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Cover picture: Richard Smallwood (in his newly acquired boat) rounding a mark chased by Brian Welham at the Frensham Pond open meeting.

(Photo: Bert Stevens, Comet 147)

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

It is too hot outside today and there is not a breath of air for sailing. I have opened all my doors and windows and taken refuge with my computer. Is summer here at last?

In fact it has been an excellent summer for sailing and, whatever we have had thrown at us during the week, most weekends have been fine and warm with good winds, or so it has seemed to me. I have long since learned not to worry over much about weather forecasts, at least for inland sailing.

We had a really fine weekend for the Association Championships at Mudeford. Thirty three competitors enjoyed very good breezes for the Saturday racing and a warm sunny day with lighter airs on Sunday. The dinner at a local restaurant was a great success and Sunday spectators had even more to interest them when the RNLI Fun Day got under way. (It was a good job all those helicopters, Harriers and things didn't come too close to our course!) I thoroughly enjoyed my sailing, even including a backward somersault over the side after I missed the toe-strap. A good venue, good racing, and great company. Well done to John Challener for winning (all five races); Mike Thompson, First Senior Prize; Annette Walter, First Junior Prize; Heather Back, First Lady; Diane Thompson, Committee Prize (for perseverance); and Phil Walter, the coveted One-Eyed Duck award for entertaining spectators with a variety of capsize techniques. Well done to all who took part!

I have been out and about as usual this summer, getting to as many of our events as I can. As always I have been impressed with the enthusiasm and friendliness of our sailors and of the host clubs. Our new venues this year, Redoubt and Carsington, proved very worthwhile additions. Two more different sailing waters and clubs you could not imagine, but each gave us a really good welcome and a brilliant day's sailing. Let's hope we keep them in the programme for many years to come.

Our web site continues to be popular and provides a useful service to existing and prospective Comet sailors and members. If you have not already seen it you'll find it worth a look. To make the site even more professional looking and more readily accessible to others, the address has been changed to www.cometsailing.org.uk. The old address will still be available for a while.

I am slowly getting more involved with the internet and, like it or not, am convinced we will all need to be before too long. E-mail is certainly a very useful tool for speedy communications and I would be very interested to know how

many of you use it. If you do and are willing to share an address with me, please mail to henryjaggers@rya-online.net. Comments, queries, and ideas will be gratefully received, especially if they relate to Comets and/or sailing!

Late addition! I am at the Comet Millenium Regatta and having a whale of a time. Norah is sailing a Zero! Many thanks to John Windibank for organising the event and to him and other Chipstead members for running it so ably. Fuller report later.

A final appeal for entries to the Photographic Competition. Please send your photos to me or to Alan Browning to arrive by the 29th September at the latest.

Good Sailing,

Henry Jaggers, Chairman



At the Association Championships, Mudeford.

John Challener leads the fleet in race 5, ahead of Nick Warren, Mike Thompson, Robin Ballam and Simon Thompson.

FIRST SIX AT THE OPEN MEETINGS

NORTHERN AREA

Combs

1	500	H Jagers
2	585	B Herring
3	633	J Edwards
4	670	P Hayes
5	641	P Hinde
6	643	K Appleby

SOUTHERN AREA

Taplow Lake

1	711	B Welham
2	188	S Thompson
3	500	H Jagers
4	625	A Best
5	626	L Dean
6	518	R Ballam

EASTERN AREA

Chipstead

1	626	L Dean
2	561	G Wilkins
3	518	R Ballam
4	117	M Thompson
5	174	M Baxter
6	323	A Walter

NORTHERN AREA

Carsington

1	670	P Hayes
2	374	J Thompson
3	500	H Jagers
4	100	S Bellamy
5	211	C Weston
6	643	K Appleby

SOUTHERN AREA

Frensham Pond

1	188	S Thompson
2	711	B Welham
3	700	J Windibank
4	99	P Luttmann
5	63	C Robinson
6	750	R Smallwood

EASTERN AREA

Redoubt

1	188	S Thompson
2	63	C Robinson
3	518	R Ballam
4	500	H Jagers
5	117	M Thompson
6	707	D Coleman

WESTERN AREA

Redditch

1	636	I Coppenhall
2	777	D Degge
3	427	M Coppenhall
4	650	P Hossell
5	500	H Jagers
6	532	J Coppenhall

SOUTHERN AREA

Hillhead

1	750	R Smallwood
2	707	D Coleman
3	40	S Cook

EASTERN AREA

Hampton Pier

1	657	M Wilkins
2	323	A Walter
3	561	G Wilkins
4	700	J Windibank
5	63	C Robinson
6	500	H Jagers

WESTERN AREA

Cotswold

1	419	P Govier
2	745	N Warren
3	460	M Govier
4	707	D Coleman
5	650	P Hossell
6	711	B Welham

CENTRAL AREA

Naseby

1	636	I Coppenhall
2	427	M Coppenhall
3	532	J Coppenhall
4	500	H Jagers
5	585	B Herring
6	488	E Coppenhall

CENTRAL AREA

Aylesbury

1	427	M Coppenhall
2	711	B Welham
3	323	A Walter
4	500	H Jagers
5	585	B Herring
6	518	R Ballam

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.

NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE

1. The new venues for 2000 couldn't have been more different in terms of size of the water and clubhouse facilities, but both offered us the warmest of welcomes and gave the helms an enjoyable day's sailing. What's more, we've been invited back to both. Thank you Redoubt and Carsington.

2. Our thanks also go to Mudeford S.C. for hosting the Association Championships. With 33 entrants, the event was an undoubted success, and enjoyed by helms and spectators alike. The Race Officer, Mike Roach, writes " I thoroughly enjoyed the task of Race Officer; your sailors are both competitive and relaxed and a pleasure to plan for." So, thank you to all the competitors who made it so successful. We look forward to returning to Mudeford.

3. Another successful feature of the weekend was the meal at a local restaurant on the Saturday evening which enabled helms to meet on a social basis. At Glossop, the very enjoyable treasure hunt round the town had the same effect. Mavis Windibank is planning a quiz for the Millennium Regatta

4. Plans are in hand for the national events for 2001. Littleton has agreed to host the Association Championships, and we are in discussion with Portland & Weymouth Sailing Centre for the National Championships. Watch this space for details. Sailing would be within the old Portland Naval Base where there is plenty of parking space, and camping facilities nearby. We hope to be able to share the Weymouth venue with other Comet dinghies, which should enable us to negotiate a reasonable price for a prestigious venue.

5. The letter sent to people who had not renewed has resulted in several cheques to the Treasurer. We hope that you all find membership useful in some way or other. It's good to have you all on board.

Norah Gould, Class Secretary

● ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIPS REPORTS

OOD VIEWPOINT

After spending the week learning all about the Harbour, the racing marks and the tidal system, I must admit that Race Officering the Association Championships was fairly straightforward. All the boats are the same size and PY, they all have sail numbers and they actually listen to briefings.

The Saturday was just perfect, with a gradually increasing Westerly allowing 3 races in ideal conditions. Most of the fleet got planing on the reaches and John Challenger had the added benefit of surfing on the Ferry's wake for most of a leg in one race. The Sunday was not so windy (NW to N force 2) but much more tactical as the tide and current played their parts in route choice up the beats. Dave Holloway set a particularly sadistic beat for the final race, squeezing all the boats into the narrow and congested channel by the Club. It certainly sorted the fleet out - and John still won!

Our man John was of course the overall winner. He was never headed in any of the races and the closest 2nd place Nick Warren got to him was about 3 boat lengths on one of the runs. Our other sailors did well too. Heather Back was just one place behind Annette Walter, who had just completed Mudeford Week and so knew the score. Brian Ward (whom all the fleet seem to know as "Basher") was a little further back in 19th place.

Everyone seemed to enjoy the sailing, the venue and the social life. We had an excellent BBQ in the Pines Hotel, cooked and served personally by Mark for a very reasonable tenner. All the sailors I spoke to wanted to come back to sail on "the sea" as soon as possible - that's what I call a Club success!

Best wishes to all Comet sailors.

Mike Roach, Mudeford S.C.

THE RACING

There were 33 entries, including 5 home boats. The racing was inside a very congested Christchurch harbour with 2 other clubs racing and pleasure boats and cruisers using the channel. In addition there was restricted areas of deep water due to a poor tide and many moored boats, making a very challenging racing area. Three races out of five counted.

Winds varied from force 3 to 4 on the first day, and 1 to 2 on the second day, giving all helms a chance to sail in conditions which suited them.

● NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE

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Saturday:

John Challenger won all three races, becoming, on the first day, the Association Champion, repeating his success of 1996. Nick Warren started well with a 2nd, 3rd and 4th, which put him in 2nd overall place. Simon Thompson also had a good first day in 3rd overall place, with two 3rds and a 4th.

In the first race Heather Back finished a notable 4th despite it being her first outing of the year in a Comet and having arrived only 15 minutes before the start. After the first race John Orchard found the increasing winds to his liking with a 5th and 6th place.

Sunday:

John Challenger won both Sunday races, reinforcing his position as Champion. Nick Warren clinched 2nd place overall, only 4 pints behind John, with a 2nd in the last race. John Windibank had mixed results (2,2,5) but was able to take advantage of discarding an 11th and 12th to oust Simon Thompson (3,3,3) from 3rd place overall, despite Simon having more consistent results, never below 5th. With the ladies, there was a battle royal between Heather Back and Annette Walter, ending with a tie on points. Heather did much better on the Saturday but the light winds of Sunday saw her pushed down the fleet. Annette excelled in the light winds and in race 4 finished 3rd despite having to do a 720 just after the start! That result decided the outcome between them, Annette (Junior prize, 3, 9, 12) was 9th and Heather (Ladies prize, 4, 10, 10) was 10th.

The best newcomer was Steve Holes of Mudeford, who borrowed a Comet for the weekend and finished a creditable 13th overall.



The fleet moored up by the Barge - spot the interlopers!

CHIPSTEAD OPEN

With 28 helms attending, 11 of them visitors, the Chipstead Open was very well attended. Held in conjunction with the National 12 and Streaker Class Opens, this year is the first time that the open has been held on our newly enlarged lake.

There were a few absentees due to holidays or illness. A notable one being John Windibank who phoned in sick with the flu.

Following a week of high winds and on a weekend when large areas of the country had suffered torrential rain and floods, we awoke to glorious skies and not a trace of wind. It did get marginally better however as the day wore on, but not much.

The day consisted of three races, the courses of which were kept as simple figure-of-eights due to the lack of wind. The first race was run over one lap and after an eternity was won by Len Dean (Kingsmead SC) with Alex Thom (Chipstead) second, and Guy Wilkins third. Mark Wilkins suffered rudder failure during the race and, after coming home in 6th place, played no further part in the day's racing.

After a good lunch, everybody got ready for the second race. The wind had improved slightly, but after struggling up to the start line at the far end of the lake, the race was delayed by a general recall, which put our start to the back of the fleet. Eventually getting under way, we did this time manage two laps of the course. The race was won by Guy Wilkins, with Len Dean second, and Robin Ballam (Crawley) third. However this race was longer than expected due to the recall. On finishing; the helms were sent straight out again to start the third and deciding race.

This final race was run in variable conditions ranging from no wind to very little wind. After a thrilling lap which would have done the Monaco Grand Prix proud, the winner was Len Dean with Guy Wilkins second. The race for third place hotted up when Paul Luttmann (Crawley), just 30 yards from the finish line, started to go backwards, just as the rest of the fleet caught up on a very welcome breeze. He finished 6th and Mike Baxter (Chipstead) stole third place.

On a day in which three races were run over a total of just 4 laps in difficult windless conditions, there was not one retirement, and the only 3 non-starters were caused either by boat failure or from boats not reaching the start line in time and having to beat a hasty retreat in the face of a fleet of boats heading towards them.

Overall everybody enjoyed a good, if slow, days racing, with not only the winner being a veteran but also 3rd and 4th places being filled by veterans also.

Overall Results:

1	626	Len Dean	Kingsmead
2	561	Guy Wilkins	Chipstead
3	518	Robin Ballam	Crawley Mariners

Best Lady:	323	Annette Walter	Welwyn
Veteran's prize	117	Mike Thompson	Crawley Mariners
Middle-of-the-fleet	63	Chris Robinson	Burghfield

Allan Collins (Comet 595)

COTSWOLD OPEN

Saturday 15th July saw 21 boats (including 13 travellers from around the country) competing in the penultimate round of the Western Aphelion Series. A shifty N-NW breeze freshened from a force 2 to 4 as the day progressed, rewarding those who read the shifts correctly on the long beat to the windward mark.

The wind contrived to back at the start of race 1, making this beat even trickier. The fleet was led by visitor John Edwards for the first two laps, with Ann Presley in close attendance in second place. Lap three saw John fall back to sixth, with Paul Govier taking the lead and Ann still holding on to second. Whilst all this was going on upfront, there were many place change duels occurring throughout the field, as a result of the variable wind on the reaches and the testing gusts sneaking around Rabbit Island. Veteran Derek Coleman hit the front on lap four, pursued by Phillip Hossell, Paul and Ann. These first three fought hard on the final lap, with Govier taking the win from Coleman and Hossell, and Henry Jagers gaining a place to finish fourth.

The windward mark was repositioned for race 2, to reflect the more pronounced Northerly wind and to avoid congestion in the narrows off the spit. Mark Govier had a dream start to lead lap one, pursued by brother Paul, who took the lead on the second lap and held it until the finish, thereby notching up an unassailable two wins. After much place changing in Paul's wake, second spot went to Nick Warren, followed by Mark Govier, Brian Welham and Hossell. Ann upheld

● FORTHCOMING EVENTS

END OF SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2000

Date	Club	Area	Contact	Telephone
Sat 30 Sept	Merthyr Tydfil	WEST	Mark Govier	01222 778459
Sat 30 Sept	Pingewood	<u>TRAINING DAY</u>	Norah Gould	01635 298074
SUN 1 Oct	Pingewood	CENTRAL	Norah Gould	01635 298074
Sat 7 Oct	Redesmere	<u>TRAINING DAY</u>	Tim Baker	0411 603010
SUN 8 Oct	Redesmere	NORTH	Tim Baker	0411 603010
SUN 15 Oct	Kingsmead	SOUTH	Geoff Kempton	01753 885782

● CYBERSPACE REPORT

We are now the proud owners of our own domain name which in normal speak means you can now access the Comet web site by typing the following in your address field of your browser:

www.cometsailing.org.uk

This should make it easier to remember and print on publishing material. I am getting a number of requests for race reports from other sailing sites on the web, notably www.yachtsandyachting.com and www.BOATmagic.com. If open organisers could email me the report then I can forward this on to the relevant publishers. It is all good advertising for the Association and the Class. I am not sure if there are any objections to this but I am not proposing to publish any more than would be in the Yachts & Yachting. I have been updating the results and open details through the spring and will keep them up to date as the details arrive.

Tony Ellison Comet 645

● MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

If you do not receive your Winter issue of Perihelion by the third week in January 2001, please contact the Treasurer because in it will be the renewal form.

Derek Coleman, Hon. Treasurer

● ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIPS RESULTS

			Races:	1	2	3	4	5	Pts
1	159	John Challenger	Mudford	1	1	1	1	1	3
2	745	Nick Warren	Littleton	2	4	3	10	2	7
3	700	John Windibank	Chipstead	5	2	12	2	11	9
4	188	Simon Thompson	Crawley Mariners	3	3	4	5	3	9
5	565	Richard Smallwood	Frensham Pond	6	11	2	8	7	15
6	518	Robin Ballam	Crawley Mariners	7	15	6	15	5	18
7	63	Chris Robinson	Burghfield	8	5	7	13	20	20
8	117	Michael Thompson	Crawley Mariners	9	12	9	26	4	22
9	323	Annette Walter	Welwyn	12	18	23	3	9	24
10	95	Heather Back	Mudford	4	10	13	14	10	24
12	761	John Orchard	Staunton Harold	15	6	5	21	17	26
11	675	Mike Squirrel	Redditch	16	28	8	11	8	27
13	478	Steve Holes	Mudford	10	9	34	9	15	28
14	209	Clive Chapmen	Littleton	11	7	11	18	19	29
15	633	John Edwards	Chester	20	24	18	6	6	30
16	645	Tony Ellison	Littleton	13	8	10	12	16	30
17	707	Derek Coleman	Coney	18	13	20	7	12	32
18	500	Henry Jagers	Staunton Harold	24	17	15	4	14	33
19	228	Brian Ward	Mudford	14	22	19	16	13	43
20	247	Barry O'Herlihy	Chipstead	17	14	14	27	23	45
21	665	Auster McKinnon-Clarke	Highcliffe	27	16	16	28	25	57
22	654	Walter De'Ath	Littleton	21	27	17	20	21	58
23	621	Gordon Flemons	Chipstead	22	20	21	17	34	58
24	319	John Foskett	Highcliffe	19	21	22	22	18	58
25	372	Geoff Harwood	Mudford	26	19	26	24	22	65
26	43	Ann Hooper	Pingewood	23	23	24	34	34	70
27	611	Phil Walter	Welwyn	28	26	25	23	24	72
28	50	Diana Thompson	Crawley Mariners	32	28	28	19	27	74
29	62	Janie Townsend	Wilsonian	25	28	27	32	34	80
30	259	Barry Sandle	Crawley Mariners	29	25	34	30	28	82
31	600	Jane Amos	Redditch	30	28	28	29	26	82
32	139	Melanie Bassett	Crawley Mariners	34	28	34	31	29	88
33	748	Bob Willis	Redditch	31	34	34	25	34	90

Association Champion: John Challenger Mudford
First Lady: Heather Back Mudford
First Junior: Annette Walter Welwyn
First Veteran: Mike Thompson Crawley Mariners

Committee prize for perseverance:

Diana Thompson Crawley Mariners

Special prize for entertainment, after 3 capsizes on the finish line:

Phil Walter Welwyn

MI-NOTES

or

TALKING TO ... MYSELF - ABOUT THE MINO

Alan Browning's comments in Perihelion 55, concerning his plans for future 'Talking to...' articles and MI-Notes, with that feature's list of previous contributions, set me thinking - always an ominous sign! Having turned the insurance actuary's significant milestone of 'three score and ten' and been reduced to strictly fair-weather sailing, with or without my Mino rig, I had taken a vow of silence on the Mino subject. I had had my say following the Glossop Nationals four years ago and, though much encouraged to discover from later contributions that I was not actually a minority of one, it appeared there was no realistic possibility of getting the Mino fully accepted as an alternative rig - as I see it, a seamanlike, well-reefed Comet to be used when conditions warrant it, without any complications of separate PY numbers, class associations or other diversions from the basic Comet ethos of a friendly, all-purpose group of dinghy sailors ranging from keen racers to family potterers. It would be down to younger, fitter, Mino sailors to make their case to the rest of the class if they did not want to be relegated to some secondary status as 'non-Comets'.

From what has been said and, in some cases reported in Perihelion, over the past four years it is evident that there is a genuine difference of view. Fundamentally, it is between those who firmly believe that one-design is all-important and those, like me, who would like the Comet class to take the lead with a more open-minded approach. Although Brian Rothwell started the ball rolling with his 'Cruising Rig' piece in Perihelion 30 I have to take responsibility for stirring the pot with the story of my purchase, in all innocence, of a Mino rig to enable me to take part in the Nationals which my club was hosting (Perihelion 39). I could argue that Andrew Simmons is not entirely blameless - he did, after all invent the Mino, without a health warning and carrying the main Comet sail number but I don't hold that against him. He isn't the Committee. What follows is an attempt to put the argument into some sort of perspective - talking to myself, as it were. Blame Alan Browning for provoking me into breaking that vow of silence!

One-design? Good. Avoids design competition between well-heeled owners, keeps competition purely to the helms, stops boats going out of date, keeps costs down, altogether a good thing.

However, bear in mind that the one-design concept was intended to prevent design alterations which helped a boat go faster and so gain an advantage. There was never much mileage in a design which made a boat slower. Everyone agrees the Mino is slower so why should anyone worry? The counter argument is that the Mino might enable someone to sail in conditions which would otherwise cause the helm to retire or not sail at all: ergo, it can convey an advantage and therefore offends against one-design principles.

On the other hand, consider three-sail boats. I was never disqualified from a competition because discretion sometimes made me leave my GP14's spinnaker in its bag. Even Comets have no objection to reefing - in the much-reported gale-beset Open at Glossop last year the only three hardy sailors who braved the last race all had three rolls in their sails. Were they any less Comets for so-doing? Would a Mino not have been an equally acceptable addition to that brave fleet? What would the pundits have said had a Mino sailor set his sail on a standard mast, with a length of line to the masthead to hold it up? This draws attention to the counter argument. The Mino has a shorter mast so is not just a well-reefed Comet - as I like to think of it - but a physically different boat.

It has been said that anything which encourages additional expenditure by way of alternative gear offends against the one-design ethos. True, a Mino rig costs money but so do the extra sails many top helms bring to meetings. We read of distinguished members of the fleet comparing their Morrison and Hyde sails. Indeed, why not? They will choose the best for the prevailing conditions and will argue, correctly, that both measure to class rules. I just wish class rules could also accept that the Mino measures and that those who are willing to accept its reduced performance could be welcomed without qualification to the competition, just as are those who choose to reef when conditions dictate that to be sensible. It was interesting to note the Committee's comment that many top helms see no problem but that 'difficulties arise further down the fleet where reefing decisions are significant'. There is no reefing decision so fundamental as deciding whether to step the Mino or the main rig. On a recent unpredictable evening at Glossop a violent squall at the ten minute mark caused this chicken-hearted sailor to take in three rolls - the main rig having been set as it was quite peaceful twenty minutes earlier - but ten minutes into the race it fell to a force zero plus. So much so that it was possible in mid-lake to shake out the rolls and continue with the full sail. Had the squall come earlier the Mino would have been used from the start and the rest of the fleet would have laughed into their beers as I tried the race officer's patience coming in on time limit. Trivial, you may well think but it makes for more fun, more competition, larger fleets and more participation - which is what it ought to be about. The point is, the Mino is not any sort of threat: it can simply help more people to take part in the competitive activity which is the life blood of

any fleet. Relegate it to the subsidiary status the Committee decrees and the chances are that the learner sailors who train on it will never experience the Comet fleet at its best but will move on to some other more 'exciting' class.

That brings up a more fundamental question: is the Comet an out and out racing dinghy? The one-design supporters keep mentioning the likes of the Laser and its Radial sibling as a precedent and suggesting that the right course is for the Mino to do its own thing as a separate class. Apart from the fact that this seems pie in the sky - 40 Minos, 700 or so Comets all told? Lasers into the tens, even hundreds of thousands. What's the point? The Committee frequently agonises over the non-racing owners and says it wants to do more for them but it seems to me that policy is driven by the racing fraternity, who should perhaps be prepared to put greater emphasis on bringing all Comet owners into the Association fold on an equal basis. As mentioned above, this would help to increase the racing interest, not diminish it. The numbers game is interesting. If Minos are less than 6% of the total, and probably an even smaller percentage of those who actively take part in racing at any level, why should they be seen as a threat? Contrariwise, of course, if they are so few why is anyone bothered to support them at all? Does it matter?

Mention of the Laser precedent brings another thought. Precedent can be an admirable means of learning from and maintaining the best from the past. It can also prove a splendid obstacle to original thought and genuine progress by perpetuating original errors. In an earlier contribution I made the obvious point that all modern racing dinghies suffer from the same fundamental fault. They only have one sail, optimised for optimum conditions. By definition, they are bound to be over-cavassed when conditions become more demanding. When I learnt to sail - remember the three score and ten - reefing points were commonplace. Then came more modern fixed rig high performance designs and a sort of macho attitude developed to see how far the insurance company could be pushed into paying for masts broken by going out in excessive conditions. (I know, I administered a previous club's insurance scheme for several years!). 'Unseamanlike' is the word which comes to mind. My GP14s could be reefed, after a fashion, or, as I said, the spinnaker left unused or the genoa exchanged for a jib. They were still GPs and no-one started grumbling about 'out of class' or bleating for a higher PY. One of the attractive attributes of the Comet was the ability to reef and, combined with Erroll Edwards' helpful response to my queries when looking for a successor to the OK I had at the time, was the main reason I chose it in preference to other contenders in the small single-hander market. Indeed, when collecting mine from South Molton, Andrew Simmons drew my attention to the ease and effectiveness of the system and how they could often be seen so rigged in waters nearby when it was blowing hard. When the Mino

appeared I took it, and still do, as merely a logical and well-executed alternative to reefing and greatly to be applauded. It simply never occurred to me that a smaller sail would offend against the one-design mantra. I enjoyed those National races in 1996 and although I have the baseball cap it still disappoints me slightly that I was not able to qualify for a result. Fortunately my club doesn't mind and I would never dream of claiming an 1193 PY on a wild day when I use the Mino. I would regard that as ungentlemanly conduct and seeking unfair advantage!

Were this really a 'Talking to. .' Alan Browning would have wielded his editorial axe long since. He could also have reminded me that following that AGM in 1996 when the Mino 'out of class' situation was explained so succinctly to us by John Windibank and I realised I was not a real competitor after all, I was given quite a talking to by one long-served Comet sailor who expressed incredulity that anyone who had been sailing as long as I had could conceivably not have realised that the Mino was self-evidently out of class. Technically, he was undoubtedly correct but, as you will have gathered, I prefer to hope that, one day, a couple of lines under the heading 'Alternative Rig' in the class rules could easily solve that one!

Tony Thomas (Comet 527)

Editor's note: I have not made any cuts whatever in this article for I regard it as the "Talking to . . Tony Thomas" which I had planned in January 1997. Tony declined an interview then but has made up for it now, and has done all the writing himself, at considerably less length than any "Talking to . . ." article.

Perhaps also I should make my own position clear. Some people seem to think that I have a personal "hobby-horse" about eliciting discussion on the Mino question, contrary to the Committee position. At their January 2000 meeting, the Committee agreed that contributions on the Mino should be allowed in every issue of Perihelion and this of course can include controversial discussion. I do however have a personal interest, I have purchased a Mino rig, am sailing it now and am not expecting to revert to the standard rig in the foreseeable future. I am well aware that my opinion on the comparison between boats, from my low level of skill, is almost worthless, but what Tony says certainly makes sense to me.

REDDITCH OPEN

Eleven visitors joined ten Redditch sailors for the Redditch S. C. Comet Open Event at Arrow Valley Lake on the 19th June. The 21 boats, plus Force 4 to 5 winds on one of the hottest days of the year, made for an eventful day's sailing for all the competitors. The OOD Richard Little set a triangular course around the central island. The beat set on the leg with the strongest winds led to many capsizes and spectator entertainment in all three races. It was a day for young and fit helms.

In the first race Debbie Degge quickly went into the lead but was overtaken on the second lap by Rick Peacock. Although he held onto the lead for a further three laps he was eventually overtaken by Ian Coppenhall who won the race.

In the second race Ian Coppenhall went into the lead, but was overtaken on the second lap by Debbie Degge. She held the lead for three further laps but was then overtaken by Rick Peacock who went on to win.

In the final race Ian Coppenhall, who had finished eighth in the second race, went into the lead during the second lap. He held that position for the remaining four laps. His brother Mark, who had challenged him for much of the race, finished third just behind Debbie Degge.

Overall Results:

1	636	Ian Coppenhall	Hunts
2	724	Rick Peacock	Redditch
3	777	Debbie Degge	Redditch
4	427	Mark Coppenhall	Hunts
5	748	Richard Hitchman	Redditch
6	600	Liz Peacock	Redditch

David M. Stephens (Comet 563)

COMBS OPEN



(Henry Jagers leading a group including Brian Herring, W. Ablett and Paul Hinde)

With a good breeze a long course was set for the first race. John Edwards set the pace but Henry Jagers soon set about reducing the lead. During the second lap the wind dropped leaving the field stretched out. Combs has flukey winds at times and this effect allowed Brian Herring to find some wind and he was able to take the lead which he hung on to for a deserved first place. John and Henry battled for second place with John first through the finish.

The second race started with light winds. John made the early pace but Henry caught him on the second lap. It was guesswork on where the wind would appear and after a close finish Henry crossed the line first with John second. Brian finished a clear third.

The third race saw the dynamic trio at it again. This was run in a better wind but with steady rain the wind soon dropped off again. Henry got a good lift from the start. Brian also got away from the pack and that set the shape of the race, John came in third.

Thanks to all nine competitors who visited Combs but unfortunately there were no local boats this year.

Overall Results:

1	500	Henry Jagers	Staunton Harold
2	585	Brian Herring	Winsford Flash
3	633	John Edwards	Chester
4	670	Peter Hayes	Redesmere
5	641	Paul Hinde	Middle Nene
6	643	Keith Appleby	Carsington

Peter Meddows, Combs Sailing Club

NASEBY OPEN

Unsettled weather on 9th July gave interesting conditions for Naseby's Open Meeting attended by 10 visitors and 8 home boats. Occasional strong gusts meant quite a few capsizes among the unwary whilst the trees surrounding this very pretty lake caused wind shadows to test the patience and skill of all the helms. At one stage in the last race there was the amazing sight of nine Comets virtually in line abreast on the run!

Dominating this day of close competitive racing was Ian Coppenhall with three firsts to his credit. The rest of the Coppenhall family, from Hunts S.C., ensured a clean sweep of the trophies, with father John and son Mark having to be separated for 2nd and 3rd places by reference to their discards. 20 year old (she admitted it!) Emma Coppenhall, in 6th place overall, took the Ladies Prize, narrowly beating Ros Stevenson.

Regular open meeting competitors Henry Jagers (with a second and a fourth) and Brian Herring (third and sixth) came 4th and 5th overall. The highest placed home sailor was George Parry (8th) who tied on 14 points with Gordon Flemons from Chipstead SC.

Overall Results:

1	636	Ian Coppenhall	Hunts
2	427	Mark Coppenhall	Hunts
3	532	John Coppenhall	Hunts
4	500	Henry Jagers	Staunton Harold
5	585	Brian Herring	Winsford Flash
6	488	Emma Coppenhall	Hunts

Chris Weston (Comet 211)

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(Henry Jagers leading a group including Brian Herring, W. Ablett and Paul Hinde)

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Chris Weston (Comet 211)

● AYLESBURY OPEN

A dry, if not typically July sunny morning, greeted the twelve visitors arriving at Weston Turville reservoir. They competed against nine home based sailors in a three race programme.

The first race was the best of the day, with the lead being disputed between three helms throughout the six laps. First to show was Mark Coppenhall but he lost his lead to Rob Kerry, who in turn dropped behind Brian Welham. It was Rob Kerry who held on, finally retaking the lead late in the last lap for his first win of the day.

Race two looked like becoming a two boat race between Henry Jagers and Mark Coppenhall. Henry led for the first two laps, only to be caught right on the windward mark by Mark. Annette Walter took, and held to the end, a strong second place. Third came Alex Gobell (a dark horse is our Alex!), with the rest of the fleet well strung out.

By the start of race three the notorious Aylesbury fluke winds were playing their part. First to show, Aylesbury's John Hynan, was efficiently dealt with by Tony Best (Taplow Lake). It was not to be though, and those who had made the slower starts got the lifts to bring them through. Pick of the bunch was Rob Kerry, going from fifth to first during the second lap, and destined not to be caught, despite Mark Coppenhall doing everything he could. Mark had to settle for second place in the race, and a very good second place overall. After three years as runner-up, Rob Kerry finally got his just rewards with first place overall. Third went to the consistent Brian Welham, and the lady's prize was once more won by Annette Walter. Annette was actually the first junior too, but graciously ceded that prize to the second place junior, Aylesbury's Andrew Kemp, competing in his first Comet open. We expect to see a lot more of Andrew in the future.

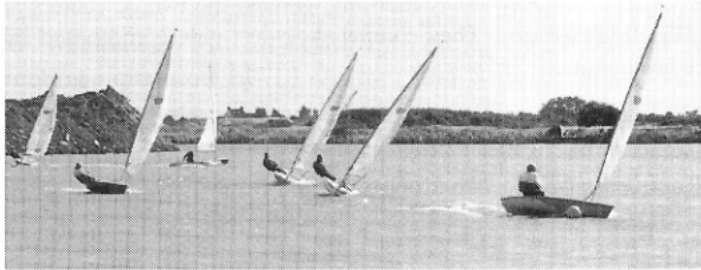
Overall Results:

1	370	Rob Kerry	Staunton Harold
2	427	Mark Coppenhall	Hunts
3	711	Brian welham	Taplow Lake
4	323	Annette Walter	Welwyn Garden City
5	500	Henry Jagers	Staunton Harold
6	585	Brian Herring	Winsford Flash
7	518	Robin Ballam	Crawley Mariners
8		Alex Gobell	Aylesbury
9	63	Chris Robinson	Burghfield
10	707	Derek Coleman	Coney

First lady: Annette Walter, first junior: Andrew Kemp (Aylesbury S.C.)

Mike Palmer, Aylesbury S.C.

● REDOUBT OPEN



The Comet Open meeting was held jointly with a Streaker fleet at the Redoubt Sailing Club, Hythe in Kent on 22d July 2000. Twelve Comets and seven Streakers raced. There were three races, the first commencing at 11.00 to allow for travellers to arrive. The two fleets started ten minutes apart with the Streakers going first.

The weather forecast had promised a "breezy" day and so it was, providing good sailing but not too strong for all helms. As the day progressed a feature was some random strong gusts around force four.

Simon Thompson was a creditable first in all three races, with the runner up position being fought between Robin Ballam and Chris Robinson.

This was the first Comet open meeting to be held at the Redoubt and it was encouraging that so many boats from other clubs were able to join the four home Comets.

Results:

1	188	S. Thompson	Crawley Mariners	1	1	1
2	63	C. Robinson	Burghfield	4	2	2
3	518	R. Ballam	Crawley Mariners	2	3	3
4	500	H. Jagers	Staunton Harold	3	6	7
5	117	M. Thompson	Crawley Mariners	5	8	4
6	707	D. Coleman	Coney	7	7	5
7	170	I. Hodge	Redoubt	8	5	8
8	58	D. Pescod	Redoubt	9	4	R
9	430	J. Peach	Redoubt	10	9	6
10	323	A. Walter	Welwyn	6	11	9
11	295	J. Clarke	Redoubt	11	10	*
12	611	P. Walter	Welwyn	R	R	R

Jeff Clarke (Comet 295)

● HAMPTON PIER OPEN

Twelve Comets participated in the Open meeting at Hampton Pier Yacht Club on Sunday 13th August, with a flat sea and a light Westerly wind.

A 'Triangle and Sausage' course was set for Race 1. Straight into the tide, from a Committee Boat Start, Mark Wilkins led to the windward mark with brother Guy close behind. They finished in that order, but Annette Walter had squeezed her way into second slot, at the finish. Joy was unconfined at the tail of the fleet as large and random wind changes just before the finish line, enabled them to overtake those immediately in front of them.

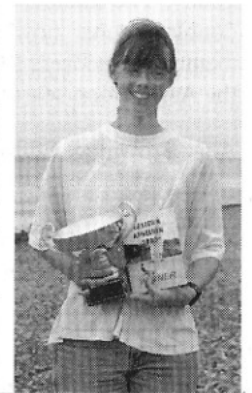
After lunch, the time for low tide was fast approaching so that the remaining races were short and in the form of a simple triangle. The wind had strengthened and backed to the South West, which meant that the start line had a strong tide running along it from right to left. This not only made for a difficult start but posed interesting questions of course as the fleet tacked towards the shore. These were solved most successfully by 1. Annette Walter, 2. John Windibank, 3. Guy Wilkins.

For the third race the wind had veered a little and again increased in strength sufficiently to give a good sail. John Windibank led initially from Mark Wilkins, but Guy was leading at the end, with Mark second. Annette was third, to round off a fine day's sailing on her part (and give her the Eastern Aphelion trophy, Ed).

Final positions were:

1	657	Mark Wilkins	Chipstead
2	323	Annette Walter	Welwyn who also won the Ladies' prize
3	561	Guy Wilkins	Chipstead

John Finch (Comet 325)



Annette Walter, winner of the Eastern Aphelion - 2000

EDITOR'S NOTES

Very many thanks to all who have sent me reports of open events, no less than nine of them this time! Mudford sent in two reports of the Association Championships, one written for Y & Y and the other for their club newsletter. I have edited them a bit for Perihelion. The photographs on pages 3 and 7 were provided by Mike Roach, Annette on page 23 by Henry Jagers and all the rest in this issue, except the cover, by Norah Gould. These are all much appreciated.

Thanks too to Tony Thomas for his latest contribution on the Mino. I have followed the precedent of W.S.Gilbert (of the Gilbert & Sullivan partnership) in allowing two titles, for it not only fills the MI-NOTES slot but also counts as a "Talking to . . ." article as well.

The website operated by Tony Ellison is I understand very successful, I have had a number of enquiries from people who have accessed it, one said "it's very good". The number of boats changing hands through it must be getting near to double figures now. Tony explains on page 12 that we now have a more memorable address for it, which may increase the number of "hits" by outsiders to the Association searching for the words "Comet" and "sailing".

Alan Browning, Editor

NOTICE BOARD

Mino 756 Dark blue hull, silver-grey deck. Cover, launching trolley, race pack, storage bin, camcleats, foil bags. As new condition, reluctant sale, only sailed 3 times (due to injury). **£2,200** o.n.o.

Jane Burman 01608 685491 (evenings) (Boat at Banbury S.C.)

Comet 718 Light blue hull, white deck. Keelband, storage bin, grab rails, race rigging, upgraded cleats, telescopic tiller extension, race and training sails, galvanised launch trolley and new unused road base. In excellent condition, very well cared for by just two owners. **£1875**

Pete Haddrell 01249 720097 (Chippenham, Wilts)

Comet 625 Cascade, dark blue, mid blue, silver-grey, silver-grey deck. Top cover, folding launching trolley, race equipped, many extras, with a very good sail. Well maintained and a classy looking boat. **£1425** or very near offer.

Tony Best 01895 448909 (boat at Taplow Lake S.C.)

Comet 253 Cover, combi-trailer etc. **£800.**

Rowland Hutchings 01737 361092 (Banstead, Surrey)

combi-trailer (as new) - save £100: **£345**

Richard Smallwood 01252 628343 (Fleet, Hants, just off the M3)

Comet 481 Red hull, white deck. Cover, launching trolley, telescopic tiller extension, storage bin, sail window, praddle, hawk. Needs some work. **£1000** o.n.o.

David Birtwisle 01322 665060 (Sevenoaks, Kent)

Comet 472 Blue hull, cream deck. Launching trolley, road trailer, cover, winner open meetings. Ready to race. **£1100** o.n.o.

Geoff Sutton 01420 475918 (near Farnham, Surrey)

Comet 468 Mauve hull, white deck. Race rig, grab rails, storage bin, telescopic tiller extension, road trailer, keelband. All in good condition. **£950.**

Chris Press 01225 768138 (Trowbridge, Wilts)

Comet 160 Blue hull, white deck. Cover, folding launching trolley, storage bin, sail window, praddle. Good condition. **£750**

Kevin Boyle 01189 2267100 (boat at Taplow Lake S.C.)

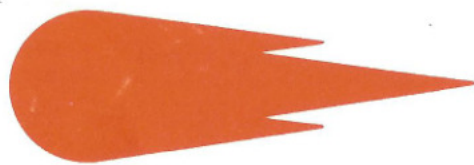
Comet 107 Blue hull, white deck. Cover, folding launching trolley, road trailer, keelband, storage bin, telescopic tiller extension. Lightly used and in good condition. **£650** o.n.o.

Philip Parker 01323 501803 (evenings) (Eastbourne, boat at Bawl Water)

Comet wanted: Jane Whigham 01926 338961

There may be other second-hand Comets for sale, the owners of which may be contacted through Comet Dinghies (01769 574358), "Dinghy Trader" (Tel: 01253 533394, Fax 01243 532025) or Yachts and Yachting (fortnightly publication from newsagents).

Prospective buyers frequently ring the Editor for information on boats for sale and it would be helpful to tell him when you do sell your Comet to save wasting everybody's time. Also tell Tony Ellison if your boat was listed on the website.



Comet Class Association

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association