, but it is as radical a Comet as it can be! Who knows, it might prove faster in a race due to everyone else making admiring glances, and missing the windshifts!

I hope to make it to the Inlands and the Nationals this year so I will see you there!

Andrew Simmons, Comet builder.

INTRODUCING . . . BANBURY SAILING CLUB

Banbury Sailing Club is in SW Northamptonshire, very close to the Three Shires Stone. It is 2 miles west of Byfield on the road to Upper Boddington, just off the A361 Daventry to Banbury Road. Grid Reference: SP 500530.



The club was founded in 1950 on Boddington Reservoir which is a feeder for the Oxford Canal. We are a very friendly, family orientated club and in 1998 became an RYA recognised teaching establishment. We have superb sailing facilities on about 100 acres of water. There is a walk around the reservoir, approximately 1/2 mile long and 1/4 mile wide including a nature reserve close by. There is plenty of room for visiting boats to rig on the lawn right in front of two slipways leading to an extensive pontoon for mooring.

The wooden clubhouse, which has been added to and modernised over the years, is in a prime position overlooking the boat park and the water. It is well fitted out with male and female changing rooms, including toilets and hot showers. It has a large galley, and a comfortable "dry" lounge area next to the *well stocked bar*. There is also plenty of seating for eating while still in "wet rubber". The outside sun-deck, added in the early 1990s, is a very pleasant place to sit on a warm day and, coupled with the children's play area, means the whole family can enjoy a day out.

We have 6 fleets: Merlin Rocket, GP 14, Solo, Laser, Comet and Menagerie comprising: Topper, Enterprise, Firefly, Lark, Mirror and Optimist. We have a Sunday race programme which runs from March to December. In addition we host Solo, GP 14 and Merlin Rocket Open meetings. At all these times we have excellent rescue boat cover.

Our first Comet arrived in 1990. By 1994 there were 8 and by 1997 an explosion of Comets took our total to 15. In addition we have two members currently wanting to buy Comets. With sometimes as many as 7 out racing on Sundays, we gained fleet status in 1998.

We are hosting our first Comet Open meeting on Saturday 15 May 1999. Please come and join us, we will make you very welcome. Further details are shown on our Open meeting flyer, alternatively feel free to contact me on 01926 640271.

**INTRODUCING . . .
WINSFORD FLASH S.C.**

The Club was founded (originally as Northwich Sailing Club) in 1931 and moved to Winsford in 1935. The 'Flash' itself is a 90 acre lake situated in rural surroundings by the River Weaver just to the south of Winsford. The Clubhouse, completed in 1990, has a large club room, spacious changing rooms with showers, a bar with lounge area and a well equipped galley.



The site has ample dinghy and car parking but is compact enough to ensure that everyone has neighbours. With concrete slipways and timber jetties, we must have among the most civilised dinghy launching facilities in the North West. We have two club rescue/safety boats.

We sail from March until the end of October and then run a 'winter' series through to Christmas. Racing is generally on Sundays and Bank Holidays with some informal races on Wednesday evenings during the summer. We sail eight different classes: Albacore, GP 14, Miracle, Topper, Laser, Enterprise, Mirror and Optimist. During the year we also hold Open Invitation Meetings for all the main club classes.

In addition to club racing, many members compete in local, regional and national championship events and the Club takes part each year in the inter-club 24-hour team race at Southport - winning the event on three occasions.

We have an active and varied social programme throughout the year - with quiz nights, barn dances, discos, an annual prizegiving and a Christmas Dinner. Wednesday evening sailing is usually followed by a Barbeque.

Brian Herring 01625 585745, Ros Stevenson 01606 592115

Winsford Flash Sailing Club,
Stocks Hill, Darnhall,
Winsford,
Cheshire CW7 4EE

Grid Reference: SJ 660650

NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE

1. This year's racing programme is now completed and a copy is enclosed with this edition of Perihelion. Once again there are 24 Open meetings, with new venues at Banbury (Oxfordshire) and Winsford Flash (Cheshire). It is good to be invited back to Redditch (Worcs) again.

2. The Committee recognised that the eligibility requirements for the Aphelions were more demanding last season, and, as a result, has created a fifth area, the Central Aphelion. Qualification for an Aphelion will be participation in 3 meetings in that area.

3. The Nationals will be at Hampton Pier (Herne Bay) on 30th and 31st July and 1st August, and the Association Championships will be at Staunton Harold (S.Derbyshire) on 1st and 2nd May. We hope that you will come to join in the racing as well as the social side of things. Being together for more than a day encourages the friendly atmosphere for which the class is renowned.

4. The Committee has decided to adjust the prize structure for the national events to formalise what were ad hoc arrangements at some events in the past. As before, there will be prizes for the first seven helms. There will also be Veteran, Lady and Junior prizes for which the top seven helms will not be eligible.

Obviously, the highest placed female helm will still become the Ladies' Champion with the Ladies' prize being awarded to the next highest placed lady below seventh place. We hope that this will go some way towards distributing the prizes throughout the fleet, which has been the subject of much discussion in recent years. The policy of recognising the contribution of each of the participants in the national events continues, and everyone who enters will receive a memento.

5. For racers and non-racers there are two training days planned - Race Training at Cotswold (between Swindon and Cirencester) on July 17th and General Training at Pingewood (Reading) on September 25th.

6. In view of the fact that several helms aged 70+ have identified themselves, the Committee would like your comments on reorganising the prize/age structure. The Secretary is in favour of 45 - 60 = Veteran. 60+ = Ancient Mariner!

7. The Committee has noted all the comments which you wrote on the renewal forms, and is attempting to address them where possible. One member asked if the location of sailing venues could be identified, and you will note that the committee is trying to comply with his request. (See page 16 - Editor).

Some of you were obviously not aware that Comet news can be found on
<http://www.btinternet.com/~tony.ellison/comet/comet.htm>

The information on the site should be restricted to factual information - venues, dates, results and reports of meetings, boats for sale, for instance. To put Perihelion on to it, as has been suggested, would, by making it available to a wider, non discriminating audience, detract from it's purpose as a newsletter for the members of the association. Alan Browning is taking an overview of the information to be included by Tony Ellison.

At present the only committee member with an e-mail address is Stuart Gilder who can be found on

stuart.gilder@sgilder.freemove.co.uk

Stuart has been keeping various doctors and nurses busy recently and we hope that all is going well with him. One way of making him feel a lot better would be to visit Glossop for their Open meeting on May 22nd.

Norah Gould Class Secretary

● **NEC LEISURE SHOW**

Instead of writing to you all individually, I would like, through Perihelion, to express a big thank you to everyone who helped staff our stand at the recent Boat and Leisure Show held at the NEC at the end of February. Without the support of all our volunteers the organisation would be an impossible task.

At this stage, we are unable to gauge the success of it, especially as it did not coincide with the usual school half term week. However, the weekends were that much busier. I do hope that everyone enjoyed being there as much as I did.

To all those that didn't go this year, let me know and get your name down for next year. It really is an enjoyable experience to meet the public and encourage them to sail (perhaps even in a Comet).

Phillip Hossell (Comet 650, Evesham SC)

● NOTICE OF AGM 1999

The Annual General Meeting of the Comet Class Association
will take place on

Saturday 31st July 1999

at

Hampton Pier Yacht Club

at

18.00 hrs or 1 hour after the last race, whichever is the later.

Items for inclusion on the agenda should reach the Secretary
no later than Saturday 3rd July 1999.

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, Comet Class Association Secretary

● SETTING YOUR COMET SAIL

Whilst looking back over the 50 issues of Perihelion I realised that many current members may not have seen Keith Lamdin's "Setting your Comet sail" articles (first printed in issues 5 & 6, 1987/88). These were for many years included in the A5 booklet issued with every new boat but I believe this is not done now. Maybe this is because in 1993 John Windibank reprinted them in an excellent booklet which was circulated, free of charge, to all members. If any newer members wish to have copies, I am prepared to make photocopies, at a price of £1 to cover postage and my printing costs. I suggest that you don't rush to buy them because updating is necessary to relate to the Hyde sails now being sold. I am planning to contact several top Comet sailors for comments on this.

Alan Browning, Editor

COMET HALL OF FAME

Past Championship Winners

<u>National Champion</u>	<u>Ladies</u>	<u>Junior</u>
1983 Ken Potts		
1984 Bob Sandford		
1985 Stuart Ingham		
1986 Keith Lamdin		
1987 Jeff Penfold		
1988 Craig Moffatt	Hayley Penfold	
1989 Chris Sinclair	Margaret Hylton	
1990 Chris Sinclair	Tracey Davies	
1991 Guy Wilkins	Tracey Davies	
1992 Guy Wilkins	Anne Brook	Nancy Gould
1993 Guy Wilkins	Christine Stack	Jake Sutton
1994 Guy Wilkins	Christine Stack	Ian Jubb
1995 Guy Wilkins	Heidi Dodd	Robert Hamilton
1996 Alex Reeve	Heidi Dodd	Andrew Bowes
1997 John Challener	Heather Back	Robert Hamilton
1998 Jake Sutton	Heidi Dodd	Robert Hamilton

Association Trophy

1988	
1989	Damon Perrin
1990	Guy Wilkins
1991	Henry Jaggars
1992	Guy Wilkins
1993	Mark Wilkins
1994	Guy Wilkins
1995	Alex Reeve
1996	John Challener
1997	Mark Wilkins
1998	Mark Wilkins

Orbital Trophy (National)

Craig Moffatt
Andrew Pierce
James Withall
Henry Jaggars
Guy Wilkins
Mark Wilkins
Mark Wilkins
Jake Sutton
Mark Wilkins
Alex Reeve
Phillip Hossell

Aphelion Trophy (Regional)


<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>
1992 Mark Wilkins	Guy Wilkins		Nancy Gould
1993 Errol Edwards	Mark Wilkins		Mark Wilkins
1994 Richard Smallwood	Mark Wilkins	Jake Sutton	Mark Wilkins
1995 Errol Edwards	Mark Wilkins	Jake Sutton	Jake Sutton
1996 Steve Heyes	Mark Wilkins	Alex Reeve	John Windibank
1997 Phillip Hossell	Alex Reeve	Mark Wilkins	Phillip Hossell
1998 Phillip Hossell	Phillip Hossell	Richard Smallwood	Phillip Hossell

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

PERIOD FROM 1ST JANUARY 1998 TO 31ST DECEMBER 1998

<u>RECEIPTS</u>	<u>NOTES</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>1998</u>
MEMBERSHIP FEES	1	£2,375.00	£2,880.00
COMET DINGIES - NEW BOATS	2	£190.00	£200.00
NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS REVENUE	3	£-	£218.98
COMMISSION ON INSURANCE	4	£1,203.00	£1,137.00
BUILDING SOCIETY INTEREST	5	£63.34	£75.77
SALE OF ITEMS (TROPHY INSERTS ETC)	6	£33.00	£6.50
DONATIONS	7	£10.00	£57.50
PAYMENTS MADE INADVERTANTLY	7a	£3.00	£1.00
		£3,877.34	£4,576.75
<u>PAYMENTS</u>			
PRIZES AND ENGRAVING	8	£761.52	£825.47
PERIHELION AND EDITOR'S COSTS	9	£1,667.44	£1,737.33
EXHIBITION CHARGES AND ELECTRIC	10	£518.58	£520.63
R.Y.A. AFFILIATION FEE	11	£57.00	£57.00
ADVERTISING	12	£416.06	£231.61
EXPENSES	13	£204.14	£256.46
ADHESIVE MEMBERSHIP LABELS	14	£5.80	£5.80
DUO'S COMMISSION 1997/MAILSHOT 1998	15	£100.00	£150.00
PAYMENTS MADE INADVERTANTLY	16	£3.00	£1.00
(SEE 7a ABOVE)			
INSETS FOR TROPHIES	17	£-	£96.29
		£3,733.54	£3,881.59
TOTAL RECEIPTS		£4,576.75	BALANCE ON B/SOC 1998
TOTAL PAYMENTS		£3,881.59	BALANCE IN B/SOC 1997
		£695.16	£700.58
PLUS PETTY CASH 97/98		£14.92	PLUS PETTY CASH 98/99
		£710.08	£9.50
			£710.08


D. COLEMAN (HON. TREASURER)


W. J. EDWARDS (HON. AUDITOR)

NOTES

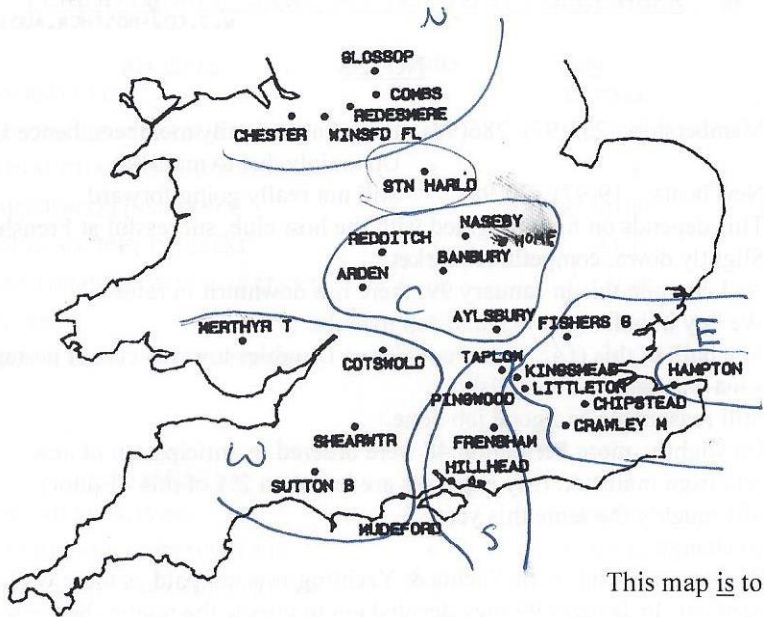
- 1 Membership: 233(97) 286(98) Including 4 family members, hence £2880
Up mainly due to mailshot.
 - 2 New boats: 19(97) 20(98) Still not really going forward.
 - 3 This depends on format agreed with the host club, successful at Frensham.
 - 4 Slightly down, competitive market.
 - 5 As I compile this in January 99, there is a downturn in rates.
 - 6 We buy in bulk (see 17) and sell to clubs.
 - 7 The bulk of this (£45) was from Comet Dinghies towards cost of postage. A spares list was sent in the mailshot.
 - 8 Still reasonable and good job done.
 - 9 Up slightly, more Perihelion 48 were ordered in anticipation of new members from mailshot. (My expenses are less than 2% of this - Editor)
 - 10 Still roughly the same this year.
 - 11 No change.
 - 12 The November bill with Yachts & Yachting was not paid as there was a disagreement. In January 99 they decided not to pursue the matter, hence we will be paying the original bill of £219.01.
 - 13 They would be a lot higher if everybody claimed what they are entitled to.
 - 14 Membership labels. No change, it depends on what colour you have.
 - 15 The mailshot to all Comet owners who were not C.C.A. members which has resulted in another 39 members at least.
 - 16 These payments (see 7a) should have been made to Alan Browning and not to C.C.A.
 - 17 Purchased in bulk, then supplied to clubs as required.
-

Not a bad year. We are told that it's good value for money, I hope so.

The mailshot was a good exercise', which I dealt with the tail end. To Norah and Henry a great job done but very time consuming.

Derek.

OPEN MEETING AND CHAMPIONSHIPS LOCATIONS



GRID REFERENCES OF CLUBS

The best information I have for Grid References of clubs (the clubhouse if possible) is given below. Please tell me of any errors that matter.

SO 915425	Arden	SU 530025	Hillhead
SP 874105	Aylesbury	TQ 015755	Kingsmead
SP 500530	Banbury	TQ 070675	Littleton
SJ 420659	Chester	SO 040060	Merthyr Tydfil
TQ 505560	Chipstead	SZ 172925	Mudford
SK 037800	Combs	SP 665778	Naseby
SU 055970	Cotswold	SU 670705	Pingewood
TQ 360405	Crawley Mariners	SP 059673	Redditch
TL 380045	Fishers Green	SJ 845720	Redesmere
SU 845400	Frensham Pond	ST 840425	Shearwater
SK 068984	Glossop	ST 549115	Sutton Bingham
TR 155680	<u>Hampton Pier</u>	SU 907809	Taplow Lake
SK 377241	<u>Staunton Harold</u>	SJ 660650	Winsford Flash

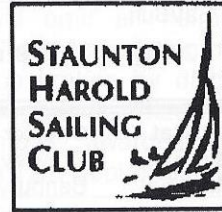
Alan Browning, Editor.

ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIPS

Saturday & Sunday 1st and 2nd May 1999

Staunton Harold Sailing Club is proud to host the Inland Championships for a second time.

Since last hosting the Championships two years ago the fleet of Comets at SHSC has grown from 6 to 13 boats, which is quite an achievement. It shows the sailors in the East Midlands are starting to appreciate the joys of sailing a Comet.



On Saturday we have the water to ourselves with the first of the three races of the day starting at 11.30am, briefing at 11.00am.

On Sunday the first race will start at 10.00am and the second race finishes at 1.30 to 2.00pm when S.H.S.C. members will be fleet racing for the remainder of the afternoon.

On Saturday evening we will be having a quiz and fish and chips evening, commencing at 6.30pm so that everybody can quickly replace all those calories from the days sailing. The cost will be about £5.00.

To find us: The Grid Reference is: Map sheet 128, SK 377241. Approach the club through a Severn Trent visitor's area, following the signs to the club. The clubhouse telephone number is 01332 826067. You will find a map on the enclosed meeting flyer.

Accommodation: Tents, caravans or camper vans are permitted to use the sailing club premises, free of charge, on Friday and Saturday nights. Please let me know if you intend to camp at the club so that I can unlock the club house gates for you. I have a list of local accommodation that I will send out on request.

I hope that has covered most queries. I am sure that we will have a great two days sailing.

Trish Moore (Comet 601) 01509 261845

COMET CLASS EVENT DIARY



<u>Date & day</u>	<u>Club</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
17 April, Sat.	Shearwater	WEST	Nic Cross	01373 822258
17 April, Sat.	Winsford Flash	NORTH	Brian Herring	01625 585745
24 April, Sat.	Fishers Green	EAST	Peter Seager	01279 433851

Sat/Sun

ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIP

1 - 2 May

Staunton Harold SC

Trish Moore 01509 261845
or John Orchard 01283 701285

8 May, Sat.	Chester S & CC	NORTH	John Edwards	01829 781234
9 May, Sun.	Crawley Mariners	EAST	Diana Thompson	01737 552482
15 May, Sat	Banbury SC	CENTRAL	Phil Henman	01926 640271
22 May, Sat.	Glossop & District	NORTH	Stuart Gilder	01457 861452
23 May, Sun.	Sutton Bingham	WEST	Gordon Parker	01458 223058
5 June, Sat.	Chipstead	EAST	Brian Thom	01812 898389
12 June, Sat.	Taplow Lake	SOUTH	Mark Taylor	01628 602663
19 June, Sat.	Frensham Pond	SOUTH	Charles Smith	01483 418745
19 June, Sat.	Redditch	CENTRAL	Bob Willis	01527 459852
20 June, Sun.	Naseby	CENTRAL	Chris Weston	01858 545564
26 June, Sat.	Merthyr Tydfil	WEST	Mark Govier	01222 778459
3 July, Sat.	Combs	NORTH	Sue Pollard	01457 862694
4 July, Sun.	Hillhead	SOUTH	Paul Drew	01329 667666
17 July, Sat.	Mudford	WEST	Peter Reid	01202 477281
18 July, Sun.	Aylesbury	CENTRAL	Mike Palmer	01296 436414
24 July, Sat.	Cotswold	WEST	Bob Presley	01761 232487

Fri/Sat/Sun

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

30,31 July, 1 Aug

Hampton Pier YC

Geoff Gambrell 01227 361156

11 Sept., Sat.	Littleton	EAST	Nick Warren	01344 623591
12 Sept., Sun.	Arden	CENTRAL	Clive Marlow	01684 562808
26 Sept., Sun.	Pingewood	SOUTH	Norah Gould	01635 298074
9 Oct., Sat.	Redesmere	NORTH	Tim Baker	01477 534238
17 Oct., Sun.	Kingsmead	EAST	Geoff Kempton	01753 885782

TRAINING DAYS

17 July, Sat.	Cotswold	Bob Presley	01761 232487
25 Sept., Sat.	Pingewood	Norah Gould	01635 298074

Orbital Trophy

Your six best open results will count. To qualify in the Orbital you must also enter at least one of the championships. Open meeting results will be as determined by the host club but omitting helms who were not members of the Comet Class Association on the day of the event. Ties decided on the results of the National and/or Association Championships. The trophy, other prizes, and mementoes for all qualifiers will be presented at Kingsmead on 17th Oct.

Aphelion Trophies

Five areas this year: qualification for an Aphelion needs entry at three open meetings in that area. Mementoes for all qualifiers: more details opposite.

COMET CLASS ASSOCIATION

APHELION TROPHIES 99

CENTRAL AREA

Banbury
Redditch
Naseby
Aylesbury
Arden

Enter at three or more events to qualify for series. Event results will omit all helms not members of the Comet Class Association on day of the event. Ties will be broken by discarded events or last head-to-head result. Prizes will be presented and mementoes awarded to all qualifiers at **Arden SC** on 12th September.

EASTERN AREA

Fishers Green
Crawley Mariners
Chipstead
Littleton
Kingsmead

Enter at three or more events to qualify for series. Event results will omit all helms not members of the Comet Class Association on day of the event. Ties will be broken by discarded events or last head-to-head result. Prizes will be presented and mementoes awarded to all qualifiers at **Kingsmead SC** on 17th October.

NORTHERN AREA

Winsford Flash
Chester
Glossop & District
Combs
Redesmere

Enter at three or more events to qualify for series. Event results will omit all helms not members of the Comet Class Association on day of the event. Ties will be broken by discarded events or last head-to-head result. Prizes will be presented and mementoes awarded to all qualifiers at **Redesmere SC** on 9th October.

SOUTHERN AREA

Taplow Lake
Frensham Pond
Hillhead
Pingewood

Enter at three or more events to qualify for series. Event results will omit all helms not members of the Comet Class Association on day of the event. Ties will be broken by discarded events or last head-to-head result. Prizes will be presented and mementoes awarded to all qualifiers at **Pingewood SC** on 26th September.

WESTERN AREA

Shearwater
Sutton Bingham
Merthyr Tydfil
Mudford
Cotswold

Enter at three or more events to qualify for series. Event results will omit all helms not members of the Comet Class Association on day of the event. Ties will be broken by discarded events or last head-to-head result. Prizes will be presented and mementoes awarded to all qualifiers at **Cotswold SC** on 24th July.

TALKING TO . . . HEIDI DODD & MARTIN VINSON

Alan Browning: You two seem to me to be an obvious choice for an interview, with Heidi third time ladies champion, close runner-up in the Southern Aphelion and 6th in the orbital and Martin a very close second in the Association Championships, close behind Heidi in the Southern and just ahead in the Orbitals. What was it? four 2nd and two 3rd, not bad at all.



(Photo: Anne Browning)

My first question is, as usual, where did you first see a Comet and what attracted you to the boat?

Martin: I was brought up on the Essex coast, near Brightlingsea and an elder brother always had an interest in boats. I came to sailing late on in life, after college. I was just getting into outdoor activities, I did a lot of cycling and I fancied taking up sailing. I did various courses including a Laser course at the National Sailing Centre just before it closed and, living near Gatwick, I joined the nearby club Crawley Mariners. I first saw Comets there, they had quite a lot of them. Steve Kibble, the class Secretary, was there and the fleet was taking off. I realised that I was not really the right weight to sail a Laser properly so I bought a Topper but what I really wanted was something a bit more like a Laser and the Comet was ideal. A friend of my brother had Comet 133 but he was too big for it and I eventually bought it. It was a silly decision in a way because I was soon to leave the area and move to Guildford and didn't know which club I would be going to, but the Comet was such a nice boat, it was an emotional decision rather than a rational one. Papercourt S.C would have been ideal but they wouldn't have it. I considered joining Frensham Pond S.C. who would have accepted it. **Alan:** Yes, I'd just persuaded them that Comets were a good thing and mine was the only one there then. **Martin:** At that stage I'd decided to sell both my Topper and Comet, buy an Enterprise and join Frensham but a

colleague of mine suggested Littleton, which was on my way home from work and handy for evening sailing. Littleton's policy was to take all sorts of boats so I kept the Comet and have never looked back. I introduced sailing to Heidi. She is a much more natural sports person than I am, she did a lot of competitive athletics as a child, right up to County level whereas before I came to sailing I'd done no competitive sport, except for school games which I hated. I didn't take up sailing to be competitive, but more as an escape.

Heidi: I came from the Isle of Wight and never, ever sailed (a travesty!). I had my first sailing adventure in Martin's Topper and although it was a bit cramped with two up it was still most enjoyable. Another of Martin's brothers had Comet 314 but he unfortunately broke his leg and decided he was not going to be able to sail it for some time and I gladly stepped in and bought it from him. It took me some time to master it, especially with the fluky wind conditions that Littleton offers, but having experienced some spectacular death rolling incidents right in front of the club-house, I gradually came to grips with it. Since I've learned to sail my brother has become really keen, he's in the Navy, and my father, just retired, has recently taken his levels 1 & 2. **Martin:** There were only about 6 Comets at Littleton when we joined in 1991. We weren't really favoured at first with comments like "why do you want to introduce another single-hander, why not join the Solos?". They then still had quite a Topper fleet but now I think the Comet has taken over from the Topper. We began to get noticed when we started to give the occasional Solos a run for their money.

Alan: What classes of dinghy are sailed at Littleton and what sort of racing do they do?

Martin: The adopted classes were Solo, Enterprise, Topper and Optimist, with a rag-bag forming the handicap fleet. There are a fair number of Lasers and then the Comets but not much else. Class races are on Sundays and on Saturdays there are handicap races. Saturday used to be quite a dead day so they have introduced a personal handicap scheme. Although there are officially handicap races on Sundays, it really has become Solos on Sundays and everyone else on Saturdays. Then on Thursday evenings in the Summer there is a handicap race which usually attracts over 50 boats, week by week they alternate handicap and pursuit. **Heidi:** The Comets at Littleton now number over 35 and we are regularly getting 8 to 10 out on Saturdays, plus a few Enterprises and Toppers and then the rag-bag of other classes that people sail. Over the last eight years something extraordinary has happened, with even now still over 100 Enterprises in the club it has become almost a single-handed club with Solos being the hottest fleet.

Martin: We sail as a club within a club, because Littleton is really a Civil Service club and we are lodgers there, under the name "Littleton Lake". Most of the time there's no distinction, but some events are special to the Civil Service members. Another lodger club (ex-BP) don't have any privately owned boats. They have recently discovered the Comet and have bought one, which is in great demand from the youngsters and they are toying with the idea of buying more. That will boost the numbers here.

Alan: What sort of training goes on at Littleton?

Martin: As well as RYA 1 & 2 courses, run three times a year in the club's own fleet of Enterprises, Optimist and Cadet training, race familiarisation which picks up people coming off the level 1 & 2 courses so they don't flounder. There used to be Topper training when the class was stronger and then Heidi and I introduced Comet race training. We arranged visits by top Comet sailors, both for Winter talks and Summer training, in particular Derek Coleman, Alex Reeve and Keith Lamdin came. Barrie and Margaret Hylton gave us a lot of encouragement too. People could see our enthusiasm and we got a lot of support from various people inside and out of the club. Even one of the Solo sailors did some sessions for us and generally I think there has been a lot of imparted knowledge from the Solos.

Littleton members also do sea sailing and a good event is the Civil Service championships at Netley. The racing is not too serious and it's more like a team event because the bulk of the boats are from only two clubs, Littleton and Fishers Green.

Alan: I know that with your enthusiasm you have not only set up Littleton as a regular open meeting venue but your fleet of Comets has grown enormously. Have you any tips for us to encourage our fleets to grow ?

Martin: The main thing is that you've got to be enthusiastic. **Heidi:** Yes, that was quite a key thing. A lot of people expressed interest and we were always happy to let people borrow our boats and take them out. You don't let them out in a blow, you don't want to put them off. **Martin:** We don't have class status in the club. There are a lot of Comet owners who don't actually want class status. **Heidi:** From a questionnaire we found that most of the Comet sailors preferred the Saturday sailing, so what happens now is that Nick Warren, who is our new "class captain", extracts Comet results from the handicap results. This makes a series within a series and encourages people, they can see how they're getting on.

Martin: A lot of the early Comets at Littleton weren't sailed very often for one reason or another. This led to boats not being sailed and we'd say to people wanting a Comet "we know so-and-so doesn't actually sail, why don't you give him a ring". In that way those boats were sold on, often within the club. **Alan:** Like the Association has done recently. **Martin:** Yes, and eventually, the establishment allowed us to have an open meeting but to ensure that it would be a success I had to be very persistent in contacting people. It took quite a while for me to encourage the club to allow us that first open, the Comet Association was instrumental in working behind the scenes too.

Alan: Have you any other comments about the Topper ?

Martin: The Topper is a good little boat to start off with but unfortunately I found it a bit cramped in light airs. They're great in a real blow but I think now that I can handle the Comet fairly well there's not a lot to say about the Topper. At one stage at Crawley a lot of people used to own both and if it was really windy they'd opt for the Topper. I guess I fell into that mould as well but once you get to handle the Comet there's no going back. Probably the Topper is a little more resilient, you can knock it about a bit more because it's made of polypropylene. **Heidi:** The Topper's good for sunbathing on, we sometimes sailed them that way when we went to Turkey on a sailing holiday. They had a variety of boats available, the sailing was really convenient, the boats were all ready for you on the beach and when you came in they de-rigged them for you, you just walked away! We sailed Lasers every day but, when it really blew up and we didn't feel comfortable enough to go out in the Laser, we took a Topper out and had a bit of a blast in that.

Alan: By now you must have a very organised way of transporting two Comets to meetings. Have you any practical things on Comet transport that you have found to be very useful ?

Martin: What we do is to top one and trail the other. We have a very efficient system for doing it, the main thing being to keep out of each other's way. The only time we cooperate is to lift Heidi's boat on top of the car. We have an Easy-Loader but it's best with two of us (without it we dented the car once!). Every bit of rope has it's special job. **Heidi:** We have one tip we say to people, don't be around when we pack up the boats, it nearly always rains! **Martin:** We lash all the spars on to the trailed boat, with a lot of carpet underlay between. The rest of the gear, including clothing, goes inside the car. Recently we bought a bigger car to make things easier, a 1.8 litre estate. We felt we needed something with a bit

more room in the back. Oh yes, there is one important tip, check lists are essential but you must always check your own stuff. For the Kingsmead open last season Heidi picked up my sail but didn't realise that I had both my sails at home. She'd picked up the old one, so I had to use that old rag of a sail in hardly any wind, it was a most depressing time. **Heidi:** I'm sure he was cursing me, but it was not intentional, I assure you!

Alan: Have you any particular trips that stand out in your minds?

Martin: Going to the Glossop Nationals in 1996 was a wonderful trip, such a beautiful club and they were so welcoming. **Heidi:** A clubmate of ours who used to live near there came up to watch us sailing and brought her camera. She positioned herself near the gybe mark and as I approached it I saw her and thought "oh, this is so unfair", you remember how windy it was. But she won a prize in the photo competition and Henry has been using some of her shots in Comet marketing and displays. We'd hoped to go up to Glossop again the next year but it clashed with something else we had on.

Alan: Heidi, you're the ladies champion now, have you any tips for the ladies ?

Heidi: There are quite a lot of ladies now, and I must admit that Heather and I have had a fair few battles over the past year, and the year before, and I've really struggled. There are others coming along well now too, in particular Penny Vere and Annette Walter. At Littleton quite a lot of the Comet sailors are women and we've managed to get quite a lot of them to join in the Littleton open meeting. They did remarkably well, even though some of the conditions have been quite blowy. But I think that a lot of them are not sure enough of their ability. Sometimes you have to push yourself that little bit harder to convince yourself that you can do things. Sometimes I say to myself "ooh, it's a bit blowy, maybe I won't go out today", but I think that's where I really learn. You're never going to master the windy conditions if you don't go out in them. I would like to encourage everyone to have the confidence to go out and try it. There was one particular thing I learnt, it was from a chat given by Derek Coleman at one of our training evenings, about coping with heavy winds. For downwind sailing he talked about how you have to steer the boat to be under the rig when it starts to rock. I couldn't really picture it off the water but I tried it out on the water at the Nationals that year it was just incredible. I just suddenly thought "I'll have a go at this" and all of a sudden I seemed able to control the boat, it was just wonderful. **Martin:** I must admit that it paid off for me too, at Hillhead last year, where almost nobody finished, there was one stage where I was steering the boat

so much under the rig, as Derek had said, that the boat was almost on its side but I was still recovering! **Heidi:** Yes, it was incredible, I did it too. I was so grateful to Derek for teaching us that technique, I hold a great admiration for him. **Alan:** Yes, I know that Derek is keen to remind Comet sailors of that technique, and you will find it in his little poem on page 35 of Perihelion 49. I do remember that there is something similar in Keith Lamdin's writings, firstly in 1989 (the "Sailing your Comet" articles, Perihelion 10) and then again in 1994 (Perihelion 33) the latter being inspired by his visit to Littleton. All of this is collected together in my "Sailing Technique", booklet, pages 19-28. Of course, reading about the technique will not have the same impact as direct word-of-mouth instruction from a top Comet sailor as you had, and I would have liked to hear what else Derek had to say that day. **Heidi:** Derek certainly brought that technique to the fore in our minds and having tried it out it certainly worked but I cannot explain it to anybody, you do the right thing when you're on the water, it sort of happens naturally.

Alan: Anything else for the ladies particularly?

Heidi: The other thing I'd like to say is that on the start line the best position along it is there for anybody to take. You're entitled to it as much as anybody else. The thing is to be confident enough to go for it. A lot of up-and-coming females in our club need to have the confidence to get to the line a bit more. Being focussed is also essential. I'm so focussed on what I want to do in a race that when it doesn't go quite right I've been known to be a little vocal. I think it's just my frustration and unfortunately I can't hold my frustration in. I do apologise if I offend anyone.

Alan: Martin, you have been improving now for some years, do you know how your sailing has changed for the better?

Martin: One of my problems has been consistency and I certainly think that in the last year I've become a lot more consistent. I can't put my finger on why that's suddenly happened. Sometimes I go out for a race and everything seems to work and that has been happening more for me. Sometimes though I get a bit uptight and I think that's when I lose it. You've got to be focussed and relaxed at the same time, I think that's when things come together. Probably my best races ever were the ones I won at Brightlingsea, I was so determined to do well but was still relaxed, and things did come together, but even then I couldn't quite pip Mark Wilkins overall. **Heidi:** We did a lot of sailing last Winter too, for the Nationals were early in 1998. We wanted to get a lot of practice in to be ready

for that. We just got out there and practised, roll-tacking, roll-gybing and that sort of thing. Previously we hadn't been that concentrated with our training but I think it really helped last year. The great thing is to get confidence that you can do it, you had a couple of good races in the early season didn't you Martin and that built up your confidence. **Martin:** I was a bit inconsistent at Crawley, but it improved, especially after the Nationals. I was a bit disappointed to be outside the top 10 at the Nationals. In fact, after I'd had a bad day, Jean Wilkins (Mark and Guy's mother) gave me a good talking to, urging me to "get out there and get on with it", and it worked, in the next race I came 4th! Then, the very next weekend, I felt relaxed and it all came together again. I had fairly consistent results after that. **Heidi:** I think that was because you weren't putting pressure on yourself, you got a bit laissez faire. Then I got stressed because you were beating me! **Martin:** Another thing that has helped me is that Heidi and I crew in 36ft yachts. We sail with some good standard sailors and I think that has rubbed off. You begin to see what the skipper is doing, the sort of decisions he is making, the risks he takes and so forth. **Heidi:** Yes I agree with that, we've found that we sail quite well together, possibly because we have different skills. We got on well together in our old Enterprise, before we gave it to my father on the Isle of Wight.

Alan: Do you sail your Comets at other times apart from racing ?

Heidi: No, we don't get any time. **Martin:** The only time we do it is if it's very, very windy and there's not much racing on at the club and we like to go for a blast. Even if we're using the Comets for training we usually end up having a race. We did have some fun one afternoon, it was a lovely sunny afternoon with very little wind. Heidi rolled up her sail completely and I towed her round the lake by the painter. **Heidi:** I just lay in the boat sunbathing, every now and then the boat would jerk when Martin tacked and the painter went slack and taut again. That would disturb my sleep. **Martin:** And then the wind picked up, Heidi rigged her sail again - - - and we couldn't get the boats apart! It got a bit frantic. **Heidi:** We've never sailed them on the sea for fun, nor have we taken them to the Isle of Wight.

Alan: Have you any thoughts on how the Committee can help non-racing Comet sailors ?

Martin: Do you mean encouraging non-racers to race ? **Alan:** Not really. We want to do our best to give people what they want. For example, owners of new boats have free Association membership for a year but if they use the boat for fun

on holidays they are likely to lapse their membership and we never hear from them again. **Martin:** Yes, we've got to accept that owners are going to do their own thing, but if we want to encourage them to race there is obviously a need for more race training events for novices. **Heidi:** But novices are not going to want to travel so I think that sort of thing has to be driven at club level. **Martin:** Many of these will not belong to a club at all so perhaps the first thing is to circularise these owners, if we can find out where they are now, with information on clubs near them that are offering race training. **Heidi:** Maybe a questionnaire is a good idea, to check where the owners are, what they are doing with their boats and what their aspirations are. **Alan:** There have I believe been some events arranged by the Association, some time ago, where non-racers got together somewhere, had a sail, a cream tea and a chin wag. **Martin:** Something like a Morris Minor car rally? **Alan:** Yes, but repeating such things does not have the same impetus as a programme of competitive open meetings.

Alan: Quite often your finishing positions in races are quite close together aren't they. Does this urge you on to do well?

Heidi: Not really, we try to race our own races. A lot of people make us feel that we're just in a "2-horse race", they seem much more interested in which of us came in ahead than how we did in the fleet, they say to us "who won?". It does cause quite a lot of pressure between us and I feel like saying "well actually Mark won" or whoever it was. **Martin:** That's one of the reasons we want to try racing together in a double-hander. We used to race an old Enterprise, but I seemed to spend more time rebuilding it than racing it! When we sail together the conversation is quite curt between us, as you would expect, but we get along OK. We've got respect for each other, there are no disparaging comments or anything like that. Obviously we make mistakes, but we just get over that.

Alan: I hear you are going to buy a double-hander. What is it and what do you plan to do with it?

Martin: We plan to buy an RS200 and sail it at Littleton this year. We've had enough of the kind of trailing around that we did so much of last year. So we'd like to just go back to the club, learn to sail the RS200 there and perhaps go to a few opens. I was Comet "class captain" at the club and I had a dilemma because to improve I had to go to the opens which took me away from the club and out of touch with the other Comet sailors. We've met some lovely people on the Comet circuit but we also love the club so we want to go back to sail there for a bit. The RS200 has a centre mainsheet, which I prefer and Heidi abhors, so she insists

that I helm that boat when we get it. **Heidi:** I'm going to do tactics at the front. Martin had the opportunity last year to crew for a day in the larger double-hander, the RS400. He enjoyed that but we feel that the RS400 would be too much of a handful for us so we settled for the RS200, in which we hope to have a test sail shortly. There are already two in the club and others are showing interest too, so there's a chance that the RS200 will take off as a class.

Alan: And the future, will you be doing the Comet Nationals this year?

Heidi: Probably not. We're probably not going to have much of a chance to sail Comets this year because of concentrating on the new boat. We're going to do a lot of offshore yacht sailing this year too, we've got a lot of plans. We're doing a week's cruising in Ireland on a 40 ft yacht and have a boat booked in August to go into the channel and hopefully see the eclipse. Then we're going out to Gibraltar, where my brother has access to the Navy yacht and we hope to sail to Africa. So we'll probably give the opens a miss, except the one at Littleton of course. **Martin:** I think it takes a build-up of doing the opens to get ready for the Nationals. **Heidi:** We've had some great times in the Comets, it's not the end of Comets for us, we're not selling them or anything. They're always be there when we stop talking to each other in the double-hander! The thing we're really going to miss are all the people on the Comet circuit, they're such lovely people. We shall miss the progress reports on Mark Wilkins' new garden and things like that. It was really great to see everybody, week by week, and the families as well that came along.

Alan: Thanks Heidi and Martin.

Stop Press: February 27th 1999 - Heidi and Martin are proud to announce the delivery of an RS200, number 431, weight 172 lbs. All three are doing well.



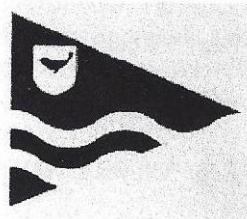
PERIHELION

This issue of Perihelion has been delayed to early April to match the last day for renewing membership. Last year there was some embarrassment about the publicity for the first open meeting but this year you will have found basic information on page 21 of issue 49 (or on the Internet ?). The next issue will be circulated in June 1999. Contributions to me by the end of May please.

Editor.

REDDITCH OPEN MEETING REVIVED AS COMET FLEET GROWS

Redditch Sailing Club is a small friendly club sailing on Arrow Lake, 27 acres of water situated in parkland. The National Cycle Path (a Millennium project sponsored by the National Lottery) runs alongside it. Grid Reference: SP 059673



Our open meeting is on Saturday 19th June. Do bring family and friends where they will be close enough to see the action while strolling along the one mile long path that runs around the perimeter of the lake, or sit overlooking the lake in our clubhouse where food and drinks will be available. If you have a dog like myself you will be pleased to hear that it can be exercised in the park but must be kept on a lead within the club compound.

Our few Comets have grown to double figures, the sailors are of varying standards, from meeting winners to near beginners, most intending to venture onto the Open circuit this year.

The Comet has taken over as the small boat fleet, superseding a boat that was built as an Evening class. These were Wagtails, a 9ft. wooden Bermudan gunter sloop, born in 1959, the first completed boat was shown at Redditch College's Exhibition, with a view to promoting a boat building class. Twelve enthusiastic builders joined the class and eleven boats were completed !!

Should you wish to join us permanently, racing takes place on Sunday mornings and Tuesday evenings in the Summer.

Debbie Degge (Comet 710)

SO WHAT HAVE THE RYA EVER DONE FOR US?

Reg, dinghy sailor: " Yeah, so what have they ever given us in return? Pause whilst everyone thinks deeply. Finally, a tentative hand is raised. " The racing rules?"

Reg: " What?"

"The racing rules."

Reg: "Oh yeah, yeah they did give us that. That's true."

"And the Portsmouth Yardstick."

"Oh yes Reg, you remember how chaotic it used to be before that was bought in."

Reg: "All right, I grant you, the racing rules and the Portsmouth Yardstick are two things that the RYA have done."

"And the training."

Reg: "Well, obviously the training. The training goes without saying, doesn't it - they do it from dinghy level up to the Admiral's Cup level. But, apart from the Portsmouth Yardstick, the racing rules and training what have they ever done for us?"

"Free legal advice for members."

"10% discount on insurance."

"Intervention at local, national and government level so that we sail in clean seas, and our hobby is as free as possible from bureaucracy and interference."

Reg (muttering) "Yea, yea alright; fair enough."

"And the Dinghy Show."

(Murmurs of approval)

"Oh yeah Reg, that's something we'd really miss if the RYA wasn't there. And you get free entry into the how if you sign up there as a member "

"And it's safe to go racing now."

"Yes, at least the whole things got a structure now. Let's face it, they are the only ones who've managed that!"

(Laughter)

Reg: "Alright - but apart from the racing rules, the Portsmouth Yardstick, the training, the Dinghy Show, the free legal advice for members and clubs, the discount on insurance, representation of our sport and free publications- WHAT HAVE THE RYA EVER DONE FOR US?"

Another tentative hand is raised.

" Organised things?"

Reg (roars) "Organised things!? Shut up!"

Knock at the door.

Everyone hides, fearing that it's the membership department about to ask them for

£ 17. (£17 if you pay by direct debit, £ 19 if you pay any other way).

(Claire Bradley, inspired by the Monty Python team, takes a tongue in cheek look at the role of the R YA.)

CARAVANNING WITH A COMET

I am a member of the Boating Group of the Camping & Caravanning Club and at Sailboat I met Derek Dumper, the Commodore of that Group. He told me that they have several Comet owners who take their boats to Boating Group events. These events are hugely social and a wide variety of classes of boat go to them. Some events are a fortnight or more long but many are weekends only. In 1999 there are no less than 45 events with venues ranging from Scotland to Cornwall, Kent to North Wales. So, for minimum racing, maximum socialising and fun, if you have a caravan, have you joined the C & C Club Boating Group? If not, Derek's telephone number is 01384 374625, he'll tell you all about it.

Alan Browning Gobur Carousel 12/2TD and Comet 361

RACE POSITION SCORING SYSTEM

The ISAF Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS) [1997-2000] stipulate the *Scoring system* under **Rule 88.3** with *General Scoring Rules* defined in *Appendix A*.

It is apparent from various Perihelion race reports that Clubs are using different scoring methods for race positions and hence final overall positions for a series. Notably Naseby (Perihelion 49 page 19), has results of 2.75 points mentioned and use of discards to determine the final winner.

The use of 0.75 for a first position and discards being used for separating tie-breaks disappeared in the 1997 - 2000 Rules. The new rules are defined in *Appendix A2.2 (Race Scores) & A2.3 (Ties)*.

It is noted that the **Comet Class Association (CCA) 1997 AGM** (Perihelion 45 page 9) passed a motion to "*use discarded race results should a tie situation arise, subject to proper notification of the intention being present in the Sailing Instructions*". The CCA Committee agreed that they "*will look to including it in the Constitution and will put it as a requirement for National events and Clubs hosting OPEN Meetings will be recommended to adopt the motion*".

Whist race *scoring can be changed* subject to **RRS rule 86 being observed** (and it must be noted that **Rule 86 (c) clearly states CLASS rules may only change 42, 49 & 50-54**), and *Sailing Instructions must explicitly define such changes*, I query... why and can CCA make these changes and in any case are changes really necessary? The RRS scoring system is now used for World, Olympic, European, National and most Club events. The use of 0.75 points for a win is totally obsolete anyway and the use of discards for tie break will (where still used) become less as time progresses forward. We are already over 2 years into the New Rules and confusion and will occur.

At my Club we adopted the **RRS Points Scoring (A2.2)** back in 1997 for all Club & Open events. Also we have used **RRS Ties (A2.3)** for separating tie break situations very successfully, and there have been numerous tie breaks in our 1998 season including Trophy awards.

We also use **RRS A5 in preference to A2.2 final para** to differentiate between entrants coming to starting area, scoring one point more than number of all

boats coming to start area for that **RACE** and those that do not come to start area score one point more than number boats entered in **SERIES**. This is much fairer to those that make the effort to attend & race over a series. Obviously **OPEN** events are usually one day and this change should be unnecessary, although many take to the water in trying conditions only to **RETIRE** and score same as those who didn't venture out! Unfair... you decide.

My queries now are:

Has the Committee included the Discards in the Constitution?

Is It legally allowed as a CLASS rule under RRS rules ?

What happens if Clubs ignore adopting the motion & use the Tie Break Rule A2.3 when hosting OPEN events?

Remember the Sailing Instructions must state the scoring system to be used. A real hornets nest can now arise if a position is challenged for a trophy award.

The CCA should be more forward looking and accept the RRS system as the right way.

What are the views of other Sailing Clubs ?

What system are they using now ?

What experience has been gained over the past 2 years from Comet OPEN events and host clubs Sailing Instructions ?

Surely the Committee should be looking to these areas and considering the motion fully and reporting to membership/AGM before changing the Constitution ?

What are the wider members views, not just those who attended the 1997 AGM, although I accept the motion was correctly put and debated I think the motion should have been:

"Remitted for investigation and report back".

Personally, I doubt that the motion is either viable or legally possible to implement.

John Regnard (Comet 534, Shearwater S.C.)

(John is asking for your views. Send them to Norah or me - Editor)

TIE BREAK RULES - UNDERSTANDING THE SCORING SYSTEM

I have commented separately on the **Comet Class Association (CCA) Race Position Scoring System** elsewhere in Perihelion (turn back one page - Ed) concerning the apparent differing methods being operated at CCA events **contrary to ISAF Racing Rules of Sailing (RRS) [1997-2000]**, whereby final results can be open to challenge due to the CCA motion adopted at 1997 AGM.

It is worthy to highlight the different ways in which **Tie- Breaks Scoring** are resolved in accordance with RRS Rule A2.3 when prescribed in the Sailing Instructions.

RRS A2.3 states: Ties

"When there is a tie in series points between two or more boats, the tie will be broken in favour of the boat with the most first places or, if the tie remains, the most second places, or lower places if necessary, **using only the scores for each boat that count for her series score**. When a tie still remains, it will be broken in favour of the boat with the best score in **the last race in which the tied boats raced and scored differently, using only the scores for each boat that count for her series score**". But remember Disqualification under Rule 2 or Rule 42 when Rule 67 applies shall not be discarded (Rule A1.3)

As examples: (Bold results indicate the score being used)

3 races, 2 to count for overall result

1. X. DNS **3** **6** = 9
Y. **4** **6** **5** = 9 X takes higher placing on count back with 3rd place.
2. X. **9** **4** **7** = 11
Y **7** Rtd **4** = 11 Y takes higher placing on count back as last race both sailed in & counting in their series score, gave Y a 4th place.

4 races , 3 to count

3. X. **1** **3** DNS **1** = **5**
Y. **2** **2** **1** **3** = **5** X takes higher position with 2 x 1st places

4. X. 9 9 6 7 = 22

Y. 7 6 9 9 = 22 X takes higher placing as last race both sailed in & both counting in series was race 3 when X was 6th to Y 9th.

(Who decides which of the pairs of 9s are discarded? Different discards would change the "last race both sailed in & both counting in series". I don't think this could ever change the conclusion, or could it ? - Editor)

3 races, 2 to count.

5. X. Rtd 2 1 = 3

Y. 2 1 DNS = 3

Y wins because she beat X in Race 2, the last race in which both sailed and counted in the series final score. If Y had sailed in Race 3 and X had won then X would have won the series as this would have then been the last race both sailed and counted in series. Y ensured that this did not happen by not starting in Race 3 to know he had won anyway, rather than risk X gaining 1st place

Confused?

Well it shows how trophy places can depend on "*off the water tactics*" and why you must understand the RRS Rules of Scoring and Tie Breaks.

Sailing clubs must issue definitive *Sailing Instructions* to amend the RRS rule on scoring system to be used. [**Subject of course to complying with RRS Rule 86**].

The foregoing indicates why an understanding of the RRS Rules is necessary even in the final scoring analysis. It is very important you study *the Sailing Instructions* for any event you are entering to see whether RRS Rules have been amended and if so, how they will apply, and also obtain results of races as they complete to establish your placings as they accumulate, it could make a difference on the final strategy.

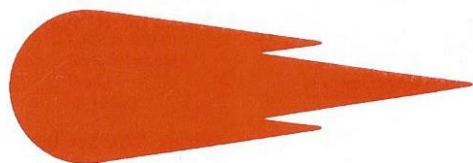
Finally, I believe the Comet Class Association has made a constitutional change which is illegal under **RRS Rule 86(c)** which states:

"Class Rules may change only rules 42 49 50 51 52 53 and 54".

Perhaps the Committee will respond urgently on this very important matter before conflicts arise at Comet Class National or Open meetings.

Despite the flavour of the above subject it is still most important that you all get out the water and enjoy your sailing with least conflicts arising **and above all have FUN** which is surely why we sail !

John Regnard (Comet 534, Shearwater S.C.)



Comet Class Association

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association