

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 51
SUMMER 1999

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Front cover: "The loneliness of the long-distance Comet" - Brian Welham
pursuing a Merlin Rocket at the Draycote Silver Salver pursuit race.

(Photo: Linda Welham)

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Greetings! And a special welcome to all new members who have joined since I last wrote.

It is the end of May and, whilst summer has not quite established a hold, winter seems ages ago. More and more Comets are on the water all over the country and people are experiencing anew the joys of sailing.

The open meeting circuit is already one third through and is again receiving good support. To date I have attended six meetings plus the Association Championship and thoroughly enjoyed both the sailing and social side of each one of them. Even Glossop which I won last year but this time did not even bother to go afloat (force 6 gusting 7?). However, three intrepid sailors did race and provided the rest of us with quite a spectacle. They got very wet (even when reefed three turns) and just watching them was exhausting!

Our two new venues, Winsford Flash and Banbury, proved very popular. Both have good sized waters and excellent facilities. Many thanks to those responsible for running these, and all our events, and we hope to be invited back next year.

The Association Championship at Staunton Harold attracted a very reasonable entry of 35 boats from all over the country. Perhaps a little more wind would have been in order but the race officer did a splendid job and altogether an enjoyable weekend was had by all. The Association was pleased to present a commemorative plaque to the club in appreciation of their efforts and, as usual, each competitor received a memento which this year was a very nice porcelain mug. Reports on this event and some of the opens will be found later.

Talking about Championships, do try to come to our National Championship which is again at Hampton Pier YC (Herne Bay) from 30th July to 1st August. It is a good club with easy launching from the beach. Make this event one of your weekend breaks this summer and try a little sea-sailing for a change. Whether competing or not, we will also be very pleased to see as many of you as possible at the AGM to be held at Hampton Pier on the Saturday evening. Details of both events appear later.

In the last issue I mentioned that the Comet is one of a select band of classes with a Primary Yardstick. Now is the time to start and to keep on reminding your club's sailing secretary of the need for clubs to complete their RYA Yardstick

Returns at the end of the season. This is the way handicaps are established and maintained and, whether you usually race as one Comet in a menagerie fleet or in a fleet of Comets, the figures really do count. Only by ensuring plenty of returns from clubs where Comets are raced can we hope to keep our prestigious Primary status.

Most of you will by now have read John Regnard's articles on scoring and tie-breaking. Probably in the Autumn edition there will be a response from the Committee on these but for now we are still interested to hear your views. Please write to me, Norah, or Perihelion. Things have, however, moved on already as (I suspect) those few of you who have seen the *Changes to The Racing Rules of Sailing for 1997 - 2000* will know. Some of these changes were approved by ISAF as long ago as mid 1997 "to take immediate effect"! Others took effect from 1st January 1999. They make interesting reading generally but are also relevant to this matter!

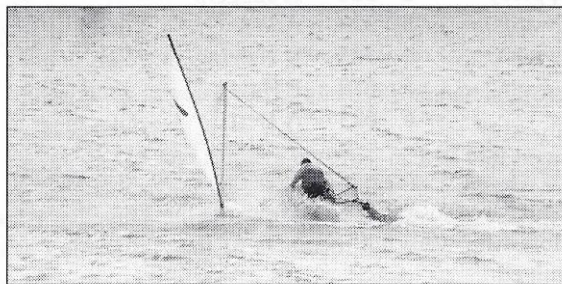
An apology to Sue Pollard and whoever bought her old house. The correct phone number for her and the Combs SC open is: **01457 763664**.

I have yet to see it (I know there will be no sleep at all should I ever get on the Internet), but our Web page seems to be attracting attention. I have had favourable comments and know of at least three non-members who have used it when looking for a second-hand boat. Keep up the good work! (Editor's note: see Tony Ellison's article on page 34 and in particular note the correct site address).

Hope to meet many of you on the water in the coming months.

Good Sailing,

Henry Jagers (Comet 500), Chairman.



Spot the boat! (answer on page 9)

FIRST SIX AT THE OPEN MEETINGS

NORTHERN AREA

Winsford Flash

1	633	J Edwards
2	724	R Duncan
3	100	S Bellamy
4	500	H Jagers
5	658	R Stevenson
6	670	P Hayes

Chester

1	670	P Hayes
2	331	S Heyes
3	650	P Hossell
4	500	H Jagers
5	585	B Herring
6	633	J Edwards

Glossop

1	670	P Hayes
2	650	P Hossell
3	331	S Heyes
=4	643	K Appleby
=4	633	J Edwards
=4	500	H Jagers

EASTERN AREA

Fishers Green

1	353	G Wilkins
2	657	M Wilkins
3	323	A Walter
4	500	H Jagers
5	518	R Ballam
6	754	N Warren

Crawley

1	353	G Wilkins
2	711	B Welham
3	188	S Thompson
4	657	M Wilkins
5	99	P Luttmann
6	565	R Smallwood

CENTRAL AREA

Banbury

1	710	D Degge
2	500	H Jagers
3	323	A Walter
4	585	B Herring
5	670	P Hayes
6	625	A Best

WESTERN AREA

Shearwater

1	565	R Smallwood
2	707	D Coleman
3	745	N Warren
4	395	M Boyce
5	534	J Regnard
6	190	L Ward

Sutton Bingham

1	419	P Govier
2	700	J Windibank
3	650	P Hossell
4	500	H Jagers
5	745	N Warren
6	99	P Luttmann

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

COMET INSURANCE

Are you safely covered? Some companies insure the boat, some the person, I suggest you shop around. Some of the well-known ones are as follows:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. St Margarets | (0181 778 6161) |
| 2. Newton Crum | (1702 710041) |
| 3. Noble Marine | (01636 707606) |
| 4. Douglas Cox Tyrie | (0181 522 3424) |
| 5. Bishop Skinner | (0171 566 5800) |
| 6. Admiral | (01722 416106) |

Get their premiums and literature to find out what it is best for you. Please mention the Comet Class Association. Noble Marine give us a small return for your business, which helps pay for your newsletter. If you have had poor dealings with an insurance company regarding a claim, we would like to know. Comets don't cause the insurance companies much of a problem, compared to some other classes.

Also if you belong to an insurance company for your Comet dinghy and you think you have a good deal, please let us know.

Derek Coleman (Treasurer)

1999 PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Very simple this year!

Purpose - to supply photos for us to use and/or publish in any way and free of charge for the good of the Association.

Entry - free, send as many as you like but enclose stamped addressed envelope or label if you want them returned.

Prizes - A first prize of £15 and runners-up prize of £10 will be awarded in each of the categories "Comet Racing" and "Comet Fun".

The judging panel to be appointed by the Chairman. Judges will not be eligible for prizes.

Closing date and address for entries - All entries must be received by 24th September at the latest. All photos submitted to Perihelion are entered automatically. Alternatively send to Henry Jaggars, competition organiser.

SHEARWATER OPEN

Once again a sunny day with the dreaded Shearwater light northerly wind greeted 9 Comet entrants to the Southwestern Area Open meeting. The entries were 1 each from Chippenham, Frensham, Coney, Littleton and 5 from Shearwater. This was 50% down on last year.

The winds were very light and extremely variable and flukey, with large holes encouraging shortened courses just to get the boats back in for the fish & chips meals on time. All this made racing frustrating and a great amount of luck was needed to get good results.

In the first race, a committee boat line start saw Leon Ward fly away to a commanding lead and a spread of boats trying to find some wind behind him. This lead was slowly whittled away with the flukey winds and by the second lap John Regnard found himself with nearly a half lake lead on the 2nd boat, but this all ended when he went into a 'hole' and sat becalmed whilst the whole fleet crept up from behind and sailed slowly past until he was in last position! This was the pattern throughout the races, everyone experienced last and probably first position during the race. No-one knew who could finally win and indeed visitors Nick Warren and Derek Coleman found themselves rounding the last mark on a shortened course with a good lead and only half the lake to sail but they also found the holes and in frustration watched the fleet closing up again. Margaret Boyce, using recently gained local knowledge, hugged the bank getting a little wind on the OOD box side and drifted slowly along to take 1st place. Behind her, Derek and Nick came home in a dead heat!

The second race had a normal line start in the opposite direction to the first race but this made no difference, John Regnard had a 720 penalty at the start but clawed his way back using wind from banks to get lifts and on the last lap came through to get 3rd but the 1st place was a tight tussle with Richard Smallwood followed by Nick Warren. Leon Ward came in a good very close 4th position.

This left the final race open to five different boats able to capture the overall trophy and with the wind variability, the holes and the frustrating swing of the light zephyrs of wind it was anyone's race.

At the start there was a quick break of 4 boats with each of them leading at various stages as the race developed. All tactics were used to try for an advantage but it ended with Derek Coleman getting that final piece of wind at the crucial

moment to clear the last mark carrying the wind all way to the line for 1st place. Richard Smallwood was 2nd just pipping Nick Warren and John Regnard, just enough to give him the Overall Trophy.

The overall results were:

					Pts
1	565	R Smallwood	Frensham	4.1.2	3
2	707	D Coleman	Coney	2.5.1	3
3	745	N Warren	Littleton	2.2.3	4
4	395	M Boyce	Shearwater	1.7.6	7
5	534	J Regnard	Shearwater	5.3.4	7
6	190	L Ward	Shearwater	6.4.5	9
7	387	J Martin	Shearwater	7.6.RTD	13
8	183	M Gingell	Chippenham	8.RTD.RTD	18
9	471	R.Barlow	Shearwater	9.RTD.DNS	19

It will be noted that tie break count-back was used to determine the 1st and 2nd positions, also the 4th and 5th positions.

Shearwater Commodore John Putt presented the prizes and Trophies and included 1st lady Margaret Boyce. John expressed thanks to everyone attending, the race committee, rescue crews, galley staff and especially the wonderful tea spread provided by the ladies.

Richard Smallwood (member of Shearwater S.C. of the past), responded on behalf of visitors and all contestants in praising the standard and friendliness of the racing in spite of the frustrating conditions and the excitement created for the last race with 5 boats fighting for the trophy. He did not realise he had won overall on tie break count-back until the results were announced. He extended an extra special thanks to the galley staff for the excellent lunch & tea arrangements. He would look forward to next year and hopefully more wind. At least 1999 was sunny all day!

Well done to everyone involved.

John Regnard (Comet 534)

(Interesting statistic: My sail number 534 matched my race positions in sequence order viz 5.3.4. If only the sail number could have been 111 !)

BANBURY OPEN

A warm the day with light north to north-east winds greeted our first open.

One of our first visitors was Derek Coleman from as far south as Chichester, others came from as far north as Redesmere, with five from Redditch. That made 32 Comets, 18 visitors and 14 of the Home Fleet.

A very enjoyable day for all, thanks to our very willing registration, catering and race duty crews.

In the first race, the first beat was long but by keeping well upwind could be reached, just, on starboard. Debbie Degge finished first, Henry Jagers second, and Annette Walter third.

The second and a third race courses were changed to beat north-easterly to the first and third marks, many places being won and lost on the tacks to reach them.

In the second race, Debbie Degge was 1st, Chris Phelan 2nd and Annette Walter 3rd.

In the third race, Debbie Degge was again 1st, Henry Jagers 2nd and Annette Walter 3rd.

The young ladies showed excellent place consistency.

Overall results:

1	710	Debbie Degge	Redditch
2	500	Henry Jagers	Staunton Harold
3	323	Annette Walter	Welwyn Garden City
4	526	Chris Phelan	Banbury
5	585	Brian Herring	Winsford Flash
6	670	Peter Hayes	Redesmere
7	624	Tony Best	Taplow Lake
8	745	Nick Warren	Littleton

Phil Henman (Comet 599)

CHESTER OPEN

There was an excellent turn-out of 14 Comets for the second of the Northern Area Aphelion Trophy events for 1999 held on the river Dee at Chester on 8th May. Visitors travelled from Evesham, Staunton Harold, Chase and Redesmere Sailing Clubs and the fleet was faced with a testing moderate to fresh southerly wind which provided an entertaining days sailing for participants and spectators alike.

Peter Hayes showed excellent river skills in the six lap first race to win convincingly from Stuart Hadfield and Ed Riley from the home Club.

The race officers maintained the same long beat course for the second race and with conditions becoming more gusty some spectacular capsizes ensued causing numerous boats to retire. The race was won by Steve Heyes in impressive style from Ed Riley and Peter Hayes.

With all to sail for in the final race, on a changed course with three separate beats, 10 boats ventured out in similar conditions to establish the day's prize-winners. Ed Riley showed the way up the first lap only to round the top buoy in the wrong direction and let Peter Hayes through who went on to win the race in commanding fashion from Ed Riley and Stuart Hadfield.

Final Results :-

1	670	Peter Hayes	Redesmerc
2	266	Ed Riley	Chester
3	331	Steve Heyes	Redesmere
4	529	Stuart Hadfield	Chester
5	650	Phil Hossell	Evesham
6	500	Henry Jagers	Staunton Harold

John Edwards (Comet 633)

Answer to "Spot the boat" (see page 3): This is Malcolm Gingell, Comet 183, nose-diving at the Sutton Bingham open in 1997. For a report on that astonishing meeting see Perihelion 43, page 20. John Challener also took a nose-dive that day but, for Malcolm, Mike Cousins was there to take the photograph.

NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE

1. Several clubs have asked about flags. Andrew is in the process of having some made, and hopes to have more than one size available. In the meantime, Liz Hossell, Derek and I will have a flag with us if you need a class flag for an Open meeting.

2. Please could clubs holding open meetings remember to send their reports to Yachts and Yachting immediately after the event. We ask that reports are also sent to Alan Browning for inclusion in Perihelion, and to Dinghy Trader. Don't forget that Phil Hossell needs a complete result sheet so that he can collate information for the Aphelion and Orbital trophies.

3. John Regnard wrote two thought-provoking articles in Perihelion 50 which your committee feels deserve a general discussion by members. We understand that Perihelion 51 will contain at least one response, and have therefore decided to hold the Committee response over until the next newsletter. However, the Committee would like to draw your attention to the RYA 'Changes to the Racing Rules of Sailing for 1997-2000'.

4. The Annual General Meeting is fast approaching, and you will find the paperwork with this edition of Perihelion. This is your opportunity to say how you want the Association to work, and how you see Comet sailing progressing. If you cannot be at Hampton Pier, ask someone else to speak for you, or contact one of the Committee members with your views and ideas.

5. The Committee needs some new members with fresh ideas. We meet two or three times a year. The planning meeting in January is usually held centrally, with any other meetings held after Open meetings. If you feel that you have something to offer, please come forward - don't leave everything to the existing Committee members.

6. You will see that the Committee is proposing an increase in membership fees from £10.00 to £12.00 (£15.00 to £18.00 for family membership) to take effect from 1st January 2000. The last increase in fees was in January 1995, and although the Treasurer has kept costs within limits, the Committee feels that with a higher budget there would be more scope for expanding services to members.

7. The Association has recently benefitted from the sale of a Comet, with a donation from the selling price. We have also received an unexpected donation

from a club which hosted an Open meeting. We are most grateful - thank you. The club levied a surcharge on participating boats which some other classes require host clubs to do. We have taken the view that Open meetings are Club events from which Comet sailors benefit, but are always pleased to share in any profits.

8. The Treasurer has noted that the Secretary has spent the first donation on some software which will increase the usefulness of the Psion. He is now wondering what other plans she has!

9. Membership renewals seem to be rather slow. The Secretary will be writing to people who have not rejoined, inviting them to do so.

Norah Gould, Class Secretary

EXTRACTS FROM "CHANGES TO THE RACING RULES"

Norah has intimated on the previous page that a member is to respond on this topic but this has not yet been received. Because some members may not have seen the RYA "Changes to the racing rules of sailing for 1997-2000" I reproduce two extracts here. These extracts relate to scoring and tie-breaking.

"The following change to the racing rules was approved by the Council at the November 1998 ISAF meeting to take effect on 1st January 1999:

Replace rule 88.3 with:

88.3 Scoring. The race committee shall score a race or series by the scoring system specified in the sailing instructions."

"Appendix A, as currently published - - - has in some cases been found defective with regard to tie-breaking. The RYA has produced an alternative, Appendix RYA1, Scoring, which is available on the RYA web site or on request from the RYA Racing Division. Regatta organisers are invited to use this appendix and send comments to the RYA Racing Division. ISAF has also published a trial replacement for Appendix A. A copy can be obtained from ISAF."

Alan Browning, Editor

1999 ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIPS

Staunton Harold were proud to host the Association Championships again on May 1st and 2nd, being the second time in three years. A big thank-you must first of all go to our fleet captain Trish Moore and her husband and daughter for all the hard work they put in to make the weekend a success. We now have 14 Comets at SHSC with my all-yellow hull boat ("you should call it Custard Cream" says Norah) being the latest addition. There isn't a reply I can print for a suggestion like that, is there? We attracted 35 helms and some friends for the weekend's racing which was held in very light wind conditions, but the OOD Dave Newton did a splendid job getting five races in, all with good tricky beats and plenty of tactical moves to think about.

The first race started with a new name to me in the lead, Deborah Degge from Redditch. She showed some of our more experienced sailors and also some younger sailors the way to the finish line, oh dear chaps we need some more race training. She was followed by John Windibank (veteran), Mark Wilkins (younger than John), Jack Thompson from Carsington and Annette Walter (Junior) from Welwyn and Garden City. The next four races over the two days saw the first three of the first race doing very well, but I think the star of the championship was Annette Walter who I first saw last year at Mudeford regatta week when she impressed everyone with her sailing ability, well done Annette.

We had no general recalls or protests but a few 360 degree and 720 degree turns were observed which is OK. Some of the fleets we have here for opens we get all sorts of hassle so well done Comets (Editor's note: See page 35 for comments from the OOD.). On the Saturday evening a quiz and a fish & chip supper went down well with few people finishing the chips, they must have big potatoes up here?

The quiz was won by (I think) Brian Herring, the one who spilt red wine down his trousers, or it could have been Brian Welham, not sure which. I am sure everyone who came to Staunton Harold enjoyed their weekend's sailing and went home happy. The bad news was, after the Comet's last race on Sunday the wind did get up a little for the club racing in the afternoon, you cannot win them all came you?

John at Orchard (Comet 761)

P.S. I think I shall call my boat "sting" because of with a yellow hull and black spars I think it looks more like a wasp, certainly not a custard cream.

1999 ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIPS

Full results:

			1	2	3	4	5	Pts	Posn	Category
			3/4	3/4	3/4	3/4	41	3	1	F
710	<u>DEBORAH DEGGE</u>	Redditch								
657	Mark Wilkins	Chipstead	3	7	2	2	3/4	3/4	2	M
700	John Windibank	Chipstead	2	6	3	3	6	14	3	M/VET
323	Annette Walter	Welwyn	5	5	8	4	12	22	4	F/JNR
500	Henry Jagers	Staunton Harold	15	2	10	6	7	25	5	M/VET
188	Simon Thompson	Crawley Mariners	12	4	12	14	2	30	6	M
374	Jack Thompson	Carsington	4	12	6	13	14	35	7	M/VET
621	Gordon Flemons	Chipstead	7	16	26	5	8	36	8	M
633	<u>John Edwards</u>	Chester	11	28	13	9	3	36	9	M/VET
711	Brian Welham	Taplow Lake	14	8	7	16	9	38	10	M/VET
715	Tony Evans	Llandegfed	9	11	18	23	13	51	11	M/VET
585	Brian Herring	Winsford Flash	22	15	4	10	23	51	12	M/VET
99	Paul Luttmann	Crawley Mariners	24	3	19	19	11	52	13	M
518	Robin Ballam	Crawley Mariners	13	18	17	7	18	55	14	M/VET
761	John Orchard	Staunton Harold	18	9	11	17	19	55	15	M/VET
745	Nick Warren	Littleton	8	14	21	20	20	62	16	M
675	Michael Squirrel	Redditch	20	13	28	24	5	62	17	M
670	Peter Hayes	Redesmere	17	10	9	29	29	65	18	M
707	Derek Coleman	Coney	10	17	23	22	17	66	19	M/VET
50	<u>Diana Thompson</u>	Crawley Mariners	23	20	20	12	15	67	20	F/VET
650	Phillip Hossell	Evesham	6	26	14	25	25	70	21	M
532	John Coppenhall	Hunts	21	19	24	15	16	71	22	M
641	Paul Hinde	Middle Nene	19	22	29	41	4	74	23	M
162	Matthew Bromley	Crawley Mariners	28	23	16	11	28	78	24	M
117	<u>Michael Thompson</u>	Crawley Mariners	27	30	5	28	22	82	25	M/VET
424	Penny Vere	Upton Warren	25	29	27	8	27	87	26	F/VET
569	John Arthur	Staunton Harold	31	21	32	26	10	88	27	M/VET
762	Ros Stevenson	Winsford Flash	26	27	15	21	30	89	28	F/VET
63	Chris Robinson	Aylesbury	16	25	25	27	24	90	29	M
601	Trish Moore	Staunton Harold	32	31	31	18	21	101	30	F
643	Keith Appleby	Carsington	30	24	22	30	26	102	31	M/VET
753	Heidi Burbank	Staunton Harold	34	33	30	31	32	126	32	F
741	Linda Pullen	Staunton Harold	35	34	35	33	31	133	33	F
688	Hilary Weatherdow	Staunton Harold	33	35	34	32	41	134	34	F
757	Michael Cohen	Carsington	29	32	33	41	41	135	35	M

● SCENES AT COMET EVENTS

Association championships

(Photos by Liz Hossell)



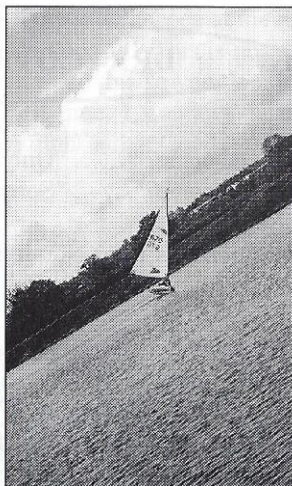
Debbie Degge in action



A group including John Orchard in his brand new (yellow) Club Comet.



Peter Hayes, winner at Chester



Peter sails his boat upright, it goes faster that way uphill!

(Photos: Liz Hossell)



A beautiful setting at Winsford Flash

(Photo by courtesy of Brian Herring)

(Left to right) Keith Appleby, Bob Willis (?), Andrew Blears, Stephen Bellamy and Mike Squirrel.



John Edwards, winner at Winsford Flash

(Photo: Liz Hossell)

DRAYCOTE SILVER SALVER

"Where did you come?" "Sixty First" "Oh"
"Where did you come?" "Only Sixty First" "Oh Well!"
"Where did you come?" "Sorry, only Sixty First" "Oh Well Done!"

The last question was from Norah, so I don't feel so bad as this is not a story of success.

One evening in early February, I had a 'phone call from Norah Gould asking if I would represent the Comet Class in the Inter Class Pursuit Race run at Draycote Water Sailing Club on Saturday 27th March. As I had never competed in this type of national event I was flattered and very pleased. Then came the revelation. "You will be the only Comet entry" said Norah. This is just the pressure you need when entering this sort of event! However, being extremely "over confident" I made my preparations.

The first of these was to pray for lightish winds. (a prayer that was all too readily answered) and to "polish" the boat so that it looked good for the long journey. I also recruited my own personal trolley dolly in the guise of Linda, my wife, who normally allows or encourages me to go to open meetings by myself,

A couple of days before the great day, I collected the Comet 711 from the Club and put it in my garage. Everything was ready but a little voice in my head kept asking , "why didn't you buy a new sail, you know it's 2 years old". However, during the week I listened intently to the weather forecast which continued to predict either Force 3 to Gale for Saturday.

The day dawned clear, cloudless and windless. "Don't worry" says Linda, "we have to drive 90 miles north and it will be different there." (Readers should note that in the Irish Channel that morning there were 30 mph winds and small boats were in trouble). Linda was correct. At 11 am when we arrived at Draycote, it was overcast with a very very slight easterly.

The race takes 3 hrs 20 mins and was due to start at 12.30, however, just after the briefing and the start line had been set, a postponement was signalled. "Why?" asked all the competitors still on the bank. After about 30 minutes, it was announced that the race officer had detected "a major wind shift!". They may have been correct but all we could feel was a drop in the wind speed from 2 mph to 0.5 mph. Finally, after an hour the start line was changed and so was the course and we were underway.

When you are racing it is important to cross the line at full speed at the right time. This is best done by practising your approach to the line. This is not easy when the race instructions specifically request you not to do this so you do not interfere with earlier starters. However, on the 15th start time, I was away second boat from the starboard end of the line in very very light air. "Good, you've done it well" I heard myself say.

However, the more experienced (or more intelligent) sailors starting at the same time as me, tacked off onto port to get clear wind. When I arrived at the windward mark I found myself behind all those previously mentioned. So there I was playing *catch up* for the next 2 miles of off-wind sailing against three-sail boats who create lots of turbulence! I did make some gains down wind but not enough to make up for a poor first leg. (*Here comes an excuse*) The course really favoured three-sail boats who were able to fly their spinnakers for at least 75% of each lap, so in very light winds the race slowly ran its course. For the first 2 hours I was apparently holding about 30th position but, as anyone who sails pursuit races will know, the dirty wind from larger, faster boats eventually swamps smaller ones like the Comet unless you get a really good start and can keep clear ahead. At the end of the race the wind dropped to zero and I drifted to a halt a mile away from the clubhouse. It was so light that the race crew brought the finish line to us instead of us going to the line.

Thanks to a kind rescue boat driver I hitched a tow back to shore and did get back before dark.

At this time I did not know where I had been placed except that there were still some boats behind me! Finally my trolley dolly came into her own and was very supportive and helpful whilst packing up the boat and when we finally found out that I was only 61st, she was the first to say "Well done".

Well this is the report of the Comet Class at the '99 Silver Salver. I would have liked to tell you that we had come within the prizes or even my personal goal of a top 50 finish, but this is the nature of competitions. It was good to take part, I think I have been honest about why I finished where I did and will try to use this to do better in the next race. I hope this story of hope and reality will encourage others to press on and take up the racing challenge.

Brian P. Welham (Comet 711)

1999 NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS INFORMATION

The National Championships are to be held at Hampton Pier Yacht Club on 30th and 31st July and 1st August 1999. An entry form is enclosed with this newsletter.

Also enclosed is a new local map of "how to get there" **because the route to HPYC has changed due to road improvements.** A miniature of this map is reproduced below.

Motorways: from the M25 to the M2:

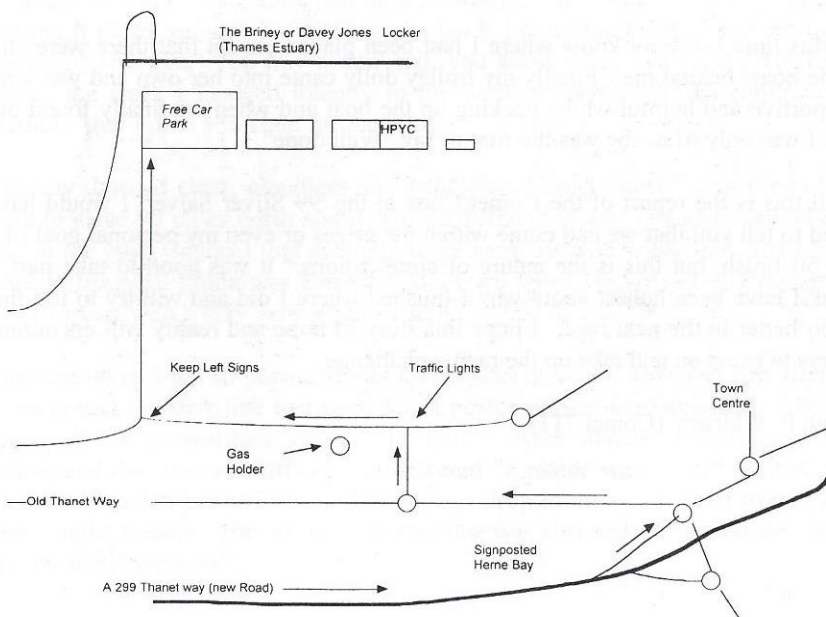
From the M25 after Dartford crossing take the A2 Dover and then the M2 Dover.

From the M25 South, take the M26 and then the M20 Dover. Then take the A249 Sheerness, and then the M2 Dover.

From the M2:

At junction 7 take the A299 Ramsgate. (For those who know the area, this is the new Thanet Way, **not** the old one that has been there since the thirties). **Turn off at Herne Bay, and follow the map to HPYC.**

Comet logos will be attached to signposts locally.



● FORTHCOMING EVENTS

JULY - SEPTEMBER 1999

<u>Date</u>	<u>Club</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Telephone</u>
Sat 26 June	Merthyr Tydfil	WEST	Mark Govier	01222 778459
Sat 3 July	Combs	NORTH	Sue Pollard	01457 763664
SUN 4 July	Hillhead	SOUTH	Paul Drew	01329 667666
Sat 17 July	Cotswold	<u>TRAINING DAY</u>	Bob Presley	01761 232487
Sat 17 July	Mudford	WEST	Peter Reid	01202 477281
SUN 18 July	Aylesbury	CENTRAL	Mike Palmer	01296 436414
Sat 24 July	Cotswold	WEST	Bob Presley	01761 232487
Fri-Sun	<u>NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS</u>			
30 July-1 Aug	HAMPTON PIER Y.C.			
Sat 11 Sept	Littleton	EAST	Geoff Gambrell	01227 361156
SUN 12 Sept	Arden	CENTRAL	Nick Warren	01344 623591
Sat 25 Sept	Pingewood	<u>TRAINING DAY</u>	Clive Marlow	01684 562808
SUN 26 Sept	Pingewood	SOUTH	Norah Gould	01635 298074
			Norah Gould	01635 298074



Prize-winners at the Association Championships:

(Left to right) Mark Wilkins (2nd), John Edwards (1st veteran), Diana Thompson (1st lady), Simon Thompson (6th), Debbie Degge (Association Champion), Henry Jagers (5th), Annette Walter (4th), Jack Thompson (7th), John Windibank (3rd), Mike Thompson (race committee prize for sportsmanship). (Photo: Liz Hossell)

CELEBRATING 50 ISSUES OF PERIHELION -PART 2

No need for arm twisting

In issue 24, Stuart Lines advertised for a new Editor and I volunteered my services largely because in the last 10 years of my employment in a Government research establishment I had written many small reports, most using a mini-computer, and I thought I could spare the time to do the job justice. I was welcomed with open arms by John Windibank, the Association Chairman, and Stuart and I did the layout of issue 27 together. Stuart had done all the typing and reduction before I visited him, then the layout involved spreading it all out on the floor to get the order of the pages and then gluing the copy to A4 sheets. A messy business! The rest of the procedure was, and still is, to send the master copy off to Andrew Simmons at South Molton. He arranges the reproduction and posts them to you.

More contributions from members

My method at first was just the same as Stuart's, typing, using editing software on my computer, a trek to the photocopy shop for reductions, then that gluing stint, which by myself I found took at least 4 hours! So the first few issues took an inordinate amount of time to produce but it was worth it to get a pleasing result. I only changed one thing, the headings for articles. Keith of course continued to write articles from time to time. But then more people began to write things and I found it necessary to free some space by including the open meeting adverts as loose inserts. These adverts were much the same each year. My computer really was a computer and I wrote a program for it to read in grid references and draw, on a plotter, a map of the locations of clubs. It drew my heading ellipses too.

Desk-top "publishing"

The only real change since then came in 1996 when I bought another machine, with scanner, laser printer, and Windows 95, Word, Excel and character recognition software. The rest of the newsletter, from issue 40 onwards, then became of the same visual quality as the list of open meetings that Henry Jagers had been providing for the previous two years. For the first one or two issues I still used the gluing method of layout, for my new software seemed to have a mind of its own, but I now do the whole thing on the "computer", diagrams, photograph scanning, layout planning and printing the master copy. My present ambition is to do a good job but not take so much time over it, at present I try to get it all together in three or four days (I've got other hobbies too!).


Even more contributions from members

The real development of Perihelion has been gradual involvement of more and more members. It is right that the Chairman and Treasurer report regularly, but now we have contributions from the Secretary, from the Hossells who provide immaculate results tables and reviews, and from Liz Hossell, Anne Browning and others who provide superb photographs. Also, many members now write interesting articles on events, both reports and impressions, experiences with sailing Comets, etc etc.

I have always been keen to invite top Comet sailors to write articles and many have been on topics that I suggested, eg strong wind sailing, capsized recovery. These I have collected into a booklet.

One of the best innovations, suggested by Margaret Hylton four years ago, has been the "Talking to . . ." series of articles, often with top Comet sailors but with as much variety as I can put in. This has also culminated in a booklet and there may now be enough for another. Doing these interviews has been a very pleasant task but the transcription from the tape recordings has not! Recently I bought voice recognising software to help me. It's OK for most ordinary speech, but some of its typing is hilarious, for example Phil Hossell used to live in "grim Siberia" (Grimsby area). That software doesn't save much time, but it's more fun than scribbling on paper!

Alan Browning, 3rd Editor



EDITOR'S NOTES

Many thanks to the contributors, especially Brian Welham and Tony Ellison. Also to the many photo contributions, some members are sending me packets of pictures now! I can't include many of course, but unless you want them back they will all go in the photo competition (see page 5). I particularly like the reports of events in this issue, which give the impression that the authors were actually watching the proceedings, not just looking at the results sheet.

Thanks too to Liz and Phil Hossell for sparing the time for a chat and I hope you will notice with pride the bouquet on page 35.

Finally, don't get lost on your way to the Nationals, the roads have been changed!

Alan Browning, Editor.

TWO COMET TIPS

Blue Peter returns

When I was not so old the presenters of the Blue Peter TV programme were always finding new uses for washing-up liquid bottles. Well, I have found one more!

Having to put the Comet mast into the boat means that I have to place its foot on to the ground. This puts mud and grit on to the mast which can grind into the fibreglass in the mast step. To prevent this I have cut the top off a washing-up liquid bottle which I put on to the bottom of the mast before I raise it to the vertical. I have made the fit loose enough to allow it to be removed easily when lifting into the boat.

Splitting the mast

Do you have problems getting the two parts of the mast apart when de-rigging?

I have used T-cut to polish the bottom end of the top section. I have found that this reduces the friction and makes it easier to get the two pieces apart.

Brian Welham (Comet 711, Taplow Lake S.C.)

PERIHELION

The next issue of Perihelion will be circulated in September 1999. Contributions to me by the end of August please.

Alan Browning, Editor

TALKING TO ... PHIL AND LIZ HosSELL

Alan Browning: You two have been firmly at the centre of Comet activities for several years now, Phil increasing your sailing consistency to take 6 of the 10 traveller's trophies in the last two seasons and Liz attending to support Phil and taking lots of super photographs. Now both of you are on the Association Committee too.

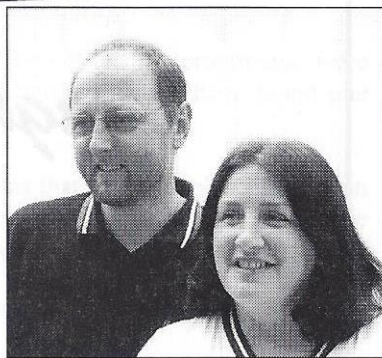


Photo: Anne Browning

Phillip HosSELL: I wouldn't say that I was very consistent. I think I did exceptionally well to win 6 out of the 10 travellers trophies. I'll give you an example of my inconsistency. At Littleton last year there were 38 boats racing. In the first race I came 21st, I won the second race, and in the third race came 15th. I think this is very inconsistent. **Liz HosSELL:** But you still won the Eastern area. **Alan:** What people seem to say is that for winning trophies you should do a lot of races and get rid of the duff ones by discards. **Phil:** Yes, Littleton was one. But don't forget that over the last 4 years I have competed at more meetings than any other Comet sailor which has given me plenty of discards but certainly I had some good results especially in 1998.

Alan : When I first saw you Phil it was at the 1994 Nationals at Queen Mary, soon after you bought Comet 650. Did you sail other boats before that and how come you bought a Comet?

Phil: I started sailing when I was around 14 or 15, a young lad who used to love playing and watching football and we had some new neighbours move in next door. This was up in Grimsby and this new neighbour said to me one day "would you like to come sailing?" This neighbour turned out to be Frank McNamara, father of ace sailor and sailmaker, Mike McNamara. So I went down to the club on a few Sundays with Frank. He used to take me out in his Albacore between races, and then one Sunday his crew didn't turn up, so Frank said "come on Phil here is your big chance," and it went on from there. Eventually, he used to let me helm the boat for some races and I thoroughly enjoyed it. Then this young lady (with her family) started coming down to the club. I took a fancy to this young lady and started getting to know her, perhaps you want to add something here Liz.

Liz: I was a lot younger than I am now, (25 years younger). I used to sail in an

Albacore with my dad, and Phil and I met down at the club and we started to sail together. We used to borrow dad's boat sometimes and anyone else's who would lend us one. We didn't get our own boat for another couple of years. We bought a new Albacore together (fibreglass hull and wooden deck and put everything together ourselves for under £500). We sailed at the club most weekends and did a few open meetings didn't we, including Winsford Flash that we went back to this year with the Comet some 20 plus years later. **Alan:** Did you, Liz, helm the Albacore? **Liz:** Not in races, I crewed. I have taken it out though.

Laser

Phil: A few years later, Liz became pregnant (with my help) and so couldn't sail, so I got a Laser and gained my sailing independence (no blaming the crew any more). I thoroughly enjoyed it and I had this for maybe four or five years. By then, heavy work commitments and the family were taking up all of our time. So we decided to sell the Albacore and Laser which would have been in 1984.

Comet

For 10 years we didn't do any sailing at all and then suddenly, in 1994 I had this urge to go sailing again. We looked at the local Evesham sailing club and went along to the Dinghy and Leisure show at the NEC and there we saw a Comet. We'd never heard of it before, got talking with Andrew Simmons and took away the literature. But I still had this urge to go and have a go in a Laser again, I loved sailing in my Laser when I was younger. I short-listed three boats, Laser, Byte and Comet. I went for a go in a Laser and found that the knees and back didn't bend like they used to when I was younger. It was blowing a bit and I thought that this was going to be a hard work for long races for an unfit fellow like me. I also tried a Byte, and hated it. I absolutely detested it. I thought it would fall to bits as the hull, mast and fittings did not give me much confidence that they would last. And then the Comet, although we did have problems actually getting a test sail due to adverse weather conditions. Eventually I had a go at the Plymouth Boat Show. Andrew rigged a boat for me and I went for a sail out in Plymouth Sound. **Liz:** I think Andrew wondered what had happened to you, as you went off for about an hour and a half! **Phil:** I'd made up my mind that this was the boat for me so, came in, ordered my boat and that was it. We went to the Nationals at Queen Mary soon after and planned to sail quite a few open meetings that year but the weekend after the Nationals my father died suddenly and it just threw everything apart.

Mirror and Enterprise

Alan: Were you contemplating a double hander? **Liz:** No, no, I wasn't then because of the children. Phil was going to be the one who was sailing and I was

looking after the children. Actually, we got a Mirror for a while thinking the girls might be interested, now that they were competent swimmers. They went out a few times but weren't really bothered so we sold the Mirror and bought an Enterprise. I was too big for a Mirror anyway. The Enterprise was just for the pair of us to sail on the river in Evesham. We sold it only about a year ago and had just removed it from the sailing club before the floods last Easter.

Alan: Then you bought a Blaze I believe. How did that happen?

Phil: Well, I enjoy the Comet but I wanted something to get me living on the edge. We'd been on a sailing holiday abroad and tried out a few boats, fast boats etc to get the heart pumping and give me a bit of an adrenaline rush. So I decided on a Blaze. The Blaze is bigger than the Comet, a metre longer in length and twice as wide with the racks out, but no trapeze. I'd decided that a trapeze was too much for me, getting in and out and hooked up and tangled (at my age and with a poor level of fitness), so I went and had a demonstration in a Blaze. In the right wind conditions it really whistles across the water and gives you the most fantastic feeling but when it goes wrong you just wish that you were doing something else (like sailing the Comet). I've had it two years now but this last year have hardly sailed it because I prefer the Comet for open meetings. The Blaze needs sailing on a big open water, it's crying out for a stretch of water like Plymouth Sound. We go to Plymouth Regatta Week (Liz's family lives in Plymouth) every year with the Blaze, and last year was absolutely fabulous for the Blaze, as there was a two mile plane across Plymouth sound, totally out of control and hanging on but somehow passing spinnaker boats. Trouble is that as soon as the wind drops light, with it being a fully battened sail, so wide and an open transom, it won't tack, it won't gybe (for me anyway) but a Comet will move on a ten pence bit. I took it to a couple of open meetings, I enjoyed it in open space, like Chichester Harbour, Hayling Island. Yes it's a super boat in the right conditions but you need a big stretch of water to get the best out of it. We won't be going to Plymouth this year because there's a clash with the Nationals at Hampton Pier, I much prefer to go to the Comet Nationals, so decided well I'm not really going to get it out so the Blaze is now up for sale - any offers?

Alan: How does the Blaze compare with the Comet?

Phil: The Blaze has a centre main. I think the Comet is a fabulous simple design, I like it for its simplicity, yet there's still enough to adjust. **Alan:** Yes, that's what attracted me. **Phil:** But on the Blaze you've got shrouds, stays, forestay and ropes and sheets galore. You go to an open meeting with the Comet and possibly after a quarter of an hour you could be on the water. With the Blaze make it an hour

and a quarter. There's so many little fiddly bits, you can't leave things tied up, you've got to re-rig it completely every time. **Liz:** You need two people to put the mast up, there are ever such fiddly things on the shrouds aren't there. **Phil:** Yes, it's a handful and also the Comet Class Association and the people you meet on the Comet circuit are so friendly, everybody helps everybody, it wasn't quite like that in the Blazes, it was very much about being an individual. You never felt part of it.

Alan: You're sailing consistently well in Comet competition now. In what ways do you think you have improved and have you any tips for us?

Relax!

Phil: My main tip is to relax and don't get wound up otherwise you will make mistakes. In 95 I think I got a couple of seconds, where on both occasions it was blowing, my preferred wind. Then in 96 I won my first race and open meeting at Chester. I did have lots of seconds in 97 that gave me two Aphelion trophies. Then last year, 98, I did have some excellent meeting results. I had one absolutely dynamic weekend where I won Cotswold on Saturday and Aylesbury on the Sunday. I think I was more relaxed because I had been made redundant at the end of 97. I'm sure that work pressures affect you. After Monday to Friday work pressures, during the weekend sailing you tend to be thinking about work on Monday, well I was. Now last year I was far more laid back. I went to college and set up my own business. I've learnt to have a much more relaxed attitude and I don't tend to worry about much. For sailing I now have the philosophy – work, forget it, I'm here to sail. However, this year something isn't quite right because I'm not doing very well! But I sail because I enjoy it, I haven't got to win. I do hate aggressive sailing and that is one reason I like the Comet, it's not aggressive sailing - usually. The race officer for the Staunton Harold Championships was absolutely amazed how friendly and relaxed the Comet fleet was. He said that generally he sees a lot more aggression on the water. It was a great venue to hold the Championships, they were pleased to accomodate us and we were pleased to be there.

Don't follow me!

I watch other people quite a bit, because it could be a good thing to see what they're doing but then whilst your watching others you're not concentrating on what you should be doing. I like to watch other people's sails, particularly if they're moving faster than me. I look and compare the sails, if they're tight in or eased out. I have to be careful though, I wouldn't offer too many tips because at Staunton Harold I had one quite disastrous beat, falling back from 7th or 8th position down to beyond 20th on one beat. That was because I decided to come

inshore where I thought there was more wind, where there was in fact less wind. Nick Warren caught me up and I said to Nick "don't follow me, if you go the opposite way you will do better". We did the next lap and I thought "well the wind's still inshore and I'm going for it again", and Nick came with me and I took him back about another 10 places! So a big tip is "don't follow me!"

Strong winds and submarining

I did have a very good nose-dive, which Derek Coleman keeps reminding me about, at the Glossop Nationals in 1996. I came round the windward mark just behind Derek. You had to bear off more than 90 degrees and I couldn't get in the boat to get the plate up because it was blowing a bit. As I did, of course it started nose-diving, it nose-dived more, and more, and more and it just filled the cockpit, I thought "she's going", but she wouldn't go, she would not capsize and I was just stationery with a cockpit full of water. I learnt from that that you must get your weight back. I had a similar occurrence at Frensham Pond, that time ending up half way up the mast which was lying on the water. I haven't done it since but I've had some close shaves, I have really learnt now "get your weight back". Weight should be forward when beating but if it's really blowing you want to be back six to twelve inches, even more in tidal conditions because otherwise you'll nose-dive into the waves. **Alan:** Some boat designs have the control ropes led out to the side. **Phil:** Yes, it's like that on the Blaze, the ropes go in a full circle round. With the Comet I've usually found that if it's blowing a hooley, it's almost suicide to try and adjust anything, providing you've got it all tight on. If you've got your kicker off you're going to be in trouble! **Alan:** What do you do with the plate, half down and leave it or what? **Phil:** I would tend to have it, non-tidal, about three inches up, or if it's tidal probably up a little bit more on the beat. But then as soon as you're on reaches or runs, I'll go for about half, most of the time. Then as it gets lighter I think you need to get rid of as much as you can especially on the run.

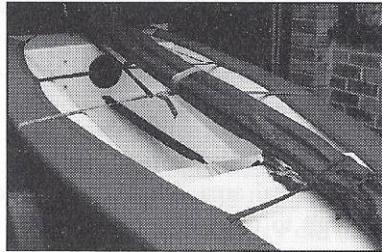
Running by the lee.

One thing I have been trying was from an article in Yachts & Yachting, I think it would have been February this year, called the Fourth Dimension, about sailing by the lee on the run. This is when you've got the sail near to gybing and the airflow passes along the sail rather than straight at it. I have been having a few practices and it did say you'll have one or two capsizes whilst learning the art of doing it. It has worked a couple of times for me but you've got to remember that your leech and luff are the other way round. Providing you can work that out, keep the wind in it, and get the sail far enough forward, it can work because you're riding on the non-sail side, not the windward side, and using your rudder to

actually pivot you. I wouldn't say I've used it successfully yet but if an opportunity comes at Hampton Pier I'll have a go if there's nothing to lose. I imagine it could be advantageous if you're in tidal conditions to get a starboard advantage over a port boat. Time will tell, if you see me in the water a lot you'll know it went wrong!

Alan: You go to very many open meetings don't you. Have you any comments on the practical aspects of that ?

Phil: I tow my Comet. What I think you must remember when towing is, it's a very light boat and the combi is also very light. Now it has its benefits, being light when you're launching, because you can do it on your own quite easily, but when towing as soon as you go over any rough road surfaces you do get a great deal of bounce, no matter what speed you're going. Pad your launching trolley well if it's a combi, and tie it fairly tight, so there's no slack, but not so tight that everything is straining. I've got a mini-ratchet round the boat virtually on the axle, and all I do then is tie it at the front with the painter, wrapping it round the trailer. I have an under cover because it protects the hull. I don't usually travel with the top cover on. I carry the spars across the top. All I do is put padding on the foredeck where the cleats are, and I use the under cover long ties around the spars. At the back I've got a trailer board which sits on the rudder pintles and it's got a U-bend where the spars rest in and raises them



Spars held with under-cover ties



Trailer board and spar support

about three inches above the rear deck.

Liz: he's very methodical, he's got a plastic bag with all the bits and bobs, he knows how many bits go in this bag, he's never forgotten anything yet. He's always got a box in the back of the car with loads of spare bits.

Alan: You both deserve our thanks for your time and effort given to the Committee, particularly, Phil, when you process the Comet results I imagine that you spend quite a few hours of your time on that. For those who know nothing of Committee work, would you describe briefly what that job entails, and particularly how members can make your job easier?

Collecting the results

Phil: What I like to do when going to open meetings is getting to know people, matching boat members with people and names. It's good to see new people, and I like to try and get to know the contacts for the open meetings because I want them to send me the results, it's imperative that I get the results promptly. All I need is the boat numbers, the helm's names and the overall result of the meeting from first boat to last. I don't need to know the individual race results. I'll pick out who are members and non-members (I get a list from Derek). I then put them into my PC and come up with the area and orbital results at the end of the season. It does make my job difficult if I have to chase these results so I do plead with all open meeting contacts to send me the results as soon as possible, before it goes out of your mind because when we get on in the season, I have people at the open meetings wanting to know how they are doing so far in a particular area. If Liz and I are at the open meeting, then, yes, Liz will take the results down and they don't need to send them. **Alan:** Who is expected to send the results to you, the contact? **Phil:** Yes, the contact: they might not be a Comet person, I think most of them are but it's the contact that Norah has dealt with and sent a letter detailing our requirements. **Liz:** They will usually tell us if it's anybody different. I must give credit, most of the clubs that we do not get to send us the results arriving by Tuesday's post. We have a fax machine, for anybody to fax them, it will operate any time.

Processing the results

We use an Excel spreadsheet, with Windows 95 operating system, and put in the results of all Association members for the North, South, East and West, and the new Central area, and then of course the Orbital. Now the Orbital is a little difficult to organise. Prior to the Staunton Harold Association Championships there was nobody on it. After Staunton Harold suddenly there are 35 boats to go into the Orbital spreadsheet. Then, after Hampton Pier, there will be all those who enter the Nationals who weren't at Staunton Harold to go onto the Orbital sheet. These are the potential qualifiers for the Orbital. **Phil:** Inserting the data is easy until the last meetings of each area when you would probably have seen Liz chasing the race officer to get the results and write them all down and we then sit down together to work it all out. Kingsmead is the worst when there is both the Aphelion and the Orbital overall results to work out. **Alan:** All under stress too, you've got to do it as quickly as you can. **Phil:** That's right and, touch wood, we've done it the last two years. We always re-check them once we've got back home. We always double check the main prize-winners at the meeting, but if there is any adjustments to make below that then I'll certainly ring people to tell them I'm sorry it's changed a bit. We have got them all right so far.

Alan: That lot must take many evenings. **Phil:** Yes, but it's not too bad. **Liz:** You stay on top of it don't you really. **Alan:** And then there's a bit at the end of each quarter to give me results. **Phil:** Yes, and I also send the results to Dinghy Trader, a magazine that generally advertises boats but also has a section for publishing reports and results. I did a summary at the end of last year, on the Aphelions and the Orbital for Yachts and Yachting and Dinghy Trader. I also send the results to you, so yes, it's not too much, an evening or two each month of the season plus the summaries at the end.

Alan: I would think that for somebody who's got a full-time job, taking over what you're doing would almost certainly require the use of a computer. To do it manually would be hell. **Phil:** Yes, it's possible, if you have a big sheet laid out, but a great thing with a computer you can correct mistakes and easily put extra names in.

Alan: You, Phil, had an extra job in January this year didn't you, standing in for Stuart Gilder to organise the helpers for the Comet stand at the NEC Show. What was that like?

Phil: It was quite a logistical nightmare but it did turn out satisfactorily in the end. There were some people dropping out but it was fortunate that I wasn't too busy the week of the show and was able to slot in to extra duties. **Liz:** We appreciated a great deal the work that Stuart had done. **Phil:** Yes, Stuart did a fabulous job. I did have his listing of who came last year, and this year some couldn't, some people had moved on out of Comet's etc, but then I was able to add several people that I knew that Stuart didn't necessarily know and I did rope in one or two others. Organising that involved a lot of phone calls. Henry did most of the liaison with the RYA. Because my boat was on display, I had to go and set up with Henry the day before, and I needed to be there at the end too. I did say to all the volunteers "if you've got a problem serious enough that you can't go, try and give me a phone call". I might not be able to do anything about it but I might be able to go myself or organise somebody because I did have the likes of Keith Lamdin and Barry Hylton who were both very busy at the time but were prepared to help in an extreme emergency.

Alan: The renewal form with a comments sheet on the back seemed a good idea.

Phil: Yes, there were certainly some ideas there to take us forward. **Liz:** There were quite a few praises and thank-yous for the Committee too. **Phil:** I would like to think, being a committee member, that I want to approach people and say "please can anybody who's got any queries on the work we do as the Committee, come and talk to us, make suggestions". **Alan:** I've put the boat numbers of

Committee members in Perihelion so members should be able to find us. **Phil:** Yes that's right. When I was ringing round to get people for the NEC show, I rang about 50 people. The majority I knew, they didn't all necessarily know me but they did as soon as I said "650, the star of Perihelion Issue Number 49".

Alan: You, Liz, are now looking after the Committee's interests in Comet trophies. Again, for those who know nothing of Committee work, would you describe briefly what you do for us?

Liz: In the last 3 or 4 weeks we've been getting things sorted out for the championships, getting prizes and the mementoes for the Nationals. Recently we did some of the trophies for the Inlands. We sorted the veteran's and the lady's prizes and they were all very happy with it this year. Then, with the mementoes, everybody was pleased with the china mug.

Alan: Let me get this straight, you have catalogues of trophies generally from a number of manufacturers. **Liz:** Yes, quite a few. We are using a local trophy shop for the trophies for the first seven, ladies, veteran and junior. **Alan:** On top of that you've got to get engraving done. **Liz:** Yes, and also then we have to get the mementoes which usually have the Comet logo. **Alan:** How is the engraving done? **Liz:** This time we used a local person. **Phil:** He does any glassware or trophies that need engraving, he can also do the Comet logo. **Liz:** Yes, he's quite good, but what we've done this year is to have the Comet logo on the glassware and use coasters with the particular event engraving. This was because at Brightlingsea some glassware had "Junior" on it, but there was no junior. So that glassware was wasted, you can't have the engraving scraped off.

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

Phil: I just love racing. For non-racing owners I can't really offer a lot of advice. On holiday though, if I'm on a beach where there are lots of sailing dinghies available, I love to go and have a blast on the water just to get out and enjoy it.

Liz: He's not one for lying on the beach for long. **Phil:** But generally my sailing revolves around racing, can't think when I last took my Comet out for a leisure sail. In recent Perihelions, we've had a few articles from people who just like to potter with the boat. Derek Coleman has the best of both worlds, living by the sea. If it's a nice day he might well go for a sail but he still comes to all the open meetings, he loves both. Maybe when I'm retired. Thinking of the NEC show, several people come along to the Comet stand looking for a boat that they can car-top because they already tow a caravan. The Comet is ideal to take a child out in

because it's lightweight and has a bigish cockpit. I do know of one other suggestion: you can, with some caravans, put your Comet inside, through the window. Mark Govier has done this and Tony Evans fits his Comet in his van (as does Andrew Simmons). But for non-racing owners I'm probably not a lot of help.

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

Phil: Use the Internet. The unfortunate thing is that Stuart is the only Committee member on the Internet at the moment and probably not enough of us have got enough passion to go on it. For me, my biggest worry is that it would consume too much of my valuable time, but I think we will all be on the Internet eventually. There seems to me to be a little bit of pressure from some members for the Internet. **Liz:** We've got the Internet at school and when I get the chance I'm going to see what's on it. The Internet could be very useful to display results. **Phil:** That's right. Presumably if we were both on the Internet Alan, it would be easy just to download the results to you that way.

Alan: Finally, Liz, when are you going to get a Comet? **Liz:** I'm not going to because I think I'm too heavy for it. I like to leave the racing to Phil and enjoy being involved on the shore. I'll help with trolleys etc but please do not call me a trolley dolly!

Alan: Well Phil and Liz, very many thanks for your hospitality today, and, on behalf of all the members, thanks too for your magnificent efforts on the Committee. I've certainly enjoyed our chat, though how you managed it in an afternoon when you're both in full-time employment I can't figure out.

Note: Liz works part time in a school running the library and carrying out Special Needs support. Phil works for himself and is able to manipulate his work around his social life (usually).

When transcribing the interview, using voice recognising software, the computer made a few mistakes:

grim Siberia, elbow corps, force day, laugh, Iris 400, cattle, pinch word, a smack expenditures, storms and held, obscene 650, order tools, French them, end easy show, play's, tent start-up, fringe some pond, easy lay readers, all but all, sex blisters all odds, Africans, typed been, r wire a, rabbit ground, your ups and yachting. There was also one too rude to print. Obviously I must speak more clearly, but I've only had it a few days.

COMETS IN CYBERSPACE

I must admit to being shocked of being accused of making Perihelion available to the general public and therefore acting to diminish the need for Perihelion to be distributed to the members.

There were two reasons for launching the web site. The first goes back a few issues of Perihelion to an article by Anna Ludgate, which concluded with a question "Why is there so few younger Comet sailors?" The second catalyst was that one of my HNC computing course assignments was to set-up a web site.

Putting ones self into the mind set of a school age person these days: How would I find more information to feed that seed planted sometime ago when I saw some friendly dinghy sailors having so much fun in a Comet? Yes, I'll look on the Internet next break-time. The school is now connected to the Internet making it the fastest and cheapest way to find more information. Yahoo is a good start; it lists all the UK sailing sites. The UK sailing index gives me all the UK classes. I'll see which class has the most active racing scene near where I live, looks sexy and is not too expensive.

So as you may have gathered my aim is to provide an electronic shop window to show potential new blood how active and friendly the class is. This will involve publishing information like the race diary, results, pictures and boats-for-sale etc. This will give potential members a taste of what we get up to and also members may access the site from work to see what events are on the next weekend. I have already had emails requesting a boats for sale section from a site surfer. I am sure the web site will not replace traditional advertising just as television has not replaced newspapers but it does provide a link to people who would otherwise miss the information. Also radio 4 is available on the Internet but I am not throwing my radio away! The web is not ideal for periodicals, as one would have to remember to print it out to read on the train. Perhaps in the longer term paper and distribution will be so expensive due high tax on un-ecological material that email will be the only way to distribute Perihelion. It will still need an editor because creating and organising the content will still be a skilled job, as well as a web administrator. Until then I vote that Perihelion stays as it is and the web site concentrates on promoting younger Comet sailors. Younger members means the class will not die out, better Comet resale value and Perihelion may get thicker with all he activity! or it might not produce any results what so ever! But it's another try.

Have a look at the site and tell me what you think. I am a technical person so I can take all the criticism you have, to make it better or delete it. email tony.ellison@btinternet.com The site is on;

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

One thing the Internet does do well is link relevant information. I would like to link to each sailing club which has say 4 or more Comets or is holding an open event and of course has a web site. This would make an easy reference for people looking for a club to sail their Comet. I have and will encourage all relevant clubs to link to the CSA site to open the electronic window as wide as possible. Please send me the URL (web address) of your club if it is not linked already.

For those not familiar with the Internet the “~” character is a tilde not a “-“ minus sign. The address can not be made simpler without paying for a URL like www.comet-sailing.com which would be better but at the moment the web space as been provided free by my employer BT so it does not cost the association a penny. The simplest URL I have is **Error! Bookmark not defined.** but this has a 10-second advert to pay for the service.

I hope you will find that the web site works to promote and harmonise with Perihelion not replace it. Let's get the subject back to Comets rather than the Internet anyway, that what Perihelion is all about.

Tony Ellison (Comet 645 Littleton S.C.)

A COMET BOUQUET

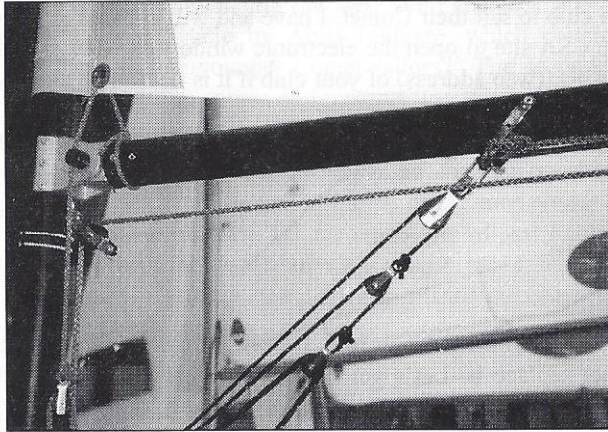
Please convey my thanks to your members for the way that they made my task of OOD, Association Championships relatively easy with a high standard of sportsmanship coupled with good humour both on and off the water. Turns were completed without argument with premature starters returning to the line promptly. Rules seemed to be followed to the letter. I trust that everyone enjoyed the weekend as much as my team and I.

I feel that your Association should be proud of the way your members conducted themselves at this regatta. Thanks also for the memento, a nice final touch.

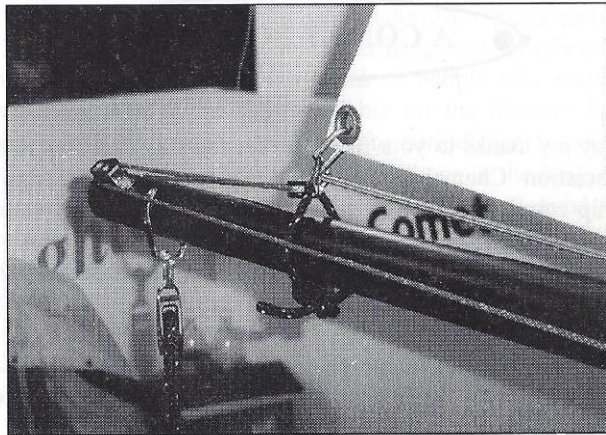
D.E.Newton, Staunton Harold S.C.

RIGGING DETAILS ON THE COMET "CLUB"

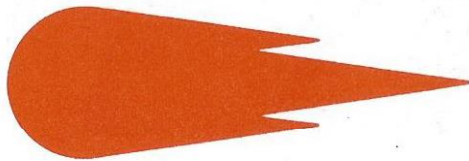
These two photos are of the Comet "Club" at Sailboat this year.



Cascade kicker pulley system.



Outhaul connection using only one dog-clip.



Comet Class Association

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association