

FILE

PERIHELION

Newsletter 10



Comet Class Association

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RESPONSIBILITIES:

STEVE is acting as the Open Meeting co-ordinator for 1989.

MIKE is acting as our representative to the Class Associations Forum and reviewing possible training activities.

JACKIE is selecting our Class Association prizes for 1988 and CARR is considering our publicity requirements and contacting ex-members with a view to renewal.

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 10

SPRING 1989

CONTENTS	PAGE
FROM THE CHAIRMAN	2
CLASS ASSOCIATIONS FORUM	3
AMS MARINE BUILDERS REPORT	4
CLASS ASSOCIATION 1989 SAILING EVENTS	5
COMET CLASS QUESTIONNAIRE	6
THE OFFICIAL WAY TO DRAW A COMET	7
THAMES YOUNG MARINERS	8
HIS AND HERS COMETS AT NORTH NORFOLK	9
A DAY IN THE LIFE OF	10
SAILING YOUR COMET - PART 3	12
BACK TO BASICS	20
WOT ABOUT THE YOUNGSTERS	21
JCB COMET OPEN	22
NOTICE BOARD	24

OPEN MEETING NOTICES:

CAM S.C.
ICI (SLOUGH) S.C.
PAXTON LAKES S.C.
MEDWAY REGATA

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Having had such a relatively mild winter it is ironic that the snow should arrive as our thoughts begin to turn to the new sailing season. Even so, those of you who have sailed through the winter have not had too much in the way of frostbiting and some days have certainly seemed as good as we get in summer.

We have had three exhibitions lately at Earls Court, Birmingham and Sailboat '89 at Crystal Palace. At each show we have had a well presented stand and plenty of interest in the boat which is being translated into a healthy order book.

From my previous pleas for assistance with the graphics and layout of Perehelion, a voice has answered from the wilderness! I am pleased to say that Stuart Lines of Kingsmead, Comet 175, has volunteered to help us and I am grateful for his offer.

An increasing number of owners have asked about a Comet Class insurance scheme and we have now arranged such a scheme through M. A. Noble Ltd. Whilst the Comet Class Association can clearly take no direct responsibility or liability for individual insurance claims, we believe Noble to have a good reputation with other class associations and they provide a comprehensive cover at quite competitive rates. Your Committee hopes you find this facility to be of use and a leaflet is enclosed for your information.

You will find details of a full sailing and racing programme in this issue with notices for the early meetings. I do hope you will make the effort to attend one or more of the training days, open meetings or championships. I would particularly mention the Inlands at Grafham Water in May where we are sailing in parallel with the Cadets. I hope that we can show off our Class as an option when the Cadets grow out of their class.

Talking of Cadets - an article in this newsletter suggests the formation of a Comet Cadet section and your Committee would welcome your views on this interesting suggestion.

If you feel like a longer or more formal training session, then the courses at Thames Young Mariners may be the thing for you particularly if you would like to take your own boat.

And if you have not yet decided on family holidays then how about coming to Chichester Harbour at the beginning of August?

As we are now the fastest growing class in the single handed range between the Topper and Laser, it was disappointing to read an article in Yachts & Yachting which omitted the Comet from a list of classes established in the 80's. I believe we are now well established and my reply to Y&Y is included here under the title of "Back to Basics".

We still suffer from a general lack of visibility while we are a relatively small class and it is important for the Clubs holding Open Meetings to submit a report to Y&Y on the event as part of the general publicity drive.

I hope we all have a good summer's sailing and I look forward to seeing you somewhere during the season.

Keith Landin.

CLASS ASSOCIATIONS FORUM

The R.Y.A. Class Associations Forum was held at the Great Northern Hotel, Kings Cross, London on Saturday 3rd December and attended on our behalf by Mike Crawshaw. The following extracts from the minutes of the Forum summarise some of the major points of discussion.

Development: On the subject of boat insurance, Don Forbes (RYA Development Manager) mentioned the difficulties experienced by boat owners in the last few years in obtaining insurance, more particularly on low-value boats, as many companies had pulled out of this field leaving the remaining companies in a very strong position. Class-based schemes were particularly valuable to insurance companies and Mr Forbes urged classes to stick to any well established scheme as it was not a good time to change any policies. Premiums were currently high as a result of the October 1987 storms but it was hoped that they would steady out in the coming year.

Public Relations and Promotion: Class Open Days were discussed at length. It was stressed that they needed to be well advertised, perhaps with the help of BBC Radio Services who, for a fee, could take syndicated messages for transmission on a variety of stations. Class Associations would have to combine with clubs to run the most successful open days and the group noted the benefits of getting a commercial sponsor for the day.

Legal Matters: In answer to a question on Weil's Disease, Mr. Whelan (RYA General Services Manager) explained that it was contracted from very low concentrations of rats' urine in water. The risks could be reduced on enclosed waters by ensuring that scraps of food were not left in the area.

National Sailing Centre: The Secretary General reminded those present that the NSC at Cowes had been closed over a year ago. It was hoped to establish a high level race training facility with a small 'clubhouse' at the North Pier in Weymouth, dedicated to the national squads and with a booking system run from Eastleigh. It would also be available to Classes and for local recreational use when not required by the national squads. Weymouth Borough Council was prepared to contribute £1/4m in addition to the £1/2m from the Sports Council and the Secretary General hoped that the new NSC could be established with the next two years.

Mike Crawshaw.

Firstly, I must apologise for the lack of a builder's report in the last issue but, to cut a long story short, there was not a great deal to report.

Southampton Boat Show in the Autumn was quite successful. There was a pleasant surprise when Colin Wilcox, son of Comet owner Alec and sometime borrower of the Chairman's Comet, sat down next to Margaret Hylton and, when asked if he had bought anything interesting, replied "Yes, a Comet" and handed over a completed order form! See you at the Open Meetings, Colin, and I hope your old Laser went to a good home.

There were other orders at Southampton of course but we often find orders still coming in well into the season from seeing the boat at that show.

Monday 2nd January, the Bank Holiday, saw the team travelling up to London Boat Show. The dinghy area this year was upstairs so rather than travel and set up the stand the day before, we gave ourselves an extra day which was certainly needed. I think our stand was the best looking and most professional so far, black carpet, colour photos, 10,000 new leaflets and even a new telly! Attendances were down but we still had our best ever show.

Barry and Margaret had a very encouraging Birmingham Show in February pushing the Comet ever more northwards.

Future plans for the Comet include the West of England Boat Show at Bristol over Easter, and the East Coast Boat Show at Ipswich, late May.

At the moment we are looking for another new lad to train so we could build four Comets a week if necessary, but also to give me more time to deal with Comet repairs which are fortunately relatively few.

Talking of repairs, I will be doing demonstrations of GRP repairs for the Comet at the early season Training days at Kennet Valley on 6th May and JCB on 3rd June. It wouldn't deal with major surgery but scratches and chips etc. Hopefully this might persuade some extra people to attend the training sessions.

Also, let's hope for a huge turnout at the Inlands at Grafham Water and I look forward to seeing you all there.

Andrew Simmons
AMS Marine.



Comet Class Association 1989 Sailing Events

Date	Club	Location	Water	Event
16 Apr	Cam S.C.	Cambs.	River	Open (T)
1 May	ICI Slough S.C.	Berks.	Lake	Open (T)
6 May	Paxton Lakes S.C.	Cambs.	Lake	Handicap
6 May	Kennet Valley S.C.	Berks.	Lake	Training
7 May	Kennet Valley S.C.	Berks.	Lake	Open (T)
20 / 21 May	Grafham Water S.C.	Cambs.	Reservoir	Inlands (T)
27 - 29 May	Wilsonian S.C.	Kent	Estuary	Regatta
3 Jun	J.C.B. S.C.	Staffs.	Lake	Training
4 Jun	J.C.B. S.C.	Staffs.	Lake	Open (T)
10 Jun	Chipstead S.C.	Kent	Lake	Open (T)
1 / 2 Jul	Shoreham S.C.	Sussex	Sea / Harbour	Nationals (T)
30 Jul	Aylesbury S.C.	Bucks.	Reservoir	Open (T)
31 Jul - 4 Aug	Chichester Y.C.	Sussex	Harbour	Family Week
10 Sep	Gunfleet S.C.	Essex	Sea	Open (T)
17 Sep	Wilsonian S.C.	Kent	Estuary	Open (T)
15 Oct	Bewl Valley S.C.	Kent	Reservoir	Regatta
21 Oct	Kingsmead S.C.	Berks.	Lake	Training / AGM
22 Oct	Kingsmead S.C.	Berks.	Lake	Open (T)

Notes:

1. Entry to Inland and National Championships restricted to Comet Class Association members only.
2. Qualification for Travellers Trophy (T) restricted to Comet Class Association members only.
3. Details on any event from:

Steve Kibble - (0444) 454730

Keith Lamdin - (0582) 665194

COMET CLASS QUESTIONNAIRE

I was delighted with the excellent response of about 100 completed questionnaires from members. Whilst there is still much work to analyse the details I will take each question with a summary of its response.

1. Specific instructional days are obviously a requirement and I believe they can be arranged at reasonably short notice with two keen helms from one area. They could make a date and venue to meet a local need so that one member invites the others to his (or her!) club for the day.

2. Holiday Week, which is on the class meetings schedule this year at Chichester, had a good response and, if well attended, will become a regular event particularly in the summer holiday time.

3. Not surprisingly, with most Comet owners being lake sailors, more members prefer inland venues.

4. However, many more than I thought, would prefer sea venues as well. So obviously one or two more events on the sea should be discussed by the Committee.

5. Less than 10% want specific junior series for under 18 year olds with prizes for younger helms. However, I believe that, as more younger helms come to Open Meetings, this will encourage the growth of the Class and so this may become a feature in future.

6. Tabulated results for Seniors and Juniors in Pereheliion is also very much desired and can be achieved this season.

7. Comet promotional material had a very high response as friends of Comet owners see just what an attractive boat is the Comet. Promotional material will be included with the next Pereheliion.

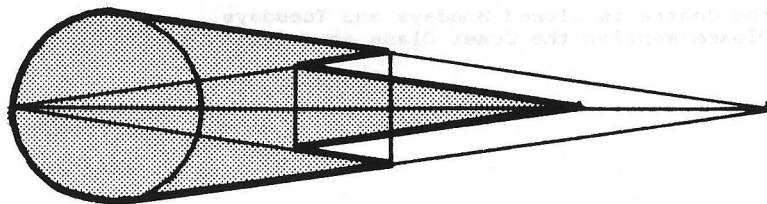
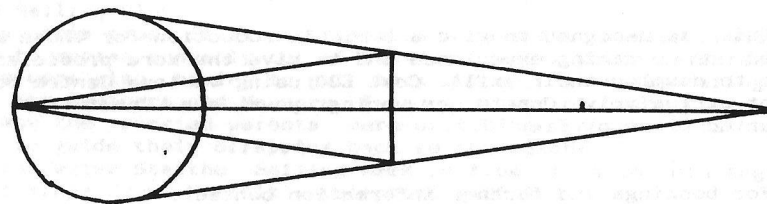
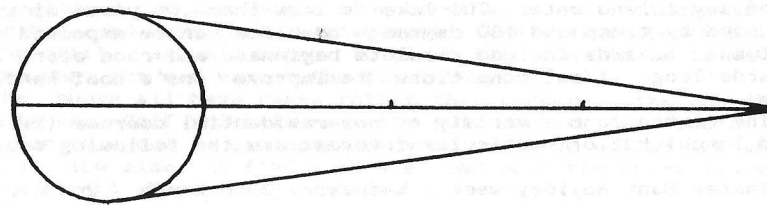
Thank you for your responses with your own ideas and criticisms, mostly the former. The Comet Class committee meet on the 18th March where your comments and suggestions will be discussed individually together with the general responses to all the questions.

I will give details of the discussions and any resultant actions in the next Pereheliion.

Carr Withall.

THE OFFICIAL WAY TO DRAW A COMET

4 EQUAL SPACES



THAMES YOUNG MARINERS

Thames Young Mariners is an RYA training establishment which is owned by Surrey County Council and extensively used by schools and affiliated youth groups. Courses are run for all ages and levels range from complete beginners to Senior Instructors.

Situated at Ham near Richmond-on-Thames the purpose built centre operates on a small gravel pit and has a fleet of some 40 boats including Wayfarers, Wanderers, Enterprises, Torches, Lasers, Toppers and, more recently, Comets. There are currently 6 Comets and further purchases are planned.

It is often said that if you can sail at TYM then you can sail on any inland water. The lake is less than 100 yards wide, is surrounded by trees and 180 degree windshifts can be expected. The additional hazards include absolute beginners and race start line 10 yards long. Ideal conditions to improve one's boat-handling skills!

The centre runs a variety of non-residential courses (bring a packed lunch) but of particular interest are the following courses

Easter Bank Holiday week:- Wednesday 29th March - 2nd April.

RYA courses for beginners, improvers and advanced helms. For improvers try the Introduction to Racing course - Level 4. Sail a variety of centre boats over the week (£60) or sail your own Comet all week for the discounted price of £40 and take home a RYA certificate if successful.

Race Training Weekend:- 27th -28th May.

This is designed to give a basic introduction for those with limited or no racing experience and to give the more proficient a chance to develop their skill. Cost £20 using various Centre boats but not exclusively Comets or bring your own Comet for the discounted price of £14.

For bookings and further information contact:-
Reg Carter,
Thames Young Mariners,
Ham Fields,
Richmond,
Surrey TW10 7RX.
01 940 5550.

The Centre is closed Mondays and Tuesdays.
Please mention the Comet Class Association.

Brian Hunt
Comet 240.

HIS AND HERS COMETS AT NORTH NORFOLK

David and I took our Comets to Brancaster Staithe Sailing Club for a weeks sailing in August last year. There were over a hundred boats entered ranging from Dart catamarans to Mirrors. The racing was for Slow and Fast Handicap, Junior and Senior, on open sea but sheltered by Scots Head. The weather was hot and sunny, with winds mainly from force 3 to 5 but, when the wind made force 7 on the Friday, all racing was cancelled!

We entered for the Senior slow handicap which included mainly Enterprises and Wayfarers. Racing with these larger boats helped with the start, as we managed to plane downwind in their wakes, until we went our own way at the first buoy.

The buoys all have names rather than numbers, like Sea which is out to sea, Golf which is near the golf course, and Cockle! The reason for this one we did not discover, until we walked the whole course at low tide, to find a cockle bed near the shore ready to take pieces out of your dagger board.

The tides started as afternoon tides and then progressed to early evening. The Thursday race went off about 5 p.m. with the wind at first about force 3 but it slowly dropped to a whisper and so the race was a long one - about three and a half hours when normally it would be about two hours.

At last I made it past the finishing line and the lady Race Officers gave me a loud cheer. I then had to sail, against the very light wind and tide, three quarters of a mile down the Creek to the Sailing Club.

By this time it was getting dark and the moored cruisers seemed to appear suddenly out of the dusk. A few young children in Mirrors were also trying to get back and so, in endeavouring to avoid the cruisers and Mirrors, I had a vision of being there for ever. Now the worried parents were switching on their car head lights to guide their offspring back to the beach!

Brancaster Staithe Sailing Week is from 12th to 18th August 1989 at Kings Lynn, Norfolk - telephone 210249.

Jackie Hudson.

If you have ever arrived at Earl's Court on the dot of 10 am during the London Boat Show you will know that each day is heralded in by a rendering of "A Life on the Ocean Wave". By then our Comets have been wiped over with a damp towel, control lines tightened up and the brochures replenished.

The video winds away, the kettle boils and the Daily Telegraph arrives free gratis on our stand. I await the first customer.

How should I play it today I wonder. Should I accost each one who hesitates, or should I smile sweetly and let them pass by. Should I engage each one who stops in conversation about the Comet, or should I digress and discuss clubs and sailing before I try selling. I decide to be positive and go straight for the throat asking:

"Can I sell you one?"

Some retort:

"You could try!", but usually temper their comment with a laugh.

Sometimes I ask,

"Would you like to buy one?"

The reply to this is often:

"Yes, I would if",

but always people laugh and a friendly conversation develops about sailing and clubs, even if a sale does not come of it. I surprised one man though. I emerged from under the desk to find him browsing through a leaflet.

"Would you like to talk about it?", I asked.

Then he surprised me with a very positive

"No!"

and he backed away rapidly.

Visitors on sailing club outings come through in fleets. They check the hull, feeling with their hands to make sure it goes all the way underneath. Then they waggle the tiller and lift the rudder up and down. Now it is the turn of the tiller extension to be manoeuvred in and out, backwards and forwards. The wind hawk is given a blow, or a quick flick of the finger to send it spinning as they move on.

The time comes for another cup of coffee. While I wait patiently for the kettle to fill from the trickling tap in the Ladies I glance down the notice that tells me I must ask permission before I wash my mugs in the sink.

Back on the stand I engage an enthusiastic young man in conversation about the attractive features of the Comet. He seems to know a lot about sailing. Then he asks:

"Can you fit a spinnaker?"

I had already had the questions about fitting the jib and centre mainsheet. Andrew had dealt with the question of the trapeze -- and we do not do double decker buses either!

Lunchtime -- so I hide myself away behind the screens with my pack of sandwiches. Sandwiched myself, between cardboard boxes and electrical cables, I relax for twenty minutes.

The afternoon session begins and I watch out for people coming back for a second look.

"Is there an International 14 at the Show?" I am asked.

"Where are the Scorpions?" (I wish I knew!).

A harassed father enquires after his four year old daughter. She is small and called Catherine, he volunteers, when pressed for more information. Our phone rings. It is for the Bass Boat Stand opposite. I am asked if I have any leaflets on the Hurricane Catamaran. That is the stand to the right of us. A young man approaches the desk in a very positive manner. He wants Martin Services -- that is to the left of us!

The day draws to an end. I wander off on a walk-about and buy myself a sweatshirt. I want Comet symbols stuck on the front and sleeves. The salesgirl tries to deter me, but I insist. The proprietor arrives back. He is not happy.

"You're not having Comet symbols down the sleeves are you?" he frowns "You'll ruin it!". But I am!

Back at my post I change into my new sweatshirt. Steve on the Bass Boat Stand asks if I have stitched the ribbons on the front myself.

A customer approaches. I grab him.

"O.K!" I say, "You can have it with a jib, and a spinnaker, and a trapeze -- but it will be out of class!"

Andrew groans.

.....Margaret Hylton.



Performance and quality at a competitive price

SAILING YOUR COMET - PART 3

In the previous article I considered the sailing techniques for the Comet on the beat against the wind. Now I will look at the basics of sailing the boat off the wind and on the reach or run. As before, I am considering the requirement from the pure sailing view rather than in the sense of racing and, again, I will assume that we are sailing inland on flat water with no wave or tidal effects.

In viewing off-wind sailing as covering every point of sailing except the beat then we can roughly subdivide the points into three main categories as follows:-

- close reach or fetch, true wind from 45 - 90 degrees.
 - beam reach, true wind from 90 - 135 degrees, and
 - broad reach to dead run, true wind from 135 - 180 degrees.
- (see fig 1.).

Each point of sailing will be considered for the three basic wind conditions of light, medium and strong but it should always be remembered that the precise definition of these conditions does depend on the water location and helmsman. A force 3 wind for a lightweight youngster at Grafham is relatively a lot stronger than a force 3 for a heavier adult at Kingsmead. Indeed, dependent on the wind angle, such a distinction may make all the difference between sailing the Comet rather slowly in displacement mode to sailing it in planing mode and quite quickly!

So, before looking at each point of sailing in detail, what are the main principles of sailing off the wind.

SAIL THE BOAT UPRIGHT: As previously covered in sailing the beat, it is most important to sail the boat upright. Whilst it may not be quite so critical as when beating because the forces generated to create the heeling effect are not as great, it is still a basic principle that real boat speed can not be developed if the boat is heeling. Neither the sail nor centreboard and rudder can work at their most efficient except when held vertically with respect to the horizontal wind and water flows.

There are, as always, exceptions which I will cover on the specific points of sailing but, most of the time, be sure to SAIL THE BOAT UPRIGHT.

SAIL THE BOAT LOOSE: It is essential not to oversheet the sail such that it is at too great an angle to the wind direction for the air flow to be able to attach to the leeward side of the sail. If the sail is sheeted in too tight then the air flow to leeward of the sail becomes turbulent and detached from the sail reducing the efficiency of the aerofoil in generating thrust.

This must be avoided at all costs and, with the sail eased to establish flow on both sides, the thrust and heel forces swing forward in direction thus increasing boat speed and reducing the heeling effects and so, SAIL IT LOOSE, (fig 2).

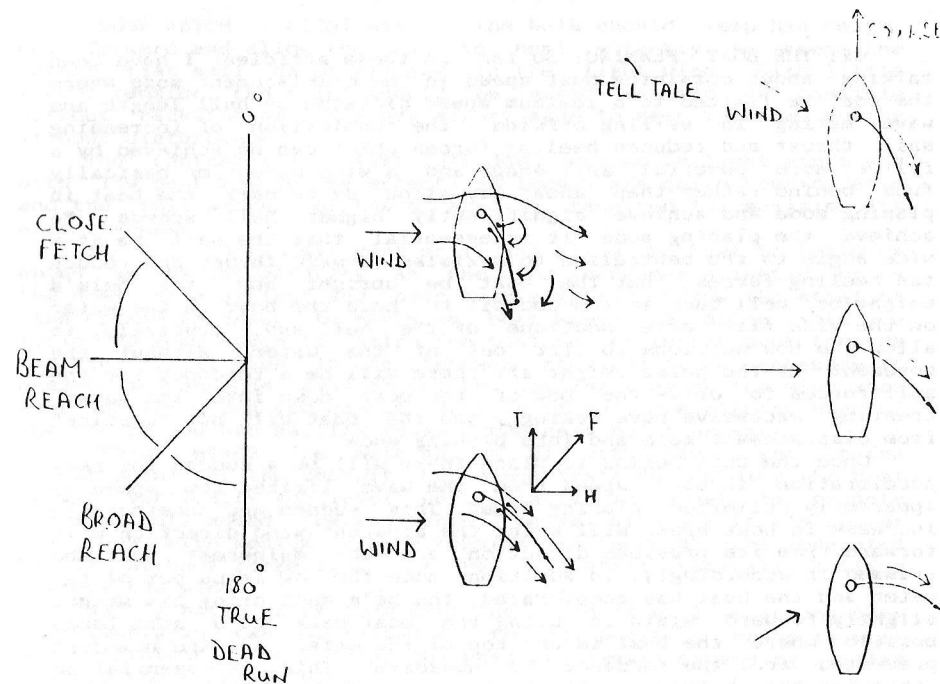


FIG 1

FIG 2

FIG 3

SAIL THE BOAT STRAIGHT: Downwind sailing is all about speed sailing in a straight line from point A to point B. Whereas in sailing against the wind we considered the wind as essentially fixed and we continuously steer the boat on a slightly variable course in order to find the best compromise of speed and distance. For downwind sailing in the displacement mode it is essential to sail the shortest distance between the two points and to steer the boat in a basically straight line.

Because the wind is, in fact, never completely constant in direction I then play the mainsail continuously to ensure that it is at the most efficient angle to the wind. Having set the boat on a basic straight line course, let the mainsheet out until the sail tell-tales are streaming and the leech tell-tale also streams.

This sets the basic sail angle for the wind direction and I now ease the mainsheet slightly until the luff of the sail begins to just backwind and ensuring that the sail is not oversheeted. Once the sail is backwinding I just pull the sheet back in slightly to eliminate the backwinding and, once the sail is pulling fully, start the process all over again.

The objective is to obtain maximum thrust efficiency from the sail, generating the greatest possible boat speed whilst sailing the shortest distance possible, (fig 3). So, while there are exceptions which I will cover, SAIL THE BOAT STRAIGHT and play the main.

GET THE BOAT PLANING: So far in these articles I have been talking about obtaining boat speed in the displacement mode where the boat is limited to a maximum speed dictated by hull length and wave making. In sailing offwind, the combination of increasing sail thrust and reduced heeling forces which can be achieved by a fuller, more powerful, sail shape and a wind direction basically from behind rather than ahead may allow us to sail the boat in planing mode and achieve significantly higher hull speeds. To achieve the planing mode it is essential that the sail be at a wide angle to the centreline to maximise forward thrust and reduce the heeling forces, that the boat be upright and the helm's weight be well back in the cockpit to hold the boat in the water on the wide flat after sections of the hull and, crucially, to allow the bow sections to lift out of the water. Without the movement of the helm's weight aft there will be a tendency for the sail forces to drive the bow of the boat down into the water, creating excessive wave-making and the boat will not "unstuck" from displacement mode and into planing mode.

Once the boat begins to plane there will be a sudden and real acceleration in boat speed from the wave limited low speed to apparently unlimited planing speed. This sudden and considerable increase in boat speed will bring the apparent wind direction well forward from its previous direction and the mainsheet must be trimmed in accordingly. In addition, once the bow is up out of the water and the boat has accelerated, the helm must bring his weight slightly forward again to bring the boat back to a more level position where the boat is on top of the water and the bow just prevented from the tendency to "nosedive". This is essential as otherwise the helm's weight at the rear of the cockpit can cause the stern of the boat to dig into the water and, by causing drag unnecessarily, limit the speed being obtained, (fig 4).

Throughout the exercise it is essential to keep the boat upright as any tendency for the boat to heel will ultimately lead to a sudden broach into the wind. This can easily cause the boom end to dig into the water, preventing the excessive heeling forces from being released by easing the sail and leading to a high-speed capsized!

If this requires the mainsheet to be eased a little then that does not matter because, once the boat is up and planing, surprisingly the sail needs to generate relatively little thrust to keep the boat moving at high speed. It is the initial movement of the hull up out of the water to be resting on the surface that requires a large amount of sail thrust.

The speed benefits of planing are so great that, if planing mode is possible, all other considerations such as distance sailed may become secondary. However, once planing is no longer possible on the course you are sailing, do not forget to bring your weight forward to the normal sailing position and to ease the main sheet out as the apparent wind goes aft. But, all other things being equal, GET THE BOAT PLANING.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE: So, if these are the major points for sailing off the wind, how do we put it into practice. As with sailing against the wind there is no substitute for experiment and practice and, rather than considering different wind strengths for the one point of beating, I will look at each point of reaching in the different wind strengths.

CLOSE FETCH - LIGHT WINDS. The helm should keep his weight well forward and allow the boat to heel slightly to keep the rather flat sail shape filling in the light wind. With little kicker tension, the main should be eased as far as possible without backwinding and every effort made to keep the boat moving without disturbance.

The centreboard is left full down because in light winds and with low boat speeds the effects of leeway are quite considerable and the full amount of board area is required to maximise its effectiveness.

The helm should sit very still and allow the boat to build up speed as the top priority. As the wind increases slightly, bring the boat more upright and bear away slightly below the straight line course in order to maximise boat speed. By doing this you build up some space to allow the boat to be luffed back towards the wind if it dies. In the lightest of winds it is necessary to create and enhance sail thrust by sailing towards the wind when ever possible and you cannot do this if you are already high of the course you are sailing towards the next point or mark.

MEDIUM WINDS. The helm should sit with his weight at the widest point of the cockpit and concentrate on holding the boat upright vertically and level horizontally in order to promote maximum hull speed. The sail should be set with a slightly fuller shape and with medium kicker tension to increase the generated forces without forgetting that you are still basically sailing against the wind.

With greater water flow past the board it will be acting more efficiently and can be raised to the 3/4 position where it will act sufficiently to counter the greater leeway caused by sailing against the stronger wind.

The increasing boat speed will cause the apparent wind to move forwards and the sail must be sheeted in slightly to the most efficient position for the tell-tales to stream. The boat will be sailed in an essentially straight line with the helm concentrating solely on setting the sail correctly and keeping the boat upright. However, if the wind is at all variable in strength rather than in direction, the technique of easing below the course in the puffs in order to head closer to the wind in the lulls is still used.

STRONG WINDS. Dependent on the wind strength and the helm's weight it is possible for the Comet to plane on a close fetch in the stronger winds.

The sail should be fairly flat and with considerable kicker tension as if sailing the beat. The centreboard may be set at the full-down position because the increasing boat speed will cause the apparent wind to be very close to the beating angle.

The boat must be held bolt upright with the helm moving well back in the cockpit and the main eased to provide maximum thrust in the forwards direction and to minimise heeling forces. As the wind increases and the boat starts to plane then bear away below the desired course to maintain the planing speed and ensure the boat is held upright. Once planing is established, ease the weight forward and bring the boat back closer to the wind and desired course. Then pull the main sheet into the new forward wind angle as long as this does not cause the boat to heel.

If the wind is not strong enough to promote planing then sail the close fetch very much like sailing the beat in strong winds by concentrating on keeping the boat upright and playing the mainsail while sailing to the required course, (fig 5).

TRUE
APPARENT
INDUCED

X HELM 1 FULL BOARD

1/2 HALF BOARD

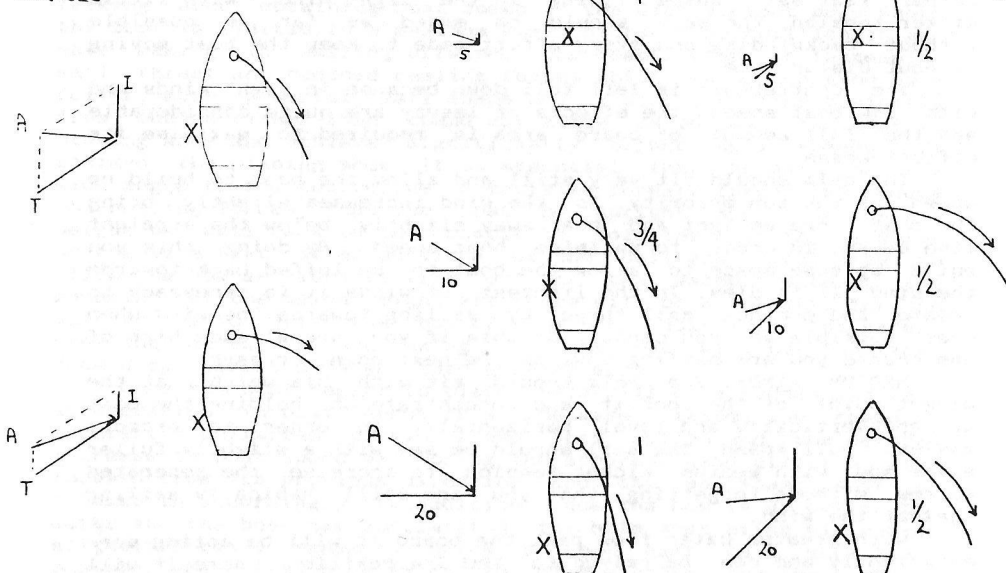


FIG 4

FIG 5

FIG 6

BEAM REACH - LIGHT WINDS. With the wind on or behind the beam and in light winds the helm should again sit well forward in the boat and allow a slight angle of heel to help shape the sail.

The sail should be fairly flat with only light kicker tension and the centreboard should be in the half-down position. The sail should be well eased and above all the helm must remain still and avoid any tendency for the boat's momentum to be affected by undue movement of the hull or rudder in the water.

Sail a basically straight course and concentrate on obtaining maximum efficiency of thrust from the sail by playing the main to the wind direction. Once the tell-tales are streaming and the sail is generating forces bear away slightly to maintain the momentum and then use that momentum to head back up towards the wind if the sail shows any sign of loosing the air flow.

MEDIUM WINDS. With an increase in wind strength the problem of obtaining an attached air flow around the sail is reduced and the sail can be set quite full with the kicker on sufficiently to hold the boom end down and just tighten the leech while still producing full power in the sail. The additional heeling forces

produced by the sail are relatively unimportant as the sail will be eased well forward and such forces are acting more along the boat than across it.

The helm should be sitting at the point of maximum beam and concentrating on holding the boat upright with the centreboard at the half down position which should be sufficient to avoid any leeway from the course sailed.

As before the boat is sailed on a basically straight line course with the main continuously played and eased to the point where the luff is on the point of lifting. The main and leech tell tales should stream easily and the helm concentrates solely on the boat's speed.

As the boat speed increases there will be slight tendency for the apparent wind to move forward and, rather than sheeting in the sail, this effect can be used to allow the boat to bear off again slightly to maintain momentum. Any sign of slowing of the boat or slackening of wind strength then allows the boat to be brought back closer to the wind, the sail to be sheeted in slightly and the attached airflow to be maintained for maximum boat speed.

I should emphasize that the alterations of course are very small in direction and do not offend the basic principle of sailing the shortest possible distance. The intention is to find the best compromise of direction and boat speed for any given wind strength.

STRONG WINDS. In strong winds the Comet will plane readily on a beam reach and, because of the speed differential when planing, all efforts must be aimed towards achieving the planing condition.

The sail should be set quite flat with considerable kicker tension to hold the leech tight and remove draft through bending the mast. Even though the heeling forces generated are not as great as when beating it is still essential to minimise them and to hold the boat absolutely upright. To plane at full speed the boat needs the flat after sections of the hull to lie on the water surface and such speed cannot be sustained if the boat heels and presses the hull into the water as an asymmetric surface.

The helm should sit well back in the cockpit to ensure that the forward direction of sail forces does not push the bow of the boat down into the water and again the board should be about half down although this is more to provide stability to the hull in the water rather than preventing leeway which will be relatively small at high boat speeds.

Whenever possible ease the main slightly and bear off in any stronger gusts to get the boat planing and then bring the sail back in to the new apparent wind which will swing well forward. To maintain the plane gently ease the helm's weight forward to reduce any possible stern drag and keep the boat upright. At the first sign of the boat coming off the plane be ready to ease the main back to the wind as it swings aft and look for the next opportunity to get the boat planing, (fig 6).

BROAD REACH OR RUN. The broad reach or dead run is perhaps the most difficult of the off-wind points of sailing to achieve the optimum sailing performance and boat speed.

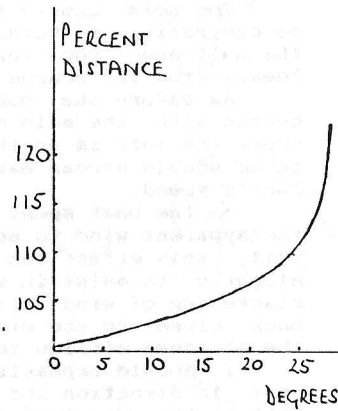
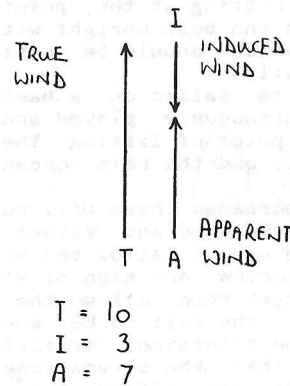
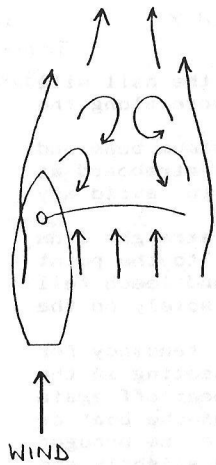


FIG 7

FIG 8

FIG 9

CE CENTRE EFFORT
 CLR CENTRE LATERAL RESISTANCE

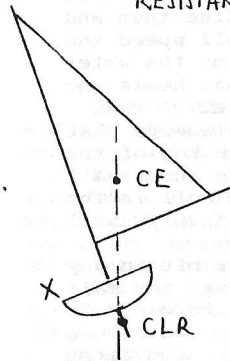


FIG 10

O NO BOARD

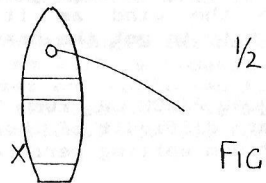
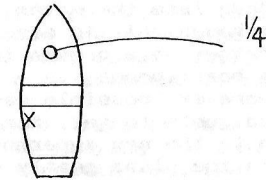
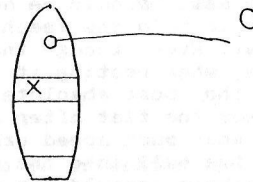
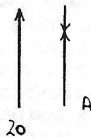


FIG 11

With the wind from virtually astern it is impossible to obtain an air flow to attach to both sides of the sail and provide the normal sail forces. Instead the sail acts basically like a flat board and generates thrust through the sheer force of the wind in hitting the sail in much the same way as wind hitting a door generates considerable force, (fig 7).

In addition, with the motion of the boat away from the wind, the apparent wind produced by the combination of true wind and induced wind is actually less than the true wind and this always ensures that the very broad reach or dead run is the slowest point of sailing, (fig 8).

However, in the extremes of very light winds and very strong winds, it is possible to reduce the effect of loss of apparent wind by judicious choice of sailing angle with respect to the required course.

Jacobs again shows that, for a 15 degree deviation from the true downwind course, the additional distance sailed is only 5% and, for a 25 degree deviation, only 10%. Thereafter, the amount of additional distance sailed rapidly becomes excessive, (fig 9).

If, by "tacking downwind" and sailing a course at an angle to the required course, you can obtain an increase in boat speed to compensate for the extra distance sailed then it may be worthwhile to do so and break the normal rule of sailing a straight line.

LIGHT WINDS. With the sail set rather flat to spread the maximum area and eased right forward at right angles to the wind direction the helm sits as far forward as possible. The kicker is set just holding the boom and the board is right up. The boat is held upright and the sail can be held steady by a hand on the boom or kicker. Experiment with changes of course direction to try and increase the effective apparent wind and generate boat speed. At all costs avoid the true dead run where the apparent wind will be close to zero and the sail hangs limp with no force generated.

MEDIUM WINDS. With the sail still quite flat, eased well forward and with a little more kicker to hold the leech, the helm sits at the front of the cockpit and uses quarter plate just to give improved steerage control in the stronger wind. The boat will be sailing quite quickly and there is no advantage to be gained by "tacking downwind" as the apparent wind change is negligible and there is not sufficient wind to promote planing. The boat is held bolt upright and even heeled slightly to windward to bring the centre of effort in line with the centre of resistance and avoid any tendency for extra steerage effort or drag, (fig 10).

STRONG WINDS. The sail is set very flat with considerable kicker tension to avoid twist and loss of power in the leech. The helm sits well back in the cockpit with half plate to dampen any tendency for the boat to roll. The sail is held in from the right angle position which also serves to reduce the effects of rolling. If the wind is not strong enough for planing then sail the direct downwind course with the boat held dead upright and the bow held up from any tendency to nose-dive. If there is any possibility of getting the boat to plane by sailing at a slight angle from the true course then concentrate on obtaining planing speed which will more than compensate for the extra distance sailed. As always, it is essential to sail the boat upright, (fig 11).

BACK TO BASICS

In answer to Jonathan Clark's question "Where next?" and the plaintive cry from Pitstop of "Where will it all end?" might I suggest..... "Back to Basics"?

In his interesting article Jonathan concentrates largely on the racing side of dinghy classes and, through implication, the higher end of the racing scene.

I would question that championship attendance, in isolation, is the right criteria for measuring a class or that the concentration of the dinghy scene into a few, mass produced, sponsored dinghy classes is in the best interests of the ordinary dinghy sailor who might well object to such regimentation of his pleasure activity.

Certainly, if the shape of the future is shown by the International 14, Laser 2 and Extrovert then, excellent boats that they may be, the options open to a wide range of dinghy sailors will be most seriously limited.

The concentration of the yachting press generally on dinghy racing and the hi-tech areas of foam sandwich and epoxies, Mylar and Kevlar cloths, ultimate courses and on-water referees misses the real point.

Whilst the dedicated few will appreciate and benefit from such developments, the vast majority of dinghy sailors remain unaffected and even possibly uncaring because they can obtain what they need from their personal choice of boat and sailing or racing.

This might only be pleasure sailing, basic training, the odd handicap or class race, possibly an occasional open meeting but it matches their requirements and probably reflects an increasing range of leisure activities competing for evermore occupied weekends.

In suggesting more consideration of the basic needs of the wider dinghy sailing fraternity, I feel I must take up the statement made by Jonathan that only two new classes have established themselves in the 'Eighties.

Not true!

The Comet was designed by Andrew Simmons in 1981 and has proceeded slowly and surely, without drum-beating, to the point where, in 1988, it can truly be said to have established itself.

The proof?

Firstly, its sales in 1988 of over 100 new boats represents a growth of 3 or 4 times greater than its peer group of other excellent and well established single-handed classes sandwiched between the phenomenons of the Topper and the Laser.

Secondly, over 50 Comet sailors enjoyed a recent Autumn weekend at Kingsmead SC where, although 41 entered and raced on the Sunday, it was probably more significant that 16 attended on a Saturday for informal, on-water training conducted by experienced class helms.

So, who has been attracted to the Comet?

A wide range of people from seasoned championship winners in other classes to absolute newcomers to sailing of all ages and

sexes.

Why? - because it meets their needs!

It is well built, fully equipped and offers sensible features at an economic price.

It has a complete range of custom designed optional extras from a Combi trailer, folding trolley to spar and foil bags.

It is responsive in light winds and controllable in strong winds with a friendly and personal service from the builder AMS Marine and its appointed dealer, Dinghy Leisure.

It has a Class Association whose aims and objectives are equally appropriate to those who sail or cruise for pleasure as to the regular open circuit traveller.

I would use the example of the Comet to suggest a profile and a future more attractive to the vast majority of dinghy sailors, current or potential, as we face "the challenge of the Nineties and the 21st Century" than that identified by Jonathan and typified by the rarified details of the Fourteen Update occupying most of Pitstop.

Is the Comet the effect of the hi-tech cause?

Let's get back to basics!

WOT ABOUT THE YOUNGSTERS?

OR

A COMET CADET SECTION

I have recently purchased a new Comet and we are most pleased with it!

I completed the questionnaire and wondered if maybe a Cadet section within the Class might be a good idea. The Comet is, after all, an excellent boat for youngsters, and could prove to be the ideal stepping stone for Optimist sailors, or perhaps save some parents the outlay on an Optimist at all.

The Cadet section, if formed, could perhaps have its own handicap races within the format of the Open Meetings, and maybe a Cadet Trophy at the Championships - both Inland and Nationals.

If a group of interested families could be gathered then perhaps training days specifically designed for children could be arranged with also some training for Mum and Dad!! It can only be to the long-term benefit of the class to encourage youngsters.

The Comet is ideal for children as it can easily be sailed two-up - ideal for training and it can easily be reefed. It is fairly light for children to pull in and out of the water, so if there are any interested parents and offspring fed up with watching Mum and Dad sailing - how about a Cadet Section?

Karen Willis
Comet 232.

JCB sc

Comet Open

SATURDAY 3rd JUNE - SAIL TRAINING DAY

Come and join us, and together we will learn about starts, tactics, boat speed, and using the rules to advantage. Run by R.Y.A. S/H Instructors. With a bit of luck we will video the days efforts for discussion and a giggle in the club bar after! Entry Fee: £1.50.

SUNDAY 4th JUNE - OPEN MEETING

Come on, all you Thames Valley chaps, why not come to the pollution and traffic free N. Midlands? JCB is 3½ legal hours from London centre; we offer a superb facility both on the water and après sail. Ask those who came last year.

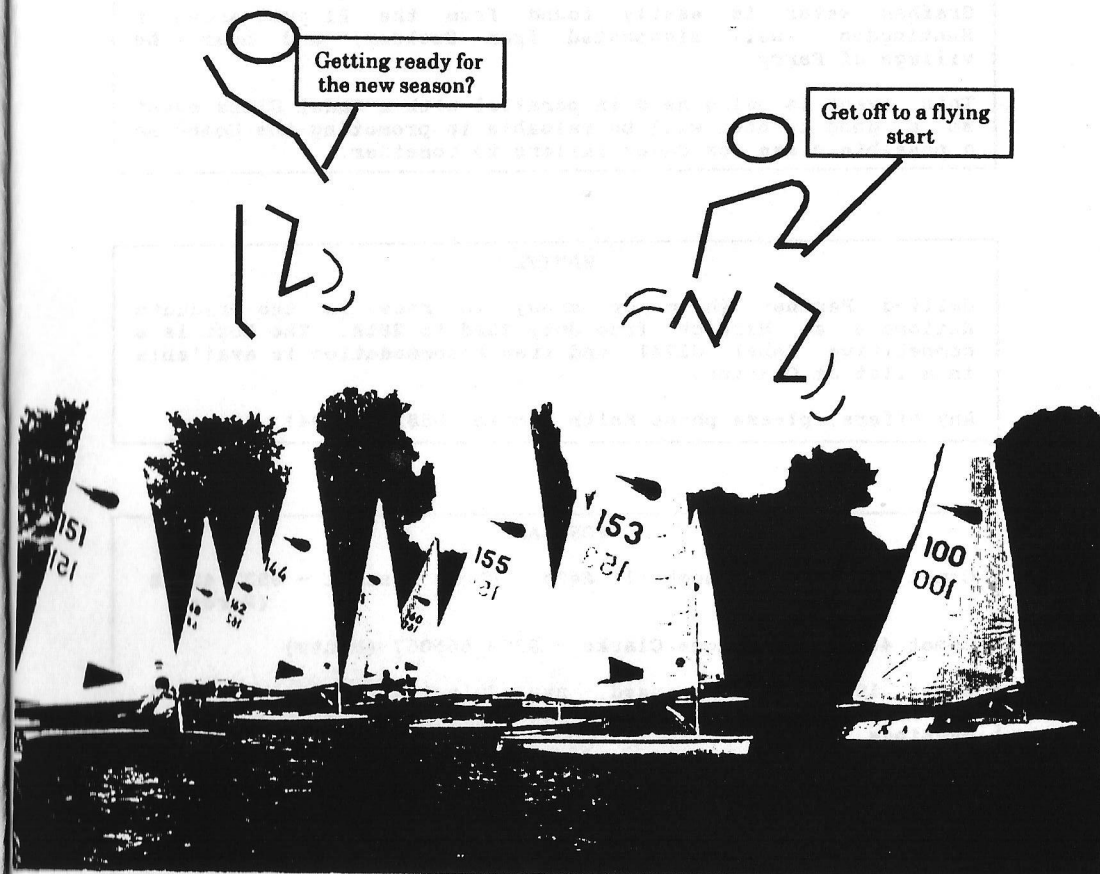
3 Races : 11:00 to 2:25 Starts. Entry Fee : £3.00.
Facilities Open 9:30 Each Day.
Local camping and B&B available.
Contact : Will Turner (0889 562637) for details.

We are located 4m N. of Uttoxeter which is midway between Stoke-on-Trent and Derby on A50. At Uttoxeter turn North on B5032 to Ashbourne. 3 miles later, turn left to Denstone having gone past JCB Factory. Follow Comet signs.

HAVE A NICE DAY!

*Dinghy
Leisure*

Comet



For a by return service from our full range of spares and accessories contact:

**Margaret Hylton
The Comet Dealer**

Sales, Demonstrations
Spares and Accessories

6 Wychwood, Little Kingshill
Great Missenden, Bucks HP16 OEJ
Tel: Great Missenden (02406) 3082

NOTICE BOARD

INLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS: Grafham Water Sailing Club

Saturday 20th May - 2 races
Sunday 21st May - 2 races
Entry Fee £10. 3 races count overall
Comet Class members only.

Grafham Water is easily found from the A1 just south of Huntingdon, well signposted from Buckden, and near the village of Perry.

This event is being held in parallel with a Cadet Class event so a good turnout will be valuable in promoting the Comet as a possible class for Cadet sailors to consider.

WANTED

Sailing Partner (helm or crew) to race in the Graduate Nationals at Harwich from July 23rd to 28th. The boat is a competitive Rebel G2741 and free accommodation is available in a flat at Clacton.

Any offers, please phone Keith Lamdin (0582 665194)

FOR SALE

Comet 1 - prestige number! £475. Phone Everest - 0527 42998
(Worcs)

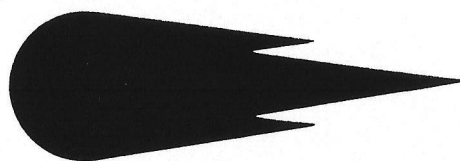
Comet 40 £600. Phone Clarke - 0329 665067 (Hants)

Comet 194 - hardly used, new July 1988 £1075 ono. Red, cover, trolley, complete. Phone David Stubley - 01 585 3437 evenings.

Top quality 2 piece roof rack as supplied by AMS Marine. Will fit any car with exterior rain gutters and is in excellent condition, having been used sparingly! £20 - phone Keith Lamdin (0582 665194).

AVAILABLE

Limited quantities of back issue Pereheliion. Contact the Secretary with issue required.



Comet Class Association

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association