

2002

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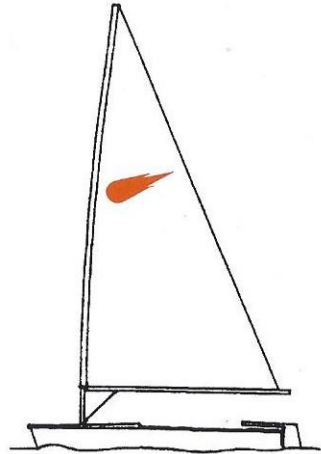
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1983

1982



**NEWSLETTER NUMBER 62
SPRING 2002**

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Front cover:

A design to celebrate Comets coming of age,
Andrew Simmons has been building Comets for 21 years.
(over 800 of them)

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

We moved to Devon shortly before last year's Nationals - over six months ago now - and were pleased to attend that event and most of the remaining opens. And what an enjoyable time it was. Now, I suspect like many sailors all over the country, I am suffering withdrawal symptoms. Not long to wait though, the new season is about to start!

Last Sunday we went to watch the action at the "Starcross Steamer" pursuit race. Starcross YC is upstream of and on the opposite bank to Exmouth, and a fine stretch of water it looked, too. We had hoped to see Andy Simmons there testing out his brand-new performance design the "Comet Race" (perhaps you saw it at the London Boat Show) but unfortunately he had more pressing things to do that day. Never mind, there was a good turnout and we enjoyed watching. Despite the rather gusty conditions it was a reasonably fine day and the water was flat - if only I'd entered my Comet. Those withdrawal symptoms again!

You may have attended one or both of the recent exhibitions: the Boat Caravan and Leisure Show at the NEC and Sailboat at Alexandra Palace. Personally I had a lot less involvement, apart from doing a little of the artwork, than for many a year, but then I am no longer "just down the road" from either, especially the NEC. However, with lots of support from members and committee, they both went well. Many thanks to Paul Hinde for managing our NEC display, and to Andy for lending us the boat. Sailboat featured Ian Coppenhall, last year's worthy winner of nearly everything, with Comet 636. Many thanks, Ian, for supplying your boat and to Nick Warren for managing the stand. Thanks, too, to everyone else who helped man the stands at either show. These shows generate a fair bit of interest from the sailing, and would like to have a go at sailing, public although the results can be difficult to quantify. Sometimes people have joined us within a few days, while there are many others who have come to Comets through seeing us at a show three years earlier!

Our 2002 Racing Programme has now been finalised. The full list and entry details can be found with this edition, also a fixture card for your wallets. Once again we have a very full programme, this year with two championships and 26 open meetings and, as always, we must thank Norah for liaising with the clubs and putting everything together for us. Thanks to all the usual venues for remaining on our circuit, a warm welcome to Rudyard Lake SC for whom this will be their first Comet open, and welcome back to Redoubt.

We wish each of them a very successful and enjoyable event and I urge Comet sailors everywhere to join in and take part.

Make a point of coming to our National Championships! This year we are at Winsford Flash SC in Cheshire for three days over the August bank holiday. An inland venue, the club and local facilities are very good and we are assured of a warm welcome. With a pig roast planned for Saturday night, the AGM on Sunday and some super prizes and mementoes to award on Monday, there should be plenty for sailors and spectators alike and an event not to be missed.

Once again we are at Hampton Pier YC for the Association Championships. Two days of excellent sea sailing at Herne Bay in late May. This club, too, has very good facilities and always makes us most welcome. Hope to see you there!

This year I am threatening to ask Norah to judge the Photographic Competition, so someone else might have a chance of winning! Anyway, please keep those photos coming to either Alan or myself. We really do need them for Perihelion and for our show and advertising displays. More details in the next issue.

2002 is the Comet's 21st Birthday and well worth celebrating, Many Happy Returns! She has brought a great deal of pleasure to very many people over the years and will continue to do so for a long time yet. Whether you race or cruise, you could not do better to mark this special year than to introduce someone to Comet sailing. You know it makes sense, show someone else!

Welcome to our new season!

Good Sailing,

Henry Jagers, Chairman.

NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE

1. You will find the Events Calendar for 2002 on page 14. We have 26 Open meetings this year, and you will note that, once again, we have taken liberties with the geography of the countryside to ensure a reasonable mix of venues for each Aphelion area. We have also tried to ensure that the final event in each area is as late as possible in the season.

As always, you are advised to check before travelling, in case a club has a hiccup in their arrangements. For instance, Cransley has a potential problem with their dam.

2. Both Hampton Pier and Winsford Flash are busy with preparations for the Championship events, which we hope you will enjoy. For newcomers to the Class, the Championships are keenly contested in all parts of the fleet, and new helms are welcomed and encouraged whatever their ability.

3. Thank you for your comments on the discards at the Championships. As a result, your Committee has decided that the National Championships will continue with the existing format of 2 races on Day 1, 3 on Day 2, and 2 on Day 3, with 5 to count.

For the Association Championships there will be 1 discard allowed regardless of whether there are 4 or 5 races.

4. In terms of the other national events, qualification for the Aphelions will be participation in 3 events in that area. Qualification for the Orbital Trophy will be participation in a minimum of 6 events, to include more than one area and one of the Championships, with the qualifier's 6 best results to count.

5. By the time you read this, the Shows at NEC and Alexandra Palace will be over for another year. Thank you to all of you who have helped by manning the stands, to Ian for letting us borrow his boat, and to Paul and Nick for sorting out all the arrangements. Whereas Sailboat is the place to meet up with old friends, and make new ones, the Boating, Caravan and Leisure Show can be less exciting. However, we know that by being there, we have rekindled an interest in sailing in some people, and have been active in promoting Comet sailing in helms in search of a boat to suit them.

6. Chipstead Sailing Club has offered boat parking spaces for Comets after the Association meeting, in readiness for the Chipstead Open meeting.

7. Paul Hinde has added to the ways in which results can be sent to him with a dedicated e-mail address - cometresults@rya-online.net.

8. The Committee wishes the Comet a "Very Happy 21st Birthday"!! Long may we continue to enjoy this lively and versatile dinghy.

The role of Treasurer

As we are currently looking for a new Treasurer, we thought that some information on the work involved was needed.

We need someone to:

- collect subscriptions and other income (such as the commission from Noble Marine);
- ensure that it is receipted and paid into an appropriate savings account;
- ensure that bills are paid and keep an eye on the finances in collaboration with the Secretary and Chairman;
- keep tabs on members' changes of address, boat number, etc., and inform Comet Dinghies of the names of all paid-up members;
- keep the Results Officer informed of the names of all paid-up members;
- prepare annual accounts.

Part of the work which Derek currently does could be separated out to some extent. At the moment the Secretary keeps a record of boat ownership, as does Comet Dinghies, but Comet Dinghies also need to know who are paid up members so they can do all the mailing for us. This may be an opportunity for us to appoint a Membership Secretary to keep the records up-to-date and liaise with members, with the Treasurer just collecting the subscriptions and passing names on.

So, whether the new person does the combined job which Derek has been doing (and has got a lot of pleasure from over the years) or limits their duties to purely financial matters, we have a deadline. The AGM will be on Sunday 25th August - and we need to have identified our new Treasurer before then. We know that you are out there - please come forward and identify yourself.

Happy 21st birthday

The Comet is 21 this year, and doesn't seem to have aged a bit. A classic body with clear cut and elegant lines she has a lively response to testing conditions. Still the same weight as she was at birth, the Comet remains good tempered and forgiving in difficult conditions. She enjoys working with helms of all shapes, sizes and ages, and is keen to seek out new sailing areas as well as tried and tested ones.

When not on the water, the Comet enjoys travelling by trailer or car-top. She won't lose her looks, whatever her age, and needs very little in terms of cosmetics. Yes, she'll appreciate being polished now and then, and, like all ladies, enjoys a new suit - well, sail and ropes.

For her birthday, Andrew Simmons is treating the Comet to longer grab rails and a lighter rudder stock.

Yes, the Comet has come of age, and is looking forward to many more years of fun.

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21st Birthday Celebrations

Martin Seaton has suggested that one way of celebrating the Comet's 21st anniversary is to promote a nationwide "Try A Comet" event. where people are able to experience helming a Comet at a local club.

Each club would decide whether to have a specific "Comet" day, include it in their public open day if they have one, or offer trials on dates to suit the enquirers. The Class Association would advertise, in Yachts and Yachting, that there are opportunities across the country to try a Comet, and would then put enquirers in touch with local contacts who would arrange the date, time etc.

In order to do this, we need the support of you, and your clubs.

Andrew will be holding various demonstration days, the first being at Burghfield on 6th and 7th April. However, Martin's scheme has the advantage of being more local, and will attract people to local clubs. Martin's home club, Mid Warwickshire Yacht Club, is already sold on the idea.

PLEASE LET ME KNOW BY MAY 1st HOW YOU CAN HELP.

During the year, keep an eye out for other articles on the Comet, and, please, keep those ideas for celebrating a super little boat coming.

Norah Jagers, Class Secretary

BAILEY'S COMET

To celebrate our 21st Birthday

Baileys Comet

Baileys
strong coffee
rum
cream
a banana
crushed ice

lime and more banana to garnish

Whizz together in a liquidiser for a few seconds until smooth and well blended. Pour into glasses and garnish with slices of lime and banana on cocktail sticks.

You can vary the proportions and amount according to taste and quantity needed.

Happy sinking!

Nancy Gould and Stu Meese, Comet 436.

Should get you into orbit!

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 2002. Contributions to me by the end of May please.

Editor.

ANDREW SIMMONS ON COMET HISTORY

(The Perihelion Editor and the Comet designer/builder chatted together at the Glossop Nationals in 1996. The outcome was the article "Talking to . . . Andrew Simmons" printed that year in Perihelion 39. Reprinted below is the bulk of that article. The part referring to the Mino is to be found on page 23.)

Alan Browning: You designed the Comet for us in 1981, but to do that you must have had background expertise in various fields. To start with would you like to tell me about the dinghy sailing you had done up to that time?

Andrew Simmons: I've been very lucky, I came from a sailing family, my parents always sailed dinghies. I think they had an Osprey and a Kestrel, then they moved on to sailing cruisers. My earliest memories of sailing were in 1960, crewing at Bristol Avon S.C. at Saltford, where my father was Commodore. I was in great demand as a crew because then I was small and light (and only 5 years old at the time). I was told to sit still and not to wriggle. Then, when my parents kept a sailing cruiser at Poole, we had a pram dinghy and I used to sail around in that all the time, on my own. I always have been a loner.

Alan: You must also have had experience in design and construction skills too. Where did you acquire those skills?

Andrew: I'm self taught to be perfectly honest, my college training was in graphic design. But I've always loved making things, when I was a kid I used to build model planes and later on I even built a "special" car. Some people have been a bit worried that I'm not a qualified naval architect, but the beauty with boats is that's it's still unregulated, anybody may design and build a boat - which is marvellous.

Alan: The Comet is made of glass reinforced plastic (glass matting impregnated with resin), how did you begin using GRP?

Andrew: In the early days I used to design small boats, as a little business in partnership with my younger brother. We used to work from a garage. The first boat we designed was a 7 foot GRP yacht tender, a little rowing pram dinghy. It was very small, compact and light and we used to sell it for £100 including oars. We used to put a 5 HP outboard on it and it skimmed along at 15 knots which was quite exciting! Normally 2 HP would have been enough. First we made a model in cardboard, then built a "plug" (a full-size replica of the finished hull) and then went on to build a GRP mould by waxing the plug and coating it with glass fibre and resin. Then we waxed the mould and coated the inside with GRP to make the hull.

Basically we were teaching ourselves as we went along. Comets are built in the same way today.

After that I designed and built a 9'6" sailing dinghy, an all-rounder which I called the "Tadpole". You could row it, sail it or put an outboard motor on the back. It had 50 sq ft of sail which gave it, one-up, Mirror performance. It was quite pleasant to sail and later the name was changed to "Dipper". That was in the late 1970s and only a couple of dozen were built. They were relatively expensive dinghies to build, but because the length was only 9'6" I found that people wouldn't pay a sensible price.

Alan: What encouraged you to design the Comet and who did you see as the main customers for it then?

Andrew: In 1981 the Topper was extremely popular and I could see that that was the way to go. I fancied designing and building a dinghy in between the Topper and the Laser, that's where the Comet originally fitted in. We just tried to make it as appealing to as many people as possible to get as broad a market as possible. We have sold them to complete beginners, and with its ability to be reefed it can be quite suitable. I think the Comet can be good for beginners because it's responsive. So many people learn on a Wayfarer, doing the RYA levels, and then call themselves fully qualified sailors. When they step into a Comet it can come as a bit of a shock. I think a boat for beginners wants to be responsive so that they learn from their mistakes. When sailed properly they are rewarded, and it's evident if they're doing something wrong - if they're swimming in the water, they've done something wrong!

At the other end of the scale we have sold very many to racers and, as we know from the Comet fleet at the Nationals, to hear those kind of sailors saying a Comet is boring or easy or undemanding is a very rare thing. I think we've got some very hot people, youngsters who are extremely fit, at the front of the fleet, but they still find it hard to beat one another.

Alan: How did you come to settle on the Comet design?

Andrew: The hull had to be decided on right at the start because with a GRP boat, and the work needed on tooling and making the plug, you can't go modifying things later. I wanted the Comet to be fairly short, compact, light and able to go on a car roof. That settled the length and weight, for if you add a foot to the length the weight just shoots up. In very light winds or when you're up and planing, the length is immaterial anyway. An added advantage of the short length is that it's incredibly manoeuvrable - some people will say too manoeuvrable! Having chosen the length, I chose the beam to be the same as the Laser, but more importantly it's beamy where it sits on the water.

Being a small boat it had to be fairly stable. With a larger boat like the Trio, you can afford to have lovely easy-flowing lines, but you can't scale this hull shape down to a small length, you lose stability. If you go right down to an 8' pram dinghy, it's got to be boxy, or it's really unstable. The hull shape I chose had a nice round bilge shape, and with a nice fine entry, it looked a proper boat shape. If you get your weight forward there's very little wetted area, and in very light winds that's what makes it a bit cheeky in its performance, keeps up with Lasers and things.

Alan: Having decided on the hull shape, mightn't it have floated nose up or nose down?

Andrew: Yes, I was lucky that it was OK. Nowadays there are computers to predict floating attitude, but before they became available even the famous designers relied a lot on luck! I knew the mast was going to be well forward so there had to be a reasonable amount of buoyancy there. Also I knew that the boat would carry a passenger now and then, so I put some extra buoyancy throughout the boat. Also I believe that if you've got a fine bow you've got to have a fine stern to make the boat balance and be able to lop up and down in waves. By that I mean not too wide a stern. Some boats have a wide stern and though this might be faster on reaches, perhaps it may not be so good going upwind in a bit of a chop.

Design is all one big compromise, my favourite word! That hull shape had to be fixed right at the start, a plug made and production started. After a couple of dozen boats, the Mk 2 plug was made, this one was made very strong and rigid to avoid distortion, and all hulls since then have been from that plug.

I chose the 70 sq ft sail right at the start too. All single-handers traditionally have a lot of sail area and following this tradition, 70 sq ft is plenty of sail area for a Comet, more than enough some people think. This area was chosen partly because predominantly the boat was expected to be sailed inland on small lakes, and I think that in this country there are always more light winds than heavy winds. From day one I wanted the boat to be able to be reefed. I chose a mast sleeve rather than a halyard, so, not being able to lower the sail, it was essential to have no battens and the ability to reef on the water by rolling sail around the mast.

Having chosen those things there's not much more you can adjust in the basic design. You can't adjust the mast rake or dagger board rake easily and they have to be chosen too. But because I wasn't very experienced in those days, the first boat was something of a prototype, in particular I needed to find the best position for the dagger board. Comet number 1 had a slot 20" long rather than 12" and I used to go out with a set of spacers. In that way I could reposition the dagger board, in steps of 1", to find the best position. It's surprising what difference 1" makes, but I ended up choosing the middle position, which gave the best balance of helm, just that bit of

weather helm to provide a bit of "feel". Also the rudder blade was increased in size by an inch all round after experience with the prototype.

Alan: Can you tell me the reasons for your choice of transom sheeting?

Andrew: The Comet is a small boat, only 1" longer than a Topper. It's always been a bit of a fun boat as well, not just a racer. There's room for a passenger or two small children on a nice day and of course a centre mainsheet, on a broad reach, would get in the way a bit and would go straight across if somebody sat to leeward, as passengers often do. So I just decided to keep it more traditional, with the mainsheet aft. It doesn't make the boat any slower does it. It was a decision made at the very beginning. Some other classes have centre mainsheets for marketing reasons, but there are disadvantages, I think there are no disadvantages in an aft mainsheet.

Alan: The Comet has developed a bit since then hasn't it, would you sketch out the main improvements since the first few boats?

Andrew: The first 24 boats had plywood foils, smooth decks, Needlespar masts and Westaway or Banks sails. Then I introduced properly shaped GRP foils, a non-slip pattern on the deck, made the masts in-house and changed to R & M sails. For the first boats we chopped and changed a little on the interior construction too. At about sail number 50 we had some trouble with the GRP foils and took the plunge, making a big investment, by going to mass-produced polyurethane foam foils, with steel rod reinforcement, made by the same company that made foils for the Laser.

Since then there have been some little changes, but they've been cosmetic things. Some things have been initiated by Comet Dinghies and Dinghy Leisure (my marketing company) and some ideas have come from Class Association members. We've developed and launched the race pack, which doesn't make the boat any faster, just easier to adjust the rig. Then there were the grab rails to help you get in after a capsize, new colour schemes every so often and, after 10 years with one sailmaker, we thought it was time for a change there too. It's a very competitive world and I must say that the new sails are of superb quality.

On improvements in the construction, we now spray on the gel-coat, which gives a more even layer and saves a few pounds in weight compared with hand application, we also spray glass fibre and resin inside as well, the actual laminate is sprayed on but some of the layers are still put on by hand. With all this spraying the staff have all along had to wear fume masks, and recently we've had to improve our safety precautions and equipment to satisfy the Health and Safety people.

Alan: The Comet seems to suit a wide variety of people. Are the customers now similar to those when the boat first came out?

Andrew: Yes, by and large it's still the same broad spectrum of people we sell them to today. We hope the Comet appeals to all ages.

Alan: How did you come up with the name "Comet"?

Andrew: In the early days there was a Comet range of sailboards, in Italy a Comet range of yachts and in America a Comet double-hander (there's a photo of the latter in Perihelion 61, Editor). I didn't think a British Comet single-handed dinghy would be confused with any of these, and I thought it was a nice punchy name, easy to remember and, now we're established, I don't think anybody is going to bring a boat out also called a Comet.

In the early days I had to cajole people to form a class committee and find venues for National Championships, I think I bought the first trophy. The Class Association is all-important. They are the people who hold it all together, and do it for the benefit of all the owners, it's like an owner's club. They do it for their own pleasure, I think it's great, like a big family. It's got to be one of the friendliest dinghy classes, relatively easy-going and a nice mixture of young and old, all sorts really.

Alan: How did the symbol come about?

Andrew: I came up with that. Not really from a picture of a heavenly comet, just a ball with a tail to give it direction - and falling as well, at an angle. The first 10 or so sails were made by Westaway, a local sailmaker, and had a blue logo and blue sail numbers. But it soon occurred to me that it should be a nice bright orange-red and that was done when we changed to Banks sails. The logo had to be punchy, simple and effective and my graphic design training helped here. We're now trying to ram home the name "Comet", the boats are now officially called the Comet, Comet Duo, Comet Trio and Comet Mino. As you know we have recently changed the name of the firm from "AMS Marine" (my initials) to "Comet Dinghies".

Alan: What of the future? Have we reached the end of the Comet's development, or can we expect the continuation of small improvements?

Andrew: The Comet is still pretty much as it was back in the early 80s and by the nature of the boat it's a strict one-design. That is the future of the boat, somebody will buy one today and they'll find it competitive in 10 year's time. The Comet could never have sail battens, that would be a major change, or a halyard, which some people would like. There are a thousand and one improvements I could make to the Comet but I just can't do them. A Comet's a Comet, it's all a big compromise, you just have to settle for what it is.

When I wrote the rules I wanted it to be a strict one-design, but with an element of individuality. There are items in the class rules that allow people to make their own foils which could be lighter ones, but I've been a bit surprised that nobody seems to have bothered. The controls must be run to the centre, split controls are not allowed, but the cleats could be different. I think most people are happy with the way it is and I'm quite pleased how the vast majority leave the boat how it is.

Obviously in the future there might be massive developments in resins or glass fibre and as long as using the new materials don't make the boats any faster I might use them. I am not forced to make the boats exactly the same inside as they have been so far and if I discovered a way to build them longer-lasting and stiffer, still within the minimum weight rule, I wouldn't be afraid to do so.

Alan: Thank you Andrew, it's been fascinating talking to you.

● WHAT'S THIS ?



(answer on page 28)

COMET EVENTS 2002

Date	Day	Event/region	Venue	Contact	
20 Apr	Sat	open/W	Shearwater	Nic Cross	01373 822258
27 Apr	Sat	open/E	Fishers Green	Jenny Colclough	02082 207105
4 May	Sat	open/S	Taplow	Tony Reeve	01628 484536
4 May	Sat	open/N	Rudyard Lake	Mike Raine	01270 780810
11 May	Sat	open/N	Chester	John Edwards	01829 781234
12 May	Sun	open/E	Crawley	Diana Thompson	01737 552482
18 May	Sat	open/S	Banbury	Phil Henman	01926 640271
19 May	Sun	open/W	Sutton Bingham	Gordon Parker	01458 223058
Association Championships					
25 May	Sat				
26 May	Sun		HAMPTON PIER	Mark Whetton	01634 294833
8 Jun	Sat	open/E	Chipstead	Allan Collins	01322 523529
15 Jun	Sat	open/N	Combs	Sue Pollard	01457 763664
22 Jun	Sat	open/C	Staunton Harold	Nigel Fern	01530 469691
29 Jun	Sat	open/C	Redditch	Bob Willis	01527 459852
7 Jul	Sun	open/C	Naseby	George Parry	01162 772449
14 Jul	Sun	open/S	Aylesbury	Scott Carter	01442 875627
20 Jul	Sat	open/E	Redoubt	Jeff Clarke	01303 813213
27 Jul	Sat	open/W	Mudford	Mike Roach	01202 477553
3 Aug	Sat	open/N	Carsington	Keith Appleby	01332 840612
10 Aug	Sat	open/S	Frensham Pond	Charles Smith	01483 418745
11 Aug	Sun	open/C	Cransley	Bill Webster	01536 725918
NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS					
24 Aug	Sat				
25 Aug	Sun	(AGM)	WINSFORD FLASH		
26 Aug	Mon			Ros Stevenson	01606 592115
7 Sep	Sat	open/C	Severn	Steve Hawley	01905 458636
8 Sep	Sun	open/W	Arden	Clive Marlow	01684 562808
21 Sep	Sat	open/E	Littleton	Nick Warren	01344 623591
22 Sep	Sun	open/C	Pingewood	Keith Taylor	01189 814933
29 Sep	Sun	open/W	Merthyr Tydfil	Mark Govier	01222 778549
6 Oct	Sun	open/N	Redesmere	Tim Baker	01477 534238
13 Oct	Sun	open/S	Kingsmead	Ian Ayres	01784 420460

Aphelions:-
 N=Northern S=Southern E=Eastern W=Western C=Central

COMET ORBITAL & APHELIONS

TROPHY SERIES 2002

Orbital and Aphelions:

Open meeting overall results, as determined by the host club, will be used after removal of the places for 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 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 overall results (from opens and championships) will be used 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 13th 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 from a region will be counted.

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 in each region.

Aphelion areas

Western Area:

Shearwater
Sutton Bingham
Mudford
Arden
Merthyr Tydfil

Northern Area:

Rudyard Lake
Chester
Combs
Carsington
Redesmere

Central Area:

Staunton Harold
Redditch

Naseby

Cransley

Severn

Pingewood

Eastern Area:

Fishers Green
Crawley Mariners
Chipstead

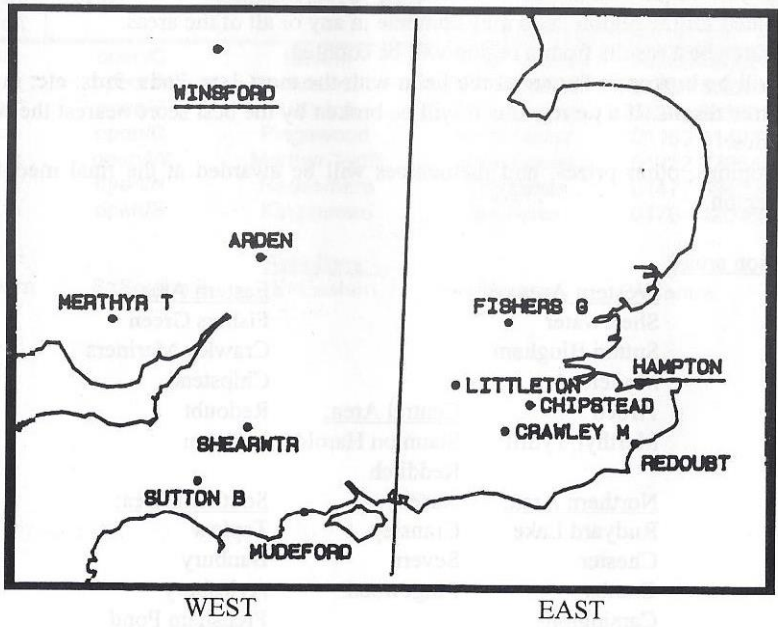
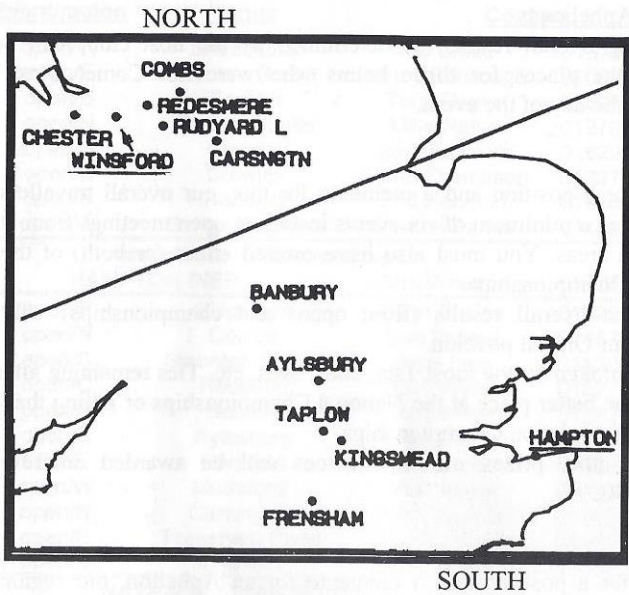
Redoubt

Littleton

Southern Area:

Taplow
Banbury
Aylesbury
Frensham Pond
Kingsmead

● OPEN MEETING AND CHAMPIONSHIP LOCATIONS

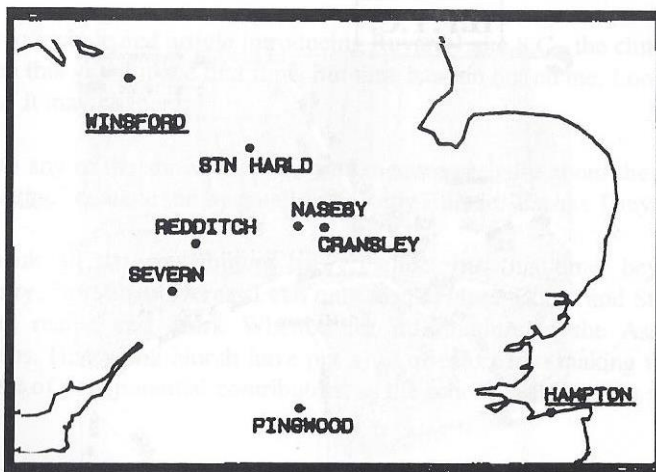


● GRID REFERENCES OF CLUBS

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

SO	912425	Arden	SO	040060	Merthyr Tydfil
SP	874105	Aylesbury	SZ	172925	Mudeford
SP	500530	Banbury	SP	665778	Naseby
SK	241514	Carsington	SU	670705	Pingewood
SJ	420659	Chester	SP	059673	Redditch
TQ	505560	Chipstead	SJ	845720	Redesmere
SK	037800	Combs	TR	135333	Redoubt
SP	820771	Cransley	SJ	940600	Rudyard Lake
TQ	360405	Crawley Mariners	SO	920392	Severn
TL	380045	Fishers Green	ST	840425	Shearwater
SU	845400	Frensham Pond	SK	377241	Staunton Harold
TR	155680	<u>HAMPTON PIER</u>	ST	549115	Sutton Bingham
TQ	015755	Kingsmead	SU	907809	Taplow Lake
TQ	070675	Littleton	SJ	660650	<u>WINSFORD FLASH</u>

Alan Browning, Editor.



CENTRAL

ASSOCIATION CHAMPIONSHIPS 2002

The Association Championships are to be held on 25th and 26^s May 2002 at:

Hampton Pier Yacht Club Grid Reference: TR 155680

Spa Esplanade, Hampton Pier, Tel: 01227 364749

Herne Bay, CT6 8EP

www.hamptonpieryachtclub.co.uk

Contact: Mark Whetton 01634 294833

There will be 5 Races, first Race 11.00hrs Saturday. Entry Fee £15.00.

Motorway travel, from the M25 to the M2:

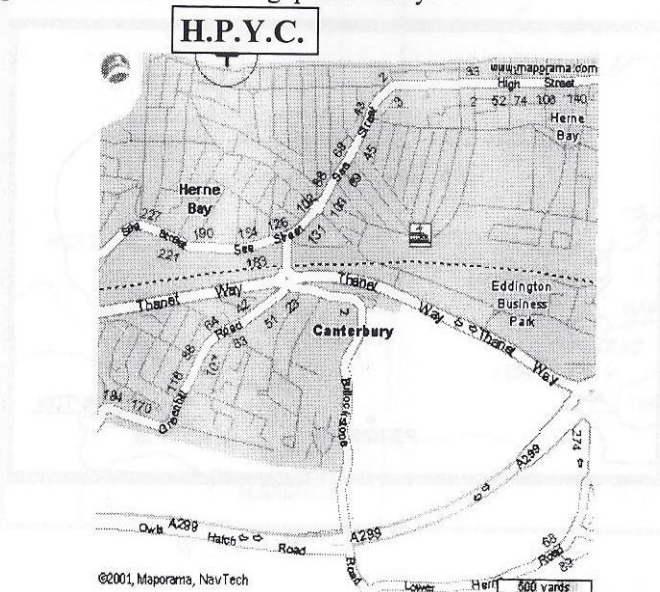
From the M25 clockwise: after Dartford crossing take the A2 Dover and then the M2 Dover.

From the M25 anti-clockwise: take the M26 and then the M20 Dover. Then take the A249 Sheerness, and then the M2 Dover.

From the M2:

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

Comet logos will be attached to signposts locally.



EDITOR'S NOTES

The Spring issue again, and that means another full programme of meetings which you will find in the centre pages. That is of course a magnificent combined effort by Norah and Henry.

As you will discover from the Chairman's Report, the Committee Notes and pages 6 and 7, the Comet is 21 years old this year. I have made sure you don't miss it by providing a cover design to match (inspired by one of Henry's Millennium poets). In those 21 years Andrew Simmons has personally built or supervised the building of over 800 Comets! The cover photograph was taken in 1996 by Anne Browning and headed an article in the form of an interview with Andrew (Perihelion 39). As a tribute to his tremendous achievement I reprint virtually all of that interview in this issue. It is split into two parts, one part describing the birth and development of the Comet (page 8) and the other part, relating to the Mino, in Mi-notes (page 23).

The very successful growth in the Comet fleets in the middle years was spurred on by Margaret Hylton, then the Comet distributor. As a tribute to her big contribution I reprint part of the chat we had in 1998 (see page 25).

I had hoped to include an article introducing Ruyard Lake.S.C., the club running a Comet open this year for the first time, but time has run out on me. Look at your loose inserts, it may be there.

I didn't get to any of the shows this year and the press release about the "Dinghy Sailing Magazine" came to me by email from Tony Ellison. Thanks Tony.

I usually thank all the contributors to Perihelion, but this time, beyond the regulars: Henry, Norah and Derek, I can only thank Nancy Gould and Stu Meese for the drink recipe and Mark Whetton for information on the Association Championships. Henry and Norah have put a lot of effort into making this issue but for the rest of you, potential contributors, as the schoolteacher might say: "can do better".

Alan Browning, Editor

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

PERIOD FROM 1ST JANUARY 2001 TO 31ST DECEMBER 2001

RECEIPTS	NOTES	2000	2001
MEMBERSHIP FEES	1	£2,375.00	£2,826.00
COMET DINGHIES (NEW BOATS)	2	£140.00	£48.00
NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS REVENUE	3	£165.00	£1,120.00
INSURANCE COMMISSION	4	£1,084.00	£1,045.00
B/SOCIETY INTEREST (NATIONWIDE)	5	£28.30	£25.91
SALE OF BOATS ON INTERNET ETC	6	£15.00	£36.50
DONATIONS	7	£28.00	£59.50
MILLENNIUM MEETING		£255.00	nil
		<u>£4,090.30</u>	<u>£5,160.91</u>
PAYMENTS			
PRIZES AND ENGRAVING	8	£759.09	£636.00
PERIHELION AND EDITOR'S COSTS	9	£1,694.02	£1,496.86
EXHIBITION AND ELECTRIC CHARGES	10	£674.20	£409.13
RYA AFFILIATION FEE	11	£57.00	£62.00
ADVERTISING	12	£443.22	£399.51
EXPENSES	13	£169.77	£211.39
ADHESIVE MEMBERSHIP LABELS	14	£6.30	nil
MILL MEETING 2000, NATIONALS 2001	15	£276.72	£1,003.00
		<u>£4,080.32</u>	<u>£4,217.89</u>
INCOME (2001)		£5,161.91	BALANCE IN B/SOC (2001) £2,273.09
EXPENDITURE (2001)		£4,217.89	BALANCE IN B/SOC (2000) £1,337.68
		<u>£944.02</u>	<u>£935.41</u>
PETTY CASH (2000)		£3.00	PETTY CASH (2001) £11.61
		<u>£947.02</u>	<u>£947.02</u>

D. COLEMAN (HON. TREASURER)

W. J. EDWARDS (HON. AUDITOR)

NOTES

1. Membership 233(2000) 233(2001) Including 5 Family Members which means 228@£12 + 5@£18, total £2,826
Included a lot of work by Norah and Henry.
2. New Boats 14(2000) 4(2001) Very poor, promotion needs revamping.
3. 39 (participants) £3 for Comet Class Assoc per entrant. What a gorgeous three days.
4. Does not change much.
5. Very poor (only 1% (need for change, maybe))
6. Boats sold on the internet plus "sticks of rock" sold to Duo class.
7. Donations from clubs..
8. Not quite as much = thanks to Liz and Ros.
9. Depends on how many inserts are required (Editor's costs less than 2% of this)
10. Back down to its proper level.
11. It's going up again in 2002.
12. Doing quite well really.
13. Up a bit, but I can assure you it could be a lot more.
14. Have not got them yet so cannot be shown in accounts.
15. This year the entrance fees were paid to C.C.A. and passed on to Portland Sailing Academy

??

That's it for 2001. These accounts are all in pounds-Sterling (if you understand what I mean). Any queries please contact me. As I hand over at the A.G.M., I have tried to look after the membership and your money.

Take care,



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
- 2000 John Challener

First Lady

- 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
- Emma Coppenhall

First Junior

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

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
- 2001 Ian Coppenhall

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
- Ian Coppenhall

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 Jaggars	Annette Walter	Brian Welham	Paul Govier	Ian Coppenhall
2001 Ian Coppenhall	Ian Coppenhall	Ian Coppenhall	Ian Coppenhall	Ian Coppenhall

MI-NOTES

(This article is a reprint of part of the 1996 interview with Andrew Simmons.)

Alan Browning: Perhaps you would like to talk a little about the Mino rig, what do you envisage its role to be, a separate racing class or just for fun sailing?

Andrew Simmons: Since the early days, the Comet has had a fairly flat sail with no battens to enable it to be reefed easily. This encourages youngsters and lightweights, especially when we have the Nationals on the sea. It's good to see people put a couple of reefs in the sail when the wind is strong, it means that they can go out for an hour-and-a-half or two-hour race and survive, whereas if they weren't reefed they would be wiped out, get exhausted with too many capsizes and have to retire. Having said that, we're often approached at boat shows by youngsters and we just have to say "really you're not heavy enough for the Comet". There's plenty of sail area on quite a tall mast so you have to be a reasonable weight to sail the boat comfortably. Because of that we've brought out the Mino rig, which is a shorter bottom mast (but the same top mast) and a smaller sail, the size of a Topper sail. It's a nice lightweight small rig on a relatively stable hull shape and it really does transform the boat. I think it was very important to launch the Mino rig, it opens the market up, ultimately I think to the good of the Comet class as well. Even if the Mino is a completely different class, I still think this is for the good of the Comet class because the Mino can act as a feeder, an introduction to Comet sailing, rather than having them buy Toppers or Bytes. But it's early days and we just don't know what's going to happen really.

The Mino is several kilos lighter than the Comet and feels so much easier going. There is less weight in the bow and it just feels a lot more stable. But obviously, unless you're very light, it's not going to be anything like as fast as a Comet. I'd like to encourage lightweights and youngsters into the class, well, into the Comet family. Technically, the Mino must be a separate class, though we're using the same numbering sequence. I'm sure that in future years the Mino fraternity will have close connections with the Comet Class Association. I can see the Mino as a separate class, but some families might have the Comet rig for the father and the Mino rig for the son.

The Mino rig was produced for people who found themselves reefed more often than not. I'd like to make this year an experimental year, with Minos invited to attend open meetings and race alongside Comets but not feature in the results. If the Mino rig were purely an optional rig, you'd have quite hot youngsters come to an open meeting and decide that for heavy winds they'd take the small rig and for light winds they'd take the large rig. This is really doing something that could be done by reefing a Comet and really complicates the issue. People must learn to be able to survive in stronger winds, depowering by spilling wind, luffing up or whatever. Really the Mino must be a separate little class, but with a growth feature, a child could have one and as he grows and puts on weight he could then buy the bigger rig. After years of training with the smaller rig, he could be a force to be reckoned with when he buys the bigger rig.

We've just got to see how the Mino goes. I'm sure it can be incorporated into the Comet scene, either with separate starts or racing together but with separate prizes, as ladies and juniors do now at championships. I do think that a person in a Mino, who weighs 8 stone or under, could sail on equal terms with Comets. It would be nice if the yardstick were the same.

The other side of the Mino market is of course the people who have had their Comets a long time and they've gone from middle age, when they bought their Comets, to older age and are finding the Comets a bit hard work. Rather than go back to a Mirror or something like that, it would be nice if they could have the Mino rig and keep in the Comet scene for a bit longer. Those sort of people aren't going to be able to sail as fast as a normal Comet, they're having the Mino rig because they're not so athletic, not so fit, getting a bit stiff, and they accept that they would not be able to sail as fast as the Comet.

MARGARET HYLTON ON COMET HISTORY

(The article "Talking to . . . Margaret Hylton" was printed in Perihelion 49. Reprinted below are the parts of that article that referred to Comet history, particularly on how the Comet is used for non-racing purposes.)

Editor's note for new members: From 1987 to 1996 Margaret Hylton's occupation was the sole distributor of new Comets for designer and builder Andrew Simmons. She traded under the name "Dinghy Leisure" and she arranged demonstrations of the Comet and delivered new ones all over the country. Husband Barrie assisted her in that period.

Alan Browning: How did it come about that you became the Comet distributor?

Margaret Hylton: My son and I sailed our Comet at some events but he was soon to be leaving home and I needed something to turn my attention to, like everybody does when the children leave home. So Andy came along just as I was looking for something I needed and a deal was done where I became the Comet distributor. For many years Dinghy Leisure was my social life as well as my business. From the beginning I've worked closely with the Class Association and received tremendous support from them. It was an honour to be made a life member in 1996.

Regarding the name for my firm, I think originally, when we were playing about with ideas, I probably had thrown in "Comet Dinghies" but Andy said that he might at some subsequent date want to use the word "Comet", so I couldn't have that. He did eventually change his firm's name from "AMS Marine" (his initials) to "Comet Dinghies" which was a sensible move because it was not obvious that AMS Marine was the sole manufacturer of Comets. The name for my firm had to do with boats and that gave the word "Dinghy". The "Leisure" word came because I wanted a name that sounded less in a hurry than "racing", you know, a contrast to racing, that sailing didn't have to be all about racing, but it could be just about having fun and to me "Leisure" was that sort of a word.

Alan: What features of the Comet did you feel to be the most important to get over to customers?

Margaret: I always saw the Comet as a class racing boat, even though it was not my main interest. I could see the role for the Comet, especially on waters like Aylesbury S.C.. But of course Andy had designed it to be a very versatile boat,

easily car-toppable, a boat you could take away very conveniently on holiday. **Alan:** Have you heard much of people doing this? **Margaret:** Yes, in fact some of the people who bought Comets in the early days weren't racers at all. I'm still in touch with families like the Heyes, who came here and collected their Comet at the start of a month-long holiday on the continent. They needed a car-toppable boat because they were towing a caravan and car-topping is very easy to do with an Easy-Loader. As the years went by, Steve Heyes joined Redesmere and now you see him in the open meeting results. I also know of two Comet sailors who had their boats in Spain, had apartments close to each other and sailed off the same beach. They wanted boats big enough to take a companion and have told me how they have used the Comets to sail to the nearest town to do a bit of shopping. Those boats are still in Spain, when the apartments were sold the boats were sold with them!

I would say that 50% of Comet owners have them just for fun. They often have their favourite places for sailing. The Camping & Caravanning Club Boating Group runs many events, with their own rescue facilities, and any class of boat can join in. A lot of people only ever sail within the Boating Group and some of those are Comets. We sold quite a few Comets to a very small club called Pool Hall. They used to gather as a group and go off to another venue, Bala or Paxton for example, taking their own rescue boat and organising their own events. Again, any class of boat was accepted, it didn't matter. They had caravans and camper vans and you would very rarely have seen them at an ordinary open meeting.

There's the low maintenance aspect too, I think when the Comet came along it was a boat for our time. I mean people were really busy working and wanted to sail in the Summer on Wednesdays after work and one day at the weekend but didn't want to have to spend the time in between on painting and other maintenance. With a Comet you have to tighten the screws occasionally and make sure nothing is frayed and the tiller extension not about to break but that's not a lot to have to do.

Alan: I have always wondered why sailing 2-up featured so much in the Comet advertising. Why was that?

Margaret: The Comet was designed for one person but the width of the cockpit enables you to take another person too, there's room for them to sit on the other side. You can get two small children in with you, Mark Wilkins and Steve Monks have done that. Also, the cockpit is deep so that if you have a child in it they have a greater feeling of security than they would have in a Laser where they would be just hanging on. The Comet is used as a training boat too with both an instructor and a student. On demonstration days Andrew used to take people out for a sail so that they could get the feel of the boat. So you see a 2-up capability gave more flexibility. The Comet can be used for teaching the children to sail or taking mum out to give her a taste of sailing, so with a 2-up capability the family is getting

more for its money, even though much of the time only one person will be in it. It helps the family justify the purchase, it's not so selfish.

Alan: Generally can you give an idea of the kind of people who buy Comets?

Margaret: No, I really can't - they were all sorts. In the early days a number of Topper sailors bought Comets, but nowadays some of them will be looking for a more racy looking boat than the Comet and there is a much greater choice of boat available. I would never personally be looking for a racy looking boat, I'd have been looking for simplicity. Some people were very experienced and knew what they were looking for, but of course they might afterwards go on to another boat. Others were completely new to sailing and we felt that we could in all honesty sell them a Comet and know that if they were keen to practice it was the boat which they would eventually be able to cope with adequately.

DINGHY SAILING MAGAZINE

Press release issued at the London International boat show 2002

'Dinghy Sailing Magazine' is an exciting new monthly magazine available on the newstand from March 2002 to fulfil the needs of people with all levels of dinghy sailing experience.

Our aim is to show sailors how they can get more enjoyment out of sailing, by covering a wide and diverse range of sailing topics, which will be of interest to both novice and experienced dinghy sailing enthusiasts alike.

Demand has grown from the trade and public for a well designed, accessible dinghy magazine which has been created on the desire to cater for the majority of participants in dinghy sailing.

'Dinghy Sailing Magazine' will provide up to date, easy to read and stimulating articles relevant to a wide range of dinghy sailors. A typical issue will contain a mix of news, new product information, boat reviews, practical how-to features, club profiles, sailing techniques, young sailor achievements and activities, racing updates and much more.

A dedicated editorial team including experienced sailing journalist David Parker, Current Laser Radial World Masters champion Steve Cockerill, Royal Navy Sailing coach Graham Foreshaw and key members of the RYA team are just a few of the people committed to bringing our readers the highest quality features in magazine publication.

The editorial team each covering specialist areas of the sport are already in dinghy parks up and down the UK hunting out the best stories and latest news to bring a new media dimension to our great sport.

'Dinghy Sailing Magazine' - Designed to instruct, inform and entertain our readers available on Subscription and in all major newsagents, first issue on sale 14th March 2002.

For more information please contact:

Office: 02392 449700
Peter Small Editorial: 07810 632888 (mobile)
Claire Read Advertising: 07775687777 (mobile)

Published by Seascope Media, a company set up in 2001 by Claire Read and Peter Small.

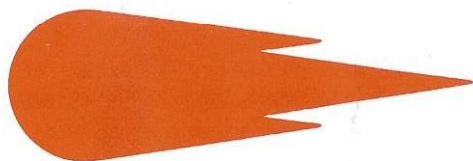
Claire has extensive publishing knowledge and advertising sales experience within the marine industry. Peter's experience dealing with technical issues relating to producing and printing magazine titles will ensure a high quality print product. Combining to make a winning team, producing a first rate product.

12 Broadmarsh Business & Innovation Centre, Harts Farm Way, Havant, Hampshire, P09 1HS

● COMETS, COMETS, KOMETS

Yes, another Comet. This one is a German tailless rocket-propelled fighter, the Messerschmitt 163 "Komet". Construction was of wood, its length was several feet less than twice that of our Comet dinghies but its weight getting on for a hundred times as much! It moved rather faster than us, approaching 600 mph (a factor of nearly 100 too!). We do better on endurance though, the Komet engine ran for only 8 minutes! It also blew up at the slightest provocation. The first flight was in 1939 and development took place in the first years of the war. Production began in 1943, probably more than 100 being built, and some were used to attack the Flying Fortresses of the American daylight raids in 1944. The one in the photograph is to be found in the aircraft museum at East Fortune near North Berwick in Scotland and I believe there is an example in the Hendon museum.

Editor.



Comet Class Association

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association