

PERIHELION

 54

Spring 2000



Comet Class Association Newsletter

**NEWSLETTER NUMBER 54
SPRING 2000**

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Front cover:

Tony Ellison (Association website organiser)
warming up for a race at Littleton.

(Photo: Walter De'Ath)

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

My club has a break from sailing in January and February and we all get a bit rusty as far as the racing goes. I expect some of you will have continued right through so you should have the edge when next we meet. Anyway, another new season dawns and I can't wait to get my boat back on the water!

Whether or not your calculations declare this to be the New Millennium, we can't get away from the fact that most of the World has decided to celebrate (if perhaps a year early). So this year let's make it a bumper one for the Comet too!

We have a very full programme arranged for you, thanks to Norah for cajoling and co-ordinating all the clubs. Most of the venues will be familiar from past years but there are a couple of new ones: Redoubt, a lake on Romney Marsh near the coast at Hythe, and Carsington, a large reservoir just northwest of Derby. Both are very keen to see us and deserving of your support as are all the other clubs on the list. Let's try to boost our meeting attendance even more this year and, if you have not yet been to an open meeting other than at your own club, please do resolve that this year you will make the effort and travel to at least one event. Don't think open meetings are only for the top helms, everyone is welcome to have a go and you, and your family, will have a really good day out. If you are looking to improve your sailing there is no better way than attending open meetings!

Our **National Championships** are early this year, at Glossop, a fine reservoir in a lovely part of the Peak District They made us very welcome when they ran this event before and have things well in-hand to make this time a great success too. The AGM will be held after racing on the middle day.

We have the **Association Championships** at Mudeford arranged for your summer holidays. This is a delightfully sheltered yet open (come along and see what I mean) tidal venue near Christchurch. Even if we get a good wind there is little to worry about as over much of the large sailing area you can stand chest high on the bottom! If you and your family want to make a longer break of it, and get some practice, then you can enter the Mudeford Regatta which is the week before our event.

Something for everyone! Cruisers and racers will enjoy the **Comet Millennium** event together. Chipstead SC are arranging a different type of meeting for the end

of August which will include fun-races, cruising, and social events to cater for us all and for our families and friends! The entire Comet Dinghies stable - Comet, Mino, Duo, Trio, Zero - are all invited. A midweek event (Tuesday and Wednesday) I gather you will be most welcome on the Monday evening too.

Further information and dates will be found on the centre pages of this edition but once again I have also produced a programme card for each of you.

As usual, the Committee have been busy since the last Perihelion and Norah has summarised some of our deliberations in her "Notes from the Committee" which you will find later. I hope we have managed to resolve at least a few of the comments and suggestions members have sent to us. As well as the programme, we have also been involved in our two main exhibitions: The Boat Caravan and Leisure Show at the NEC and Sailboat at Alexandra Palace. Many thanks to those of you who helped man the stands.

I cannot pass over the NEC show without a mention of our **royal visit!** As you may know, our stand is part of a larger RYA exhibit (we get it very much cheaper that way) and we had a visit from Princess Anne, who knows a thing or two about sailing and has been president of the RYA for many years. She was very thorough and spent quite a long time with us.



The conversation went something like this:

HRH: Where do you sail?

me: My home club is Staunton Harold but the Comet Association is nationwide. HRH: What do you do?

me: As a voluntary organisation, independent of the boat builder, we look after the interests of Comet owners, publish a quarterly magazine, and arrange a full programme of Championship, Open, and other events for our members. We are a small class but very keen with a relatively high proportion of members to the number of boats built.

HRH: It looks quite a fast little boat, a bit like a small Laser.

me: Yes, it's halfway between the Topper and the Laser in performance but a lot more comfortable than either! Our members find it suits a very wide range of sizes and ages. It's a super little boat to sail.

HRH: Who builds it and where?

me: It is built by Comet Dinghies at South Molton in Devon.

HRH: That's a funny place to build boats!

me: Better not tell the builder that! But seriously, he has done pretty well. We have boats all over the country and a few abroad. This one belongs to one of our lady members from Cheshire.

HRH: Hmm...

Me: They do come in other colours!

Written out like this it sounds a lot more formal than it was. After her unspoken but obvious remark on the colour (we had Ros Stevenson's lilac or pink coloured Club Comet on show) HRH drifted away to admire one of the other exhibits.

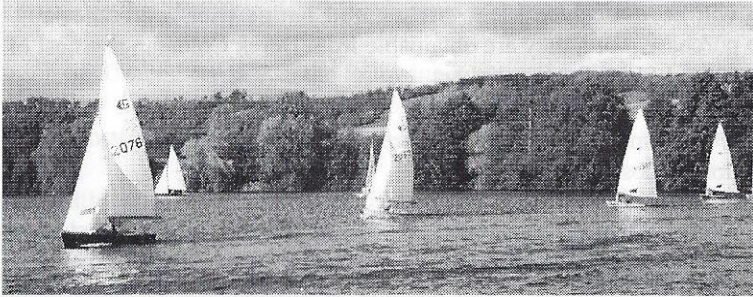
Photographic Competition. Please send us your photos! As last year the rules are minimal. All photos submitted to Perihelion will be considered or you can send them directly to me. The closing date is Friday 29th September. Can we have more for the "Comet Fun" category this year, please?

To end this time, I must note the retirement of Barrie Hyton. I am sure most of you will know and have appreciated the superb service he and Margaret have offered to us Comet sailors over many years. First as agents and promoters for Comets and spare parts, latterly doing a wonderful job of repairs and selling second-hand boats. Well, sadly for us, Dinghy Leisure will no longer be around to help us but we wish Barrie and Margaret a very happy retirement and sincerely hope we will not lose contact with them entirely.

Henry Jagers

MILLENNIUM REGATTA

28 - 29 AUGUST



Chipstead sailing water

For the first time and to celebrate the dawn of the new era with something different, we will be holding a Millennium Regatta for all the Comet range of dinghies.

We have tried to arrange events that will be fun and enable the very different boats and crews, with varying degrees of ability, to compete on a friendly basis and feel involved with the activities throughout the days of the Regatta.

Planning for the event is well advanced and the Comet fleet at Chipstead have all enthusiastically joined in to help with ideas and preparation. Chipstead SC is a very friendly Club and is well known for its excellent catering and bar facilities with hot and cold food, meat and vegetarian dishes available.

There are excellent Club facilities with a hall and comfortable lounge looking down onto the lake, with drinks available all day. There are spacious changing rooms with hot showers and good wheelchair access to all areas and we have very modern toilet facilities for the disabled. Out of doors there is a play area for small children, grassy banks and outdoor picnic tables with a good view of the lake where the non-competitors can follow the events. There is a large car park and boat launching is very easy with hard ramps or you can launch from the sloping banks if you prefer.

Chipstead has a large fleet of Comets, a Duo and a Mino and we are expecting our first Zero to be delivered soon. Send your application forms in early if possible, to help us to plan a smooth and trouble free event for you. A local accommodation list is available on request.

Chipstead SC. is looking forward to having you with us for what we hope will be a very enjoyable time.

John Windibank. Event Co-ordinator

NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE

1. You will have received a **car sticker and badge** with your renewal. If you wish to purchase more, they are obtainable from Derek Coleman at a cost of £1.50 for badges and £1.00 for car stickers.

2. Andrew is making enquiries in respect of the **flag**. We are awaiting information on cost etc.

3. **The programme** is displayed elsewhere (page 16), and the Committee is grateful to Henry for painstakingly making the cards. You will note that 3 training days are included. The one run by Cotswold is specifically for race training, the other two are more general. The Committee has noted the request for more training opportunities and hope that they will be well attended.

4. The Secretary has an apology to make. **MUDEFORD WEEK PRECEDES THE ASSOCIATION MEETING**. Which should give you all plenty of opportunity to practise!

5. Our thanks go to Ros Stevenson and Nick Warren for lending their boats for the exhibitions at NEC and Sailboat. Nick and Paul Hinde were responsible for setting up the stand at Sailboat, and for giving it a new look. Thank you.

6. Membership fee

Elsewhere you will find a proposal to increase the membership fee. The Committee has had considerable discussion over one potential source of income, namely entries to Open meetings. Last year there were 66 non member entries to Open meetings. Assuming that this represented 66 different people, restricting entry to Open meetings to CCA members would have increased income by £660.00. However, the system encouraged people on to the water in Comets which would probably stayed on land otherwise. If view of this, the Committee has decided to continue to permit non-members to enter Open meetings.

7. Mino rig

The Committee is conscious that the debate in respect of the Mino rig has continued, and recognise that several members have asked for further guidelines. The Committee reiterates the guidelines which were published in Perihelion 42 and have been issued to clubs hosting Comet events since then. viz:

“ - They may join Comet events with their own prize structure if more than one starts.

- Competitors will not be allowed to change rigs during a competition,
- Minos will not be eligible for national prizes
- Minos will be eligible for qualifying mementoes

- CCA will keep a record of anyone wanting to sail a Mino throughout a series, to ensure that they receive the appropriate memento."

In addition the Committee makes the following points:

- The CCA has always welcomed Mino helms, recognising their potential for moving on to Comets and giving Comet hulls more flexibility for the less agile.

- Although helms at the front of the Comet fleet have indicated that they see no problem with Minos racing as Comets, there are issues for sailors further down the fleet where decisions over reefing are crucial. It is acknowledged that a reefed Comet will not sail as well as a Mino.

- There are precedents for alternative rigs, such as Laser, where each rig has it's own Class Association.

- Keeping the rigs separate in events run by the Class Association does not affect Club rules where a helm may change rigs during a season

- The Comet has a primary yardstick of which we are justifiably proud, and which we do not wish to jeopardise.

- The suggested PY for Minos of 1193 should be tried and tested through the club reporting system, to enable them to have their own identity,

- There are already events for Mino rigs in 2000 - National and Association Championships and the Millennium meeting. The first two require at least 2 Minos to enter. - If Mino helms wish the CCA to organise events for them, we will consider doing so, but we would expect at least 2 Minos to be committed to enter.

- In view of the interest in, and debate on, the Mino, Perihelion will feature a Mino section.

8. Scoring system

The scoring system has also occasioned a certain amount of comment and debate. The Committee has considered the arguments put forward by a number of members, and the following is extracted from the minutes of the Committee meeting of 22/01/00:

"i) There has been discussion over Open meeting results, with the suggestion that each race should be counted when calculating the relative positions of members and non-members. Phil Hossell reported that if the result of each race was taken into consideration, it would affect approximately 3% of the overall results. The amount of work involved in collating every race result, and the possible ambiguities which would result were discussed at length. It was agreed that the existing system of taking the Open meeting overall results and extracting the non-members' results when calculating Aphelion and Orbital scores should stand."

ii) It was agreed that the host clubs's scoring system should be accepted for Open meetings, although clubs will be requested to adopt the current RYA system.

Summary of Scoring Systems at Open Meetings:

- Scoring system as used by host club
- Omit non CCA members from Open meeting overall result
- From above, all CCA members' results into Aphelion and Orbital.

iii) It was agreed that for the National and Association Championships, the scoring system should be that given in the latest RYA rules, plus appendices.

Summary of Scoring Systems at National and Association Championships.

- Only CCA members may participate.
- Latest RYA scoring + appendices i.e.
 - (assuming not all races to count) Ignore worst results. If there are equal worst results, the earliest in the series is ignored first.
 - Most 1sts, 2nds, 3rds etc.
 - In the event of a tie, the results to be put in order with the best result towards the end of a series being used if the tie continues. - Disqualification cannot be used as a worst score, and must be counted. - Retired to count one more point than boats in the race.
 - Disqualified and Did Not Start to count one more point than boats in the series.

iv) **Summary of Scoring System for the Aphelions:**

- 3 out of the 5 possible results from Open meetings to count.
- Ties to be decided as per RYA rules, i.e. worst scores from the earliest events being ignored first if there are equal worst scores, most 1sts, 2nds, etc., and then the best score nearest the end of the series (see rule A2.2)

v) **Summary of Scoring System for the Orbital Trophy:**

- 6 best results to be counted from open meetings.
- Entry required at Open meetings in 2 Aphelion areas plus the Nationals or Association Championships.
- Ties to be decided on most 1sts, 2nds, etc. and then best results at Nationals, then best result at Association Championship.

9. It was recognised that the result at Glossop last year, with 3 helms having equal 4th place, represented an irresolvable tie, as all three boats had equal scores.

10. The Committee has agreed to place an advert in Dinghy Trader.

1999 AGM MINUTES

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, HELD AT HAMPTON PIER YACHT CLUB, Saturday 31st July 1999

The meeting was attended by members of the committee and 22 members of the Association.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Andrew Simmons, Keith Lamdin, Margaret and Barrie Hylton, Derek Coleman, Stuart Gilder, Flona Cauter, John Regnard, Guy Wilkins, Mark Wilkins, Penny Vere, Trish Moore, John Orchard, Steve Rothman, Brian Welham, Ian Hodge, John Peach, David Pescod, Robin Ballam and Nancy Gould.

2. Minutes of the AGM held on Sunday 24th May 1998

The minutes of the last AGM were agreed and signed. Proposed by Phillip Hossell. Seconded by John Windibank.

3. Reports by Officers

a. Chairman

The Chairman welcomed everyone to "Frensham" and apologised for the error which had gone out on some of the notices. [The meeting was, of course, at Hampton Pier]. This was the end of his second year of office and he hoped members had no regrets for electing him. He greatly appreciated the help and support received and hoped to continue to promote the Comet Class as the active and friendly Association it is.

The Comet, as a relatively small fleet, is indeed remarkably active in terms of the percentage of owners who belong to the Association, in our open and championship meetings, and in club activity and member involvement all over the country. This continues to be recognised by the RYA in granting us Primary Yardstick status and, although entries are down this year, we are usually well towards the top of classes for the numbers attending our championships.

The Chairman gave details of a membership drive which he and the Secretary had undertaken. 430 letters had been sent out to non-members and lapsed members. This had been a successful exercise and gained over 40 new members. It also flushed out about 30 second-hand boats which quickly found appreciative and, hopefully, active new owners. Some nice letters were also received from people saying how much they enjoyed their Comets.

The Chairman said that further highlights of the year would be covered by other officers later in the meeting. He closed his report by saying a sincere thank you to all the Committee, to all who sail Comets, and to Andrew Simmons for building them.

b. Secretary

The Secretary reported on the venues for the national events for the next year as well as the open programme. The new venues, Winsford Flash and Banbury had been well attended, and it had been good to return to Redditch. Brian Welham had represented the Class at the Draycote Silver Salver, and had found it an interesting experience.

During the year, several helms had been injured - Paul Hinde and Ros Stevenson at Staunton Harold, Chris Robinson at Taplow and Penny Vere at Sutton Bingham. Stuart Gilder, Fiona Cauter and Peter Hayes had all been receiving treatment for non sailing related conditions which had kept them off the water. Current reports indicate that all were responding to treatment.

c. Newsletter Editor

The Newsletter Editor thanked everyone for their contributions, particularly reports of meetings, which are increasingly interesting to read. In the past some had been mere quotes from the score card, not even mentioning the weather. The rules for the photographic competition have changed, and photos sent for Perihelion will not be returned unless requested until after the competition. Photographs other than those taken this year are also eligible.

The editor apologised for the late delivery of the current Perihelion, which had been delayed to include the AGM papers. He had telephoned Merthyr Tydfil to apologise for the fact that their advert had not reached members, and this may have contributed to a poor turn-out.

He thanked Tony Ellison for setting up the Comet website.

Phillip Hossell

Since the AGM of last year Jake Sutton became our 1998 National Champion and Mark Wilkins the 1998 Association Champion. Heidi Dodd was the Ladies Champion in both events. Debbie Degge won the 1999 Association Championship in May of this year, with 4 straight wins, convincingly ahead of Mark Wilkins, John Windibank and the young and upcoming exciting prospect in Annette Walter - what a championship she had! Phillip suggested that with this upsurge of Ladies, perhaps now it is time to introduce a new Gentleman's Trophy for the first man?!

Over 500 helms took part in the 1998 Orbital and Aphelion events - a record number. Richard Smallwood won the Southern Aphelion and Phillip Hossell the rest.

With the new venues for this year, and after listening to the helms comments on having 4 events to count out of 6 in each area, the committee has decided to create a fifth area, and to return to 3 events out of five to count. The Western Aphelion has already been completed, and won by Phillip Hossell. Attendances this year have ranged from 4 at Hillhead and 5 at Merthyr Tydfil to 32 at both Chipstead and Banbury.

Phillip again asked that a full list of Open meeting results are given to him as soon as possible after the event. Articles in Yachts and Yachting and Dinghy Trader give good publicity, and a more informal report should be sent to Alan Browning for Perihelion.

4. Builder's Report

Andrew apologised for missing the AGM - the first he has not attended since 1983. He is delivering 6 Minos and 3 Trios to Wimbleball.

He has built 15 Comets and sold 19 so far this year and has 5 in stock, 4 of them being the new Club range. The Club has been produced to compete with the second-hand market, which Andrew sees as being the biggest competitor to new Comets. Boats sold this year have included several with both rigs, and 10 have been Mino rigs. The Duos and Trios are continuing to sell steadily.

Andrew reported that he will be at the Southampton Boat Show, and has booked a stand at London, although he is concerned that the show will not attract many dinghy sailors. He plans to have a larger, more prominent stand at Sailboat.

5. Adoption of Accounts

The Treasurer was unable to be present. The accounts, which had been published in Perihelion 50 were agreed and adopted. Proposed by Mike Thompson. Seconded by Paul Hinde.

6. Consideration of Motions

There was considerable discussion on the motion proposed by the Committee 'that the subscription for the Comet Class Association be increased to £12.00 (£18.00 for family membership)per annum from January 1st 2000'.

The Treasurer sent a report detailing the increased expenditure by the Class since the last subscription rise in 1995. These included improvements to Perihelion, the

Psion for the secretary, link-up units for the computer, trophies and prizes, publicity and exhibitions. The cost of entries in Yachts and Yachting, and of the exhibition stands has risen considerably over the years.

He felt that it was time to move on in order to keep Perihelion held in high esteem by other classes, and to maintain the Comet's place at the top as one of only 14 dinghies with primary yardsticks, of which only 4 are single-handers.

The motion was defeated on a show of hands after the meeting decided that the Committee had not prepared a sufficiently convincing business plan, and that an increase at this stage would be a disincentive for those who had been recruited last Autumn.

7. Election of officers

There were two new nominees to the committee. However, as neither wished to dislodge existing members, all of whom were willing to stand, it was agreed that they should be co-opted to the Committee at the earliest opportunity. Proposed by John Windibank. Seconded by Richard Smallwood

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

Chairman	-	Henry Jagers
Treasurer	-	Derek Coleman
Secretary	-	Norah Gould
Committee	-	Alan Browning (newsletter) Phillip Hossell (results/trophies) Stuart Gilder

The co-opted members are:

Liz Hossell (trophy buyer)
Paul Hinde
Nick Warren

8. Appointment of Auditor

John Edwards was appointed as Auditor. Proposed by Paul Hinde. Seconded by Phillip Hossell.

10. Any Other Business

a) Millennium

John Windibank reported that Chipstead is happy to organise a joint event for all the Comet Classes, and details will be available shortly.

b) Venues

The Committee would welcome comments on the venues chosen for open and Championship events. Brightlingsea was felt to be unsuitable off the water because the event was a small part of a much larger one.

c) Draycote

The Committee thanked those who have sailed for the Silver Salvors in the past, particularly Brian Welham this year, and pointed out that this is a prestigious meeting to which it was an honour to be invited.

d) Vote of Thanks

Mike Thompson asked that a vote of thanks to the Committee be recorded.

BUILDER'S REPORT

I've just returned from Sailboat where a record total of five dinghies were shown on a Comet Dinghies/Comet Duo/Comet Trio stand. As usual it was very hectic as more and more club sailors and Comet owners visit this show in preference to the London Boat Show at Earls Court.

The new Comet Zero made it to London but photos and video were not done until the Wednesday after Christmas. The printers didn't start back until the following Thursday so I did well to get the brochures half way through the boat show. We plan to get a brighter, larger brochure done for Southampton in September. We have already sold eight Zeros so the future looks promising.

The Comet order book is slowly filling, some sailing schools are having Duo fleets and at the last count there are nine Trios to build! We have a few Comets in stock but generally I am quoting early June for any new boats and we haven't even had our main Spring Demo Weekend at Burghfield yet.

My new employees are shaping up well, Graham our new laminator is sailing a Comet for the first time this weekend at the "Exmoor Beastie," a pursuit race at Wimblesball S.C. He will be trying to catch yours truly in a Comet Zero.

I hope to see you at the Nationals on the Saturday where I'll have a Zero, but that evening I am back down to Llangorse in South Wales for a Trio weekend.

Andrew Simmons, Comet Builder

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

PERIOD FROM 1ST JANUARY 1999 TO 31ST DECEMBER 1999

RECEIPTS	NOTES	1998	1999
MEMBERSHIP FEES	1	£2,880.00	£2,190.00
COMET DINGHIES (NEW BOATS)	2	£200.00	£240.00
NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS REVENUE	3	£218.98	£120.00
COMMISSION ON INSURANCE	4	£1,137.00	£1,067.00
B/SOCIETY INTEREST	5	£75.77	£37.56
SALE OF INSERTS FOR TROPHIES	6	£6.50	£10.00
DONATIONS	7	£57.50	£276.00
PAYMENTS MADE INADVERTENTLY		£1.00	nil
		£4,576.75	£3,940.56

PAYMENTS

PRIZES AND ENGRAVING	8	£825.47	£1,045.74
PERIHELION AND EDITOR'S COSTS	9	£1,737.33	£1,838.18
EXHIBITION AND ELECTRIC CHARGES	10	£520.63	£400.97
RYA AFFILIATION FEE	11	£57.00	£57.00
ADVERTISING	12	£231.61	£601.64
EXPENSES	13	£256.46	£289.97
ADHESIVE MEMBERSHIP LABELS	14	£5.80	£5.25
MAILSHOT 98 / CAR STICKERS 99	15	£150.00	£272.54
PAYMENTS MADE INADVERTENTLY 98 AND CLOTH ADHESIVE BADGES 99	16	£1.00	£491.97
INSERTS FOR TROPHIES	17	£96.29	nil
		£3,881.59	£5,003.26

TOTAL RECEIPTS	£4,576.75	BALANCE ON B/SOC 1998	£2,383.90
TOTAL PAYMENTS	£3,881.59	BALANCE ON B/SOC 1997	£1,683.32
	£695.16		£700.58
PLUS PETTY CASH 97/98	£14.92	PLUS PETTY CASH 98/99	£9.50
	£710.08		£710.08

D. COLEMAN (HON. TREASURER)

W. J. EDWARDS (HON. AUDITOR)

NOTES

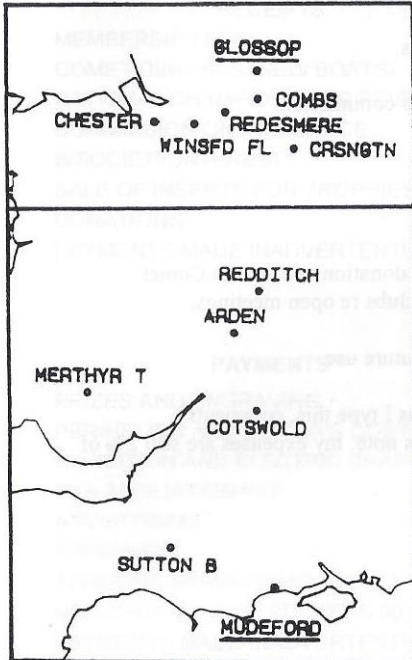
1. Membership 286(98) 215(99) Including 8 Family Members
No mailshot this year so not much different to 97.
2. New Boats 20(98) 24(99) Some Improvement.
3. Revenue generated through National Championships.
4. Down again, well we are not taking the Duo's-Trio's commission.
5. Very poor interest rate.
6. A few more have been sold,
7. Includes revenue from Association Championships, donation re sale of a Comet together with donations from Chipstead and Banbury clubs re open meetings.
8. An increase but a lot of items purchased, some for future use.
9. Our only real means of contact with everyone and, as I type this, comments on your renewal forms show it is appreciated. (Editor's note: my expenses are still 2% of this, less than £10 per issue).
10. Only paid part so far for Birmingham Boat Show.
11. Remains the same.
12. 1/3 of this was held over from last year.
13. Still quite good. Includes the link between Norah and Henry (sorry Psion to Computer) that cost £70 odd.
14. Depends what colour you have.
15. Mailshot not repeated this year but the count makes interesting reading. But everyone gets an Association car sticker. Our first.
16. Also everyone is to get a cloth iron-on adhesive badge. These items everyone benefits, not only the racing side of it.
17. Still some inserts in stock.

Here's to the future,

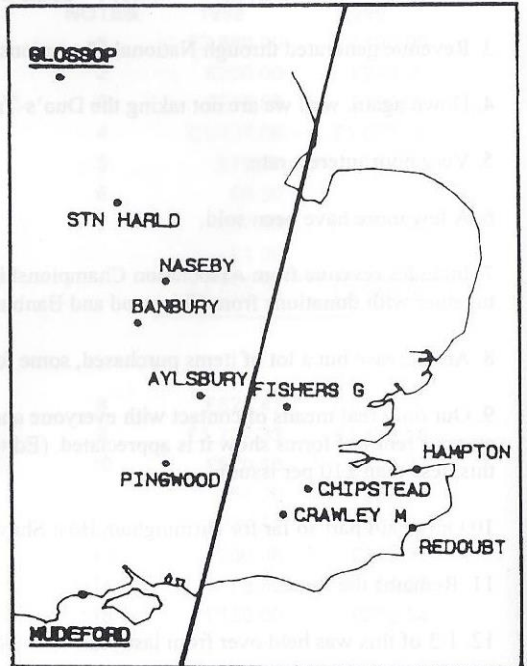
Derek.

OPEN MEETING AND CHAMPIONSHIPS LOCATIONS

NORTH

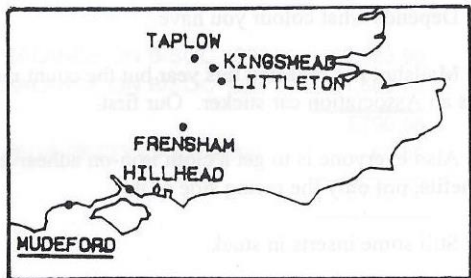


CENTRAL



WEST

EAST



SOUTH

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.

Championships:

SK	068984	GLOSSOP	
SZ	172925	MUDEFORD	

Aphelion - North:

SJ	845720	REDESMERE	
SK	038802	COMBS	
SJ	420659	CHESTER	
SJ	660650	WINSFORD FLASH	
SJ	241514	CARSINGTON	

Aphelion - West

SP	059673	REDDITCH	
SO	915425	ARDEN	
SO	040060	MERTHYR TYDFIL	
SU	055970	COTSWOLD	
ST	549115	SUTTON BINGHAM	

Aphelion - East

TL	380045	FISHERS GREEN	
TR	155680	HAMPTON PIER	
TQ	505560	CHIPSTEAD	
TQ	360405	CRAWLEY MARINERS	
TR	135333	REDOUBT	

Aphelion - Central:

SK	377241	STAUNTON HAROLD	
SP	665778	NASEBY	
SP	500530	BANBURY	
SP	874105	AYLESBURY	
SU	670705	PINGEWOOD	

Aphelion - South:

TQ	015755	KINGSMEAD	
TQ	070675	LITTLETON	
SU	845400	FRENHAM POND	
SU	907809	TAPLOW	
SU	530025	HILLHEAD	

Alan Browning, Editor

COMET PROGRAMME 2000

Dates	Club	Area	Contact name	Contact phone
15 Apr Sat	Winsford Flash	N	Brian Herring	01625 585745

**29 Apr-1 May NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS & AGM (30 Apr) Sat to Mon
at Glossop SC - Stuart Gilder 01457 861452**

06 May Sat	Fishers Green	E	Peter Seager	01279 433851
13 May Sat	Chester	N	John Edwards	01829 781234
14 May Sun	Crawley Mariners	E	Diana Thompson	01737 552482
20 May Sat	Banbury	C	Phil Henman	01926 640271
21 May Sun	Sutton Bingham	W	Alastair Graham	01935 863275
03 Jun Sat	Chipstead	E	Allan Collins	01322 523529
10 Jun Sat	Taplow	S	Tony Reeve	01628 484536
17 Jun Sat	Frensham Pond	S	Charles Smith	01483 418745
17 Jun Sat	Redditch	W	Bob Willis	01527 459852
01 Jul Sat	Combs	N	Sue Pollard	01457 763664
02 Jul Sun	Hillhead	S	Paul Drew	01329 667666
08 Jul Sat	RACE TRAINING at Cotswold		Peter Haddrell	01249 720097
09 Jul Sun	Naseby	C	Chris Weston	01858 545226
15 Jul Sat	Cotswold	W	Peter Haddrell	01249 720097
16 Jul Sun	Aylesbury	C	Mike Palmer	01296 436414
22 Jul Sat	Redoubt	E	Jeff Clarke	01303 813213

**5 - 6 Aug ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIPS Sat & Sun at Mudeford SC
Peter Reid 01202 477281 (Mudeford Regatta is just before our event)**

13 Aug Sun	Hampton Pier	E	Geoff Gambrill	01227 361156
19 Aug Sat	Carsington	N	Keith Appleby	01332 840612

**29 - 30 Aug, Tue & Wed COMET MILLENNIUM Special Event!
Fun racing/cruising/social for all Comet/Mino/Duo/Trio/Zero sailors
& families at Chipstead SC - John Windibank 01474 325653**

02 Sep Sat	Staunton Harold	C	Trish Moore	01509 261845
09 Sep Sat	Littleton	S	Nick Warren	01344 623591
10 Sep Sun	Arden	W	Clive Marlow	01684 562808
30 Sep Sat	Merthyr Tydfil	W	Mark Govier	01222 778459
30 Sep Sat	TRAINING at Pingewood		NorahGould	01635 298074
01 Oct Sun	Pingewood	C	NorahGould	01635 298074
07 Oct Sat	TRAINING at Redesmere		Tim Baker	0411 603 010
08 Oct Sun	Redesmere	N	Tim Baker	0411 603 010
15 Oct Sun	Kingsmead	S	Geoff Kempton	01753 885782

COMET ORBITAL & APHELIONS

Trophy series 2000

Orbital and Aphelions:

Open meeting overall results, as determined by the host club, will be used after removal of the places of those helms who were not Comet Class Association members on the day of the event.

Orbital

To qualify for a position and a memento for this, our overall travellers' series, you require entry in a minimum of six Comet open meetings. You must also have entered either (or both) of the National or Association Championships.

Your six best results will be counted from the Comet open meetings.

Ties will be broken by the most 1sts, 2nds, 3rds, etc. Ties remaining after this will be decided by the better place at the National Championships or failing that by the better place at the Association Championships.

The trophy, other prizes, and mementoes will be awarded on 15th October at Kingsmead SC.

Aphelions

To qualify for a position and a memento for an Aphelion, our regional travellers' series, you require entry in a minimum of three of the five Comet open meetings designated for the region. You may compete in any or all of the areas.

Your three best results will be counted from a region.

Ties will be broken in favour of the helm with the most 1sts, 2nds, 3rds, etc. in their best three results. If a tie remains it will be broken by the best score nearest the end of the series.

The trophies, other prizes, and mementoes will be awarded at the final meeting (underlined) in each region as listed below.

Aphelion areas

Central Area:

Banbury
Naseby
Aylesbury
Staunton Harold
Pingewood

Northern Area:

Winsford Flash
Chester
Combs
Carsington
Redesmere

Eastern Area:

Fishers Green
Crawley Mariners
Chipstead
Redoubt
Hampton Pier

Southern Area:

Taplow
Frensham Pond
Hillhead
Littleton
Kingsmead

Western Area:

Sutton Bingham
Redditch
Cotswold
Arden
Merthyr Tydfil

COMET SAILS

The issue of the sail for the Comet dinghy is a straightforward one for me and as I bought the dinghy to compete in one-design racing this is the issue that concerns me with the sail.

From my perspective the criteria for sails are:

1. All the sails should be as near as possible identical in performance.
2. The sails should be manufactured and supplied from one source.
3. The sail should be good value and last whilst maintaining its performance.

The change came about because Andrew Simmons considered that a new sail manufacturer would help to improve the image of the dinghy and he could consequently sell more boats. He was supported at that time by Barrie and Margaret Hylton and the selling of more dinghies would also be of benefit to the Class as a whole. The problem the Class Association has with this is that they were generally pleased with the old sail and they were not consulted about the change. From a sailing point of view the change was unnecessary and there were concerns as to possible performance differences and a similar situation arose when Topper changed to Hyde.

Well how has it all worked out?

The performance of the two sails are very close, when the sails are laid together it is evident that the cut is almost identical. With my Morrison and Hyde sails, the top two panels on the Hyde sail are slightly fuller than those on the Morrison and the luff is longer. The cloth on the Morrison is noticeably stiffer and the panels are double stitched as opposed to the single stitching on the Hyde and the Hyde has a softer luff.

With these differences, in theory, the Hyde ought to go better, but I feel that it needs more attention to adjustment to get it to perform well. With the Hyde fuller at the peak, this means it needs more mast bend to flatten it and I personally feel it has to be set fuller when running.

So how does the current situation meet my criteria outlined above?

1. The sails' performance are very close, they are well made and the differences will suit some more than others.

2. The sails are still supplied from one source which in my opinion is the only way to protect the true one-design concept.

3. Value for money ? I don't know how the prices compare these days but the Morrison was always good value and with the stiffer cloth and double stitching I would think that the Morrison was the better buy.

The change of sail has certainly not helped to boost the sales of Comets and I suppose a better way to improve the image with the sail is to change the rule that restricts the sail to one colour not change the sail manufacturer. The Byte and Topper are very striking with their colourful sails.

So were do we go from here?

Unless there are very good reasons I would not recommend another change although if the Morrison sail were better value I would be in favour of changing back to them and encourage Andrew to jazz up the sail colours, as this I feel would be the best way to change the image of the dinghy.

John Windibank Comets 700 and 555

MI-NOTES

At their January meeting the Committee agreed that Perihelion should include each time a small section devoted to the Mino. I know that some members argue that the Mino is not a Comet and so should be excluded altogether from the newsletter but owners of new Minos do get a year's free subscription and it is the policy of the present Committee to encourage Minos to join in open events, albeit as a separate fleet.

This is the first of these Mino notes and this time there is not much to say except that there are now approximately 40 Mino rigs in existence. I invite members, Mino owners or not, to send me points of view on the Mino for future "Mi-Notes" sections of Perihelion.

Editor.

TALKING TO . . . NORAH GOULD

Alan Browning: All readers of Perihelion will know that you are the Comet Class Association Hon. Secretary, but some may not know that this goes back over six years to the 1993 AGM when I too joined the Committee as Newsletter Editor. Perhaps I should explain that for some time I have had a plan to talk to all the Committee members who have specific tasks and talking to you completes that plan. We've had John Windibank (Chairman, issue 40), Derek Coleman (Treasurer, issue 46), Phil Hossell (results and at that time NEC volunteer coordinator, issue 51), Liz Hossell (trophies, issue 51). My purpose was to have in writing a description of these duties to await the day when changes are needed (ie we want to twist somebody's arm to take on one of these jobs!). You may ask when I will interview myself, but you will find my job described in issues 50 and 51 under the heading "Celebrating 50 issues of Perihelion". So I complete this little plan now by talking to you, mainly about the Secretary job, but of course about any other Comet topic you wish to bring up.



Photo: Anne Browning

I was first aware of a Gould in the Comet scene when, about 10 years ago, and before I bought my Comet, I visited an open meeting at Kennet Valley S.C. Your daughter Nancy was sailing there. Later I read in Perihelion that she had won the Southern Aphelion in 1992. Then, as I've said, you became our Secretary in 1993. Perhaps I should not ask how you came into the Comet scene, it was obviously through Nancy, but when did your family first see a Comet and what attracted them to the boat?

Norah Gould: I'm not by nature a sailor, I used to reckon to be sick on the Woolwich ferry, but before being involved with Comets I'd been sailing offshore for about 10 years. In 1983 we as a family bought a Westerly Cirrus, a 22 footer Bermudan rigged sloop. We didn't race at all, we'd never sailed before, so it was a question of finding out how to steer, what to do with the big white flappy things. We got some friends to teach us and did the RYA Coastal Skipper course and Yachtmaster courses. She did us very well, she took us from the Solent to France and down to the West Country, we did a lot of mileage in her. We spent a lot of

time offshore laughing at the “wet bum brigade”, as the dinghy sailors were known, but after a few years we realised the children wanted to start dinghy sailing. We realised they were serious when we saw them in the tender going through Emsworth harbour with Nancy at the back with an oar over the back as a rudder and Greame standing amidships holding his coat tails up above his head using them as a sail. So we joined the local sailing club, and they were given a Stanley 10 which was a double-handed boat, a home built type with plans put up by Stanley tools. That needed a lot of repairs so we bought an old Mirror but in that they argued a lot, so we started to look for a single-hander. While they were learning at the Civil Service Sailing Club at Pingewood they had the opportunity to try all sorts of different boats. There were Comets on the lake, Peter Adlington had one, Martin Jarman too and they tried Bytes and Lasers and Laser Radials, all sorts of different boats, they were in and out of every one, but the Comet was the one they liked the look of most. On the lake there had been Comet opens for several years, so we'd seen Comets in competition. The Byte they didn't like at all, they hadn't got anywhere to put their knees. We went off and looked at different boats. We spent some time at the Laser Centre which was a bit like a used car sales room! Then we went to see Barrie and Margaret Hylton who spent a lot of time with the children going through things with them.

So we bought Comet 436 in September 1990. I think originally it was in a way partly a birthday and Christmas present for the two of them. The plan was that Nancy and Greame should share it, one would have it one week and one would have it the next but Nancy actually got on with it better than Greame did. Since then I've thought of it as being her boat. Greame eventually bought a Europe, he wasn't competitive in the same way that Nancy was, he enjoys messing about in boats, he doesn't have the competitive streak. So that's how we came to have a Comet.

When we first got it we didn't have any grab rails and Nancy found it very difficult to get up after a capsize so she spent one February day just capsizing it and getting it up, until she mastered it but by then we'd talked to Barrie and he had sent us some grab rails.

Alan: How did it come about that you became Class Secretary?

Norah: I was on the Committee before I was Secretary, co-opted in 1992. We went to the AGM at Sutton Bingham and they didn't have anybody to do the trophy buying. After the meeting half a dozen people came up to me, independently of one another, and said “you're always hanging around doing nothing, how about doing the trophies?” So I was trophy buyer for a year or two. I didn't realise that being the trophy buyer I was on the committee and it wasn't until

the next Perihelion came out that I found that out, which was a bit of the shock because I hadn't intended being on the committee! I bought all the Aphelion trophies, I was there when we set that up, so I was responsible for those. I became Secretary in 1993, again co-opted. I took the job on from Errol Edwards.

Alan: I believe that you did not sail dinghies yourself until recently. How are you getting on and are you enjoying it?

Norah: I have been out in the Comet a few times but I'm nowhere near as far on as I thought I was going to be by now. I haven't done a lot this year. My plan was to be able to come along and join on at the back of races. I'm certainly not confident enough in being able to sail from A to B to be able to do it in a race situation and to feel I am not an impediment to everybody else. Alan: Did you do any of the courses, RYA 1 and 2 ? Norah: Yes, I did those at the Berkshire School Sail Training Centre, of which I'm a trustee. That's at Burghfield. Also I've done powerboat training and things like that so that I can be useful when required at the club. I started by doing some crewing in a Merlin. I've sailed a bit at Burghfield when I've been helping with Sailability but not this last year very much. I have arthritis in my spine and my hips and my mobility this year has not been as good as it could be. I also have an aversion to immersion so I choose my weather carefully. I really enjoyed going out in the Trio with Andrew at Brightlingsea and I've been out in it at Burghfield when he's been doing demonstrations days and I have to say it's a lovely boat to handle. Alan: Are you enjoying it? Norah: As long as I don't get wet! I haven't capsized in anger yet, I have only done it in capsize drill. I'm still quite frightened of the water and I don't like getting my face wet. Alan: I don't mind getting my face wet, life-saving courses cured that, what I don't want is to be hit on the head by the boom which can convert you from a swimmer to a non-swimmer, hence I've got a hard hat in my sailing bag. Norah: That's quite sensible. I always say I can't swim but I can get along the length of a swimming pool and back, but I don't like going out of my depth. I spent my childhood on the North Cornish coast where swimming is actively discouraged and the sea is very, very frightening and I don't think I've ever lost that great fear. Of course when you go swimming you have to take your glasses off and I do have a problem there because I don't see terribly well then. I find that quite disconcerting.

Alan: Nancy went to very many open meetings didn't she. Have you any comments on the practical aspects of that, for example transporting the boat, getting clothing ready ?

Norah: I have always had an estate car, it's so much easier than a saloon if its wet and you get wet wheels in the back. You must make sure that you've got sufficient clothes with you, make sure you are prepared and a good idea is to invest in a dry suit. Nancy has had one for years and it lengthens the season in which you can sail. I remember you did an interview with somebody who sailed back in the thirties when hypothermia hadn't been invented. The dangers of hypothermia are now known and I do think that each one of us must be responsible for our own safety, so every safety measure that is on offer we should be taking, in particular a good fitting buoyancy aid and suitable clothing.

Forgetting things

I'm sure having a pit crew does help, particularly to make sure everything is in the sailing bag. We boobed once. As we drove in the gate at Fisher's Green Nancy said "I've left my wet-suit behind". It was a cold, very windy November day, gusting five plus and she had to borrow a wet-suit which was slightly too big for her. She did some very dry capsize the whole of the first race!

Car-topping

Even when Nancy was only 14 or 15 we could get the boat on the roof by ourselves if we were really stuck and I have always used that as a selling point for the Comet. But I do think that if you're not very strong, you should ask for help, don't be silly and try and do it all on your own. To ease transporting the spars we have a purpose-built rack which looks a bit like a set of stocks built in plywood.

Tying boats down

Some people, when they tie their boats on the roof, use three or four back-up systems so that if one rope fails another will hold. You really need a couple of bands over the boat and you must tie it back and front, legally it must be tied down back and front. You also need to watch the width of your roof rack because there are legal limits on the width of your roof rack. But I don't think there's any set way of loading. **Alan:** No, but if Andrew sold kits of ropes etc for tying Comets to roof racks or trailers, with a set of instructions, maybe more people would travel. I certainly can improve my method of tying on the lighting board.

Alan: You deserve our thanks for your time and effort given to the Committee as Secretary over the last 6 years. I imagine that you have spent quite a few hours on the job, and travelled quite a bit too! I must say you are a wizard at arranging all the fixtures, both opens and championships, a task you have to get stuck into for several winter months when most of us are thinking of other things like Christmas. For those who know nothing of Committee work, would you describe briefly what the Secretary's position involves, and particularly how members can make your job easier?

Norah The main job as I see it is to ensure that what the Committee decides is disseminated, I'm sort of a channel of information. My second job, the most important job really, is to organise the events for the year.

National events

I need to look ahead a year for the national events and there I'm looking for a good venue at a price that people are prepared to pay. In fact prices have not really gone up in the last 10 years. I need to liaise with the host clubs and with the trophy buyers at the clubs and in the Association to make sure everybody knows who they need to contact for what. We don't usually have any difficulty getting an inland venue for national events but we have more difficulty getting a seaside one. Now one of the reasons it's difficult is it that we try to have one northern event and one southern event and we don't have a lot of seaside events toward the north, Essex is about the furthest north we've got. That has been a problem and will continue to be as far as I can see. We've always relied on clubs who want to have us and I personally would prefer to see it continue that way. I recognise that the RYA is trying to push people into centres of excellence but I'm still hesitant on cost and certainly on one occasion, when we did use one of the big clubs, a commercial club, the organisation of the racing wasn't done as we wanted it done and in particular the launch and recovery wasn't as we were anticipating. It was an experience, but it wasn't one that we were in a hurry to repeat. I usually try to remember to do a thank-you letter for the Nationals, we always say thank-you on the day but I usually do a little wash-up letter afterwards, particularly if we've got any particular bits of praise or comment. There's always something nice to say.

Open meetings

Open meetings tend to run on one year to the next and occasionally clubs fall by the wayside but every year we're having other clubs wanting to host. Some clubs just come along and say "we'd like to run an open meeting", like Redoubt and Carsington have done this year. Sometimes I put the idea into a Comet sailor's head, and say "any chance of doing a meeting at your club in the next couple of years?". Sometimes I'm a bit more blatant than that, "please can we do one". The real organisation is done in the close season, that's the busiest time without a doubt. I usually start 'phoning round in the first week in November or the last week in October, as soon as the season's finished, I sit down with the 'phone list and talk to all the contacts. Often we have to wait, we might get a provisional date but we have to wait for a confirmed date until people have had their committee meetings and some of those don't happen until December, even into January. So most clubs need at least two 'phone calls, one to get a provisional date and one to get the confirmed date and then a we set the Aphelion areas at the committee meeting in January or early February. Usually during February I write to all of the contacts with a letter which has been standard now for five or six years. From

time to time we add bits into that letter, for instance when the Minos came in we gave them our thoughts on the Committee agreements on how the Mino should be treated. Also our views on scoring systems when we realised there were problems with the RYA '97 rules, we put in how we felt the rules should be interpreted. This year I'll be sending out similar letters with the new thoughts which incorporate the amended RYA scoring system. That letter also is a confirmatory letter to ensure that I've got the date right and it also tells them which Aphelion they're in. In the sailing season, when I go to open meetings, I can be useful on occasion, sometimes I've been able to help out in practical ways like helping with the lunch or collecting the money. Yes, and I drove the rescue boat at Combs. When I've been asked to do reports for open meetings I decline, because that job is part of the commitment by the club. You wouldn't want one style of report all the time.

Sailing clubs

On the next level down, sailing clubs, I think the club system is running into problems at the moment. We know that club membership numbers are falling nationally and it's partly because people have got less time to commit to running their club. Many people just want to sail, they don't want to have to do an OOD duty or go and paint the club hut, clear away the stinging nettles or drive the rescue boat. I'm not terribly sure I welcome the idea that we'll end up with more sailing centres where you can keep your boat if you own one or otherwise hire one. People who just want to sail can go on holiday, in Minorca or wherever, where they can get up in the morning, have their breakfast, go down to the beach, jump into their little boat, have a day's sailing and some lessons and come back, park the boat on the beach and go off and have a drink. They haven't got to worry about doing anything else but sailing. We're used to the idea of sailing clubs being a way of life with a lot of commitment, and I think most Comet sailors have some responsibilities in their own clubs. What I'm saying is that there is a coming generation who don't want to be members in that way. They want to be able to pay their subscription, go and sail when they want to sail but don't want to have to be bothered with all the other bits of it. **Alan:** At Frensham we've got two kinds of membership, one of which is for mid-week only with no club duties.

Enquiries and Comet demonstrations

Norah: A less obvious job for the secretary is promoting the class and promoting the Comet dinghy in general. I don't pass up an opportunity to talk about Comets. I spend a lot of time talking to people about Comets, there are very few weeks that go past without a 'phone call about them, or a written enquiry about the boat and/or the Class Association, so I spend quite a lot of time on the 'phone talking about the boat, discussing its merits, perhaps putting people in touch with

someone who's selling, or organising demonstrations for people. When someone 'phones up I'll work out which clubs are near them and if I know there's a Comet nearby I will tell them to go and talk to the owner. The leaflet about the Class Association saves me quite a bit of time and effort in this direction. I look at where the person lives and give them details of any open meetings that are coming up in that area during the season, and then arrange for a demonstration on an open meeting day. If I know they're definitely going I'll arrange with one of the sailors to lend them a boat over lunch-time, and if I can I'll go along to make sure I'm there to talk to them. Not to talk to the sailor so much but I'll talk to the family because very often they're the people who need winning over. The sailor wants the boat but very often you have to persuade the wife or the girlfriend or whoever's going to be sat on the shore that it's quite a good idea from their point of view.

Membership information

A very big job I'm working on at the moment is the information about the membership. We have records for every boat, who owns it and who used to own it. This is a paper record, Errol gave me 7 books of names and I have added another book since then. Updating those is a very long-winded job. We've recently put the information on current owners on to the Association's Psion organiser. This information is often several months out of date because updating it is very time-consuming.

Membership review

A couple of years ago we wrote to all the people who hadn't rejoined and a lot rejoined as a result, so it obviously works to make a personal approach. We followed that up with our membership review which took an awful lot of effort and time. Normally, when you send out a survey like that, and you get a 5 per cent response, you have done very well. We gained 40 new members from it and we had somewhere round the same number of boats change hands and they are still changing hands. We had a number of other enquiries, so out of 400 letters we sent out it was something like a 25 per cent response rate which was fantastic. It was way above anything that we might have expected. Whether that's because Comet sailors are just generally nice people or whether we managed to hit the right spot in the way we worded the letter, I don't know. As we've sat here we've just had a response from that letter of 18 months ago! The review was a worthwhile exercise, but of course we now need to see whether they renew again. The numbers went back again last year to the previous year's figure which means that other people must have dropped out. It was cost-effective, as long as you don't cost the time to do it, but last year we didn't write to the people who hadn't renewed, mainly because we were in between two systems, a paper and an

electronic system, which meant it was difficult to find out quickly who hadn't renewed. We've now set it up on the computer so that with any luck, assuming the system works properly, we should be able to do this easily, soon after the first of April. We've put it on the Psion but we can now link it up to a computer. That was the extra bit of software we bought last year, to be able to generate the letters and things on the computer. I suppose it should really be the Treasurers job to chase up subs but I've always done it, well Derek and I have done it between us. Derek has supplied the information and I've done the letters. I'm not the best wizard on computers and it is quite a chore for me still because I haven't worked out how to mail merge.

Advertising the Comet

Alan: I remember I found out about the Comet from a book of seventy dinghies which had the Class Association Secretary's address in it. **Norah:** There are a number of booklets that we're in, some we pay to go in and some we don't. We have our advert twice a year in Yachts and Yachting, Henry usually does the art work for that. We're just putting an advert into Dinghy Trader which from our point of view is a much cheaper option than Yachts and Yachting. They'll do the art work within the price, so we just pay them, and send them a photograph and various bits and pieces that we want to be said and they do the rest.

Mail

I receive an awful lot of mail as Secretary. We get an awful lot of paperwork through from the RYA, quite a lot of it I don't use, some of it isn't relevant, perhaps relating to big yachts which needn't concern us, but some of it I do put through to Perihelion if I think it's appropriate. We are invited to various forums and usually Henry goes if we decide to send a representative. It's usually Henry because he has the time to do it and he's involved in the RYA in other ways. I get a lot of advertising from all sorts of people who buy lists from the RYA, I think my favourite was one from Marconi which sent us information on a fish finder that that we could put on our boats! We get adverts for clothing, web sites, all sorts of things. We also get invited to the Draycote Silver Salver and I obviously have to organise the people to go to that. That's the only one of those to which we are invited. There is the Endeavour Trophy which we rather feel we ought to be invited to, but it is sailed in double-handed boats, you don't sail in your own boat.

Alan: I think of the secretary as a sort of focus. If in doubt you should tell the secretary. **Norah:** That's right, my job then is to talk to the different committee members and ask them to pick up if appropriate or refer people on to the right source, a bit like the AA really, "if I can't do it myself I'll find someone who can". **Alan:** You presumably keep a huge file of correspondence. **Norah:** No I don't, I might keep people's names and addresses but that's all.

Meetings

The other obvious job for the Secretary is doing the minutes for meetings and keeping all the paperwork because we are accountable and we have to make sure that everything is accounted for. We have a planning meeting in January or February and we usually have one towards the end of the season at Pingewood, and we normally look at one during the summer somewhere. The one in September it is to review how things have gone, to look at what we are likely to do in the following year and judge the photographic competition and generally round the season off. The one in the middle is "as and when we need it". We haven't always had one there but we may need to review things if there's something coming up at the AGM or to pick up any particular issues which have arisen. Because we're so spread out as a committee it can be useful to have a formal meeting which we can minute rather than several informal ones. We sometimes get together at open meetings where it can feel as though one or two people are making decisions and the rest aren't involved, and that's wrong.

Committee

The committee works really well I think. We've worked together as a group now for quite a time, John and Fiona were very much part of it and now Nick and Paul have come in and they're going to take over doing the Sailboat set-up this year. That is going to be super because it means that we've got a completely fresh look at it. Derek does all the paperwork in terms of paying for the stand, I'm liaising with the stands next to us, Henry will supply the display material, I'll transport it from Birmingham and Nick and Paul will do the setting-up, so you can see how the committee works together, it's a corporate job as it were. Each member of the Committee have got their own forte. We rely on Phil to look at the results and can rely on him to pick up any discrepancies and to work with Keith if necessary on the rules if we need anything looked at. Stuart is excellent at organising volunteers for NEC. Henry's obviously there as a general arbiter, but we also rely on him to do all the art work. We've all got our different strengths and that's good. I'd say not a week goes past without my talking about something to the Chairman and the Treasurer. We can't have 3-way conversations yet, we haven't got the technology at our houses, but I've no doubt that will come eventually.

You asked about how Comet sailors could make my job easier. One thing I do find is that people will ring up occasionally or talk to me at meetings and complain about something. They would help me greatly if they would then put that in writing for Perihelion rather than assume I'm going to do it because I'm not.

Alan: I agree with that. **Norah:** I thought you would.

Alan: What do you think are the most important abilities a CCA Secretary should have?

Norah: A good memory and the ability to recall information. Because of my work I was trained to remember things reasonably well but there are times when I'm stumped. I'm obviously expected to remember people and I do try my best to do that. **Alan:** There's quite a number to remember isn't there? **Norah:** It's not just the members, I also need to know people who own Comets who are aren't members and I need to remember people I've seen at boat shows who've talked to me about Comets because they're going to expect me to remember all about them next time I see them.

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

Norah: I think it is not having enough time to really keep everything up to date. Andrew sends me a list of changes that he knows about once a month, but I don't enter those once a month because I need to be able to commit half an hour or an hour to sit down and do it and I'm not in a position to commit that time always. Then when I do need to do them they take an awful time to get up to date. An example of that was when we decided to write to all the non-members and it took an awful long time to get the database up to scratch and although I vowed I was going to keep it up after that it hasn't happened as well as it should have done.

Alan: All that is because you've got a job as well, I felt this when I took over as editor, I was retired and it made it much easier. **Norah:** Yes, and since I've taken on the Secretary job I've actually gone back to working full time! And of course I'm involved with other activities for sailing and for local things as well, in village life for example. I end up finding myself feeling guilty because on an evening when I ought to have done some Comet things I actually sat and read yesterday's newspaper.

Alan: What has given you most satisfaction as Secretary?

Norah: I suppose having seen the open circuit grow over the last few years. It's continuing to grow and it's satisfying to see that the numbers haven't dropped off in total, the total number of people attending is still growing. I had a definite glow of satisfaction when we got 51 boats out at Queen Mary and at Frensham.

Alan: Are there any ways in which you would like to see the Association develop?

Norah: I think that one of the issues that we have is the fact that we are very separate from all the other Comets. I have over the last year been discussing in

principle the idea that we join with the other Comet Classes for a Nationals, when it's tidal. We could look at it for the Inlands but in terms of numbers we don't really need to do that. For the Tidal I think there could be a number of gains if we joined up. One would be on cost. We could have a more prestigious venue and it would widen the scope of where we could go because at the moment we tend to stick to the same tried and tested venues for the Tidal. I'm very much looking forward to the millennium meeting this year to see how that pans out because I think that will be a pointer for what we may or may not be able to do in the future.

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

Norah: I think that the criticism that we don't do enough for the non-racers is a bit harsh because the non-racers haven't come forward and said what they would like us to do. If they did we would be able to consider things for them. From that point of view the millennium meeting is aimed at the non-serious sailor as well as the serious sailors, it's supposed to be a fun week. I think the idea of a jolly down in Chichester Harbour is a great one, or a jolly up the Cam or sailing from one place to another on the Avon such as from Evesham to Warwick. I think those are smashing ideas but whether we get people to support them is another matter. There are several rivers with sufficient clubs on them that we could do a club-hopping tour, arranging for people to stay overnight or camp or whatever. It wouldn't be a particular problem I wouldn't have thought.

We've put in a third training day this year. Now the trainings are not well attended and I think that's something to bear in mind too, we often only have two or three people turn up for them, six at the maximum. We've been running the training days now for four or five years now. We started with just plain training, the Pingewood one has always been what people have wanted to do and I'm anticipating that the new one at Redesmere will be similar. The other one is at Cotswold and that's specifically race training. If any other clubs want to think about putting training days on then we will back them in that we will pay expenses if asked to do so.

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

Norah: We could do an awful lot of the things, I've been joking for ages we should have some Comet merchandise, Christmas cards and calendars and what have you. I think that we come back always that as a class we promote the boat in a lot of ways through the shows that we do. We do the show at Birmingham where Andrew doesn't go and we support him on his demos when we can. We don't go to

all the boat shows with him, we don't go to London, we don't go to what was the Wooden Boat Show at Pangbourne, and we don't go to Southampton so there are places where perhaps we could help do some more promotions but should we be selling boats? If we don't sell boats we don't really have a class association. We tend to be more involved with the second-hand market, but I think it behoves us all to extol the Comet's virtue so that more new boats are sold. The new boat market and the second-hand market don't really compete, people who can only afford a second-hand boat aren't going to buy a new one. To some extent we've picked up a little of the role that Margaret Hylton had but we can't do it as well as she did because we haven't the time, the energy or the expertise. I personally am very sorry to hear that Barrie is giving up his repairs business because up to now we've been able to know that we could send people to him and they would get very good service. That will be a great loss to the class. **Alan:** The merchandise business is being done as much as anything by Andrew isn't it. **Norah:** Yes, he does sweaters and things but one of the problems about things like buoyancy aids, T-shirts and sweat shirts is that they are extremely expensive to set up because you can't just buy one size, you've got to stock a variety of different sizes and the initial outlay is horrendous. You're not going to get your money back straight away and you are not going to make a profit on it. We have thought about it when we were in funds but at the moment of course, with a funds being committed now for the next year, we aren't going to be able to do things like that.

Alan: Wow - you certainly do a lot for us as Secretary! Long may you continue in the post. I must admit I hadn't appreciated how much time you put in - and with a full-time job too! On behalf of all members I'll say "Thanks Norah".

WEBSITE - "BOATS FOR SALE"

If **you want to advertise a Comet for sale**, please send your copy direct to Tony Ellison by email at the address: tony.ellison@btinternet.com

or if you cannot email, write to him: Mr T.S.Ellison,
32, Park Road,
Cheam,
Surrey SM3 8PY

Your advertisement will normally be deleted from the website after 3 months or when you advise that the boat has been sold. **When your boat is sold**, please tell Tony, either by email or by 'phone. Tony's number is 020 8642 3479. To save wasting other people's time, please also tell the Perihelion Editor: Alan Browning: 01252 336389.

EDITOR'S NOTES

This time I chatted with Norah Gould, our Hon. Secretary. You will find that she does a lot for us and I have thanked her on your behalf.

This is the issue with a lot of administrative stuff: AGM minutes; annual accounts; event diary; Aphelion trophy details; maps of club locations; lists of grid references and the latest "Hall of Fame".

Tony Ellison (who features on the cover) tells us that the address of the Association website has been changed. The new address is given inside the front cover and how to advertise second-hand boats on page 33. We have had at least one more second-hand Comet change hands via the internet.

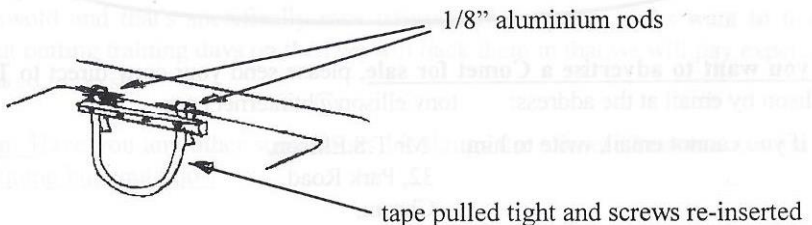
John Windibank contributes his views on sails and encourages us to drop in at the Millenium Regatta at Chipstead on 29-30th August.

Alan Browning, Editor

A GRAB STRAP

This suggestion was received via the renewal comment sheet:

"At the age of 60 in February 1999 I purchased my first Comet, coming to terms with it in flukey winds and have done my share of swimming - well that's OK but getting back in was not. To help I looped a nylon tape through the grab rail thus:



This was done to assist my grip when pulling myself back in. After righting the boat the method is to reach in for the strap and grip it with one hand, palm upwards, and then reach in with the other hand for the toe-strap. Is this out of class?"

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
1999 John Challener	Annette Walter	-

Association Trophy

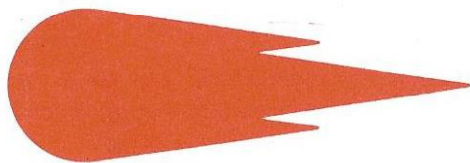
1988	
1989	Damon Perrin
1990	Guy Wilkins
1991	Henry Jagers
1992	Guy Wilkins
1993	Mark Wilkins
1994	Guy Wilkins
1995	Alex Reeve
1996	John Challener
1997	Mark Wilkins
1998	Mark Wilkins
1999	Debbie Degge

Orbital Trophy (National)

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

Aphelion Trophy (Regional)

<u>North</u>	<u>East</u>	<u>South</u>	<u>West</u>	<u>Central</u>
1992	Mark Wilkins	Guy Wilkins	Nancy Gould	
1993	Errol Edwards	Mark Wilkins	Mark Wilkins	
1994	Richard Smallwood	Mark Wilkins	Jake Sutton	
1995	Errol Edwards	Mark Wilkins	Jake Sutton	Mark Wilkins
1996	Steve Heyes	Mark Wilkins	Alex Reeve	Jake Sutton
1997	Phillip Hossell	Alex Reeve	Mark Wilkins	John Windibank
1998	Phillip Hossell	Phillip Hossell	Richard Smallwood	Phillip Hossell
1999	John Edwards	Mark Wilkins	Mark Wilkins	Phillip Hossell
				Phillip Hossell



Comet Class Association

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association