



NEWSLETTER NUMBER 58
SPRING 2001

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Front cover:

Comet sailing for fun - from an early Comet brochure

Photo: Andrew Simmons

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

There's still a chill in the air, it was snowing here this morning, but boat parks are bustling with activity up and down the country and anticipation colours the conversation. Like many clubs, we have been deprived of sailing throughout the winter months. Also like many we have been using the off-season to spruce up both our premises - some fairly major improvements in our case - and our boats. Improved premises and facilities to make things easier and more comfortable and to make our clubs and sport more attractive to newcomers. "Improved" boats in the hope of gaining a place or two or just for the added confidence, pride, and joy to be had from a bright shiny hull. Whether racing or cruising, I wish you all a warm welcome to the new season and hope you have a really great year.

We had quite a successful week at the NEC show this year. Holding up our end as part of the relatively small but important sailing section of the show, we made a number of very promising contacts who we hope will be converts to the Comet, had some pleasurable reminiscences with existing Comet owners, and encouraged many non-sailors to give our sport a try. Many thanks to everyone who helped out on the stand.

By now, the Sailboat Exhibition at Alexandra Palace will also have passed and we will have been well represented there as usual, as will our builder. More of an enthusiasts show, this one, and always a pleasure to visit for anyone with half an interest in dinghy sailing. It does, of course, have many visitors who are thinking of taking up sailing but many more who already sail and are considering a change of class or of club. There's usually plenty of chandlery bargains, too! We would be pleased to hear your impressions of both the Comet Class Association stand and the show in general should you have visited this or the earlier show.

Thanks to Norah's hard work, our programme for the year has now been finalised: see "Comet Events" later in this edition. Once again I also enclose a programme card which I hope you'll find useful. At the start of work on this year's programme, it looked as though we would have a record 28 open meetings. Unfortunately a number fell by the wayside, I hope temporarily, but with three keen new venues we still have a very creditable total of 24 and I hope to see many of you round the circuit again this season. Once again can I encourage you to support these events. Even if you only race occasionally at your own club, please make the effort to visit at least one other club this year - there is almost certainly an event not too far away - it really does make a good day out and the experience you gain on a strange water is by far the quickest and most enjoyable way to increase your sailing ability and pleasure.

Another good reason to travel is that you cannot expect others to come to your club's event if you don't support theirs!

This year the Association Championships are at Littleton SC over the Spring bank holiday weekend. They have a large, sheltered water, a fine clubhouse with excellent facilities, easy, dry-foot launching, and plenty of parking and boat space. I am sure it will be a weekend to remember and being within very easy reach of many of you I expect us to have a really good turnout.

Something a bit different this year for our National Championships! Book now for a great August Bank Holiday at Weymouth! For some years now, some of you have been asking why we couldn't hold our championships at one of the more prestigious venues like other classes use. Being a relatively small class it has always come down to cost and, as you should be aware, we have always managed to keep our costs way below what most other classes have to pay for their events. Well this year our event is to be at the Weymouth and Portland Sailing Academy and at a very reasonable cost indeed! There is a large clubhouse, good facilities and plenty of parking. Launching is easy and the sailing promises to be both superb and comfortable on the large sheltered waters of Portland Harbour. Andrew Simmons has arranged this venue for us as a joint venture with the other Comet Dinghy classes who will be joining us there for their own separate events. Norah and I went down to the site in early February and thought it a super venue. Despite the weather (raining and blowing a force 4 to 5 westerly) the water was flat and there were between 30 and 50 Oppies out racing with no problems at all. It's a great holiday area, too, and with fine inland and coastal scenery nearby, plus the added interest of the Coastguard helicopter station, come the summer, it will definitely be the place to be! Come and join us!

There will be more details in your next Perihelion but I will end with at least a reminder for the 2001 Photographic Competition. I hope it will generate as much interest as we had last year.

Racing or cruising, let's see those Comets out!
Good Sailing,

Henry Jagers, Chairman

ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIPS 2001

Sunday 27th - Monday 28th May 2001

As you are probably no doubt aware Littleton Sailing Club will be hosting the Association Championships in 2001. For those of you have not visited Littleton Sailing Club before we enjoy exclusive use of a picturesque lake of some 80 acres between Shepperton and Chertsey,

Our two storey clubhouse, with a panoramic view over the lake, provides excellent facilities including changing rooms, a licensed bar, and a large galley area serving hot and cold food. Full details about the club can be found on our website: <http://www.littletonsc.co.uk>

The event will consist of 5 races, 3 on the Sunday and a further 2 on the Monday, with the best 3 results counting to your overall position. The opening race will be at 11:00am with a briefing to be held at 10:30am. All racing will be in accordance with the new racing rules which have been recently published by the RYA, however full details will be provided on the morning.

We have made plans to host a 'Social Event' on the Sunday evening along with the rest of our Club members. This will involve a BBQ (with a difference) and 'other' entertainment. The beer is cheap, so we hope that as many of you join us as possible for what should be a fun evening and take full advantage.

Camping is allowed at the club on the Sunday evening. For those looking for a little more comfort I have some details of local hotels and B&B's which I am happy to provide.

Anyone that has hosted one of these events will know that it helps greatly if you can complete your entry in advance. This obviously helps us with the planning for catering etc..

The entry fee is £20.00, which includes all racing as well as lunches and teas for both days (an entry form is enclosed). Tickets for the social event can be purchased separately and will be available, when you register on the Sunday, at a cost of £10.00.

Key Notes

Venue Littleton Sailing Club
Dates 27th & 28th May 2001
Remittance £20.00
Race Start: Sunday - 11:00am (other start times to be agreed on the day)
Monday - 11:00am (other start times to be agreed on the day).

Address: Littleton Sailing Club
Littleton Lane
Shepperton
Middlesex
TW17 ONF

Telephone No: 01932 561756
Grid Reference TQ 061675

Any further questions please give me a call on 01344 623591 or alternatively 07714 825782.

Nick Warren (Comet 745)

SAILING AND THE FOOT AND MOUTH CRISIS

I understand that many clubs are closed at the moment (Mid March) due to the foot and mouth disease crisis. Our open events programme begins on 21st April and there may still be closures then. Before setting out to go to meetings it is wise to ring the meeting contact number. Information can also be obtained from the Comet web site: <http://www.cometsailing.org.uk>. (see Tony Ellison's notes on page 11).

Editor.

PERIHELION

This issue of Perihelion has been delayed to early April to match the last day for renewing membership. The next issue will be circulated in June 2001. Contributions to me by the end of May please.

Editor.

NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE

1. The Secretary had some form of mental aberration when preparing the last set of Notes from the Committee. Not only was the date for Shearwater the wrong way round, but Crawley and Chester were down for the wrong days. Hopefully the programme set out elsewhere in this newsletter is more accurate. However, always check with the club before you travel!

2. Since the Committee sorted out the programme and organised the Aphelion areas, several clubs have advised us that they will not be able to host an event after all.

Arden moved to their new site over New Year, and feel that their facilities may not be fully operational. We hope that they will be able to accommodate us again in the future.

Redoubt were given a month's notice, and had to be off their site by 1st March. Everyone who went to their meeting last year enjoyed the sailing, and the warm welcome. We hope that the Redoubtable Comets will find new homes before the sailing season starts in earnest.

Cotswold has also reluctantly given notice that they are unable to host the Open this year. Their Comet fleet has diminished, and they no longer have a fleet captain or anyone available to manage the event. The sailing secretary at Cotswold sends the club's apologies to all the helms who would have attended.

3. However, we welcome some new clubs to the circuit. Severn, Cransley and Middle Nene are all looking forward to meeting Comet sailors from around the country (with Middle Nene, Cransley and Naseby all within spitting distance of one another, we were tempted to have a new 'A14' Aphelion!).

4. The Aphelions were arranged before the cancellations came in. We have decided to leave them as they were, which does mean that they are uneven in terms of numbers of events. Maybe YOU can help to even things up by arranging an Open meeting at your local club. We can always accommodate late comers!

5. You will find information on the Association Championships elsewhere, and Andrew tells me that all is in hand for the Nationals at Weymouth and Portland (which promises some super sailing).

6. You may have wondered why we have not reported on Comets at the Draycote Silver Salvors for some time. We understand from Draycote that they were unable to run the event at all last year, in spite of postponing it until the autumn. Because

of organisational problems, they are not proposing to run the Silver Salvors this year either.

7. The Committee is looking at the format and content of the website with Tony Ellison. The site is envisaged as an adjunct to Perihelion, not a replacement, and we are looking at ways of ensuring that you still have a motive for paying your annual subscriptions!

8. The Committee has decided to reconfigure the prize structure for the National and Championship events. There will be prizes for the first 7 helms as before, with prizes for the highest placed lady and junior helms outside of those first 7 places. The Veteran prize will now be awarded to the next highest placed helm aged 45 - 60 on the last day of the competition, and a new prize will be awarded for helms aged 60+ on the last day of the competition. We are proposing to call these the Ancient Mariners, but will be happy to have any more appropriate suggestions !

9. Liz is always looking for ideas for trophies and keepsakes. If you have any suggestions to make, please let her know. We also like to hear your views on prizes and keepsakes already presented. Did you want ornaments, glassware, utilitarian objects, or alcohol? Did you want trophies to display or use, or would you prefer vouchers? It is always difficult to get it right: please help us.

10. Henry is updating the Class Association brochure. Please contact him for supplies for your club.

11. We are occasionally asked for back copies of Perihelion. Where we have spare copies, they can be made available for £1.75 each.

12. Please let us know what you thought of the stands at NEC and Sailboat. They represent a sizeable chunk of our expenditure and energy. We think that Paul and Nick have done a great job in setting them up, and would like to have your comments too.

13. The RYA is organising a match racing competition, using 'big boats'. If any of you have an urge to prove that Comet sailors can crew as well as helm, please let us know so that we can register an interest in the series.

Norah Gould Class Secretary

MI-NOTES

MORE MINO MUSINGS

In a different way to Tony Thomas, the Editor has encouraged me to 'write something about the Mino' partly, I suspect, because of his support for the cause and partly as a palliative for the diet of race reports at the end of the season. As I agree with his view that 'what Tony says certainly makes sense to me' and, as a former editor, I know the difficulty of a balanced Perihelion, I suppose I have no option!

I won't rehearse the arguments again as they have been well aired other than to say that I agree with Tony's analysis of the issues in Perihelion 56 and, specifically, his reference to the 'basic Comet ethos'.

The Comet is destined, in the mass marketing of the modern dinghy scene, to remain a small class and that does nothing to detract from its value, particularly to us, the Comet owners. That it is a fact is demonstrated by the time it took for the new boat to 'take off' as a class, the quite rapid growth of ten years ago, as discerning sailors realised what they had been missing and, now, the return to relatively slow growth which remains likely for the foreseeable future.

It is pointless to compare ourselves with the Laser in any way. A path has been established from Optimist, to Topper and onward to Laser Radial and Laser which, fuelled by Ben Ainslie's success and as shown on primetime television, will sideline the Comet from the ambitious young sailors of the future.

Given that, it beholds us all to make the most of what we have got for the overall benefit of the class in all respects. It matters not to me whether we are young or old, racers or cruisers, competent or not - we are all Comet sailors and should surely help each other first.

The issue of 'one-design' is, in fact, somewhat contrived. The Comet has had 4 separate engines in its history, in the form of sails from 4 different sailmakers and they have all performed differently and, in some conditions, significantly so.

Conversely, the class has no recorded instance in its history of a reefed Comet winning a race against competitors using a full sail. I am aware that one young man did very well with a Mino rig in one race in a windy Nationals at Sheppey but this may have had something to do with talent and, surely, such an isolated instance should not drive the class agenda for the future.

I spent time talking to Mark Wilkins and Alex Reeve at an Aylesbury Open some years ago and it was clear that the sail was a real issue to them but the Mino was not - and they would accept it happily as a means of extending the fleet.

Obviously, they were relaxed about a problem that would not affect them at the top of the class but, equally, doesn't their attitude send a signal ? Are we not better accepting fellow sailors in rough conditions, be they young and lightweight or old and decrepit (sorry, Tony!) for the greater good of the Comet Class ? Is this not better than inhibiting our numbers, already small, for the sake of concern over some middle fleet placings on relatively rare occasions ?

One problem for those of us who might agree with Tony is that such matters are determined by AGM's held for obvious logistical reasons at National Championships where the voting members might conceivably be biased! I suggested some time ago that a referendum of all members might easily be conducted at low cost as part of our renewal process for membership.

I may be wrong but I would be surprised if a majority of all Comet Class members didn't say "Yes" to a simple proposition that the Mino rig be incorporated as an alternative rig with no restrictions on use.

What do we lose by asking the question? Conceivably, depending upon your persuasion, you would stop people like Tony and me bleating on in the future. Alternatively, you might have a more vigorous class with greater numbers participating on a wider basis of use.

Let's find out !

Keith Lamdin. Comets 55 & 241

● FAMILY SUBSCRIPTIONS

Derek Coleman, our Treasurer, has pointed out to me that there was an error in the renewal form incorporated in Perihelion 57. The subscription for family membership was printed as £15 but it should have been £18. Our Constitution states that "family membership shall be 1.5 times that of a full member" (item 4d(iii)). So £15 was correct when the full member's subscription was £10, but when the figure was raised to £12, at the 2000 AGM, the family membership automatically became £18. My apology for that error.

Editor.

THE PORTHMADOG "MINO"

Perihelion 57 contained a couple of phrases, one from Alan our editor, stating that there had been no contributions on the Mino, and one from Andrew the Comet builder, who, reporting on Comet Mino sales, informed that one of them had gone to Porthmadog. Being the Porthmadog recipient of this Mino I was consequently motivated to shrug off my sloth and submit a few words for possible publication in the Mi-notes section. (Editor's note: OK by me, but as you see I've included it in the "Customisation" series, seems more logical there).

I am however doubtful of this article arousing any interest as I am not the sort of Comet association member to be encouraged, being rather ancient, with racing days long gone, added to that is the fact that my customised abuse of the dinghy has placed it well outside even the Mino class!

My wife and I, both in our 70's, have during our sailing years owned eight different sizes/classes of sailing dinghies, and for a brief period a small cruiser. As Joan was sailing less and less with me, the decision was taken in 1999 to sell our Laser 13 named 'O' r Diwedd' - Welsh for 'At Last' and selfishly get a single-hander for me, such requiring less muscle power to haul around off the water.

Raised gooseneck (Customisation item 47)

Having had the opportunity to sail a Comet at my club, I was smitten by it, the only drawback being that I was also smitten a few times by the rather low boom, the sole reason for this was of course my geriatric lack of elasticity. Andrew Summons, bless him, solved this problem for me by fastening the boom goosneck 10" higher up the mast from the foredeck which meant that only the Mino sail could be accommodated. Although I was loth to lose the power of the larger standard sail it sensibly acknowledged my increasing desire/need for a quieter, more relaxing life.

Having purchased a few of our past dinghies from new, I must confirm the reader's experience at this stage, which undoubtedly is that Andrew Simmons is a delight to do business with, his helpfulness and generosity being commendable. What Andrew did not say in reporting that a Mino went to Porthmadog was that he and his wife brought it all the way from Devon to our bungalow three miles west of Porthmadog, which is on the North West Wales coast, on Easter Saturday 2000 and still only levied the standard delivery charge.

The Porthmadog Sailing Club, from where I mainly sail, lies on the wide Glaslyn estuary about ¾ mile seaward of Porthmadog harbour, with the open sea of

Tremadog Bay, a heavily sandbanked two miles further on. Compensation for the sandbanks and restricted sailing time comes from the fantastic panoramic views from the water.

Topping lift and net bags (Customisation items 48 and 49)

Other deviations that 'Omega' (782) has suffered at my hand is the fixing of a lightweight 'topping lift' which allows me if needed to let the sail fly, but keeps the boom out of my way, and the attachment of a net bag suspended beneath the grab rail on each side of the cockpit, necessary for a coffee flask, snack and flare etc.

Rowlocks (Customisation item 50)

The most recent addition, which sounds incongruous I know, is the fitting of a small pair of rowlocks enabling the use of a pair of 5'6" aluminium oars. It has been my experience that the 'praddle' makes very hard work of getting back to the club when there is a strong ebb tide and the wind drops completely. In any case I enjoy rowing!

Obviously 'Omega' will have to be returned to standard when I come to sell it in 10 to 15 years time! Until then I am going to enjoy fully each season's Comet sailing, having only one regret which is that, due to the Comet's size, my wife cannot share in the experiences.

Bill Burgess ("Mino" 782)

**A NOTE FROM THE
COMET WEBSITE ORGANISER**

If you are new to the Comet do not be worried about sailing your first open. We are a friendly bunch and so long as you can get round the course and have the basic sailing rules sussed then you will not be out of place or tutted at by any means. New Cometers are very welcome even to the Nationals.

All the 2001 Open event and Championship dates have been published on the Comet web site. Go to <http://www.cometsailing.org.uk> and then click on the "Fixtures" button on the left menu. I have created links to every club web site where I have found one to help you with directions and email addresses.

Please note during the current foot and mouth disease crisis many clubs are closed. I will update the fixtures list as I get information but please ring the organisers for the latest information before leaving home.

Tony Ellison<tony.ellison@btinternet.com>

COMET EVENTS 2001

Date	Day	Event/region	Venue	Contact	Contact
21 Apr	Sat	open/W	Shearwater	Nic Cross	01373 822258
28 Apr	Sat	open/E	Fishers Green	Paul Rayson	0208 360 7162
5 May	Sat	open/N	Winsford Flash	Ros Stevenson	01606 592115
12 May	Sat	open/C	Banbury	Phil Henman	01926 640271
12 May	Sat	open/N	Chester	John Edwards	01829 781234
13 May	Sun	open/E	Crawley Mariners	Diana Thompson	01737 552482
20 May	Sun	open/W	Sutton Bingham	Gordon Parker	01458 223058
27 May	Sun	Association	Littleton	Nick Warren	01344 623591
28 May	Mon	Championships			
2 Jun	Sat	open/E	Chipstead	Allan Collins	01322 523529
9 Jun	Sat	open/S	Taplow	Tony Reeve	01628 484536
16 Jun	Sat	open/N	Combs	Sue Pollard	01457 763664
23 Jun	Sat	open/C	Middle Nene	Paul Hinde	07703 654899
30 Jun	Sat	open/W	Redditch	Bob Willis	01527 459852
1 Jul	Sun	open/C	Naseby	Chris Weston	01858 545226
15 Jul	Sun	open/S	Aylesbury	Mike Palmer	01296 436414
28 Jul	Sat	open/S	Frensham Pond	Charles Smith	01483 418745
4 Aug	Sat	open/N	Carsington	Keith Appleby	01332 840612
5 Aug	Sun	open/S	Mudford	Mike Roach	01202 477553
12 Aug	Sun	open/C	Cransley	Bill Webster	01536 725918
25 Aug	Sat	National	Weymouth &		
26 Aug	Sun	Championships	Portland Sailing	Andrew Simmons	01769 574358
27 Aug	Mon	"	Academy		
2 Sep	Sun	open/E	Hampton Pier	John Finch	01227 792030
8 Sep	Sat	open/C	Severn	Steve Hawley	01905 458636
15 Sep	Sat	open/C	Staunton Harold	Trish Moore	01509 261845
30 Sep	Sun	open/W	Merthyr Tydfil	Mark Govier	01222 778459
6 Oct	Sat	Training	Redesmere	Tim Baker	01477 534238
7 Oct	Sun	open/N	Redesmere	Tim Baker	01477 534238
14 Oct	Sun	open/S	Kingsmead	Geoff Kempton	01753 885782

Aphelions :-

N=Northern

S=Southern

E=Eastern

W=Western

C=Central

COMET ORBITAL & APHELIONS

Trophy series 2001

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 events including open meetings from at least two of the Aphelion areas. You must also have entered either (or both) of the National or Association Championships.

Your six best results will be counted to determine your Orbital position.

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 14th 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 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
Middle Nene
Naseby
Cransley
Severn
Staunton Harold

Northern Area:

Winsford Flash
Chester
Combs
Carsington
Redesmere

Eastern Area:

Fishers Green
Crawley Mariners
Chipstead
Hampton Pier

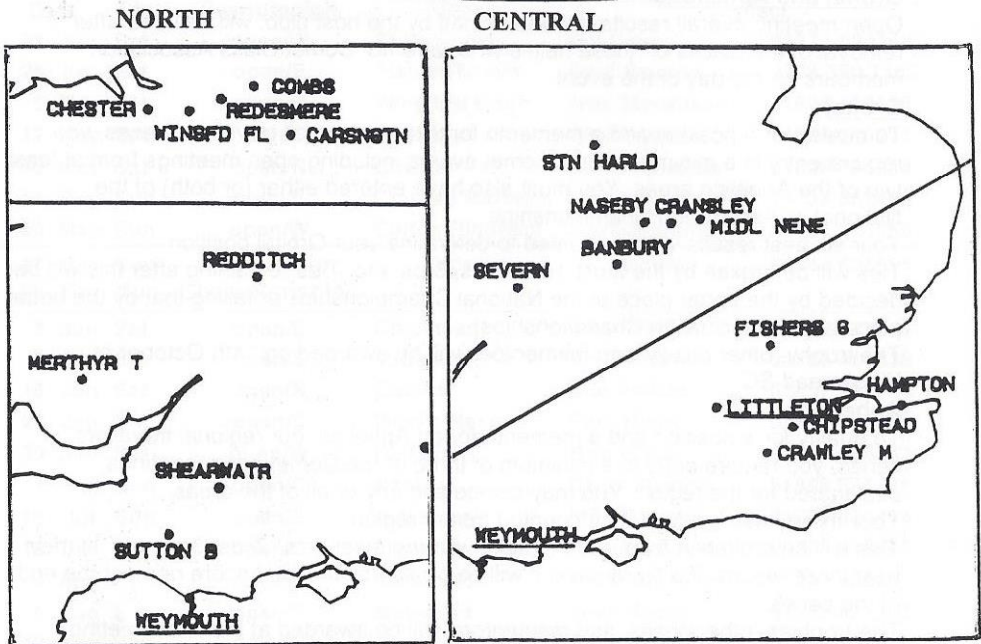
Southern Area:

Taplow
Aylesbury
Frensham Pond
Mudford
Kingsmead

Western Area:

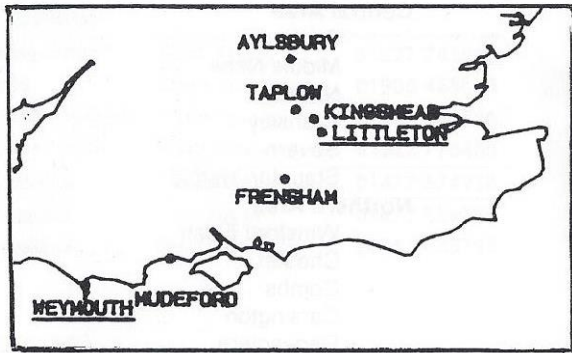
Shearwater
Sutton Bingham
Redditch
Merthyr Tydfil

OPEN MEETING AND CHAMPIONSHIPS LOCATIONS



WEST

EAST



SOUTH

(These maps are to scale)

● GRID REFERENCES OF CLUBS

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

Championships:

SY	670770	WEYMOUTH	(approx)
TQ	061675	LITTLETON	

Aphelion - North:

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

Aphelion - West

SO	040060	MERTHYR TYDFIL
SP	059673	REDDITCH
ST	840425	SHEARWATER
ST	549115	SUTTON BINGHAM

Aphelion - East

TQ	505560	CHIPSTEAD
TQ	353404	CRAWLEY MARINERS
TL	380045	FISHERS GREEN
TR	155680	HAMPTON PIER

Aphelion - Central:

SP	500530	BANBURY
SP	820771	CRANSLEY
SP	993792	MIDDLE NENE
SP	665778	NASEBY
SO	920400	SEVERN (approx)
SK	377241	STAUNTON HAROLD

Aphelion - South:

SP	874105	AYLESBURY
SU	845400	FRENTHAM POND
SZ	172925	MUDEFORD
SU	907809	TAPLOW LAKE

Alan Browning, Editor

COMET MILLENNIUM REGATTA

The millennium duly arrived and the country was not impressed, 2000 years of waiting for what? Perhaps we were all expecting too much. The fireworks at midnight were well received by those who could get there but Oh that big top optimistically called a Dome, Joe public was definitely underwhelmed.

Our planning for the Comet Millennium had been going on for nearly 2 years and as the first day of the event dawned with virtually no interest outside Chipstead, we too were looking at a flop and a financial embarrassment.

Day one of the Regatta and the rescue boats were wheeled out, the race box made ready, the reception teams were prepared, the food and entertainment was on line, the treasure hunt maps were waiting and the prizes prepared.

We had one intrepid participant, Jean Ismay-Wakery who had travelled down from Norfolk with her Zero the night before and was camping in the car park and a few sailors who had promised to come but the event organisers crossed their fingers and toes and waited.

Then they started to arrive slowly at first and then in a rush as the Chipstead members arrived and although the numbers were about half the planners had anticipated, we had at least a reasonable turn-out that ensured we could run a viable event.

It was a beautiful sunny day with very little wind that came and went. The first race should have been no problem as it was a straightforward handicap race except the start line had been wrongly indicated which as you can imagine caused plenty of confusion, but in the spirit of the event we all got on with it. The race which was closely contested with Gordon Flemons getting a flier at the start but he was gradually reeled in and was caught on the line by Robin Ballam, with Annette Walter third. Fiona Cauter having her first race of the year after recovering from a severe back problem finished a magnificent 4th with Henry Jagers 5th. All the leading boats were Comets and the Zeros, who were sailing on a handicap of 2050, were well back in the fleet although the very light winds always favour Comets.

The next event was the relay and 5 teams of 4 were organised each with a Trio Duo or Zero and 3 Comets. Teams could sail their boats in any order and each team had to hand over their coloured tassel behind a line on the shore line. The

wind had virtually disappeared by now and the race was conducted with much bending of the rules and paddling became acceptable. An interesting variety of running styles were displayed and the Brown team of Andrew, Gordon, Allan Thom and Mike Baxter emerged the winners with a few laughs and much good humour.

The last race of the day was a pursuit based on the results of the morning handicap, boats had been issued with a personal handicap. We used a formula we had worked out based on the elapsed time from the morning race. We divided this figure by 60 and multiplied the result by the length of the race. This was then taken away from the time of the scratch boat and (as they say) ABRACADABRA you have a personal handicap, but would it work?

The first boats started nearly 20 minutes ahead of the scratch boats and people coped with the light air in their own way. Sailing as a scratch boat I was able to observe some of the problems people were experiencing, most seem to be sailing too close to the wind to move in light air, easing the sheets and responding to the shifting wind direction keeps you moving and then your very movement creates a little wind. Phil Walter won the event inches ahead of Andrew Simmons in his Trio, Brian Thom was third, I was 4th followed by Mike Baxter, Sue Wilson and Ian Hodge from Redoubt SC 7th. The first 4 boats were all from different starts on the handicap and our formula seemed to have worked, much to our relief.

No interest had been shown by any of the Classes in a Champion of Champion event so this was dropped which fortunately helped the scheduling but forced us to rethink our prizes strategy.

Shirley Sinclair the wonderful caterer at Chipstead and incidentally mother of the two times Comet National Champion, Chris Sinclair, provided us with a scrumptious evening meal and this was followed by our Millennium quiz night. Six teams of eight completed an enjoyable day and Mavis Windibank compiled and asked the questions.

The second day arrived, we had kept the sun but the wind had arrived and was an interesting force 3 or so. The morning handicap race was a relief to us heavier weights, the beat was right down the length of the lake and interesting duels ensued with many changes of position. I managed to emerge the winner from Henry and Annette with Robin 4th and Derek Coleman 5th. The afternoon pursuit saw Andrew Simmons start as scratch boat but Annette Walter starting 2 minutes ahead was the clear winner and what a competitor she is these days. To rub in the girl power Beverly Franklin was 2nd with Clive Cottam 3rd, close behind was Don Blackman and Gordon with Phil having another good race, and Allan 7th.

During all this fun on the water the non-sailors had been searching for clues to the Treasure Hunt, there were 8 clues hidden around the lake, 3 were only accessible from the water and we even had a message in a bottle. While planting the clues I managed to get into hot water with a local house warden telling me I could not put that there 'ere, but with a bit of grovelling and explanation I was allowed to leave the clue in place for the duration, lucky for him though I was just about to set Derek Coleman our treasurer loose on him and he is a force to be reckoned with (only joking). Anyway Angie Smallwood with Richard's help was the first to work it all out and come up with the right answers and the other successful treasure seekers were Fiona, Annette & Phil and they were all winners. The clues were in the form of letters that spelt the word MARTIANS and the Martians were the nick name for the 1996 British Olympic Yachting team (Sponsored by "Mars"). Ian Walker, silver medallist in the games, who has been a member of the club since he was 8 years old, had presented the club a picture signed by the all the British team and as you can imagine Ian Walkers name crops up all over the club and the Treasure Hunters also had to find where he was mentioned in the club.

Well, how did we allocate the prizes? The regatta, we decided, had evolved into a handicap; a pursuit; an overall event and a relay.

Phil Walter was the winner of the pursuit races and Robin Ballam the Handicap Races. Annette Walter was overall winner with Mike Baxter's consistency giving him second place, Robin was 3rd and Brian 4th, Gordon was 5th and Henry and Phil were in joint 6th place. The Brown team were first in the relay and the team comprised Andrew Gordon Allan Collins and Mike. There were two special prizes kindly awarded by the Comet Class Association and these were decided by putting the number of boats competing into a hat and drawing out numbers that were sealed in an envelope and given to the Race Officer. The finishing positions that corresponded with the numbers in the envelope won the prizes and incredibly the winners were Henry Jagers and Andrew Simmons! The same names have cropped up as winners in the different categories but the prizes were spread around as none was allowed more than one prize.

Well, summing up was it all worth it? The event managed to break even with the money we raised at the quiz night and all the competitors were highly enthusiastic and enjoyed the event. The response from all the established Classes other than the Comet Class was virtually nil. We had one Duo and Andrew brought his Trio but remarkably we had 3 Zeros, remarkable because only 8 had been built at that time. The Chipstead Comet fleet were enthusiastic to put on another similar event in the future but it would probably be pointless to invite other classes except perhaps a few individuals who have expressed an interest. My wonderful

spreadsheet for working out the results had a few bugs on the day and my resulting prickliness is down to anxiety and not general bad temper, because I too, as a competitive racing type, also enjoyed myself.

My thanks to Chipstead SC for opening the club for free, to Shirley for the catering and to members of Chipstead's Comet fleet for all the work that they put in to run the event and to the many helpers on the day, to Wendy Ward (ex Comet Sailor) our race officer and for the support of the Comet Class Association.

So finally like the Dome our Millennium event was enjoyed by those who actually went! Overall yes, it was well worth doing.

John Windibank Comets 555 & 700

EDITOR'S NOTES

As usual, this Spring issue contains the events diary and traveller's trophy details, prepared by our Chairman, with my maps of club locations and lists of grid references.

Please keep an eye on email and website addresses, some have been changed and these are emphasised by **bold print**. Tony Ellison gives us another note on the Comet Association website on page 11.

Thanks to our contributors of articles. John Windibank describes what went on at the Chipstead Millenium event last year and new Comet owner Bill Burgess has done some interesting modifications to his boat to suit his sailing. Keith Lamdin writes again on the Mino, giving us food for thought. Thanks too to Paul Hinde for his article introducing Middle Nene S.C. for their open on 23rd June and to Nick Warren for his page on the Association Championships. The other two new venues will be introduced in the next issue.

I have found what I believe are the full results of the 1992 Nationals, so have extended my analysis back one year (page 20). My conclusions are largely unchanged but there are now no grounds for splitting the mid-fleet group into two.

As Editor, I try, on pages 22-23, to encourage non-racing Comet owners to contribute more to Perihelion, and I make some suggestions they might like to comment on. In that vein the cover photo is plainly Comet fun, an old brochure picture actually.

My chin wag with members of Crawley Mariners Y.C. has still not taken place - -
- hopefully next time.

Alan Browning, Editor

THE NATIONALS - LOOKING BACK TO 1992

I have found what I believe to be the full results of the Sutton Bingham Nationals of 1992 and can improve my analysis in pages 22-25 of Perihelion 57. The relevant results in 1992 were:

1 Guy Wilkins, 3 Mark Wilkins, 4 Henry Jaggers, 6 Tony Best, 10 Simon Thompson, 11 Derek Coleman, 12 Robin Ballam, 15 John Windibank and 24 Michael Thompson. The fleet was 34 strong.

Including those results gives a revised table:

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Av.
Guy Wilkins	100	100	100	100	94	97	98	91	87	96
John Challener					77	100		100	100	94
Mark Wilkins	94		86	96	84	83	96	96	90	91
Richard Smallwood			72	93			84	83	57	78
John Windibank	58	89	92	79	81	55	80	87	67	76
Simon Thompson	73	63	67	75	71	69	88	78	80	74
Phillip Hossell			58		52	72	67	70	73	65
Heidi Dodd				61	65	45	86			64
Martin Vinson				57	58	52	76			61
Henry Jaggers	91		36		48	14	92	57	63	57
Tony Best	85		69	43	29		51			55
Peter Hayes		58	47	68	45				33	50
Brian Welham			39	18	74	7	90		70	50
Robin Ballam	67	53	64	54	32	38	55		27	49
Michael Thompson	30	47	14	50	35	59	63	74	60	48
Derek Coleman	70		53	14	42	41	69		20	44
Paul Hinde					19		37	39	17	28
Barry O'Herlihy		21	28	0		34		30		23
Diana Thompson		11		4	16	24	8	13	0	11

Comparing with the previous table, we see several changes to the ranking:

John Windibank, with an average of 76, changes places with Richard Smallwood, Tony Best, with a mean of 55, goes up to above Peter Hayes and Brian Welham Michael Thompson, average now 48, goes between Robin (49) and Derek (44).

If I had used this table I would not have differentiated between upper and lower mid-fleet. With Henry Jaggers' average up 5%, the gap between him and Martin

Vinson does not exist, there is a steady increase in average scores from Derek Coleman (44) to Phillip Hossell (65).

Using my statistical test on the larger mid-fleet group still shows no significant difference between them, but from the test the implied equality of ability is less convincing. I don't really believe they *are* all equal, and it still may be worth some kind of prize for the highest in that group in future Nationals.

Editor.



**INTRODUCING . . .
MIDDLE NENE S.C.**

Location: The sailing club is located just north of Thrapston at the junction between the A14 and the A605. Its grid reference is SP 993 792.

History: The club has been in existence at this site since 1946, when the lake was about one-third the size and was still a working gravel pit. This produced added dimension to the racing when the barges passed through to the works in Thrapston. In 1992 the club purchased the site along some 180 acres of water and the surrounding land.

Facilities: The club boasts 140 acres of open, unrestricted water on which to sail. The club is well equipped with fixed landing stages to prevent wet feet when launching. The changing rooms are equipped with hot showers and the clubhouse boasts a fully licensed bar and catering at the weekends. A full racing programme is organised throughout the year, which is staffed by members of the club.

The Event: The Comet meeting on 23rd June is being run alongside the normal Saturday racing and training, but don't worry, the lake is big enough. For more information please phone me to confirm the details of the event and in order to give an indication of the number of people attending. The more entries the better as we would like to demonstrate to the other members of the club that these Comet 'things' are competitive and don't always lag behind the rest of the fleet.

How to get there: From A14/A605 junction, head towards the centre of Thrapston., turn right at the traffic lights by the Public House. After the Co-op, take the first turn on the left; this road leads downhill towards the town recreation ground. Proceed down the gravel road alongside the playing field until you reach a gated causeway, follow the road through the gate and round towards the club.

Paul Hinde (Comet 641)

● NON-RACING COMET SAILING

500 Comets not racing

Virtually all the Comet sailing I hear about is racing of one sort or another, indeed some have expressed the view that the Comet is not suited to anything else. However, the proportion of Association members is only about a quarter of the Comets that have been built. This I gather is very good compared with other classes, but Comets can last a long time, with fibreglass hulls and foils, aluminium spars and sails made from modern materials. There must be around 600 Comets not regularly engaging in Association activities. OK, say 100 of them join in open meetings without joining the Association, but that still leaves 500 Comets that are only raced occasionally or not raced at all.

The silent 500

The Millenium event last year at Chipstead attracted 18 standard Comets and only two of the names were new to me, so clearly it did not attract non-racing Comet sailors. Perhaps this was not surprising, when the publicity advertised so much racing. I know non-racing events have been run in the past, but recently we have had very little comment on them in Perihelion. This also can be regarded as surprising considering that all new Comets come with a year's membership of the Association. True, we are now not in the business of 100 new Comets a year, but I would have imagined that *some* Comets are still bought "for fun".

Non-racing reasons for sailing

If you don't race your Comet what do you do with it? Possibly the 500 non-racers all do different things for different reasons, so let me write down a few:

Get the children into sailing, have fun in a boat on family holidays, enjoy the feel of sailing, the feel of the wind, the rhythm of the waves, battling against the elements, the challenge to get the boat to go where you want it to, open air activity, enjoyable exercise, enjoy improving skill, explore sailing techniques, explore rivers, explore seashore, enjoy beautiful scenery, be at one with wildlife, join in social weekends with a mixed fleet, transport, fishing (?), pride of ownership, visual appeal of sailing boats, an activity which to do well requires both physical and intellectual skills, and perhaps even "don't know, it's just in the blood". I'm sure you can add to this list and am just as sure that each person's pleasure is bound up with a number of reasons.

Trying to classify these:

Social: Children sailing, family holidays, social weekends,

Feelings: Wind, waves, sailing generally, open air, exercise, beautiful scenery, wildlife, visual appeal, ownership, “in the blood”,

Exploring: Rivers, seaside, wildlife,

Challenge: Against the elements, improve skill, sailing techniques, control boat, physical and intellectual skills,

Other: Transport, fishing.

Non-racing events which the Association could encourage

Any non-racing event involving the sailing of Comets must help to satisfy the “feelings” reasons, so I take that for granted. Also, the weather will often determine whether or not the sailing is a challenge. River based clubs are best fitted to offer some exploring and inland clubs often boast interesting wildlife. Challenges in sailing technique can also be stimulated in training days, which I discussed in Perihelion 57, but I am not sure how popular this is. I don’t think the Comet is well suited to transport or fishing, with very limited on-board storage, but I could be wrong.

That leaves the social side of non-racing events. Ignoring competitive social activities like treasure hunts and fun races, what can we do? Obviously meeting and chatting will happen, as it does between spectators at open meetings. This can include helping one another in boat handling, equipment additions and, particularly for non-racers, customisation ideas. Other things are walks, picnics, pub lunches, sunbathing, and perhaps invited speakers, not on racing but on things like boat repair, sailing smoothly, coping with difficult conditions, more unusual techniques like sailing backwards or deliberately slowly, sailing Comets in unusual places etc.

Spectators with boats

Perhaps a start might be to encourage owners (owners, not members) to attend open meetings, bringing their boats with them. There shouldn’t be much of a problem to allow them to sail during the day, away from the racing, join in the chat and meals with the racers if they want to, but have other times where they do other things especially for them, perhaps chatting with Andrew Simmons about improving their boats, etc. At some venues sailing could include a convoy to a remote part of the venue for a picnic or pub meal or to relax in some other way.

Comment please!

That’s enough for now, what I’m really trying to do is to entice more contributions from the “silent 500” on non-racing Comet sailing.

Alan Browning Editor

COMET HALL OF FAME

Past Championship Winners

National Champion

1983 Ken Potts
 1984 Bob Sandford
 1985 Stuart Ingham
 1986 Keith Lamdin
 1987 Jeff Penfold
 1988 Craig Moffatt
 1989 Chris Sinclair
 1990 Chris Sinclair
 1991 Guy Wilkins
 1992 Guy Wilkins
 1993 Guy Wilkins
 1994 Guy Wilkins
 1995 Guy Wilkins
 1996 Alex Reeve
 1997 John Challener
 1998 Jake Sutton
 1999 John Challener
 2000 John Challener

Ladies

Hayley Penfold
 Margaret Hylton
 Tracey Davies
 Tracey Davies
 Anne Brook
 Christine Stack
 Christine Stack
 Heidi Dodd
 Heidi Dodd
 Heather Back
 Heidi Dodd
 Annette Walter
 Debbie Degge

Junior

Nancy Gould
 Jake Sutton
 Ian Jubb
 Robert Hamilton
 Andrew Bowes
 Robert Hamilton
 Robert Hamilton
 -
 Mark Coppenhall

Association Trophy

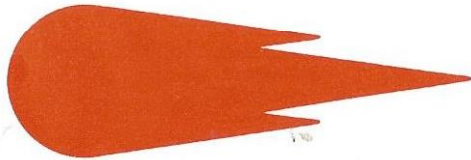
1988
 1989 Damon Perrin
 1990 Guy Wilkins
 1991 Henry Jagers
 1992 Guy Wilkins
 1993 Mark Wilkins
 1994 Guy Wilkins
 1995 Alex Reeve
 1996 John Challener
 1997 Mark Wilkins
 1998 Mark Wilkins
 1999 Debbie Degge
 2000 John Challener

Orbital Trophy (National)

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

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	Mark Wilkins	
1995 Errol Edwards	Mark Wilkins	Jake Sutton	Jake Sutton	
1996 Steve Heyes	Mark Wilkins	Alex Reeve	John Windibank	
1997 Phillip Hossell	Alex Reeve	Mark Wilkins	Phillip Hossell	
1998 Phillip Hossell	Phillip Hossell	Richard Smallwood	Phillip Hossell	
1999 John Edwards	Mark Wilkins	Mark Wilkins	Phillip Hossell	Phillip Hossell
2000 Henry Jagers	Annette Walter	Brian Welham	Paul Govier	Ian Coppenhall



Comet Class Association

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association