

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 65
WINTER 2002/2003

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE
CHAIRMAN'S REPORT	2
NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE	4
ORBITAL RESULTS - 2002	5
APHELION RESULTS - 2002	6
NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS REPORT	8
NEW TREASURER	9
FIRST SIX AT THE OPEN MEETINGS	10
PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION	11
DATES FOR YOUR DIARY	12
PERIHELION	12
NEC SHOW: INFORMATION AND VOLUNTEER FORM	
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM AND MEMBER'S REPLY PAGE	
<u>MI-NOTES</u> - MINOS GALORE	13
GOING PLACES	14
THE VOLKSWAGEN KOMET	15
COMET SAILING - A NEWCOMER'S JOTTINGS	16
THE HOSSELL PLATE	18
DIANA THOMPSON - SIX YEARS WITH COMETS	18
MERTHYR TYDFIL OPEN	20
PERIHELION REPRINTS	22
EDITOR'S NOTES	23
BUILDER'S REPORT	24

Cover picture: Sandy goes for a sail
(Winning photo, Comet fun: Wendy Hayes)

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I have not yet joined a local sailing club. Strange, as the last time I moved I joined a club first and then found somewhere conveniently close-by to live. But, despite not having a local base, I do seem to have done a fair bit of sailing this past season, including 17 of our Comet events!

Following the Nationals at Winsford, the final few weeks of our programme were very busy. Norah and I spent a full and very pleasant weekend by the river Avon, racing at Severn SC on the Saturday and then at Arden SC on Sunday. The event at Severn attracted an especially good entry and we all enjoyed an excellent day's racing. The local fleet continues to grow and their enthusiasm is truly infectious. After the sailing, we stayed on with other visitors and locals for a meal and social in the clubhouse and then camped onsite overnight. We enjoyed a leisurely breakfast before departing for Arden, just a short drive away. Arden have moved their site since our last visit and now occupy a very pleasant and more spacious area. The new clubhouse they are building will soon be very well-appointed, but despite the builders' rubble and trenches we had a good day and the hospitality was excellent.

Our next weekend away took in Littleton and Pingewood, the final events of the Eastern and Central Aphelions, respectively. Both events were well supported and hotly contested. Next came Merthyr Tydfil, last event in the Western Aphelion, and it was good to see more visitors there than in recent years. It really is a very fine stretch of water and they always give us a good welcome. But too windy for my liking, again! We were unable to get to Redesmere this year but I am told the event went well and was a fitting end for our Northern Aphelion.

As usual, the last event of the season was at Kingsmead SC. Kingsmead was the first club I joined after leaving college and having been an active member there for over 21 years it is always a pleasure to return and catch up with old friends. Wind and rain made conditions more than a little testing this year: nothing, to quite strong, from any direction and back to nothing within a few yards with the gusts getting progressively stronger as the day went on! Many thanks to Kingsmead for allowing us time at the end of the day to present all the Orbital, and outstanding Aphelion, prizes and mementoes, and the Hossell Plate. A full roundup of winners and all the qualifying competitors will be found later. Congratulations to you all!

Whatever statistics Paul Hinde, our Results Coordinator, comes up with, my own feeling is of yet another very successful year for the Comet. Our events have been

generally well attended and there is evidence of continued enthusiasm and renewed growth for the Comet at many clubs. This years *Racing Classes Review* edition of *Yachts & Yachting* has just been published and, although their own commentators may not give us credit for it, we compare very favourably with the majority of other classes for numbers taking part in the Nationals in both absolute and relative terms: especially when you consider our latest sail number is only 810. Furthermore, and from my own observation (for example where we have shared a venue with another class), attendance at Comet open meetings is more often than not better than other, more numerous, classes!

The Photographic Competition proved, in one way, no less embarrassing for me than it has been for the past couple of years! The judging panel was composed entirely of "volunteers" from those members of Kingsmead SC who were not sailing and made its decisions unaided during the racing. Despite using such an impartial and uninformed jury, first and second in the "Comet Racing" category went to Norah! (Well done). Congratulations to Wendy Hayes for winning both First and Second prizes in the "Comet Fun" category.

I started by stating how many events I managed to get to myself this year. I cannot end without paying homage to someone who competed in **all** the events! (Excepting one where two were on the same date). That is he sailed at 24 open meetings and 2 Championships. I speak, of course of Peter Hayes, C803, of Winsford Flash SC. What a tremendous feat! It would not have been possible, however, without Wendy Hayes who drove him to most of the venues and who has become as familiar and as welcome a visitor as Peter himself. Thanks, Wendy, and I hope you have enjoyed the season as much as any of us. And not forgetting Sandy, their dog, who is now well known at sailing clubs right across the country. She had quite a few adventures of her own during the year, including an attempted kidnapping, but has made many new human, and canine, friends herself and is not beyond donning a buoyancy aid and going for a sail!

Once again, the Association is planning to exhibit at the Birmingham Boat Caravan and Leisure Show (NEC, 15-23 February) and at Sailboat (Alexandra Palace, 1-2 March). If you have any new ideas as to how we could make more of an impact, or could spare a few hours to help man the stand, we are ready and waiting to hear from you!

Happy Christmas and a Successful New Year to you all!

Good Sailing,

Henry Jagers, Chairman.

● NOTES FROM THE COMMITTEE

1. The dates for the **Association Championships** are 7th and 8th June 2003, at Rutland. We will be sharing with the other Comet classes, as we will for the **National Championships** at Weymouth and Portland Sailing Academy on the 23rd, 24th and 25th August 2003.
2. Your Annual General Meeting will be on Sunday 24th August at Weymouth.
3. The Sailing Academy at Weymouth and Portland is being restructured, with plans for extensive new club buildings to create shore facilities to match the superb sailing. We had hoped that the new club house would be ready by August, but a recent visit to the academy revealed that building will not be completed by then.
4. One criticism of the venue is the lack of viewing opportunities for spectators. The new club house will have a large balcony area which will be right on the water's edge, and high enough to give a reasonable view over the sailing area. For 2003 we are making enquiries to see if we can arrange for spectators to go out in other boats to watch the racing.
5. At our recent Committee meeting we agreed to a change in banking arrangements which will give us a chequing account.
6. Paul has continued to have problems in gathering results from clubs hosting Open events. We have decided to send a stamped addressed envelope out with the confirmatory letter which is sent to club contacts, and we will also ask clubs to send e-mail contact details to Paul so that he can send reminders nearer the date of the event. It sounds like a "belt and braces" approach, but our current method of relying on club contacts (who may not be at the event anyway) has not been particularly successful. Our thanks go to Paul for getting all the results in the end!
7. Alan Browning is happy to continue to produce photocopies of "Setting Your Comet Sail" for a small fee.
8. There has been a suggestion that there be an overarching Class Association for all the Comet dinghies. The idea is that this would support the smaller classes, such as the Zero and Race, who would struggle to maintain a committee, and where activity is low: encourage

classes to have joint events and share venues: and make best use of resources by having a joint magazine , with sections for each class. The idea has only recently been mooted and is very much in the idea/discussion stage. Any thoughts which you have on the subject will be much appreciated and valued.

**4. DON'T FORGET – your subscription is due on January 1st 2003.
You will find your renewal slip in this edition of Perihelion**

Norah Jagers, Class Secretary

Editor's note: The above note 8 has come at about the time when I have been thinking of handing on the editorship of the Newsletter to someone else at the next AGM, for by then I will have had the job for 10 years. Finding someone should not be too difficult these days for many more people are "computer literate" than was the case 10 years ago.

ORBITAL RESULTS - 2002

			Six best results						Pts
1	636	I Coppenhall	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
2	620	A Bennett	1	1	2	2	2	3	11
3	188	S Thompson	1	2	2	2	3	3	13
4	800	H Jagers	2	2	2	3	3	4	16
5	803	P Hayes	1	2	3	3	4	4	17
6	427	M Coppenhall	2	2	2	3	3	8	20
7	711	B Welham	3	3	3	3	5	5	22
8	532	J Coppenhall	3	3	4	4	5	5	24
9	518	R Ballam	3	4	4	6	6	7	30
10	585	B Herring	4	4	4	6	6	8	32
11	488	E Coppenhall	4	4	4	4	6	15	37
12	707	D Coleman	4	5	6	6	9	10	40
13	641	P Hinde	2	7	7	8	8	9	41
14	63	C Robinson	3	6	7	8	9	12	45
15	750	R Smallwood	5	5	7	8	9	11	45
16	724	R Lemmon	6	6	6	10	10	13	51
17	762	R Stevenson	8	9	10	11	11	23	72
18	643	K Appleby	8	9	9	10	12	41	89
19	549	M Thompson	4	6	10	12	27	31	90
20	438	G Benson	10	11	11	12	19	46	109

● APHELION RESULTS - 2002

SOUTHERN AREA

			TAP	BAN	AYL	FRN	KNG	Pts
1	636	I Coppenhall		1	1	1	1	3
2	188	S Thompson	1			2	2	5
3	711	B Welham	2		5	7	3	10
4	620	A Bennett		2	4		7	13
5	323	A Walter	6		3	4	6	13
6	518	R Ballam	3	4	11	8	9	15
7	750	R Smallwood	4		7	5	12	16
8	532	J Coppenhall		3	6	10	14	19
9	800	H Jagers	5			3	13	21
10	801	A Best	8	5	9		18	22
11	707	D Coleman	9		10	6	16	25
12	803	P Hayes		9	8	11	11	28
13	63	C Robinson	7		12		10	29
14	611	P Walter	10		13	14		37

CENTRAL AREA

			SHA	RED	NAS	CRN	SVN	PGW	Pts
1	636	I Coppenhall	1	1		1	1		3
2	620	A Bennett	3	2	1		3	1	4
3	800	H Jagers	13	5		2	8	3	10
4	650	P Hossell	2	4	9		6		12
5	427	M Coppenhall			2	3		9	14
6	803	P Hayes	4	8	3		7	7	14
7	532	J Coppenhall	7	6	10	5	11	5	16
8	585	B Herring	10		4	6	13		20
9	780	P Mountford	5		5		12		22
10	641	P Hinde	8	14	7		18	12	27
11	738	R Lemmon		10			10	13	33
12	420	A Bevan		11			20	8	39
13	762	R Stevenson			8	9	23		40

WESTERN AREA

			SHR	SBG	MUD	ARD	MER	Pts
1	636	I Coppenhall	1	1		1		3
2	803	P Hayes	10	2	6	7	3	11
3	800	H Jagers	2	6	4	5	10	11
4	532	J Coppenhall	7	4		4		15
5	419	P Govier	8	3			5	16
6	420	A Bevan	4	7	13	10	7	18
7	724	R Lemmon	6			6	6	18
8	460	M Govier	14	5			4	23
9	205	R Bevan	16	8	18		9	33

EASTERN AREA

			FGR	CRW	CHP	RDT	LIT	Pts
1	636	I Coppenhall	1	1	2		1	3
2	188	S Thompson	3	3	3		6	9
3	803	P Hayes	6	8	5	1	15	12
4	711	B Welham	7	5		3	5	13
5	323	A Walter	10	2		5	18	17
6	518	R Ballam	11	6	6	8	19	20
7	700	J Windibank		4		4	13	21
8	532	J Coppenhall	9	9	7			25
9	117	M Thompson	4	10	12		27	26
10	707	D Coleman	12	11	10	6	11	27

NORTHERN AREA

			RUD	CHS	COM	CAR	RDS	CRN	Pts
1	636	I Coppenhall	1	1		1	1		3
2	352	T Raine	2	2		2	2		6
3	532	J Coppenhall	5	3		5	6		13
4	488	E Coppenhall		6		4		4	14
5	730	B Herring	4	4		6			14
6	670	P Hayes	7	5		7	4	7	16
7	633	J Edwards	6	7		10	5		18
8	643	K Appleby	9	8		9	10		26
9	438	G Benson	11	10			11		32

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS REPORT

Forty nine Comets came to Winsford Flash Sailing Club in Cheshire for three days, over a lovely sunny August Bank holiday. Competitors came from as far as Devon and Sussex in the south to Glasgow in the North.

The first race got under way at 1 pm on the Saturday, with a light North Westerly wind, Ian Coppenhall (Hunts) reaching the windward mark first, followed closely by Bill Webber (Winsford Flash) and Mark Wilkins (Chipstead). Fortunes then changed in the leading group as first Mark then Bill took the lead, meanwhile Christian Birrell (Winsford Flash) had managed to get into the lead group. At the line after some exciting racing Ian got back to first place followed closely by Bill, Mark, Niki Birrell (Winsford Flash) and Christian.

In race 2, the wind increased slightly. First at the windward mark was Mark Wilkins, followed by Bill Webber. After one lap Mark was still in the lead followed by Steve Bellamy (Winsford Flash) Bill and Nick Warren (Littleton). After three laps Mark had opened up a Commanding lead over Bill, at the finish Mark was first, Bill second, Ian Coppenhall third, Tony Best (Taplow Lake) fourth and Alan Bennett (Shustoke) fifth.

Sunday started with a lovely Sunny day, but a more difficult light easterly wind across the lake. In race 3, Ian Coppenhall had a good start and kept the lead for the whole race, Mark Wilkins was second with Christian Birrell third.

Race 4 started after lunch, with Christian Birrell first at the first mark, unfortunately he capsized and Ian Coppenhall overtook. The first three finishing places were the same as Race 3, Ian, Mark and Christian.

Race 5 was proving very difficult to start through wind direction and very light easterly winds. Once again Ian Coppenhall was first at the windward mark followed closely by Brian Welham (Taplow Lake), Brian Herring (Winsford Flash) and Jonathan Latham (Winsford Flash). These four broke away, then on the run, the wind filled from the back and the middle of the fleet caught the leaders. Ian finished first, followed by Simon Thompson (Crawley Mariners) Alan Bennett third and Mike Raine (Rudyard Lake) fourth.

Monday started at 10.00am with another light easterly wind. Christian Birrell lead from start, but was overtaken by Bill Webber who went on to win, followed by Christian and Mark Coppenhall (Hunts).

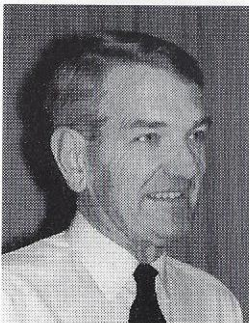
The wind changed to Northerly for the final race of the weekend, strengthening to force 2. Christian Birrell led for most of the race, with Mark and Ian Coppenhall having a brotherly tussle. Mark eventually won with Ian second and Christian third.

I would like to say a big “thank you “ to everyone for coming all the way to Winsford and making it such a lovely week-end.

Ros Stevenson



NEW TREASURER



For those who have not met our new Hon. Treasurer, Richard Smallwood, here he is. Richard has owned Comets since 1993, first 565 and now 750, and he has won many open meetings in those years. He won the Northern Aphelion in 1994 and the Southern Aphelion in 1998 and his name is usually to be found near the top of the results of our Championships. He has sailed all his life, his story is a fascinating one and is to be found in the “Talking to . . . “ series, Perihelion 37 (dec 1995), now reprinted in the one of the booklets.

FIRST SIX AT THE OPEN MEETINGS

SOUTHERN AREA

Aylesbury

- 1 636 I Coppenhall
- 2 427 M Coppenhall
- 3 323 A Walters
- 4 620 A Bennett
- 5 711 B Welham
- 6 532 J Coppenhall

SOUTHERN AREA

Kingsmead

- 1 636 I Coppenhall
- 2 188 S Thompson
- 3 711 B Welham
- 4 488 E Coppenhall
- 5 626 L Dean
- 6 323 A Walter

EASTERN AREA

Littleton

- 1 636 I Coppenhall
- 2 800 H Jagers
- 3 314 M Vinson
- 4 488 E Coppenhall
- 5 711 B Welham
- 6 188 S Thompson

CENTRAL AREA

Severn

- 1 636 I Coppenhall
- 2 168 S Lemmon
- 3 620 A Bennett
- 4 673 D Harris
- 5 724 C Hawley
- 6 650 P Hossell

CENTRAL AREA

Pingewood

- 1 620 A Bennett
- 2 673 D Harris
- 3 800 H Jagers
- 4 707 D Coleman
- 5 532 J Coppenhall
- 6 63 C Robinson

NORTHERN AREA

Redesmere

- 1 636 I Coppenhall
- 2 352 T Raine
- 3 620 A Bennett
- 4 803 P Hayes
- 5 633 J Edwards
- 6 532 J Coppenhall

WESTERN AREA

Arden

- 1 636 I Coppenhall
- 2 641 P Hinde
- 3 673 D Harris
- 4 532 J Coppenhall
- 5 800 H Jagers
- 6 724 R Lemmon

WESTERN AREA

Merthyr Tydfil

- 1 673 D Harris
- 2 620 A Bennett
- 3 803 P Hayes
- 4 460 M Govier
- 5 419 P Govier
- 6 724 R Lemmon

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

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

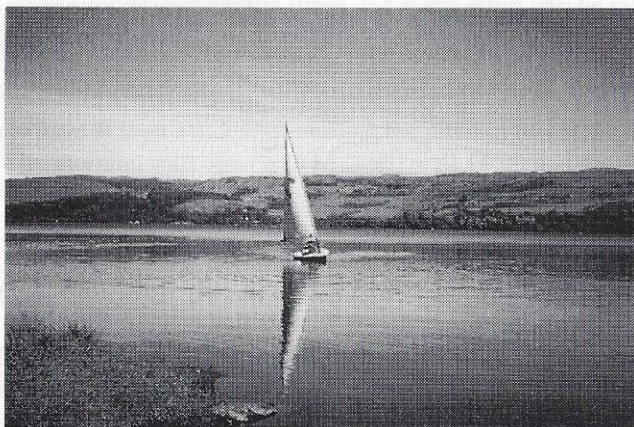
The prizes for this season's photographic competition were:

Racing category: Both prizes to Norah Jagers. The winning photograph was from this year's Nationals at Winsford Flash and appeared in Perihelion 64, the upper picture on page 8. The runner-up appears below.

Fun category: Both prizes to Wendy Hayes. The winning photograph is on this issue's cover featuring her dog Sandy and the runner-up appears below.



Racing category runner-up



Fun category runner-up

● DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

N.E.C.Show: 15 - 23 February 2003

Sailboat: 1 - 2 March 2003

The outline calendar for the early events in 2003 is as follows:

Sat 05/04/03	Shearwater	confirmed
Sat 26/04/03	Fishers Green	confirmed
Sun 27/04/03	Winsford Flash	confirmed
Sat 03/05/03	Taplow Lake	provisional
Sat 10/05/03	Chester	confirmed
Sun 11/05/03	Crawley Mariners	provisional
Sat 17/05/03	Banbury	provisional
Sun 18/05/03	Hampton Pier	provisional
Sat 31/05/03	Chipstead	provisional
w/e 07-8/06/03	<u>Association Championships</u>	
	Rutland	

National Championships are at Weymouth and Portland, on 23rd, 24th and 25th August (Bank Holiday weekend)

Mudford Open is on Saturday 2nd August and will be at the END of Mudford Week, for those of you who want to get your holidays booked.

The full programme will be sent out in the Spring edition of Perihelion. REMEMBER you will only receive that edition if you have paid your subs, which are due on January 1st 2003

● PERIHELION

The next issue of Perihelion will be circulated in early April 2003. **Contributions to me by the end of February please.** Distribution is a few days later than issues at other times of the year because it is deliberately delayed to be after the last day for renewal of membership. If you haven't paid your sub you won't get a perihelion 66!

Alan Browning Editor.

NEC SHOW, BIRMINGHAM

Caravan, Boating and Leisure Exhibition 2003

Would you like a free ticket to this show?

Can you spare four hours?

Are you able to spare a morning or afternoon between the 15th and 23rd of February 2003 to help promote the COMET Class Association and the Royal Yachting Association at this prestigious exhibition?

If you are able to help with the COMET stand at the NEC, please fill in the attached form and return it to me at the address shown on the bottom of the form. Alternatively, contact me on:

Phone: 07703 654 899

OR e-mail: paul.hinde@RYA-online.net

When completing the form, please could you give an indication of when you are able to help staff the Class Association stand. Unfortunately it will not be possible to allocate everybody to their chosen times, but every effort will be made to do so. As a result it will be necessary, after consultation, to timetable people at times other than those requested.

The aim is to have at least two people staffing the stand in two shifts, morning and afternoon. The morning shift will be from 10:00 until 14:00 and the afternoon one from 14:00 until 19:00 on Saturday and Sunday and until 18:00 on weekdays.

Paul Hinde, Comet 641

Please complete the form overleaf to volunteer to help with the COMET Class Association stand.

MI-NOTES

Minos galore

As a somewhat ancient sailor, I was delighted when the Mino modification came along, and was probably amongst the first to adopt the rig. Since then I have only used the full rig occasionally in light weather and for the odd Comet event at Hampton Pier. I have found the smaller rig much less tiring and can still enjoy the comfort of the Comet. After a tiring beat I find that I can recuperate by lying on the cockpit floor for runs or broad reaches and in calm weather, with a light wind, can get good trim and comfort, by sitting on the foredeck with my back against the boom to keep it out. Safety boat crews have occasionally checked to see if I am still awake. On my first outing, a friend said how well the boat was going and I replied that I had only lost the 20% of the sail that I didn't often use in anything of a wind! The lighter mast makes rigging a little less like tossing the caber and also lowers the centre of gravity marginally. Another advantage is that, like a Mirror, it gybes quite happily with the plate fully down.

I am fortunate in belonging to Hampton Pier Y.C., which sets a minimum Portsmouth Yardstick Number for racing. In fact our fastest boats at the moment are Albacores although the limits would encompass Fireballs. This eliminates cats and other hotrods with sails and when split into three fleets, it provides handicap racing which is just about as fair as it can be. Minos race in the Slow Fleet with Toppers as their main opposition. These are probably a shade faster in heavy weather, whereas the Minos do better in lighter conditions. This has been recognised by giving the Minos a Club Handicap of 1260 as compared to the 1290 of the Toppers. It would be interesting to know what handicaps are used in other clubs. The P.Y. of 1193 by the manufacturers (Comet 1173) is quite unrealistic, except perhaps, in a Force 5 - 6 wind.. Certainly a few years ago a Mino with a very able helm was doing well against the Comets at Hampton, in conditions so horrific that when he eventually capsized he bent his mast.

Several of my fellow members have been impressed with the rig and we now have five Minos, with a sixth on the way. It must be said that the owners reached their years of discretion some years ago, but are still very happy to enjoy some close racing. Following on to a comment in the last 'Perihelion', I do race with 14 year olds who are sixty years younger and it is not unknown for me to win!

John Finch Comet/Mino 325

GOING PLACES

Being part of the Comet family has given me the opportunity to go to various places which I might not have gone otherwise, and to stay in a variety of accommodation.

This year I had my first taste of camping. It wasn't particularly taxing – there were loos and showers across the grass (wet) and breakfast was served in the clubhouse. Mind you, I woke during the night to the sound of pickaxes, sledge hammers and falling rubble. Eventually I went out to find out who was demolishing the clubhouse – but there was no-one in sight, and the club members who were also camping on site were conspicuous by their absence (it was about 03.00 hours). Enquiries in the morning elicited the information that the nearby railway track was under repair.

For another weekend event we stayed in a hotel which had an en-suite bath. The bedroom had one corner partitioned off, and the resulting “room” had a bath in it. The wash basin and loo were in a separate room outside the bedroom. Although we also had a “sitting room”, which was furnished with a settee, single bed and TV, the rooms were very Spartan, and courtesy items like soap, shampoo and tissues were non-existent.

The same applied to one of the B&Bs, but there the tea-making equipment was much more adventurous as it was composed of: kettle, toaster, sandwich-maker, tea bags, coffee, dried milk (later some out-of date milk sachets arrived) sugar, and a jar of pickled gherkins. We have to admit to not making use of any of these useful items, mainly because we couldn't work out how the water in the kettle had grown a rather attractive fungus.

This particular house was remarkable for the fact that there was no lighting circuit, so all the lighting was by table lamps. Which was fine, except for the one which had a plug in the bathroom.

We, and our fellow guest (another Comet helm) were given the impression that we each had use of an en-suite bathroom. In a way this was true, as the bathroom which we all used was reached by going through another bedroom (which was unoccupied, luckily!). Those of you who remember Gerard Hoffnung's speech to the Oxford Union will recall the letters from Tyrolean landladies – “Bedroom with bath I have not. Bathroom with bed I have”, which somehow seemed rather apt.

We won't mention the lack of hot water, the wet wall in the bathroom because there was no shower curtain, the damp smell in the room below because the bath wasn't sealed to the wall, the extra lacey fringe on the bedside lampshade which turned out to be cobweb, or the fact that, although the bed was a standard length, the mattress was 6 inches shorter! Given that the bedroom door could only be shut from the inside, and then only by using a bolt, we felt (and hoped) that we were in a crime-free area.

Needless to say, we had a thoroughly enjoyable weekend with the Comet fleet, and our accommodation added a certain piquancy.

Incidentally, we never did work out why there appeared to be a stuffed ferret in a cage in the corner of the room.

Norah Jagers

(Editor's note: The times Anne and I have stayed over at Comet events has been in our folding caravan, new in 1995. Luxury, Any spider that gets in is ruthlessly pushed out !!!)

● THE VOLKSWAGEN KOMET

The Komet camper van which Alan featured in Perihelion 64 was one of a range of motorized caravans produced by, I think, a company called Holdsworth. They were based on a VW Transporter chassis, and there were several models. As well as the Komet, the firm produced the Kameo, Kamper and Karisma.

My parents bought a Karisma, which was a 2 person version, with standing headroom. They drove all over the country once my father retired, visiting many old haunts and renewing friendships, many from their schooldays.

I had been on the look-out for a Komet to photograph for Perihelion, and we eventually saw one as we left the meeting at Staunton Harold. Henry wandered over to take a shot while the occupants were looking at something else. However, Alan had also spotted one and got his photo in first!

In terms of Comets, Andrew has already produced the Charisma. Do we await the Camper and the Cameo with bated breath!!

Norah Jagers

Editor's note: Hopefully there will be another Comet vehicle in the next issue.

COMET SAILING - A NEWCOMER'S JOTTINGS

In the summer of 2001, I was rapidly coming to the conclusion that no-one wanted to sail with dad any more.

I had owned a Wayfarer which we had sailed as a family for seven or eight years on Chichester Harbour, a beautiful location with some of the best estuary sailing in the south of England. Never very serious sailors, we had used our trusty boat 'Enigma' for family days out to East Head beach, around the various inlets of the harbour, and even to the Isle of Wight!

Our three lads, all advancing teenagers had decided that

- a. Sailing with Dad helming was definitely not 'cool'
- b. Wayfarers were not really very exciting

(Anyone who thinks a Wayfarer is not exciting, should read some of the accounts in their class magazine of characters such as Ralph Roberts and Frank Dye, who have sailed this old warhorse to various locations across the channel, down the St Lawrence Seaway and from Scotland to Iceland!)

However, as anyone with teenagers will know, at some point you have to 'let go'. Although I decided to keep the Wayfarer, it was essential that I got hold of something more interesting... and quickly. A holiday in Cornwall beckoned and some sort of boat was a must.

Flashback to a holiday several years before in Salcombe. We had parked Enigma on Mill Bay beach, the opposite side of the estuary to the town for the duration. This is reputedly the best place to launch, but pushing a Wayfarer across a sandy beach is the best way I know to slip a disk. Lying on the beach, nursing my sore back, I gazed lazily at the bustle of boating activity that is Salcombe Estuary in high summer.

Amongst the normal selection of Ents, Wayfarers, GP 14s, Lasers and Salcombe Yawls, I spotted a solitary boat with a red splodge on its sail. I didn't know what it was, but this guy was having serious fun. There was a fairly gentle breeze on the beach, but the wind in Salcombe funnels along the estuary. A sailing friend had suggested I always check the flag on one of the hotels right next to the main 'drag', and sure enough it was fluttering vigorously.

Anyway, this boat, which was of course a Comet, was being flung around with gay (old sense!) abandon, by some chap who clearly knew how to handle her. When he landed on the beach, I did the usual saunter-nonchalantly-over-and-admire-the-boat routine, which gave me the chance to have a good chat and look the thing over.

MMmmm..... simplicity personified:

- * Nice and light - no more sore back
- * Loose-footed sail - easy to rig
- * Stern mainsheet - not so sure, as I am a lazy cleat-in / go-about type
- * Unstayed mast - great !
- * Nice front seat and room for two - good for teaching youngest son
- * Proper boat you could sit in - not 'on' as per horrid Lasers

So there it was, love at first sight, or as they say in nautical circles ' I liked the cut of her jib' - except she didn't have one.

So back to 2001 and a very short bit of searching led me to become the proud owner of Comet 57 (Beanz Meanz), all ready for my holiday. The name is interesting, in that the owner who registered it was worried that Heinz might not approve. So he sought permission and duly received a letter that basically said "OK, but don't use our greenish bean can colour". I was a bit curious about what concerned them surely no one could mistake a Comet for a family-size can of beans ?

Anyway, the only bit of sailing I could fit in before the holidays was on Chichester Harbour. One of those days where you turn up, look at how strong the wind is, debate a bit, then convince yourself its OK to have a go.. With a 4 gusting 5, I left a bit of a reef around the pole (is one supposed to do this?). After several attempts at getting in (it was high tide), being watched by a crowd of admirers on the slipway, I finally got off on a broad reach.

After years of sailing Enigma, this was like riding a bike for the first time - in heavy traffic! The Harbour on a Sunday is like Piccadilly circus. Basically, I shot across the estuary, went about and shot back to the slipway ! Definitely the end of my sail for the day, and still shaking !

If anyone is in the remotest bit interested in these ramblings, I will provide Alan with some more on how the first holiday went, for a future edition.

THE HOSSELL PLATE

The Hossell Plate was donated last year by Liz and Phillip Hossell as an annual award to the person judged by the committee to have made the greatest contribution to Comet sailing, and to enhance the membership of the Comet Class Association.

Last year the worthy winner was Sue Coppenhall for her organization of and support for "Team Coppenhall".

This year your Committee has awarded the Hossell Plate to someone who works tirelessly to enthuse people, particularly youngsters, to sail; encourages people to try and buy Comets; and, once they have, actively promotes the Class Association. Their club has a very high proportion of Comet sailors who are members, and who have benefited from this person's tuition in their role as Instructor.

On top of all this activity in respect of the Class Association, their club, and sailing in general, this person also sails regularly in Comet events. They have been one of the Association's most faithful and dedicated competitors for many years.

The winner is DIANA THOMPSON.

DIANA THOMPSON- SIX YEARS WITH COMETS

Editor's note: Diana made these comments in my interview with her family in August 1995 (see Perihelion 36), by which time she had been involved with Comets at Crawley Mariners S.C. for six years. She is still of course going strong now after 13 years.

"In 1987, my family, that is husband Michael, offspring Simon, Juliette and I, went on a dinghy sailing holiday in the Med and I had quite a bit of fun in a Topper. The following year Simon started to learn to sail at Plymouth Polytechnic and as Michael did not want him to get a head start, I finally gave in and we took up an offer from friends, who had been trying to persuade me for 15 years, to join them at



Crawley Mariners. We started off in March 1989 by doing the RYA Level 1 and 2 at the club and thoroughly enjoyed it.

After the course we ordered a Miracle, but they took such a long time to finish it that, when Comet 50 came up on the notice board for sale, we bought it so that we could keep practising. We had looked at Steve Kibble's boat and Robin Ballam's boat and had decided that the Comet was the boat that suited our family. A woman could sail it, a man could sail it, two people could sail it. We've always thought that the versatility of the Comet was under-advertised. It's a good family boat for varying weights. Then, when Simon came home from college he used to sail it and race it whilst we (Michael and I) went on to do RYA level 3.

Simon was getting really interested so we bought Comet 188. Michael and Simon went away to the Sutton Bingham Nationals that year (1992) but I didn't want to go just to spectate, so I went to look at 117, a lovely boat in beautiful condition. We also rang up the man who wanted to sell 65, but it was showing its age. However, its combi-trailer was excellent and Simon needed one, so we bought both those boats. Michael did up 65 and Juliet now has that one. So that was how we came to buy four Comets. As you see we had not done much sailing, except on the RYA courses, before we came to the Comet.

There are 5 ladies who race regularly at our club (sailing Mirror, Gull, Topper and 2 Comets) and we thoroughly enjoy sailing against each other. Among the ladies, I know that if I win I've done well and know that I'm improving. In the Comet fleet, we always have 2 or 3 Comets on the water and they jokingly say that if the three Thompsons turn up there's enough for a race anyway. Like Juliet I'm not very good in the thick of it, but I'm becoming more confident. I had a few nasty accidents on the run when I first had the Comet. Andrew Simmons had never seen anybody hanging on for dear life like me, kneeling in the back with a terrified look on my face! But I'm not as frightened of it now, I'm beginning to enjoy it.

I think that racing Comets is a sport that you can do to quite an advanced age. I wonder who the oldest Comet sailor is?

We've got about 27 Comets Crawley Mariners and a fairly good nucleus and we nearly reached 30 but lost a few. But building up the fleet was easy in some ways because when a number of Comet sailors did well, some of the lighter Laser sailors changed to the Comet. The only problem at present is that you can't get hold of second-hand boats for the youngsters at a price their parents can afford. Many youngsters graduate from Toppers to Lasers and find they can't handle them in stronger winds. I feel that the Comet is such a good transition boat but its price is unfortunately against it.

I always write something in the club newsletter about events at home and away which helps to keep up the interest in the class. I also do as much as I can to help club members buy, sell and try out Comets. Then it's just a matter of being enthusiastic and encouraging Comet sailors to get on the water as much as possible.

The biggest problem I've found is getting in again after a capsize. I've discussed this with Andrew Simmons and Barrie and Margaret Hylton, because when you're older it's not so easy, even with the grab rails. I think I've finally cracked it but I still can't get it up from an inversion. Barrie reckons that I need a more buoyant buoyancy aid that will hold me higher in the water so that I can get up on to the boat when it's inverted. Also when it's reefed it's harder to get up because it comes up too fast and goes over the other way.

I have found the Comet class very supportive to me, in particular the other ladies. Everyone was so good to me when I first sailed on the sea at Gunfleet. I do actually like sailing on the sea now. I think the Comet is a bit wide for a small woman, if you're short, there's a problem hiking out. I put my foot on the dagger board to push myself out. I've also found that it's a nice easy boat to rig, except for putting in the mast, which I don't do unless the wind is very light.

I like being Comet class captain, it's fun, but I want to go on sailing one as long as possible - - - then buy a Gull."

● MERTHYR TYDFIL OPEN

Conditions were beautiful for the eleven Comets competing in this, the last race of the Western Aphelion (travellers series). After the early morning mist burned off we had constant sun with a good southerly force three blowing straight up the lake allowing for a good beat to the first mark.

By the time the first race started the wind had increased to a force 3 to 4 and competitors were enjoying the planing conditions before the start. Dave Harris led the fleet to the first mark with Alan Bennett second and Paul Govier third. Dave and Alan maintained these positions for all three laps but Paul lost third position to Roger Lemmon before the finish.

After a great lunch the second race was held with several competitors choosing to reef in the strengthening wind, now force 4 to 5. The beat was shortened to save tiring legs and more reaches were added to the course. The start was much closer and more organised with all starters crossing the line within a couple of boat lengths. Paul Govier led to the windward mark by quite a convincing distance. With a big gust at the gybe mark flattening four of the chasing boats Paul's lead

increased. However, in the increasing wind Paul was finally overhauled on the third lap finishing in fourth. Pete Hayes finished first, Mark Govier second and Dave Harris third.

In the third race Mark Govier crossed the line first but was overtaken by Alan Bennett and Dave Harris before the windward mark. Dave and Alan swapped places a few times before the end of the race and Pete Hayes overtook Mark. Alan finished first, Dave second with Pete third.

The overall result for the day was a win for Dave Harris, Alan Bennett was second and Pete Hayes was third.

Overall Results

		Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Overall
673	Dave Harris	1	3	2	1
620	Alan Bennett	2	5	1	2
803	Pete Hayes	5	1	3	3
460	Mark Govier	6	2	4	4
419	Paul Govier	4	4	6	5
738	Roger Lemmon	3	DNF	5	6
420	Alun Bevan	8	6	7	7
724	Helen Leivers	7	DNF	8	8
205	Rhiain Bevan	10	DNF	9	9
426	Roger Edwards	9	DNF	DNF	10
800	Henry Jaggers	DNS	DNF	DNF	11

Mark Govier Comet 460



● PERIHELION REPRINTS

I apologise in advance if the reprints that have been ordered by members do not arrive until after Christmas. The delay is due to personal problems which are taking up a lot of my time at the moment. Also it will be working my LaserJet 5L printer rather hard and the computer driving it sometimes has a mind of its own!

To reassure those who have asked for reprints that I am working on their orders, the names so far are: Armstrong, Brander, Butcher, Carling, Chorley, Dormand, Duerdoth, Foster, Gregory, Keynes, Palmer and Pearson. Please bear with me.

E-mail, floppy disc, CD, website.

The set of 7 booklets I offer total about half an inch in thickness (twice the thickness of a year's worth of Perihelions), which you can read, put on the shelf and refer to conveniently if you want to.

It has been suggested to me that the documents could be sent via e-mail. The present position is that the documents are on about a dozen floppy discs in Word-7 format and the total number of (A5) sides is 213. Using e-mail transfers the problem of printing from me to you. You would need perfect transmission, the few photographs are not vital but the many scanned-in drawings are are essential.

Of course, if my costs are covered, I could simply send a set of floppies, hoping that you can read and print them. Other possibilities are of course copies of the files on to one CD (but I've not got a CD-writer and I'm told that there are several CD formats). Perhaps best of all might be to send the files to Tony Ellison for him to place on the Comet web-site. I am told that there is a system called "Acrobat" which is designed to give universal readability regardless of the type of computer etc. I am following this up to see what Tony can do.

Costs

Regarding the cost of booklets, I am only trying to recoup what it costs me to do the printing and pay for the envelopes and postage. Five years ago I charged £1 each, £5 for the set of six, but someone has suggested that costs have gone up, indeed my toner cartridges now cost nearly £50! So while I accept the £5 payment for those who wrote in straight away I am asking £6 for the set now. The set now includes a complementary copy of Keith Lamdin's "Setting your Comet sail".

"Setting your Comet sail"

If you wish to have a copy (photocopy) of "Setting your Comet sail" on its own, just send me a stamped addressed envelope (19p or 27p stamp). The booklet only comprises four A4 sheets so I don't ask a "small fee".

EDITOR'S NOTES

This, the Winter issue, includes as usual the final results of 2002 compiled by Paul Hinde. Unfortunately, he has had some computer trouble and his review of the season's competitive sailing will not be with you until Perihelion 66.

Membership renewal time has come round again! As last year there are un-numbered pages for you to remove and send to the Treasurer, and the Committee have asked me to include again a comments sheet on the back. So more comments please! Also you will find Paul Hinde's request for volunteers to help at the NEC show. Those pages are in the centrefold, between pages 12 and 13.

Please note three corrections on the inside cover (printed in **bold**). These are to Richard Smallwood's e-mail address and postcode and Andrew Simmons e-mail address.

E-mail

At the moment it is **not** possible to send things to me by Fax or e-mail. The computer that received e-mails is not connected to the net.

Thanks

Many thanks to Mark Govier and Ros Stevenson for their meeting reports and the authors of other articles, John Finch on the Mino fleet at Hampton Pier and Steve Gregory on being a newcomer to the Comet. Steve had been sailing a Wayfarer for a decade or so, it would be nice to hear from newcomers to the Comet who have not had such experience, like my situation was in 1991. Also thanks to Norah Jagers for her jottings on being a "traveller". I'd like more "chatty" articles on personal experiences, I won't send them on to Tony for the web site.

Rivals scoring

Some may have noticed that when I looked at the "Rivals" in the last issue I used a different method of scoring, an easier one to do after the event. Whilst it will not always do so, it did give the same ranking as the method of "deleting the rest" previously used.

Alan Browning, Editor

BUILDER'S REPORT

What a year it's been! Foul weather in the Spring and early Summer put a damper on new boat sales, but enquiries picked up a lot in August and September. We've done some full-page adverts in the new Dinghy Sailing Magazine which have created some interest.

Final developments with our new racer, the Comet Race delayed the first customer delivery until June. Some of you may have seen the Yachts & Yachting test which was rather good. So far we've built six but hopefully it should start to pick up next year now we have the boat test. If there are sufficient numbers its first Inlands and Nationals will be with all the other Comets at Rutland and Weymouth.

Business picked up a bit at the Southampton Boat Show in September with a couple of orders, the demo weekend at Burghfield went well with another six, two of which were for Comets, recently an ex-Comet, ex-Topaz sailor has returned to the fold with another Comet and there is a Comet Mino on order for Seaton near Henry and Norah in the Spring.

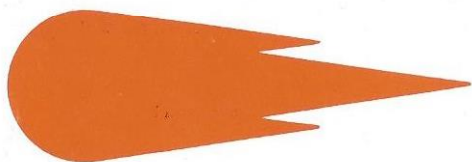
After an absence of a couple of years, there will be a Comet on the stand at London Boat Show in January, which should result in some renewed interest.

Despite the costs and efforts of developing the Comet Race, we are launching yet another Comet at London. This new dinghy, the Comet Versa, will be an all rounder, not a racer and will fit in between the 11ft Zero and the 15ft Trio. No prizes for guessing its length at 13ft. A very stable hull with 5ft 4in beam, sit in seats as well as a "not too narrow" side deck. Most will have mainsail and jib but officially it will have just a single sail as standard but we will show it at London with the jib option. After more developments this winter we will show it with a small asymmetric spinnaker at Sailboat. In its single sail mode it really is an easy going "gentleman's single-hander".

If you are at London do come and say hello, at Sailboat in March. All the Comet Classes and my trade stand are together so should present quite a spectacle.

Wishing you all a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year.

Andrew Simmons.



Comet Class Association

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association