

**PERIHELION**



**71**

**Summer 2004**



**Comet Class Association  
Newsletter**

**NEWSLETTER NUMBER 71**  
**Summer 2004**  
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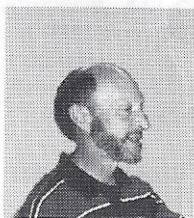
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## Chairman's Report



What a wonderful Bank Holiday weekend we enjoyed at Rutland!

There was a good mix of wind strengths: often too much for me on the first two days, although I did finish all the races and the sailing was really exhilarating.

Monday was very much calmer, enabling some of the lighter weight helms to demonstrate their skills: too late for some! Competition was close as ever this year right down the fleet but particularly for the top places with the overall winner not decided until the final race. A full report of the racing will be found later in this issue so I need not go into further detail here. Just to say hearty congratulations to our 2004 National Champion, Ian Copenhall, he had a good run for his money this time but triumphed at the end!

As well as the racing, for which Mike Atkinson did a first rate job as Race Officer, the food and social side went very well with Rutland SC's caterers doing an excellent job at very reasonable cost. The B-B-Q after the AGM on Sunday was especially noteworthy.

Forty-six entries, old friends plus many new faces, fine weather, a good venue and great sailing - and even Barrie and Margaret Hylton (who many of you will remember) came over to watch - our 2004 National Championships really did live up to expectations! Sincere thanks to Rutland SC,

to Norah for organising the event, to Ros for choosing the prizes and to Hyde Sails for sponsoring us.

Our AGM was held as usual after the racing on the middle day of the championships and was well-attended. In my report, I took the opportunity to thank the rest of the committee and many others for their work and assistance over the past year. I also made a plea for others of you to get more actively involved in the organisation, we could do with a few new faces on the committee and some new ideas to help promote the Comet which you all know is the best small single-handed dinghy on the market. All that said, the Committee was re-elected *en bloc*, so no changes this time. Minutes of the meeting will be published in a later edition.

No substantive motions were put to the AGM but a lively discussion developed under *any other business* over a suggestion that the builder should offer a centre main sheet as an alternative to the transom sheeting. Some of the arguments which were put, for and against, are as follow:-

### For

The helm faces forwards throughout tacking and gybing which, with a bit of practice, some may find preferable. In some classes, centre sheeting gives more control of mast bend and sail shape but this would not work as our sail is loose-footed.

Centre sheeting is favoured (?) by the RYA for teaching, especially for their youth training programme, so newcomers to sailing considering a boat of their own

might dismiss an aft sheeted boat. "Street-cred" amongst younger sailors. Most of the newer classes are centre sheeted.

### Against

Added block and rope would be a serious encumbrance when moving round in the cock-pit, especially in light airs when boat trim is so important.

The existing boom would not be strong enough and would be bent.

The most practical design would still have a transom-horse arrangement with the sheet led along the boom and down through a cock-pit mounted block. This could impair the free movement of the boom, especially in light airs.

If it did enhance the boat speed, and there is no reason to think it would, all existing Comet owners would need to learn new techniques as well as having the expense of converting if they want to remain competitive.

It would negate our "one-design" status. Aft sheeting was the reason many of us, including our younger members, chose the Comet to start with. Would a centre sheeted version really attract the new youngsters?

We would welcome your comments on this issue!

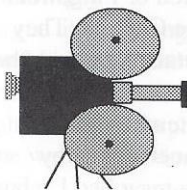
The National Championships were early this season but with eight open meetings preceding them there had been plenty of opportunity to practise. I managed to get to six: Shearwater, Fishers Green, Sutton Bingham, Taplow, Banbury, and Crawley Mariners. Many thanks to these and to Winsford and Rudyard for putting on the events and to everyone who supported them. Hope to see even

more of you at our remaining events, especially at the Association Championships at the end of August at Hampton Pier.

Here in Beer, as across the country, we have enjoyed some really hot weather of late. Late last night Norah called me down from the PC to come into the garden. There, by the steps just outside the sitting room door, were two glow-worms, our first of the season and very early, their segmented bodies shining brightly with that mysterious green glow: almost uncomfortably intense in the surrounding darkness! Summer is here and if the sunshine keeps up and there's a breeze with it there should be some really fine sailing yet to come. Let's all get out in our Comets and show the other classes what it's all about!

Good Sailing,  
Henry Jagers

## Photographic Competition



Entries, as many as you like please, to me or the Editor by the 16<sup>th</sup> October.

Send as prints, files on disk or CD (scanned or direct from digital camera), or email. (If

emailing me lots of large files perhaps you could give prior warning!)

Categories are :-

**"Comets on the Water"**  
and **"Comet People"**.

**Open to anyone!**

Henry Jagers



## Secretaries Report

### Notes from the Committee:

1. It was good to see so many people, new faces as well as some of the "old stagers" at Rutland for the Nationals. The conditions certainly gave everyone a chance to shine, as the results testify.
2. We can report that the "walking wounded" are all well on the way to recovery, with both Helen Leivers and Tony Best sailing as well as ever following their head injuries, and Brian Welham has recovered from his chest infection.
3. We are sorry to hear that the Open meeting at Naseby has been cancelled. The water board, having thought that they had fixed the problem with the dam during the winter, found that more work was needed, and have drained the lake again. The club has now disbanded.
4. In order to ensure that helms have sufficient opportunity to qualify for the Central Aphelion, they will be able to use their results at Arden, Littleton or Pingewood & Kennet Valley towards the Central. They must notify Paul Hinde (contact details on the inside of the cover) of their intentions as follows: Arden by 19th September 2004; Littleton, Pingewood & Kennet Valley by 10th October 2004.
5. The National Championships 2005 will be over the August Bank Holiday – venue to be confirmed shortly.
6. The Association Championships 2005 will be at Staunton Harold SC over the May Day bank holiday.
7. There was considerable discussion at the AGM around a suggestion that the builder be approached to consider a centre main sheet.



We would be grateful for your comments to inform the debate. You will find the main arguments for and against elsewhere in Perihelion.

8. We are mindful of our programme for 2005, especially with the demise of Naseby. Please come forward with offers of venues for events, as well as comments on places which we already use.

Teignmouth Corinthian YC has already expressed considerable interest in hosting the Nationals in 2007.... Comments please!

9. Rupert Whelan, who is a newcomer to Comets, has commented that his Comet has attracted a good deal of interest at his home club. If any of you would like support in meeting such interest, and perhaps increasing the numbers of Comets at your club, please contact any of the members of the committee. We also produce an annual brochure about the class association which you may like to give to Comet owners who are not members – please contact Henry who will send some to you.

Norah Jagers  
Class Secretary



## Editorial

For most of my life I have been involved with committees and in my experience they all start with apologies and the correction of errors. Well my editorial experience it seems is going the same way. The front cover photo of Perihelion 70 was wrongly attributed to Norah and the credit should go to Richard Smallwood, so thank you its a great shot. My spelling mistakes are not as bad as the old days because of the first class spell checking but I occasionally still get names wrong. I won't be able to correct everything but I will grovel when I see you. The feed back from the last Perihelion was of too small printing and information jumping columns which I have taken on board for this edition. Some of the problems arise from me not understanding the limitations of the printing process the DPI density and subtle variations I made to the lay out on my software were not transferred to the printed edition. So for this edition I have been more conservative with the layout.

This edition has a first class national report by Alan Bennett loads of open meeting reports, Information and Photographs from our wonderful committee and articles by Rupert Whelan, Brian Welham, Roger Johnstone, me and some great photo's from Jennifer Lemmon. Thanks to all the contributors and please make it clear who is sending the items, because otherwise I am prone to guess.

Also please note when sending in your results that Paul Hinde has changed his address and telephone.

Have a good one  
John Windibank

## LETTERS

### Centre Sheeting

Do we don't we? and it seems that all classes argue about changes with their boats and now its centre sheeting for Comets. The reason I bought a Comet was its simple unfussy layout no shrouds or battens a beautiful uncluttered cockpit allowing a passenger if you want. A lightweight well made one design dinghy that was responsive and good to sail at a very competitive price. Centre sheeting for me would not be an advantage as it would detract from many of the Comets advantages and if I had wanted a centre sheeting dinghy I would probably have bought a Laser. But we are all different and if people want to sail with centre sheeting perhaps we should give them the option as they do in the Laser Class and the one design concept is not a problem there as everyone sails centre sheeted. It won't in my opinion sell another boat but it should prove a slight advantage to the racing man so it will mean we will all have to have our boats modified to compete and with so many other centre sheeting dinghies to choose from, why pick a Comet?

John Windibank 700/555



## 2004 Comet Nationals.

### Success for Ian Coppenhall

An excellent turnout of 46 Comets from all over the country assembled for an exciting weekend of sailing at one of the premier inland sailing venues, Ruland Water, on the Whitsun bank holiday weekend of May 29/30/31.

Large courses were set up in the main sailing area near the dam and water tower for those who know the Water. The courses for race one and two were sausage, then triangle, and had legs about one mile long. Conditions varied from next to nothing to force 4 plus, so providing a challenge to all sailors. These upper wind ranges make the Comet an exciting boat to sail and maximum concentration is needed at all times, especially on the reaches and runs.



RACE ONE lasted for 58 minutes for the lead boat and had the strong winds mentioned, coming from ESE direction. Alex Reeve Comet 152 from Taplow, lead for the first three laps, dropping to second on the last lap. Bill Webber 107 from Winsford Flash was second then fourth for two laps finally winning the race. Robert Hamilton 150 also from Taplow was third for the first two laps, second for lap three and finally third at the finish. Ian Coppenhall 636 from Hunts was fourth, then fifth, then third, finishing fourth. Dave Harris 673 from Severn the outgoing Champion was having an up/down race – 7<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, finishing 6<sup>th</sup>. He had admitted at the briefing as feeling understandably nervous at this event. Stephen Lemmon 168 also from Severn was also moving up and down but more consistent in 9<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> for the last two laps, Richard Smallwood 750 from Frensham Pond improved from 15<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>, to 6<sup>th</sup> finishing in 7<sup>th</sup>

place. Derek Coleman 707 from Coney went well in lap one in 10<sup>th</sup> place but fell back to 20<sup>th</sup> for the rest of the race. John Windibank 555 from Chipstead was also having a bad hair day having positions of 14<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, and finishing 18<sup>th</sup>.

RACE TWO was held back to back and was quite eventful for several reasons as a windsurfer was sitting on his board waiting for help in the middle of the start area. Several boats capsized as they got caught out in the gusty conditions and one sailor was thought to have been hit by a capsizing boats' mast. She was returned quickly to the shore for treatment by the rescue boat. The mark laying boat then had to cover instead and there was a hold up of the next start as the wind had shifted.

Four more exciting laps were then completed with again many places changing throughout the race.

The places changed mainly over 3-4 positions so it was important to get a good start and first beat and read the windshifts well. Ian lead for the first two laps then dropped single places over the last two to finish 3<sup>rd</sup> at the end. John Windibank was living up to his name and going well this time having positions of 2<sup>nd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> ending in 6<sup>th</sup> place. Bill was 3<sup>rd</sup> for the first two laps and 1st for the last two laps. Mark Wilkins 657 from Chipstead was making up for race ones' 11<sup>th</sup> and was in 4<sup>th</sup> place throughout. Stephen was going really well with a tighter toe strap with 5<sup>th</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and ending in 2<sup>nd</sup> place. Robert was 6<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, and finished in 5<sup>th</sup> place. Richard was having a battle with Dave for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>, with Dave coming out on top. One of the biggest gainers was Stephen Harvey 758





from Cotswold moving up from 20<sup>th</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> 17<sup>th</sup> and finishing 13<sup>th</sup>.

At the end of the first day and after two races, Bill was leading the Championship on two points and looked to be running away with it. Stephen was second on seven points, Ian third also on seven, and Rob fourth on eight points.

The second day of the event saw slightly less and a more comfortable wind, down from force 4+ to 3+, from the same general direction and sunny conditions throughout.

The course for RACE THREE was still the sausage then triangle format, with legs about a mile long. Bill was trying to capitalise on the first day and lead throughout. Mark had moved up during the race from 6<sup>th</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> for the last two laps. Robert went well in the first lap in 2<sup>nd</sup>, but dropped to 4<sup>th</sup> and then 6<sup>th</sup>. Ian also had a bit of a hiccup going from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> finish in 3<sup>rd</sup>. John had 4<sup>th</sup> then 3<sup>rd</sup> ending in 5<sup>th</sup> place.

Alan Bennett 620 from Staunton Harold had 5<sup>th</sup> for two laps and ended in 7<sup>th</sup>. Stephen had a bit of a nightmare going from 7<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> and ended in 13<sup>th</sup>. Richard was going the other way and reading the windshifts well going from 8<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>. Bill was declared to have been OCS so everyone was quite happy to move up one place!

The fleet returned to shore for lunch before coming back out for races four and five. The course this time was the inverted "P" of beat, reach, gybe, reach, run, with the beat about one mile long.

RACE FOUR the start sequence had to be restarted due to a windshift, and all went well the second time.

Ian decided that he had given Bill too much of a lead over the first three races and it was about time that he won a race or two to even things out a little. He proceeded to lead from start to finish even managing not to be OCS! Bill held on to have a 4<sup>th</sup>, then 2<sup>nd</sup> for the last two laps. Dave reappeared and had 2<sup>nd</sup>, then 4<sup>th</sup> finishing 3<sup>rd</sup>. Robert ended in 9<sup>th</sup>, having previously been 22<sup>nd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>! Alan had 5<sup>th</sup>, and then 6<sup>th</sup> for the last two laps. Stephen went better this time and moved through from 6<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> at the end. Henry Jagers 800 from Beer, had a good first lap at 13<sup>th</sup> but dropped like a stone to 21<sup>st</sup> and ended in 31<sup>st</sup> place! Mark, who had been promoted to win race three was having a very dodgy race having a 14<sup>th</sup> then 10<sup>th</sup> and ending in 12<sup>th</sup>.



RACE FIVE was one to remember for several reasons and was held back with race four. The wind dropped from a 2 to 3, to a 1 to 2 at the start and was very shifty.

Ian lead at the end of the first lap, was then 2<sup>nd</sup> and ended in 1<sup>st</sup>. Alan was 2<sup>nd</sup>, and then 3<sup>rd</sup> for the last two laps. Bill was 3<sup>rd</sup>, then 1<sup>st</sup>, ending in 2<sup>nd</sup>.



### Nationals Continued

These three boats pulled away from the rest lead by Stephen who was 4<sup>th</sup> for two laps losing out in the last lap down at 9<sup>th</sup>. Mark was 7<sup>th</sup>, then 8<sup>th</sup>, finishing in 4<sup>th</sup>. Dave had 9<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> and up to 5<sup>th</sup> at the end. Rob had 8<sup>th</sup> then 5<sup>th</sup> ending in 6<sup>th</sup>. One reason for these place changes was the mini



localised strong wind that capsized boats that were either on the run or rounding the leeward mark at the end of lap two. This was followed by a massive 30 degree wind shift halfway up the beat which meant that you could fetch the windward mark on starboard. Boats that went right lost out to this. There were massive place changes from 6<sup>th</sup> place downwards. Ian was declared OCS (so replicating Bills' score), and once again the rest of the competitors were happy to be promoted one place! The fleet returned to shore for the AGM and the BBQ.

Racing on the Monday was delayed due to light patchy winds but eventually started in sunny skies, with what wind there was in a SE direction with the windward mark up near Normanton Church Museum.

RACE SIX was very much a lottery, but still saw the same group of sailors at the front – as you do! The course was once again the sausage then triangle, with long legs. The leading large bunch came to a halt on the run in the middle of lap one, so the second half of the fleet simply went around to the left. Ian managed to hold on to his first place which finished after another beat and one reach, and was not OCS! Christian Birrell 331 of Leigh and Lowton was 2<sup>nd</sup>, having had two 7ths in races 4 and 5. Mark was third. Niki Birrell 351 also of Leigh and Lowton was 4<sup>th</sup> – his best result. Alan had moved up from the last bunch to finish 5<sup>th</sup>. Alex came in 6<sup>th</sup>, Richard 7<sup>th</sup>, John 8<sup>th</sup>, Bill 10<sup>th</sup>!, Stephen 18<sup>th</sup>!, Dave 23<sup>rd</sup>!, and Rob 27<sup>th</sup>!

Ian was now getting very close to Bills' total score and had to win the last race with Bill in 3<sup>rd</sup> place or lower.

In RACE SEVEN, the leading three got away from the main bunch which once again got held up on the run. This time the right side gained which avoided most of the mayhem that might have happened if thirty odd Comets arrived at the leeward mark together. It says much for the Class that there were no collisions and everyone got around safely. It then paid to go mainly right at least at first and boats that had been

in the second half of the bunch pulled ahead but not enough to worry the leaders. The wind now picked up a little which allowed tacking duels to take place. Ian was leading up to the short finish line at the windward mark, with Bill in second. Rob was around in third to spoil the party for Bill. Ian managed to sail very tactfully and allow Rob to get into second place but still win himself. Christian had another good result in 4<sup>th</sup>. Henry at last showed his potential in 5<sup>th</sup>, in conditions which suited him well. Stephen regained his composure in 6<sup>th</sup>, having a close finish with Alex in 6<sup>th</sup>, Derek in 7<sup>th</sup>, and Alan in 9<sup>th</sup>. James Wilkins 221 of Chipstead got 19<sup>th</sup> and beat his Dad Mark in 22<sup>nd</sup> in a race for the first time. Ian and Bill had exactly the same score on count back of 3 firsts, one 2<sup>nd</sup>, one 3<sup>rd</sup>. Ian had the better score in the final race as well as the better discard 4<sup>th</sup> v 10<sup>th</sup>, both also had an OCS as discards. Ian was thus declared National Champion of the Comet Class for 2004, with Bill a very close 2<sup>nd</sup>, and Robert 3<sup>rd</sup>.

#### ••••• • **Prize Winners**

- Stephen Harvey 758 Cotswold 1<sup>st</sup> Veteran
  - Ros Stevenson 820 Winsford 1<sup>st</sup> Mino
  - Annette Walter 323 Welwyn 1<sup>st</sup> Lady
  - Richard Smallwood 750 Frensham 1<sup>st</sup> Ancient Mariner
  - Catherine Bellamy 248 Winsford Highest
  - Newcomer Christian Birrell 331 Winsford 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Junior
  - Helen Leivers 724 Severn Committee Prize
  - Team Prize Severn SC
  - Knobly Knees Severn SC.
  - With many thanks to Rutland Water SC for hosting
  - another very successful major event for the Comet Class.
  - **Thanks also to Hyde for the Tee Shirts.**
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## Comet Nationals 2004 - Rutland Sailing Club

Pos	Sail No	Helm	Club	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	Pts
1	636	Ian Coppenhall	Hunts	4	3	2	1	OCS	1	1	8
2	107	Bill Webber	Winsford Flash	1	1	OCS	2	1	10	3	8
3	150	Robert Hamilton	Taplow Lake	3	5	5	9	5	27	2	20
4	657	Mark Wilkins	Chipstead	11	4	1	12	3	3	22	22
5	168	Stephen Lemmon	Severn	5	2	12	4	8	19	6	25
6	620	Alan Bennett	Staunton Harold	8	10	6	6	2	5	9	27
7	673	Dave Harris	Severn	6	7	8	3	4	23	DNF	28
8	152	Alex Reeve	Taplow Lake	2	12	11	5	9	6	7	29
9	331	Christian Birrell	Leigh & Low ton	OCS	19	16	7	7	2	4	36
10	750	Richard Smallwood	Frensham Ponds	7	8	3	16	12	7	29	37
11	555	John Windibank	Chipstead	17	6	4	13	10	8	15	46
12	650	Chris Hawley	Severn	9	16	9	19	25	9	10	53
13	745	Nick Warren	Littleton	13	9	19	10	17	14	21	63
14	758	Stephen Harvey	Cotswold	18	13	13	15	11	13	DNF	65
15	190	Rupert Whelan	Whitefriars	16	15	7	17	15	15	16	68
16	217	Steve Hawley	Severn	15	17	14	25	18	22	18	82
17	63	Chris Robinson	Burghfield	10	11	10	20	32	38	33	83
18	625	Brian Jones	Taplow Lake	20	21	32	8	6	DNF	DNF	87
19	803	Pete Hayes	RYA	12	14	20	22	21	DNF	DNF	89
20	351	Niki Birrell	Leigh & Low ton	41	DNF	15	21	14	4	36	90
21	100	Steve Bellamy	Winsford Flash	25	24	17	14	10	DNF	DNF	90
22	730	Brian Herring	Winsford Flash	24	18	18	18	DNF	16	34	94
23	518	Robin Ballam	Crawley Mariners	22	25	21	28	35	17	11	96
24	707	Derek Coleman	Coney	19	23	23	24	24	24	8	97
25	800	Henry Jagers	RYA	36	30	34	31	23	11	5	100
26	812	Roger Lemmon	Severn	21	20	22	26	29	20	20	103
27	532	John Coppenhall	Hunts	30	33	27	32	19	18	13	107
28	549	Michael Thompson	Crawley Mariners	35	27	28	11	22	26	27	113
29	323	Annette Walter	Welwyn Garden City	32	34	36	33	13	12	30	120
30	488	Emma Coppenhall	Hunts	29	32	33	29	20	31	14	123
31	643	Keith Appleby	Carsington	31	31	25	35	26	33	12	125
32	233	Oliver Halford	Littleton	28	22	29	27	28	29	26	131
33	420	Alun Bevan	Merthyr Tydfil	34	37	37	23	34	21	25	137
34	641	Paul Hinde	Severn	14	28	26	36	35	35	35	138
35	724	Helen Leivers	Severn	23	DNF	30	30	31	37	28	142
36	221	James Wilkins	Chipstead	33	35	31	34	33	30	19	146
37	367	Daniel Moon	Severn	40	DNF	38	37	30	25	17	147
38	649	Diana Thompson	Crawley Mariners	39	36	35	38	27	39	24	160
39	188	David Taw	Crawley Mariners	38	DNF	39	40	DNF	32	23	172
40	801	Tony Best	Taplow Lake	26	29	24	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	174
41	205	Rhian Bevan	Merthyr Tydfil	42	DNF	40	39	37	28	37	181
42	711	Brian Welham	Taplow Lake	27	26	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	197
43	271	Jennifer Lemmon	Severn	43	DNF	42	DNF	DNF	36	31	199
44	633	John Edwards	Chester	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	34	32	208
45	248	Catherine Bellamy	Winsford Flash	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	DNF	239

## First Six

1 <sup>st</sup>	Ian Coppenhall	636	Hunts SC	8 points
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Bill Webber	107	Winsford Flash SC	8 points
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Robert Hamilton	150	Taplow Lake SC	20 points
4 <sup>th</sup>	Mark Wilkins	657	Chipstead SC	22 points
5 <sup>th</sup>	Stephen Lemmon	168	Severn SC	25 points
6 <sup>th</sup>	Alan Bennett	620	Staunton Harold SC	27 points.

Scribe : Alan Bennett

Results : Paul Hinde



# OPEN MEETING REPORTS

## REDDITCH SAILING CLUB COMET OPEN EVENT SATURDAY 19 JUNE 2004

Seven visitors joined five home boats for the Redditch S.C. Comet Open Event. The wind from the north west varied from light airs to moderate over different parts of the lake throughout the day. The OOD Ian Ranford set a circular course around the central islands for the three races.

In the first race, which was held over four laps, Mike Squirell and Andrew Audley both Redditch S.C. sailors went into the lead, they were joined on the second lap by Ian Coppenhall from Hunts S.C. The third lap saw Coppenhall take the lead only to lose it to Audley in the final lap. Third place went to Peter Hayes.

In the second race which was held over five laps Ian Coppenhall again established an early lead which he held to the finish. A dual for second place took place between Henry Jaggers and Andrew Audley. After leading for two laps Jaggers was overtaken by Audley who went onto claim second place with Jaggers finishing third.

In the final race Ian Coppenhall again established an early lead. Second and third places were keenly contested by Andrew Audley, John Coppenhall and Henry Jaggers. On the second lap Audley overtook Jaggers and went into second position which he held for the rest of the race.. Third place was ultimately claimed by John Coppenhall.

David Stephens

### OVERALL RESULTS

	Sail	Helm	Club	Race1	Race2	Race3	Points
1st	636	Ian Coppenhall	Hunts	2	1	1	2
2nd	563	Andrew Audley	Redditch	1	2	2	3
3rd	800	Henry Jaggers	RYA	7	3	4	7
4th	803	Peter Hayes	RYA	3	5	8	8
5th	532	John Coppenhall	Hunts	9	6	3	9
6th	364	James Dawes	Redditch	5	7	5	10
7th	488	Emma Coppenhall	Hunts	8	4	6	10
8th	675	Mike Squirell	Redditch	4	8	rtd	12
9th	420	Alan Bevan	Merthyr	6	9	7	13
10th	205	Rhianin Bevan	Merthyr	10	11	9	19
11th	798	David Stephens	Redditch	11	10	rtd	21
12th	382	Lavrene Grinne	Redditch	rtd	rtd	dns	



## Banbury Sailing Club Comet Open Saturday 15th May 2004

A Pleasant day, lightly overcast with light variable winds north to north-west. 18 entries, 5 Banbury boats with visitors from as far a field as: Cambridge, Crawley and Cheshire. The Coppenhall brothers Ian and Mark shared the top positions in the first two races leaving all to play for in the third race. This was close run with



some exciting tacking duels between the brothers with Ian narrowly coming out on top at the line; a boat length ahead. The rest of the fleet settled into two groups of 8 to 10 and battled with interchanging positions.

The first Banbury boat was Stuart Allen with 6th place overall and a very creditable 4th in the third race. This was Stuart's first outing in a Comet

and he is still on target to achieve his ambition of competing in every Open meeting at Banbury this year.  
Eb Brown

### Results

	Helm	Club	Sail	Race1	Race2	Race3	Points
1st	Ian Coppenhall	Hunts	636	1	2	1	2
2nd	Mark Coppenhall	Hunts	427	2	1	2	3
3rd	Alan Bennett	Staunton Harold	620	3	3	8	6
4th	Brian Herring	Winsford Flash	730	4	10	3	7
5th	John Coppenhall	Hunts	532	11	5	5	10
6th	Stuart Allen	Banbury	53	13	7	4	11
7th	Henry Jagers	RYA	800	5	6	7	11
8th	Pete Hayes	RYA	803	19	4	9	13
9th	Phillip Hossell	Severn	650	7	9	10	16



## Fishers Green Comet Open 24th April

A hot sunny day greeted 15 visitors and 7 Fishers Green Comets, but very little wind. The race officer delayed the start due to lack of wind, but as we all wanted to get going he set a short triangular course around buoys 3, 4 and 8 all to port.

The wind kept changing as we went off with



the Lightning's starting 5 minutes before us. At the finish the leading comets were in front of 3 Lightning's and the wind was so light that 2 comet were lapped and decided to retire.

During lunch the wind appeared to pick up a bit! but as soon as we got out on the water it had dropped again. The course was this time 8, 3 and 4. After this race Ian managed to

capsize and a big cheer went up, he may have just wanted to cool down !!

The 3rd race began without a break as the wind had picked up slightly. The course was the same as the 2nd race but the beat became a run causing a great hold-up at the first mark. This race was only of one lap duration although there was more wind; the competitors had had more than enough and lets hope for more wind next year.

The overall results were.

- 1st Ian Coppenhall
  - 2nd Brian Welham
  - 3rd Annette Walters
  - 4th John Coppenhall
- 1st Fishers Green prize went to Karen Ascii.

Jenny Colclough 660



## Winsford Flash Comet Open 8<sup>th</sup> May 2004

On Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May Winsford Flash Sailing Club hosted its 2004 Open for the Comet class dinghy with seventeen boats involved including 9 visitors coming from as far afield as Peterborough and Gloucestershire. The races were held in wet, blustery conditions with a base wind level of F2-3.

In the first race former national champion Ian Coppenhall quickly established a lead over the rest of the fleet. Still holding the lead after the first lap he looked very strong but local sailor Bill Webber was hot on his stern and Paul Plested and Jonathan Latham were swapping third and fourth places. By the end of the second lap the lead boat had drawn out a half mark lead over the chasing fleet. With the stiffening breeze the first of a number of



capsizes occurred. The third lap saw local sailor Bill Webber taking the lead for a short period at the windward mark with Ian Coppenhall snatching the lead back as they rounded the near mark. Paul Plested held third place and Jonathan Latham had dropped back to sixth place, fourth place now being held by another local sailor Steve Bellamy, while Jonathan Latham regained fifth place on the run. Local sailor Bill Webber regained the lead in the final lap, taking first place, with Ian Coppenhall taking second place.

The second race of the day started after an excellent lunch prepared by the club galley staff. With the skies brightening up, the sailing conditions were looking better although still with the stiff northerly breeze. Local sailor Bill Webber took the lead during the first lap, only to be overtaken by visitor Allan Bennett, who went overboard when he missed the toe strap when coming about, losing about ten

places in the process. This allowed Bill Webber to take first place, followed by Peter Hayes in second and Jonathan Latham in third place.

Bill Webber had now already won the event but the remaining places were very much in contention in the third and final race and a couple of boats were across the line at the start. Local sailor Paul Plested went into the lead, holding first place for the first few laps before being overtaken by Ian Coppenhall who eventually won the race. Bill Webber, who had already won the event, had a bad start, but worked hard to reach third place and then battled hard with Paul Plested for second place before settling for third in the end.

The Final Open results had local sailors Bill Webber and Paul Plested in first and third places respectively with Ian Coppenhall from Hunts SC in second place.

David Harrison

Sail	Helm	Club	Race 1	Race 2	Race 3	Points	Position
107	Bill Webber	WFSC	1	3	2	1st	
636	Ian Coppenhall	Hunts	2	6	1	3	2nd
585	Paul Plested	WFSC	5	4	2	6	3rd
620	Alan Bennett	Staunton Harold	3	12	4	7	4th
803	Peter Hayes	RYA	8	2	6	8	5 <sup>th</sup>
351	Jonathan Latham	WFSC	7	3	5	8	6 <sup>th</sup>
100	Steve Bellamy	WFSC	4	7	7	11	7 <sup>th</sup>
650	Phillip Hossell	Severn Valley	6	5	DNF	11	8 <sup>th</sup>
730	Brian Herring	WFSC	9	8	8	16	9 <sup>th</sup>
274	David Harrison	WFSC	12	9	9	18	10 <sup>th</sup>
532	John Coppenhall	Hunts	10	10	11	20	11 <sup>th</sup>
488	Emma Coppenhall	Hunts	11	11	10	21	12 <sup>th</sup>
762	Ross Stevenson	WFSC	13	13	DNF	26	13 <sup>th</sup>
702	Chris Keeling	North Staffs	14	14	DNF	28	14 <sup>th</sup>
438	Guy Benson	Redesmere	DNF	DNF	12	30	15 <sup>th</sup>
726	Jim Dormand	Glossop & District	15	15	DNF	30	16 <sup>th</sup>
248	Catherine Bellamy	WFSC	DNS	DNF	DNS	36	17 <sup>th</sup>



## Taplow Lake Sailing Club Comet Open

Sat. 8 May 2004

Having not stepped into a boat for nearly two years, Alex Reeve won the first two races in the Comet Open at Taplow S C on 8 May. So he took first place overall from a field of 17 competitors from nine different clubs. The wind was never more than force-three, but was very switchy, which tended to favour the home club, which took the first five places.

At the start of the first race, Alex Reeve anticipated a wind shift, started alone on port and crossed in front of the entire fleet. Nevertheless, Robbie Hamilton led round the first mark, although Alex Reeve took the lead on the downwind leg and the two quickly opened up a gap from Brian Welham, Brian Jones and Alun Bevan. They remained in this order throughout most of the race until Alun Bevan capsized near the end of the last lap and John Windibank moved up from 8<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> place in the closing seconds, narrowly beating Clive Chapman and Henry Jaggers.

In the second race, Brian Welham and Alex Reeve tussled for the lead at the first mark. Brian got round first, while Alex touched the mark and was forced to do a penalty behind

Tony Best and Richard Smallwood. Brian and Tony then swapped places a couple of times before Brian capsized near the end of the first lap. At this point, Alex took the lead and held it to the end, followed home by Tony Best, Brian Welham, Brian Jones, John Windibank, Robin Ballam, Richard Smallwood, Clive Chapman and Chris Robinson.

In the last race, Alex Reeve again started at the port end and led at the first mark, well clear of Robbie Hamilton, Richard Smallwood, Tony Best and Alun Bevan. However Robbie managed to catch, blanket and nearly overtake Alex on the downwind leg. A ding-dong battle ensued, with the lead being swapped between the two several times, until Robbie substantiated his lead on the final lap. He was followed home by Alex Reeve, Tony Best, Brian Welham, Richard Smallwood, Alun Bevan and John Windibank.

Mark Taylor

### The final result:

1st	Alex Reeve	152 Taplow Lake	9th	Clive Chapman	622 Littleton
2nd	Robbie Hamilton	150 Taplow Lake	10th	Henry Jaggers	800 unattached
3rd	Tony Best	801 Taplow Lake	11th	Robin Ballam	518 Crawley
4th	Brian Welham	711 Taplow Lake	12th	Chris Robinson	63 Burghfield
5th	Brian Jones	625 Taplow Lake	13th	Derek Coleman	707 Coney
6th	John Windibank	555 Chipstead	14th	Stephen Harvey	758 Cotswold SC
7th	Richard Smallwood	750 Frensham	15th	Mark Taylor	676 Taplow Lake
8th	Alun Bevan	420 Merthyr Tydfil	16th	Rhiain Bevan	205 Merthyr Tydfil
			17th	Nicky Levett	562 Taplow Lake

# FIRST SIX AT OPEN MEETINGS

## Northern Area

Winsford Flash  
107 Bill Webber  
636 Ian Coppenhall  
620 Alan Bennett  
803 Pete Hayes  
100 Steve Bellamy  
650 Phil Hossell

## Southern Area

Taplow Lake  
152 Alex Reeve  
150 Robbie Hamilton  
801 Tony Best  
711 Brian Welham  
555 John Windibank  
750 Richard Smallwood

## Central Area

Banbury  
636 Ian Coppenhall  
427 Mark Coppenhall  
620 Alan Bennett  
730 Brian Herring  
532 John Coppenhall  
800 Henry Jagers

## Western Area

Shearwater  
190 Rupert Wheelan  
711 Brian Welham  
532 John Coppenhall  
803 Pete Hayes  
800 Henry Jagers  
745 Nick Warren

Sutton Bingham  
711 Brian Welham  
673 Dave Harris  
803 Pete Hayes  
800 Henry Jagers  
518 Robin Ballam  
707 Derek Coleman

Redditch  
636 Ian Coppenhall  
800 H Jagers  
803 Peter Hayes  
532 John Coppenhall  
488 Emma Coppenhall  
420 Alan Bevan

## Eastern Area

Fishers Green  
636 Ian Coppenhall  
711 Brian Welham  
323 Annette Walter  
532 John Coppenhall  
549 Mike Thompson  
555 John Windibank

Crawley Mariners  
555 John Windibank  
809 Simon Thompson  
803 Pete Hayes  
800 Henry Jagers  
549 Mike Thompson  
532 John Coppenhall

Paul Hinde



Sutton Bingham



Severn



## My first Comet Open

The autumn of 2003 saw me give up the fight against Pizza and Cider, so I sold my old Topper and bought myself a brand new (by my standards) 1988 Comet, Number 190, known to all as Beatrice. Due to other commitments, I missed the last couple of Opens of the season, but spent the winter trying to figure out how to make her tick. With no other Comets racing at Whitefriars, I had to guess how progress was going. Light winds appeared hopeful, though I still couldn't keep up with my wife's Firefly. Strong winds, however, saw me being caught and overtaken by GP 14s rather more often and more quickly than I would have liked, but I put that down to a combination of the boat's light wind strengths and my own strong wind weakness. I still had no idea how I would do against other Comets.

So, Spring 2004 rolls around, and the open season is upon us. Due to 2 small kids and a Firefly rebuild in time for the Classics season, I realised that I'd probably not make it to many meetings before the Nationals, but I wanted to do at least one, just to see how the boats should be sailed. I chose Shearwater, partly because I'd sailed there in the Firefly the year before and knew I could expect a warm welcome, but also because that was where Beatrice had sailed before I bought her, and I hoped she would remember the way round!

I managed to reach the club, without getting lost, at about 9.15am on Saturday morning, to find some Toppers rigging on the shore, and some of the local organisers getting things ready. Shortly after, the other Comets started arriving, and I met up with lots of people who I had either seen the names of in Perihelion, or who I had communicated with by e-mail. All were friendly, and some even knew who I was, due to Beatrice's presence!

Once rigged, changed and briefed, racing commenced. Here was where I would find out how far off the pace I was. Off the startline, the boats around me were pointing higher and going faster. Oops. Better stop looking at them and concentrate. By the windward mark, I was about 1/2 way

down the fleet of 12, but still in the bunch. Some luck at the many marks saw me climb to second, which with some more fortune from the shifts, I was able to hold on to. No chance of catching Brian Welham, though!

Lunch was delicious!

The wind picked up for the second race, and after a start and 1st beat that made the previous race look good, I thought, "Ho Hum, beginner's luck has run out!" However, tacking on the shifts up the next couple of beats saw me through to 2nd again, with John Coppenhall well in front, and Brian and Peter Hayes just behind. A lucky shift (for us) saw us catch up with John, and for a lap or more the 4 Comets were locked in a titanic struggle. In the end, Brian's experience paid, and he popped out the front of the pack. However, he started making up his winner's speech too early, and missed a big gust, which sent him for a swim or 2. Peter probably couldn't believe his luck, but then fell foul of the same gust at the Gybe mark, leaving John and I to battle it out for 1st. I was fortunate enough that the finish came before I could suffer the bad luck that hounded leaders in that race!

There were now 3 of us in with a chance of taking the trophy home. If Brian, John or myself won the last race the cup was ours!

Race 3 finally saw me get an OK start (I followed Brian) and thanks to Derek calling starboard and putting me onto the lovely shift he was following, reached the windward mark 1st. Remembering the previous race, I started to wonder what would befall me! Slowly, Brian and I opened a lead on the rest of the fleet. Each time I got a few yards ahead of him, however, the invisible piece of elastic would drag us back together again! Luckily for me, the course made it very difficult to overtake, and I discovered I can be very stubborn (bloody-minded might be closer!) When defending a lead, I can still



picture the "I'm hunting you" position Brian takes up in his boat, though!

So, amazingly enough the ability to pick a shift had overcome genuine skill and experience. Following a very tasty high tea, prizes for Toppers and Comets were presented, and I was happy to go home with some new gloves and a small but perfectly formed bottle of bubbly, as well as a pretty trophy and some very good memories.



Stephen at  
Severn SC  
*We have all  
been there.*

Many thanks to both Shearwater and the Comet sailors for making me feel so welcome, and especially for not minding that a fluky newcomer snuck away with the Trophy!

Rupert Whelan, Comet 190, Beatrice

Talking to Brian Welham at the Taplow open it became clear that he also had an interesting story to tell of the Shearwater open and with a bit of persuasion he kindly wrote this piece for us. The article came with a note saying he could also provide stories about why he did not win Taplow and Fishers Green Opens also!  
Has Brian started a trend? as we all have stories about why we loose races.  
Brian is sailing as well as ever this year with one win already.  
ED

## How things can change

This is just a note to explain why I did not win the first Open of the year.

Having won the first race at Shearwater, I had fought my way to the lead of race 2 by a good margin. In rounding the second gybe mark in a rising wind, I got it wrong and capsized. "Don't panic" I told myself and righted the boat quickly, without falling in the water and proceeded to bear away. I was still in the lead by some way but I suppose I was then a bit *less relaxed!* The wind continued to blow strongly and to prevent another capsiz I threw myself out over the side to balance the boat. The next thing I saw was the surface of the water about a foot above me as I had missed the toe-straps completely and had thrown myself overboard.

In my confusion, I had lost the mainsheet and had to swim quickly after the rope to pull myself back to the boat. I climbed back onto the boom and mast step and got on top. Again in my panic I failed to get on the centre board the first time and by the time I was on top, the boat was completely inverted. Luckily Shearwater is not that deep at that point. I then saw the whole fleet flash past before I was able to get it back upright and into a sailing position.

Off I went again but could only manage 7<sup>th</sup> place in that race. To win the event I had to win the last race and failed. So from an almost guaranteed event win to a ducking was just a moment of inattention.

Brian Welham Come 711



## Sailing Away Series

### A COUPLE A COMET AND A DUCK

We needed a break, it had been a busy year and Mavis needed time to work on her Open University projects and I, well I wanted to sail. We decided on Windermere as the apartment overlooked the lake, it was quiet and joy of joys it had a jetty.

The dear old Comet is no trouble to take on holiday whether you car top or like me you use the excellent combie trailer supplied by Comet Dinghies. I've had the trailer 15 years and apart from the mudguard strut breaking and lacerating the tyre which finished the journey on the canvass liner it has been trouble free.

The journey to Windermere from my home on a good day takes 5 hrs or more, but that M6 is something else, so it was a very tired couple who followed the winding road into the lakes. Round another sharp bend and over another hump in the road and we were finally there, that wonderful view looking down on the blue water rippling in the wind breathtaking, I just had to have a photograph.



Now I have a lot of good qualities I am told, but judgement about the right time to take photographs is not one of them and my poor wife trembles when she sees me with a camera.

Thrown hard against the seat belt as I stopped the car my wife saw me grab the camera as though there was no tomorrow, dodge the motorist who had just had kittens as I stooped without warning and there it was, another memory committed to cellulose another album to be completed.

The apartment was everything we had hoped for an absolutely idilic spot and almost perfect apart from the ducks. Now me and ducks have a history and I have never forgiven them for christening my nicely washed decks when I sail on the Norfolk broads. They lie in wait for you there and one twitch of the cabin curtains on a misty morning and they are at you like the charge of the duck

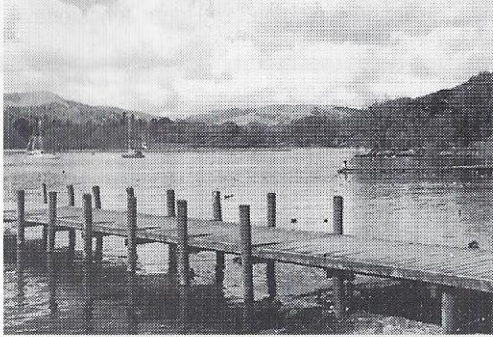


brigade all over the boat 'til you feed them, they even walk on water to get to you like an Exocet programed just for me! paranoid, what me.? Well the ducks at Windermere have evolved from the feudalism of the Norfolk Broads ducks, they just know who things belong to there and its them. They still poooh of course, but at Windermere they do it in the lounge and you know what, they are quite haughty when you object to this. Mavis of course finds this all very amusing but then some people will laugh at anything.

So all that water, a wife that wants you out of the way and the weather perfect. The jetty had a launching ramp next to it and to tell the truth it was somewhat slippery, the other hazard is of course trees and whether to launch with the sail up or furled. Now I have a lot of experience at taking these sort of decisions as launching at Chipstead present similar problems and well I have not had a lot of luck rigging the boat tied up to a jetty. What usually happens to me is that as the sail is unwrapped and secured

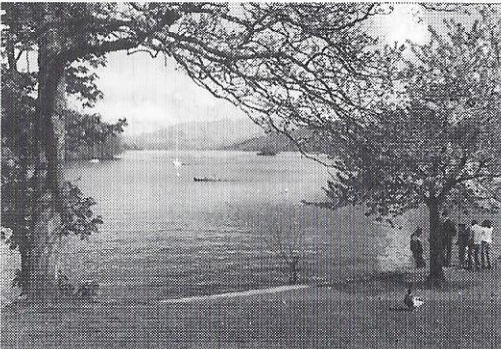


to the outhall the boat blows away from the jetty and lying spread-eagled on the fordeck

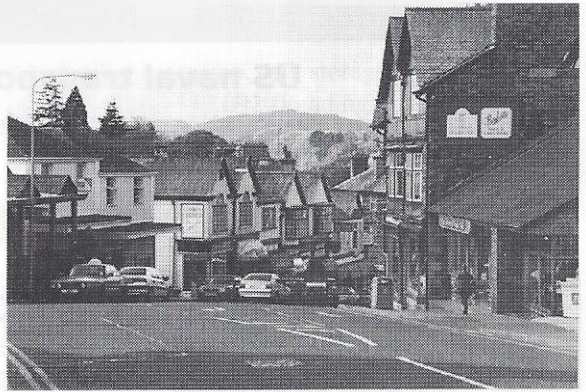


trying to reach the painter is somewhat destabilising to the balance of the boat and without help I usually get wet. The wind was favourably offshore so I decided to launch fully rigged, but wind being female and somewhat changeable the sail managed to entangle itself on the pontoon. Patience is a virtue they say and anyway there was no one there to hear my language (apart from the ducks and they don't count) I managed to disentangle and slide into the boat and away.

**Yyess** this is the life a good force 3 everything was breathtaking and nothing went wrong with that sail. You don't sail on Windermere on your own if you are a beginner as the wind has a way of you could



be sitting with your feet dangling in the water totally becalmed and the next you can be charging across the lake in a force 5. Its just a great place to sail the scenery is stunning with swallows and amazon inlets and coves. Windermere town is small clean and full of character but beware the coffee vendors. I have been ripped of from Prague to Cairo buying the stuff and Windermere is no exception and it was quite possibly the worst and most overpriced polystyrene cup of ?coffee I have ever tasted. You can spend may hrs traversing the lake but always go well prepared with some sort of paddle and check everything well before you set out. I



have only sailed without a bung in the boat twice in my life and of course you guest, this was one of them. You first start to notice something's wrong as the boat becomes very sluggish and does not respond well to the helm, you won't sink because of the massive amounts of buoyancy provided but everything becomes very unstable so getting ashore to empty out is your only option and was I red faced? no not me it was just the sunburn from the lovely weather we were having.

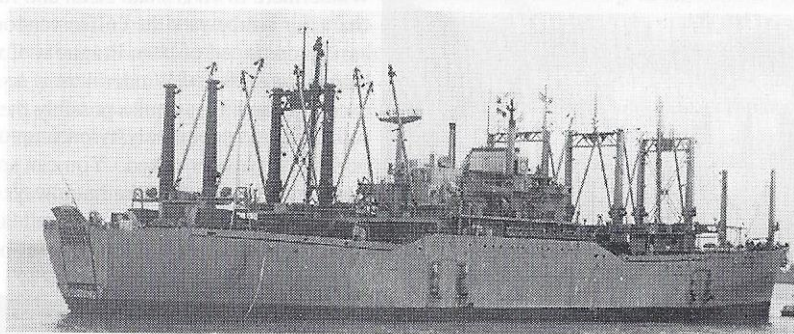
Well as they say we had a good one. Mavis eventually acquired her Desmond and I had a terrific weeks sailing and of course the duck is still there but just a bit fatter.

John Windibank 555/700



# Comet

This is the 10th Comet in the series and the second contributed by Roger Johnstone



## US naval transport *Comet*

Next time you drive aboard a car ferry, spare a thought for the 1957-built US naval transport *Comet*.

She was the first large freighter designed with the stern door and ramp now familiar on "roll-on, roll-off" ferries, and entered service some years before drive-on car and truck ferries became commonplace. Described by the US Navy as a "vehicle landing ship", she had over 80,000 sq. ft. of garage space for trucks, tanks and other rolling cargo – plus conventional cargo holds and gear.

*Comet* served on the Vietnam supply shuttle into the military port built at Cam Ranh Bay. She was the design basis for the later and successively larger transports *Meteor* and *Admiral Wm. M. Callaghan*, both built in 1967. The 18,300-ton (full load displacement) *Comet* also inspired a few commercial cousins.

Many of the USA's current military transport ships (the Ready Reserve Fleet) are from later generations of large ro-ro ships that owe several key design features to the now largely-forgotten 1957 *Comet*.

She ended her active days at the reserve fleet anchorage in Suisun Bay, California.

**Poto: NahvSource/US Government**



## **NOTICE BOARD**

### **Dates for your Diary Comet Events**

17-Jul Sat open/N	Chester	John Edwards	01829 781234
24-Jul Sat open/E	Redoubt	Jeff Clarke	01303 813213
01-Aug Sun open/Joker	Mudford	Mike Roach	01202 477553
08-Aug Sun open/C	Cransley	Bill Webster	01536 725918

### **28th - 29th August Association Championships at Hampton Pier YC**

04-Sep Sat open/C	Severn	Steve Hawley	01905 458636
05-Sep Sun open/W	Arden	Niall Campbell	01299 890047
25-Sep Sat open/S	Littleton	Nick Warren	01189 773110
26-Sep Sun open/W	Merthyr Tydfil	Mark Govier	02920 778459
02-Oct Sat open/S	Pingewood	Jason Hall	01635 579912
03-Oct Sun open/N	Redesmere	Tim Baker	01477 534238
09-Oct Sat open/S	Burghfield	Pat Forbes	01189 303604
10-Oct Sun open/E	Kingsmead	Ian Ayres	01784 420460
23-Oct Sat open/C	Staunton Harold	Nigel Fern	01530 469691

### **FOR SALE**

Comet 154 - Blue hull, white deck, tiller extension, sail, storage bin, folding trolley £650, Mark Gale Tel: 07963 543 092 (Reading)  
EasiLoader rolling roof rack £75 Tel: 07963 543 092 (Reading)

Comet 605 - Good condition, red hull with silver stripe, white deck, racing rig, folding launch trolley (with new wheels), top cover, spar bag. £990. Simon Pritchard

Tel: 01483 859298 evenings or 07810 507417 or e-mail  
shpritchard@ntlworld.com Located Littleton Sailing Club, Shepperton

Comet 272. Grey hull white top, top cover, folding trolley, keel band, sail window, storage bin and grab rails. light use so very good condition. £800 Anthony Cooves.

Tel 01442253591 e-mail: anthony.cooves@bt.com lying Milton Keynes

Comet Charisma 535. Hull Silver/Blue stripes Keelband-Cover-Grab rails. Race pack-Good sail- Plus cruising sail. Excellent condition, sound hull Road trailer and folding launching trolley at Crawley, West Sussex. £1200 John James Phone No. (01293) 882487

Comet 583 - Good condition, grey hull, white deck, racing rig, 2 sails in bags, praddle, folding launch trolley, top cover, spar and foil bags.

Located Milton Keynes - £1,200 ono. Ruth Chapman

Tel: 01908 502071 e-mail ruthchapman@myhome.org.uk.

### **Perihelion 72**

Please send your contributions for the next issue of Perihelion by

**22nd August 2004**





## **Comet Class Association**

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association