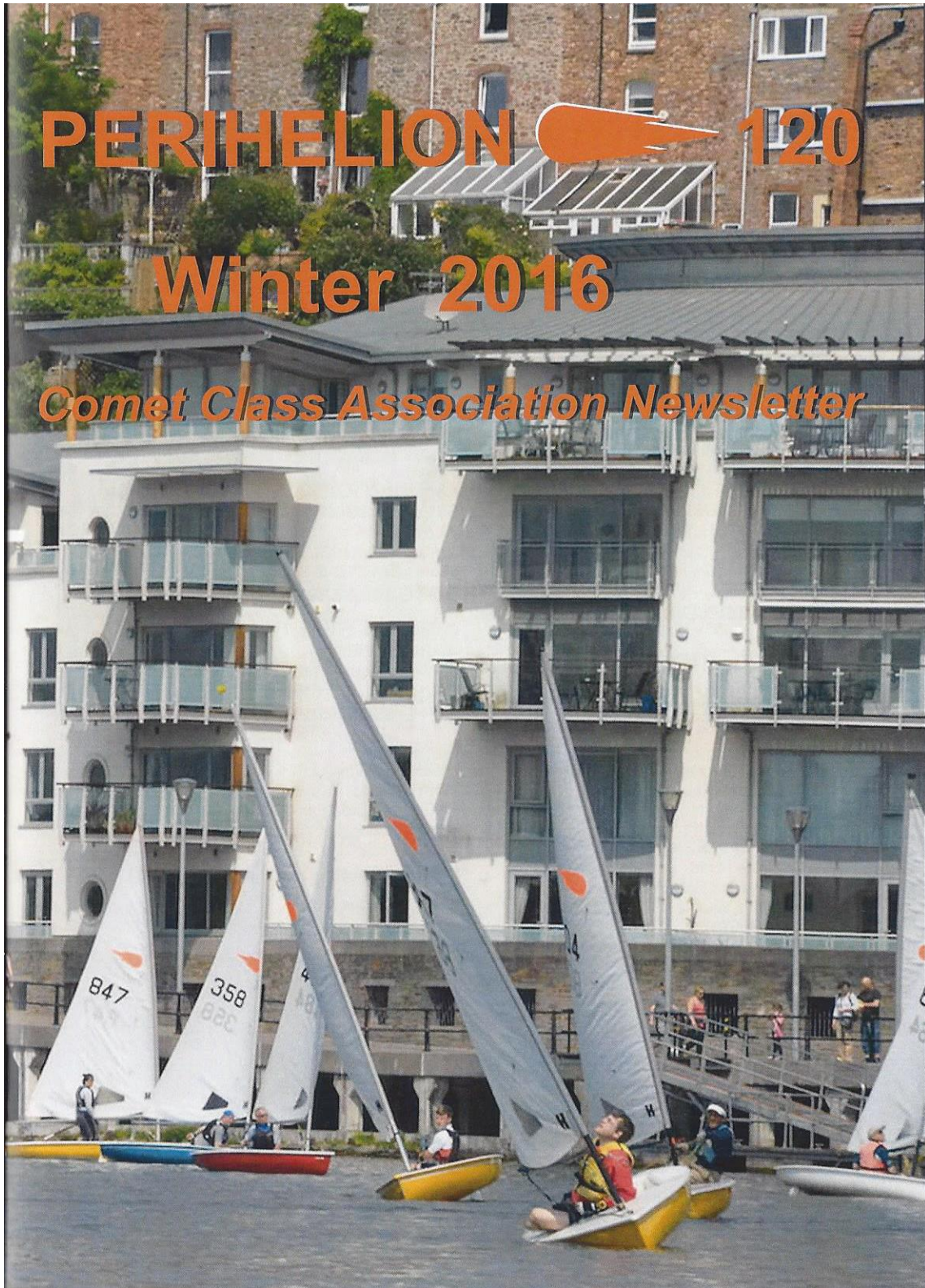


PERIHELION  120

Winter 2016

*Comet Class Association Newsletter*



## OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

### President

**KEITH LAMDIN**  
1, Japonica Court  
Marine Parade East  
Clacton on Sea CO15 5AF  
(Comet 55)  
Tel: 01255 421862

### Chairman

**PAUL HINDE**  
32 Honeymans Gardens  
Droitwich Spa Worcestershire WR9 9AD  
(Comet 844)  
e-mail: [paul.hinde@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:paul.hinde@yahoo.co.uk)  
Tel: 01905799134 & 07703654899

### Secretary

**NORAH JAGGERS**  
Green Bank,  
9, Clinton Rise,  
Beer, Seaton,  
Devon EX12 3DZ  
e-mail: [cometdinghy.class@btinternet.com](mailto:cometdinghy.class@btinternet.com)  
Tel: 01297 20858

### Treasurer

**RHIAIN BEVAN**  
2 Hall Lane  
Kettering Northamptonshire NN16 7LJ  
(Comet 724)  
e-mail: [rhiainbevan@hotmail.com](mailto:rhiainbevan@hotmail.com)  
Tel: 07834 186247

### Committee Results

**MICHAEL ETTERS HANK**  
40 Fennfields Road  
South Woodham Ferrers  
Chelmsford Essex CM3 5RZ (Comet 84)  
Tel 01245 329797  
e-mail: [michaelettershank@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:michaelettershank@yahoo.co.uk)  
[cometresults@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cometresults@yahoo.co.uk)

### Committee

**JOHN STURGEON**  
6 Adams Drive Fleet  
Hants GU51 3DZ (Comet 400 & C246)  
e-mail: [johnbsturgeon@hotmail.com](mailto:johnbsturgeon@hotmail.com)  
Tel: 01252 623253

### Committee ((Trophies))

**LIZ HOSSELL**  
3 Crump Way Abbey Vale  
Evesham Worcs WR11 3JG  
e-mail: [lizhossell@hotmail.com](mailto:lizhossell@hotmail.com)  
Tel: mobile : 07801 656662

### Committee

**NIGEL FERN**  
3 Cheltenham Drive  
Ashby de la Zouch  
Leics  
LE65 2YE (Comet 845)  
Tel : 01530 469691  
e-mail: [n.fern@ntlworld.com](mailto:n.fern@ntlworld.com)

### Committee

**STEVE GREGORY**  
33 Abbey Rd  
Medstead Alton GU34 5 PB  
phone: 07977 215581  
e-mail: [steveggregory33@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:steveggregory33@yahoo.co.uk)

### Committee

**MARK GOVIER**  
43 Hatherleigh Road, Cardiff, CF3 4AS  
Phone: 029 2077 8459  
e-mail: [mark.govier@gmail.com](mailto:mark.govier@gmail.com)

### Committee

**NIGEL AUSTIN**  
Farm Cottage  
10 London End Earls Barton  
Northampton NN6 0EZ  
Tel 0754 5531331  
e-mail: [austins.cottage@btinternet.com](mailto:austins.cottage@btinternet.com)

### Magazine Editor

**BRIAN WELHAM**  
9 Murrell Court  
St Neots Cambs. PE19 1LL (Comet 801)  
e-mail: [bwelham@sky.com](mailto:bwelham@sky.com)  
Tel: 01480-534624

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## Chairman's Report

### Chair's Mutterings



#### Chairman's Mutterings P120

Now the open meeting season has finished, it is time to think about some boat repairs that have been on the list for a while and then some winter sailing as a break from work and sitting in the house. It's also time to reflect on the sailing season and continue to improve from this year.

While most of have had varying degrees of success on the open meeting circuit, there have been two people in particular that should be congratulated - Chris Jones from Sutton Bingham SC, who won both of this year's championships, and Chris Hatton from Severn SC, who won all of the Aphelions and the Orbital. Also this year, the committee decided to award the Hossell Plate, for promoting the Class, to Sarah Austin for the work that she did to help organise this year's championships. The FATE plate was awarded to Carol Butcher from Hawley Lake SC for her determination to complete all of the races at the Nationals despite capsizing on the way to the start of the first race.

Those of you who regularly visit the website will have noticed the open meeting programme for next is already starting to come together. This year, we are adding the events to the calendar as they are confirmed so that you can start planning which events to attend. Some of the notable dates are National Championships, and Annual General Meeting, that will be at Burghfield SC at the end of May, the Association Championships at Attenborough SC at the end of August, and

first of all the RYA Dinghy Show at Alexandra Palace at the beginning of March. As always, keep checking the website for the latest information. The allocation of events to the Aphelions will be discussed by the committee at its spring meeting and then published at the RYA Dinghy Show.

Finally, I would like to thank all those people who give up their spare time to help organise events, plan and run the activities of the class association and also all of the members who support the events and continue to make the programme a success.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

**Paul Hinde C844**

The password for the members section of the class website has changed, it will now be: **linear2016**

**The photographs in this issue were printed with the kind permission from the following.**

**Cover**

**P253**

**P24 P25 and P26**

**Norah Jagers**

**Brian Welham**

**Keith Lamdin**

## Secretary's Report

### Notes from the committee:



1. Well, 2016 has been the "Year of the Chris"! Chris Jones is our National and Association Champion. Chris Hatton won all of the Aphelions as well as the Orbital Trophy. Congratulations to them both.
2. All of the Aphelions were closely fought, with 9 qualifiers in the West, 8 in the North and 7 in each of the East and South. In the North, Eddie Pope was only 1 point behind Chris Hatton with Henry Jagers in third place. Chris Robinson beat John Coppenhall to 4<sup>th</sup> place on count back. In the Southern Aphelion 4 points separated Chris and Bob Dodds, with Eddie and Ben Palmer in between them. The Eastern Aphelion's third and fourth places were decided on count back with Michael Ethershank just beating Bob Dodds. Chris Robinson was second. Eddie, Ben and Chris Robinson had 11, 12 and 13 points respectively in the Western Aphelion, giving them 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> places, with Bob and Henry separated by 1 point in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> places.
3. The new perpetual trophies were awarded at the end of the Eastern, Western and Northern Aphelions. They have been designed to match the Southern Aphelion, and the name plates from the old cups have been put onto the back of the new trophies. Many thanks to Liz for organising these, and all of the mementoes.
4. The Pingewood Trophy, which is awarded to the helm who competes in the most Open meetings, has been shared by Chris Robinson, John Coppenhall and Henry Jagers, all of whom attended 20 events.
5. The Club Trophy was a tie between Severn and Staunton Harold. Chris Hatton flew the banner for Severn. Staunton Harold's "secret weapon" was Dave Waymont who was

persuaded to go to a number of Open meetings which gave the club double points. Well done all of you!

6. We had a short Committee meeting at Staunton Harold, and agreed to have a stand at the Dinghy Show which will be on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> March 2017. John Sturgeon is organising this again, with support from Nigel Austin. Please let them know if you would like to help.
7. Once again we also agreed to accept any invitation to have a representative in the Battle of the Classes at the Southampton Boat Show. As this has clashed with an Open event in the past, the committee decided to give average points to the sailor(s) representing the class so that they are not disadvantaged by competing in Southampton. Chris Jones was unfortunately unable to represent us this year.
8. You will have noticed that we have reduced the number of Perihelions to 3 this year. I've only just realised that this means that there hasn't been a report from Rutland until now. Let's say that the weather was much as usual. We had some extremely windy weather and some races with no wind. At one point at least 10 boats were capsized at the same time, which gives some idea of conditions. Chris Jones was the eventual winner, with Nigel Austin (2<sup>nd</sup>), Eddie Pope (3<sup>rd</sup>) and Chris Robinson (4<sup>th</sup>) all following him on 19 points. Rutland SC made us very welcome and our thanks go to them for an enjoyable event.
9. The Annual General Meeting did not spring any surprises. Helen Leivers was appointed as Honorary Auditor, with our thanks going to Michael Thompson for all his help over the last few years. Your Committee was re-elected en bloc.
10. The programme for 2017 is coming together well, with most of the usual clubs offering an Open meeting. You'll find a list of the early events elsewhere in this edition of Perihelion, but do keep an eye on the website as Nigel Fern is putting events on to it as soon as they are agreed.
11. Chris Robinson has negotiated our National Championships at Burghfield over the Spring Bank Holiday – May 27<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup>. The Association Championships will be at Attenborough over the

## Secretary's Report (cont.)

August Bank Holiday, August 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. Nigel Fern has kindly offered to be our contact with the club. The Nationals in 2018 will be over the August Bank Holiday at Staunton Harold.

12. The Annual General Meeting for 2017 will be at Burghfield on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> May. You will realise that this is much earlier than our usual date, so please be prepared with motions and ideas as well as nominations for the committee. Paul will stand down as chairman, after his 3 year tenure, and I would like to retire as secretary and programme organiser.
13. Please continue to make use of the website especially the member's area. You can send reports and photographs to [cometresults@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cometresults@yahoo.co.uk). We're still trying to locate all of the Comets which have been built, especially those owned by people who aren't members of the Association, so if you have another Comet at your club, let us know. Perhaps you could persuade the owner to join the Association – or at least come out to an Open meeting.
14. Helen Leivers is getting back on her feet after taking a tumble at her club and breaking her leg and ankle. She still managed to get into a dory to do some coaching, with her plastered leg covered with a black sack. Our good wishes go to Derek Coleman who is unwell. Nigel Fern and Steve Gregory have also been hors d'combat and we hope that they are soon on the mend. It was good to see Keith Bullock and Len Dean recently. They are Comet sailors who used to sail at Kingsmead.

**Norah Jagers Class Secretary**

**The FATE Plate** was presented by Peter and Wendy Hayes for fortitude in the face of adversity. In 2015 it was awarded to Peter Mountford.

This year the committee has decided to present it to a Comet sailor who has supported the Open circuit and Championships for several years. At the National Championships they capsized while making their way to the start line for the first race, and spent a considerable length of time in the water as the wind was too strong for them to right the boat. However, they went on to compete in all the subsequent races, even though the conditions were challenging.

The **FATE Plate** is awarded to:

**Carol Butcher**

**The Hossell Plate** was presented by Liz and Phillip Hossell for the person, outside of the committee, who has contributed most to the development and growth of the Comet Class Association. Last year it was presented to Rowena and David Bevan.

The committee has decided to award the Hossell Plate to someone who has competed in a number of Comet events, including Championships, over several years as well as encouraging youngsters in their own club to learn to sail, and to chose Comets. This year they did a huge amount of work behind the scenes to ensure that both the Association and National Championships ran smoothly. This included providing food for the former.

The **Hossell Plate** is awarded to:

**Sarah Austin.**

## Builders Report

2016 was quite a year for Comet Dinghies. We moved to new smaller and a lot cheaper premises in April but it wasn't until October that I can honestly say I finished unpacking!

Our new place is only 1300 sq ft but I also rent a 40' and 20' containers to store old moulds and all those things that still might "come in handy" one day.

Early summer saw a couple of Comets ordered, one for Arden sailing club on the Avon and the other to Chipstead S C. In the autumn another Comet (ex-Dinghy show) also went to Arden, where the Comet might be soon the biggest fleet although it is a small but friendly club.

The Xtra conversion continues to be a steady seller and some of the "early adopters" are now replacing their sails. Its amazing to think its been on the scene 10 years now. The Standard Sail with a Zipper option suddenly had a "spurt" with 3 ordered in one week having not previously sold one for 6 months. At the moment, I have an original owners' 27-year-old Comet in for refurbishing and conversion to Zipper Standard Sail and overboom cover.

In the new year, I'll build two Comets for the Dinghy Show, one of which is for a long-term, multiple Comet lady owner. (That narrows it down a bit).

As usual I can take sails and bits to the Dinghy Show early March, but as usual even if you don't want a new sail until later in the spring, please let us know so we can forward plan.

Have a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year and I'll see some of you at the Dinghy Show.

**Andy Simmons**



## COMET SPARES, REPAIRS AND ACCESSORIES

Don't forget all spares and accessories are held in stock and can often be with you in less than 24 hours if you order in the morning.

New Dinghies	A selection always in stock
Comet	£4050
Comet Xtra	£4150
Comet Mino	£4000
Standard Sail	£ 320
Standard Sail with Zipper	£ 350
Zippered Sail Conversion Kit	£ 30
Mino Sail	£ 280
Xtra Sail	£ 385
Xtra Conversion Kit & Sail	£ 415
Xtra Bottom Mast	£ 170
Xtra Top Mast	£ 95
Xtra Boom	£ 140

A full spare parts price list is now available to download from our web page. [www.cometdinghies.com](http://www.cometdinghies.com)

**Repairs** Accident damage and refurbishing gladly undertaken. Write, phone or e-mail but include a daytime phone number

### Comet Dinghies

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Ashreigney  
Chumleigh

Devon **EX18 7ND** Tel **01769 520545**

**e-mail** [cometdinghies@btconnect.com](mailto:cometdinghies@btconnect.com)

## **National Championships Rutland Water August 2016**

Rutland Water has always been, in my mind, unforgiving and for first 2 out of the 3 days of the Comet National Championships it lived up to its reputation. Forget Wind Guru or Wunderground with its 15-18 knots, it was definitely 20 gusting 25-30 especially on the 2<sup>nd</sup> race of Day 1, when most of the fleet were skittled whilst praying for a rest bite next aptly to Normanton Church. As if the Race Officer knew what was to come (although i am not sure she did!) those who did survive flew round the triangle-sausage- triangle course with Chris Jones crossing after 23 minutes and Chris Robinson after 45 minutes in Races 1 and 2 respectively!!!

Race 2 nearly saw a disaster in the form of young Isaac Dodds being squashed by the wrongly named passenger ferry, The Rutland Belle. Poor Isaac had been so startled by its repeated horn blasts as it ploughed through the fleet that he Chinese gybed right next to it and was able to identify individual barnacles as it passed within feet of him! We had been warned at the briefing that it had right of way but it showed no attempt to avoid the gaggle of 31 Comets.....terrifying!! Of course Isaac was offered glasses for the remainder of the racing and we all said it could never happen again.

Sunday saw the winds the same and despite trying to push the first mark close to the windward shore there was no escape and those spectators both on the bank and peering out from the church's countless weddings witnessed some spectacular reaching up and down the start line (actually we did that for quite alot of the time between the 8 races!). 4 races came and went and Chris Jones dropped his guard slightly and went swimming either side of lunch, although his 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> meant he enjoyed the Steak Meal that night with a poorly disguised smile! Yours truly managed to fulfil a "bucket wish" to win a Nationals race (actually managed 2 back to back) and celebrated with extra Vionetta although young Chris Hatton and Isaac Dobbs did overdose on the remaining portions. This extra energy certainly was well stored by Chris who got a couple of bullets on the Sunday when the wind had subsided – thank goodness it wasn't like that on Friday and Saturday as i think it may have been a different story when the cups were handed out!.

Chris Robinson had rather sneakily managed to put together a less erratic set of results than myself and Eddie Pope hit a rich vein of form for the last 3 races but one fatal remark (from Chris R) spurred me on after the penultimate race – Chris asked how i got on and i said about 8<sup>th</sup> – to which he replied that i needed a 6<sup>th</sup> to beat him overall. I had no idea and so i set off to try and get there – until.....the Rutland Belle appeared on the last beat – parallel to and windward of me but 100m behind and with the safety boat telling me not to tack!!! - i sailed for probably 200m initially on my beat then had to steer on to a close fetch as the captain decided to veer to port. By the time i tacked behind the safety boat and the end of the Belle (i actually said something else on the water!) i couldn't see the rest of the leading fleet as they had all tacked off to starboard. It was then a miracle happened and i got a personalised lift and gust right up to the windward mark to get to 7<sup>th</sup>. I tried my best to butter Ben Palmer up on the last leg prior to the leeward mark but he wasn't accepting any brown envelope offer so instead i had to rely on a couple of wind changes on the last short stretch to the line to get to 6<sup>th</sup> and secure 2<sup>nd</sup> overall on discards from Chris and Eddie.

There was a great atmosphere amongst the fleet both on and off the water and not one protest despite the close racing – well done to everyone!. The single handed Comet will obviously never be as popular as those mass produced dinghies like Lasers or Solos but they are unique in that they can be just as competitive 30 years after being designed and built, as one its maker Andy Simmons built last year – true durability and class, no wonder the numbers of venues and competitors on the Open Circuit are still going strong with a huge age range, both ladies and gents as well as those better in light winds and those better in heavy winds.....!

Many Thanks to all at Rutland SC

***Nigel Austin Comet 875***

## Comet Nationals at Rutland SC August 2016

Rank	No	Name	Club	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	Pts
1st	70	Chris Jones	Sutton Bingham SC	1	3	2	-5	-5	1	3	3	13
2nd	718	Nigel Austin	Cransley SC	2	2	7	1	1	-8	-8	6	19
3rd	804	Eddie Pope	Ogston SC	-9	5	1	(33 DNC)	7	2	2	2	19
4th	867	Chris Robinson	Burghfield SC	6	1	3	2	2	5	-20	-11	19
5th	84	Michael Ettershank	Up River YC	5	4	4	6	11	3	-22	-21	33
6th	597	Ben Palmer	Baltic Wharf	7	6	-14	3	6	4	-9	9	35
7th	844	Paul Hinde	Severn SC	4	9	5	4	8	6	-13	(33 DNF)	36
8th	869	Bob Dodds	Crawley Mariners YC	-10	7	-10	7	9	9	4	7	43
9th	711	Dave Harris	Severn SC	8	11	6	(33 DNC)	3	7	-18	10	45
10th	875	Tom Bull	Cransley SC	11	-13	8	11	4	10	-17	12	56
11th	48	Chris Hatton	Severn SC	13	(29 DNF)	20	(25 DNF)	10	12	1	1	57
12th	31	Jeff Smith	Crawley Mariners YC	-14	12	11	8	12	14	7	-15	64
13th	701	Izaak Dodds	Crawley Mariners YC	12	8	13	(33 DNC)	16	-18	10	13	72
14th	724	Rhiain Bevan	Cransley SC	16	14	12	14	13	16	-26	-25	85
15th	532	John Coppenhall	Hunts SC	-20	17	18	12	15	17	-19	8	87
16th	126	Alan Bennett	Staunton Harold SC	3	29 DNF	9	(33 DNC)	(33 DNC)	33 DNC	11	4	89
17th	559	John Twiggs	Ulley SC	18	16	17	15	18	(27 DSQ)	5	-19	89
18th	311	Stephen Bellamy	Winsford Flash	19	15	15	13	(33 DNC)	(33 DNC)	12	16	90
19th	518	Michael Thompson	Crawley Mariners YC	-22	10	21	10	19	21	-24	14	95
20th	293	Catherine Bellamy	Nantwich & Border SC	15	18	16	17	(33 DNC)	(33 DNC)	16	17	99
21st	800	Henry Jagers	Beer SC	17	(29 DNF)	-26	25 DNF	24	24	6	5	101
22nd	142	Nick Vowles	Covenham SC	(33 DNC)	(33 DNC)	19	9	14	11	27	27	107
23rd	556	Andrew Beaumout	Attenborough SC	23	22	24	(33 DNC)	17	13	-25	20	119
24th	845	Nigel Fern	Staunton Harold SC	-24	19	22	18	22	23	-28	22	126
25th	801	Brian Welham	Hunts SC	(33 DNC)	(33 DNC)	25	25 DNF	21	20	14	23	128
26th	57	Steve Gregory	Frensham Pond SC	(29 DSQ)	29 DNF	23	25 DNF	(33 DNC)	15	15	24	131
27th	400	John Sturgeon	Hawley Lake SC	29 DNF	29 DNF	(33 DNC)	(33 DNC)	20	19	21	18	136
28th	614	Carol Butcher	Hawley Lake SC	(33 DNC)	(33 DNC)	27	16	23	22	30	28	146
29th	754	Mary Starkey	Upton SC	21	21	29	(33 DNC)	25	25	-31	29	150
30th	237	Diana Thompson	Crawley Mariners YC	25	20	28	19	(33 DNC)	(33 DNC)	29	33 DNF	154
31st	527	David Waymont	Staunton Harold SC	26	29 DNF	30	(33 DNC)	(33 DNC)	33 DNC	23	26	167
32nd	644	Nigel David Ford	Olton Mere	(33 DNC)	(33 DNC)	32 DNF	25 DNF	26	33 DNC	33 DNS	33 DNF	182



## ***First Time Nationals in a Mino***

The talk at Cransley Open was of who would be attending the Nationals at Rutland Water in a fortnight's time. I told everyone, "No, not my scene, too different to my comfortable 20 acre home pond with its gentle winds". But then I thought, "Why not, our juniors sailed at Rutland Water in the NSSA Nationals last year and I have been sailing for longer than most of them." If I was forced to retire to the club house, the handful of Opens I have attended has taught me that Comet sailors and their partners are a friendly bunch and I would be in good company. So Friday 12<sup>th</sup> August found me in the spacious Rutland Sailing Club car park rigging my boat in wonderful sunshine together with many other Comet helms. The wind was a brisk Force 4 as promised, but was forecast to drop to a Force 3 on Saturday and a Force 2 or less on Sunday. Most helms were choosing a standard rig with a few lighter or less nimble sailors reefing the sail. A few sailors decided to defer sailing until Saturday.

I chose my Mino rig; much easier to right the boat than with a reefed standard sail, and was pleased to see another Mino sailed by Diane Thompson. On Saturday we were joined by a third Mino sailed by Carol Butcher from Hawley Lake. So we three ladies had our own little competition within the main fleet. I have always thought this the great thing about racing, no matter if you are not there at the front, you will always find sailors of similar ability to compete against and try to get ahead of in the next race. I have heard it said that various finer aspects of rigging or rules are not important "since I am not in the top five", but if you are racing, position is important to everyone.

We were briefed that the course would be around three buoys with up to third laps; a triangle followed by a sausage and then a triangle with the start / finish line as a gate. So easy to remember, but first one had to spot the buoys amongst the waves!

We all launched at about 2pm; the racing area was about 1 km or 15 minutes sail away near the sunken church, and it was a run down the lake. I followed the example of the rest of the fleet and reached my way there. I immediately found that the waves were much bigger than they appeared from the shore and I was getting my face splashed and water in the boat. It felt very uncomfortable, but I was here so must have a go, and did find that I got used to it quite quickly.

It was quite gusty in the race area so there were a few capsizes to entertain the spectators, but I survived the first race. The race officer had misjudged distances and the lead boats completed in 28 minutes so the windward buoy was dragged out for the next race. I was getting a little bolder and decided to play on a reach while we waited. Bang, I was in the water and the boat immediately turtled, a new one for me as at home my mast just gets stuck in the mud. I was told the technique was to grab the dagger board, which seemed impossibly out of reach. Somehow I found something to kick against and got up there and the boat righted itself easily enough, although climbing in again was a big effort.

The wind was stronger for Race 2 and I noticed that many of us sailors at the back of the fleet were choosing to tack rather than gybe, but of course it meant over-standing the mark to find room. Carelessly I allowed myself to be overpowered as I came out of the second tack so got wet again, but at least I got rid of the water in the boat. (I had experimented with lifting my self-bailer but was not convinced water that was going out rather than in). I managed to finish the race but was second to last. (There was amusement in the club house that evening as I was recorded as 8<sup>th</sup>, so that had to be changed!) Then followed the long beat back to the sailing club where a few kind sailors remained on the beach to catch us. There was much exclamation at the foot or so of water I had accumulated in the bottom of my boat. I was told I should have opened the self-bailer and left it open!

A very pleasant evening was spent on the balcony and in the club bar with wonderful views over the lake and a barbeque provided by the kitchen. Carol and I retired to the inexpensive but comfortable bunkhouse accommodation located on the ground floor.

I was disappointed to find that none of my aches and pains had disappeared over night but fortified by an excellent cooked breakfast, I went to rig my boat. The wind was a little quieter than Friday but still gusty and Carol decided against her Xtra in favour of a Mino sail; she said later that it had been a good choice. 22 knot gusts were forecast but they proved to be stronger. Quite a few other sailors kept a reef in their sails. The fleet, now 33 strong, made its way to the race area. Race 3 seemed similar to Friday. Then, during Race 4, just as everyone approached the first windward mark, a squall blew up.

## ***First Time Nationals in a Mino (cont)***

Brian Welham dry capsized as he approached the mark and Henry Jagers was also in the water and chose to retire. The next leg received the full force of the squall and I watched three boats capsize ahead. I thought, "I have a smaller sail, I should be able to survive", did the wrong thing and joined them. Diane was over to windward, she had recognised that the wind had shifted so the leg was now down wind and went off onto a broad reach. Then things got a little interesting as the Rutland Belle cruise ship crossed into the racing area and started to honk at the capsized boats seemingly expecting them to get out of the way. One of the safety boats had to rush across and escort the Rutland Belle around. I retired. Diane and Carol were more skilled and stayed upright but a message was sent to Diane as she rounded the last mark, saying that she was out of time as 20 minutes had elapsed since the first boat finished. She protested that in a Mino rig she deserved more time, but in the event the sailing instructions allowed for a maximum elapsed time of 70 mins so she and Andrew Beaumont who was behind her, were reinstated. I felt that to be just as they had both put in a lot of effort and deserved more points than those of us who had retired.

After lunch, the wind moderated, and white crests were no longer visible. I think Races 5 and 6 were enjoyed by all.

The AGM was followed by a steak dinner with all the trimmings. The kitchen did a great job, the steaks were cooked to perfection and all 40 odd were produced in record time, by just three staff. This was followed by an ice cream Vienetta roll pudding provided by Cransley Sailing Club (I understand that this was to help keep costs down so thanks to Cransley for their efforts).

Next day the wind had died completely, much less than forecast; sailing in a Mino rig was going to be hard work. However it was warm and dry. It was clearly going to take quite a while to get to the race area so most sailors set off early and played about. I tried a new tacking technique proposed by Brian. I did not test the start line as I was tardy in getting there and paid for it by being one of the last to start. That then set me a challenge to catch up with my fellow Minos

and I had a very enjoyable race nearly catching them at the last mark. I was more prepared for Race 8 and was there at the front at the start. I chose to beat up the port side of the course and was amongst the first group to get about 100 yards from the mark. The mark was in a wind shadow so the wind was shifting all over the place, just like home. I got a nice lift and looked set to make the mark easily, noting that the two other Minos had chosen the starboard side of the course and were completely becalmed. But things can change! The wind dropped / I made a bad choice of tack and for 5 minutes was stuck myself. Meanwhile a nice finger of wind reached the sailors to starboard and Diane and Carol rounded the mark close on my heels. The pressure was on. I must admit that both Diane and Carol had passed me easily by the time we had completed the lap, but the sailing had got so painfully slow that Diane retired for a cup of tea. I managed to hold close to Carol's heels for most of the last lap, but her early choice of starboard tack after the windward mark, opened a big gap between us; a well-deserved (Mino) win by her. I just finished within the 70 minute limit.

So it was back to the Club house for a buffet lunch (excellent cakes), again provided by Cransley, and for prize giving. I was too preoccupied at the back of the fleet to be aware of how the leaders had been fairing but it was apparent on Saturday night that the first 5 positions were being strongly contested. Final scoring gave a clear winner in ..... But the next three sailors had an equal number of points so second third and fourth place were determined by the number of wins.....

In all this was an excellent weekend and thank you to the team that made it possible.

## ***Mary Starkey C754***

## 2016 Nationals a personal view

I delayed entering for this year's Nationals as it was held not too far away from my home so I could travel there each day so did not need to book accommodation and my camping days are over and as the weather (wind) this year appears to be much stronger (or I am getting more wary) I did not fancy paying only to sit on the bank and watch others fight the elements.

On the Friday I hitched up the boat and headed up the A1 towards Rutland. My sat nav told me it would take about an hour to do the 40 odd miles to Edith Weston, At this stage the wind was strongish but possibly OK for me. Thirty minutes in the journey I crossed the A47 (just north of Peterborough) and there was a jam ahead and an hour later and 6 miles up the road I passed the police who caused the jam where they had coned off half the road and held two trucks. The traffic did not completely stop for any length of time so I have no idea what it was all about. During my slow journey the wind increased until I was less sure of taking part on day one. I arrived at Rutland Sailing Club having taken to wrong turns within the village but just about on time to compete if I chose. At this point I made my choice which as to rig the boat and set it up to sail the next day as the organisers had made it possible to qualify by only sailing the 6 races on Saturday and Sunday. The forecast was for the wind to moderate on Saturday I had a very pleasant afternoon watching the others from a very nice veranda.

On Saturday I got up early and drove to Rutland in the proper time and registered and paid, including the special meal laid on for us after the AGM on the Saturday evening. However, to my horror the wind had not abated although it was forecast to drop in the afternoon. Along with others I put in two reefs and set off reaching to the start area on the other side of the lake. Much to my surprise I was able to control this boat with the 2 reefs although at a previous Nationals putting in one reef did not help me at all. The first race was over and I had survived and now came race 2 (back to back). The forecast was for the wind to gradually ease BUT just as we were about to start race 2 the wind increased to about 25 mph which was much stronger than the winds on Friday. With the confidence I had gained from the first race I thought I was able to cope beating with this reduced sail so I started and up the first leg, with difficulty but I kept it upright although close to the back of the fleet. Then came the thought "*How do I manage the run and the probable gybe at the bottom?*" This is where the mayhem had occurred on Friday and in first race one that morning. So what do you do about this situation? My solution was to continue up the beat to get into the lee of the trees on the windward shore. *Big mistake!* As I got closer to the shore the wind came over the top of the trees and blew down onto me inducing a heel that I could not dump the wind from and the boom hit the water and the boat capsized. I did my "walking on water" trick and ran down the boom and onto

the hull. Now comes the "difficult bit" when you are my size and age you lack the agility to get across to the centreboard quickly. My problem was that I took so much time to get onto the board that the boat began to invert and so I was left with a completely inverted boat. My excuse for getting the safety boat to help me right is that I don't have enough weight to do it (and I did not want to fall in the water!)

Once back in the boat there was just the challenge of sailing it back to the clubhouse with a number of other retirees in a 25 mph wind in a lake with 4 foot high waves. This may mean nothing to you sea sailors but to us "pond" folk it is a big thing! Luckily the wind did ease off from this high point for the two afternoon races. I sailed both of these and for a reefed sail I did OK.

We had the AGM and a very nice steak dinner in the evening and I drove home.

Now the following day the forecast was for an nice 6 – 8 mph wind (this is my favourite wind strength and I expected to do well). I left my "club racing" sail on the boat but shook out the reefs. (That's an old fashioned way of describing un-rolling the sail but it sounded better). As with the previous day the forecast was wildly wrong and this time we got 1-2 mph which I was equally unable to master and was placed in the low twenties for these races as I was in the races on Saturday except for the DNF and a 15<sup>th</sup> that came from somewhere.

It was my worst Nationals ever but I did gain some experience on stronger winds and how to control a reefed boat. I claim the capsize was not my error but those pesky trees. I hope you found this account amusing. What about other experiences you could share with the members. **Brian Welham C801**



## ***Ken - King of the Comets at the Gunfleet Open***

Gunfleet Sailing Club played host to dinghy sailors around the country when it hosted the 2016 Comet Open Meeting last Sunday 10 July. Sailors came from as far as Worthing, Perterborough, and even Seaton in Devon to take part last Sunday in, what can only be described as, very lively conditions. The event saw overall victory going to local sailor Ken Potts, who had the honour of winning the very first Comet National Championships back in the early 1980's.



As the competitors rigged their craft the wind started to build and was soon blowing a steady south/south-westerly force five. At the start of the first race it was Potts who shot across the line on starboard tack, heading out to sea to catch the flood tide, as the fleet sailed down the coast to the St. Michael's buoy. Visitor Chris Robinson made good progress on port tack and then headed out to sea just behind Potts. Henry Jagers found the conditions just a bit too lively and wisely retired back to the shore, Potts leading around the first mark. Robinson caught him up, however, on the broad reach back to the AWS buoy and it was neck and neck on the fetch out to Seaward; Potts pulling ahead at the last minute. By this time the wind had increased to force six and capsizes started occurring, not least of whom was Potts as he ran down to the Kingscliff Buoy. This gave Robinson the chance he was looking for, and he immediately took the lead. The second lap saw Potts catch-up but he lost out again on a second capsize on the same leg of the course; Robinson claiming victory.

After lunch the second race was held and, as the competitors started, the wind began gusting to 33 mph, a force seven, resulting in some alarming speeds. John Coppennall lead the fleet on the first leg but saw a number of Comets overtake him as the beat progressed. Potts once again got into top spot, followed by Robinson, who later capsized and allowed Bob



Dodds to gain second place, despite Dodds ripping a rudder fitting off the boat.

The third race saw Potts once again take the lead, but this time followed by fellow Gunfleet sailor Derroll Pedder who took a very creditable second place.

With the best two results counting it gave Potts an overall win for the day.

Overall Result – Comet Open 2016:

1. Ken Potts – Gunfleet Sailing Club
2. Chris Robinson – Burghfield Sailing Club
3. Bob Dodds – Crawley Mariners Yacht Club

*As some of you will know Gunfleet is the home club of our president Keith Lamden who has also sent us a report of this event so I have included a couple of points of interest not covered in the piece above.*

*PPS. For those interested in Class history, Ken was the first Comet National champion at Gunfleet in the early 80's and was sailing my boat that fortunately suffered no damage.*

*PPS. For those who remember Robin Ballam, Derroll was sailing C32 which was Robin's first boat and is now owned by Peter Downer who does extremely well here in handicap racing in lighter conditions.*

**Keith Lamdin C55**

## **Baltic Wharf Comet Open 5<sup>th</sup> June 2016.**

Ten visitors joined three local comets for the Baltic Wharf Open. Sailors were treated to 25 degree temperatures and wind that ranged from nothing to 15mph in each race.

Race one was set with a head of the harbour course. 12 boats started after a small delay waiting for Nigel to swap his xtra boom with the standard to match the sail. As the wind shifted past the SS Great Britain it allowed Eddie Pope and Chris Hatton to catch and overtake Chris Robinson and Ben Palmer. Chris Hatton led on the run back down the dock until he sailed into a hole and was caught by Eddie and Ben. Chris held the lead to the end followed by Ben and Eddie.

The second race was set as a figure of eight course closer to the club. Ben was over the line and had to restart (A fact the OOD has reminded me to include) Chris Hatton led from start to finish with Brian Welham holding second until lap 5 when Eddie passed him to take second. Special mention to the competitors that managed to miss the rowing skiff on the reach from the first mark.

After a short break the final race was the same course with the first and final marks extended. Chris Hatton took the final first place of the day. There were a few changes of position but Eddie took second again and Henry took third.

First place overall went to Chris Hatton, Second to Eddie Pope and Third to Ben Palmer on countback over Henry Jagers. **Ben Palmer C597**

Helm	No.	Club	R #1	R #2	R #3	Pts	Place
Chris Hatton	48	Severn	1	1	1	2	1
Eddie Pope	804	Ogston	3	2	2	4	2
Ben Palmer	597	Baltic Wharf	2	7	5	7	3
Henry Jagers	800	Beer	DNS	4	3	7	4
Brian Welham	801	Hunts	5	3	8	8	5
Chris Robinson	867	Burghfield	4	6	6	10	6
Peter Mountford	864	Staunton	6	8	4	10	7
John Coppenhall	532	Hunts	10	5	7	12	8
Isla MacNeal	847	Baltic Wharf	7	12	9	16	9
Richard Steptoe	484	Baltic Wharf	8	11	10	18	10
Clive Chapman	821	Shearwater	9	9	RTD	18	11
Nigel Fern	845	Staunton Harold	12	10	11	21	12
Mick Parnel	358	Bristol Avon	11	13	DNS	23	13

## Comet Open Merthyr Tydfil Sailing Club 18<sup>th</sup> September 2016

This is starting to become a trend: For the past several years the equinoctial storms have completely bypassed the weekend we chose to run the Comet class open meeting at MTSC. Yes, on arrival we were again greeted by near zero wind. Maybe not quite as flat as recent years but still awfully light. The forecast was for very light wind at first turning to the southwest and increasing to a F1 to 2. It didn't quite go like that...

Six visitors from as far away as Crawley Mariners Yacht Club and Hunts Sailing Club joined four local boats entering this year's competition... The briefing was held shortly after 11 am by which time there was occasionally wind straight across the lake from due west. So the course and starting sequence was explained and everyone headed out onto the water. Today everyone was using the standard Comet rig.

The first start was, well, "awkward" as the wind swung around at the last minute and for some it was a fetch or reaching start with few tacks to the "windward" mark. Now, I was not in a good position to figure out what was going on up front, becalmed at the back is never a good place. On the first lap Ben Palmer (Comet 597 from Baltic Wharf Sailing Club) was in front followed by Bob Dodds (Comet 869 from Crawley Mariners Sailing Club) then came Chris Hatton (Comet 48 from Severn Sailing Club). During the second lap Chris Hatton moved up to the front and John Coppenhall (Comet 532, of Hunts Sailing Club) got into third place. Chris managed to pull further ahead to secure first, Bob was second and John was third.

We then came ashore for some lunch and drinks on the patio overlooking the lake. The baked potatoes with chili and salad followed by spiced apple and fruit crumble and custard went down very well. The wind after lunch had maybe filled in a little more towards the northern end of the reservoir so we switch the course to an L shape so that we had a true run.

This different course, didn't defeat the fickle wind; in the final minute before the start it died and shifted. Without the luxury of infinite time that Olympians have to reset courses and races, one boat drifted over at the start and four others were "drawn together" by the vacuum left

by the disappearing wind. However, return to the start and turns done everyone eventually got away; even I thought I'd done well this time; but no. Everyone was in front of me by the windward mark. At least that was true, it did remain a beat to the first mark and a fairly dead run back allowing the front of the fleet to battle over places upwind, downwind and along the reaches. Bob Dodds got round the first lap in front followed by Chris Hatton and Henry Jagers (Comet 800, Beer Sailing Club). On the second lap Chris Hatton again managed to get to the front of the fleet and was followed over the line that time by Ben Palmer with Henry in third. On the final lap Chris remained at the front but Henry managed to squeeze past Ben into second place.

The third race of the day was started as soon as the sailors and race officer were ready; we didn't want to hang around as the wind seemed to be sticking around too and maybe a little stronger. This start everyone made a fair start in the slightly more consistent wind. This time Chris Hatton got to the front and stayed there. He was followed around the first lap by Robert Wookey (Comet 165, Merthyr Tydfil Sailing Club) and Bob Dodds crossed in third place. On the second lap's reaches Robert was overhauled by Ben Palmer, who moved into second place and Bob Dodds who held onto third. On the third and final lap the front three was maintained, with Chris Hatton first, Ben Palmer second and Bob Dodds third.

We then got ashore and recovered our boats to get packed away for the journey home. The prize giving was accompanied by friendly chatter over sandwiches, tea and cakes. Many thanks again to the visitors for making the effort to visit us and all those who helped at the club adding greatly to a great day in the light autumn winds.

**Mark Govier, C460,**

**Overall Result Table**

Helm	Boat	Club	R1	R2	R3	Pts	Pos
Chris Hatton	48	Severn	1	1	1	2	1
Ben Palmer	597	Baltic Wharf	4	3	2	5	2
Bob Dodds	869	CMSC	2	6	3	5	3
John Coppenhall	532	Hunts	3	4	4	7	4
Henry Jagers	800	Beer	5	2	5	7	5
Chris Robinson	867	Burghfield	6	5	7	11	6
Rob Wookey	165	Merthyr Tydfil	8	9	6	14	7
Alun Bevan	420	Merthyr Tydfil	9	7	8	15	8
Rhian Bevan	724	Cransley	7	8	10	15	9
Mark Govier	460	Merthyr Tydfil	10	10	9	19	10

**From: DAVID CHESWORTH**  
**[david.chesworth@btinternet.com]**  
**Sent: 22 July 2016 20:43**

Subject: Something all comet members should read  
From David Chesworth At Chipstead Sailing Club

What this proves is that within two years the Comet class has lost members due to the ruling "any rig one result" Where at that meeting Guy said it would bring in more members, it's actually done the opposite, more members have left than actually racing, in the points series.

Proof with stats that any rig one result rule does not work and loses you members

At Chipstead sailing club the Comets agreed for 2015 to use any rig - one result ruling. These are the stats

In 2015 there was 14 points difference between 2nd and 3rd place due to the top two boats using two rigs. Is that fair sailing when others didn't have the rigs?

In 2015 you had 22 boats racing that season but only 13 in any one race

In 2016 you've had only 16 boats racing this season but only 12 in any one race

Proof that one rig one result works below

In 2014 when you only had one rig one result you had 26 boats and 14 out in any one race. with 3 boats having 2 rig results. which makes it a total of 23 boats overall racing its a drop of 7 boats between 2014 and 2016 due to the any rig one result ruling

Stats don't lie. It was better under one rig one result.

Cause of the any rig one result you have actually lost members and boats racing that's a fact backed up by stats.

Something to think about. Proof one rig one result is better., as it retained comet members.

## ***National Championships 2017***

Burghfield Sailing Club are delighted to be hosting the Comet National Championships in 2017. The event will be held in conjunction with the Combined Comet Class Inland Championships (Trio, Versa, Duo and Zero), the first time since 2011 that all the Comet classes have sailed together. In 2007 Burghfield hosted the Comet Association Championships, won by Alan Bennett, and has held a Comet Open every year since then. It is also the home club of former Chairman and ex Comet National Champion Chris Robinson.

The club is situated in the middle of the Thames Valley, south of Reading, just off Junction 12 of the M4. When travelling westbound on the M4 you can see the water on your left at the half-mile signpost.

Burghfield Sailing Club is one of the largest inland sailing clubs in the country. The lake has over 200 acres of sailable water and lies along the beautiful Kennet Valley so benefiting from the prevailing south-westerly winds. However, good beats can be set whatever the wind direction. The clubhouse has catering and a bar with a lounge area. There is also a small chandlery. The club will be able to offer camping (tents or campervans) onsite.

The Comet Nationals will be held over the Spring Bank Holiday 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> May 2017. The intention is to have a ten race series finishing about Monday lunchtime. Full details will be in the Notice of Race, which will be on Burghfield's website at [www.burghfieldsailing.org/comet\\_championships](http://www.burghfieldsailing.org/comet_championships).

Other relevant details and pre-registration will also be available via the website.

Further information on the club can be found on its website [www.burghfieldsailing.org](http://www.burghfieldsailing.org).

## ***The Comet Open Cransley***

Cransley SC hosted their annual Comet Open meeting with 13 visitors and 4 locals enjoying a relatively steady Force 2 north-easterly breeze. Cransley managed to get two folk on the water at the last minute who were not really expecting to, Alan Hatton and Peter Stein!. With so many on the water, the start line was set across the whole lake for the first race (actually for all of them), and it wasn't long before young Chris Hatton from Severn SC was showing the fleet a clean transom – who is that guy?!! Nigel Austin from Cransley and Chris Robinson from Burghfield had a close tussle over a 6 lap course, and despite losing his traveller (poor knot!), Nigel managed to hold on literally for the last 2 laps to beat Chris. The chasing pack was lead by Eddie Pope (Ogston SC) in a borrowed Comet from Dave Harris (Severn SC) and Henry Jaggars (Beer SC). The remaining Comets were closely grouped and there was a fair few calls but none malicious, we are just not that type of fleet!!.

Then followed the reason why Cransley always seem to attract folk, well that was what i was told when i asked one of the visitors – the lunch! Barbequed kebabs and lots of healthy salads (ok some Pizza). Fully refreshed and with the Duty Officer altering the course (so we had a hooked finish, we like to confuse visitors!), all 17 boats sailed two races back to back.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> race saw a repeat 1, 2 but a fantastic 3<sup>rd</sup> was posted by John Twigg from Ulley SC - just shows what a good start can do for your confidence!. Henry, Eddie and a fast improving Emma Brisley (hadn't sailed a Comet for 7 years and was cajoled into it by John Coppenhall that morning) followed but Chris Robinson was suffering from post lunch traumatics with an 8<sup>th</sup> behind Dave. Nigel Fern from Staunton Harold crept into to the top 10, however for the remainder of the fleet the middle race was generally their discard.

Race 3 was started with quite a crowd on the bank, unfortunately the only capsizes of the day happened to “ yours

truly” 30 seconds before the start much to the amusement of all –and dampened my spirit!. Spurred on by a good start Chris Robinson saw his chance to snatch 2<sup>nd</sup> overall and apart from a brief moment when Henry led on the last lap, he never looked back! The first lap saw Peter Stein up with the leaders briefly however Chris Hatton, who had already won, clicked into results mode halfway through the race and pulled through to third, with Dave and Emma following on. Eddie retired whilst in 4<sup>th</sup> place due to another unravelling knot but this was the only retirement throughout the day, so we have to conclude everyone was enjoying themselves really!!

Afternoon tiffin was served prior to the Prizegiving – sometimes you have to get the priorities right! With 2 weeks to the Nationals at Rutland, this was an ideal warm up, well done to Cransley for a great day (including all the top weedcutters, safety and catering crews (including Bob the Barbeque), Duty officer (John T) and helpers – Cransley to be renamed in this Olympic year the “Rio of the Midlands”??

## ***Nigel Austin C718***

### **Perihelion 121**

Please send your contributions for the next issue of  
Perihelion by

**Mar 1 2017**

To Brian Welham, Class Editor, 9 Murrell Court  
St Neots Cambs PE19 1LL  
e-mail [bwelham@sky.com](mailto:bwelham@sky.com)



## **Attenborough Sailing Club Comet Open Meeting 18 June 2016**

Ten club Comets were joined by seven visitors for this years Comet open meeting at Attenborough Sailing Club on 18th June. Three races were organised with two to count for final positions.

The first race started in a light force 2 but a late wind shift meant that the leg to the first mark was a close fetch for some and at worst a short tack was needed to make the mark. It didn't take long for a break by five boats from the main fleet with Henry Jaggars (Beer SC) taking an early lead from Chris Hatton (Seven SC) with John Twigg (Ulley SC), Eddy Pope (Ogston) and Paul Jago (Attenborough SC) chasing. At the end of lap two Chris Hatton had take the lead where he stayed until the end and the only other significant change to the top five was John Twigg falling down to finish fifth. At the bottom of the fleet there was very little change in the positions.

Race two after lunch started in very light air and it took several competitors several minutes to even cross the line. Chris Hatton and Eddy Pope were jockeying for position on the line but unfortunately for Chris he hit the line too early and had to return but had soon passed half the fleet before the first mark. At the end of lap one Eddy Pope was in the lead from John Coppenhall (Hunts) and Chris Hatton who had climbed up through the fleet. The race was shortened to two laps to stay within an hour finish for the first boats Eddy Pope maintained his lead with Chris Hatton finishing a close second followed by John Coppenhall.

The wind filled in for the start of race three but was very inconsistent. Chris Hatton once again got away well but at the end of the first lap a new name appeared second on the leader board, that of Paul Jago from Attenborough SC sailing a loaned

boat. He was closely followed by Eddy Pope and Henry Jaggars. The difficult wind conditions highlighted the difference between the fleet leaders and those enjoying their racing at the back of the fleet as the first three boats had started to lap the back markers. Chris came home first but Paul slipped third whilst Eddy had taken the second spot. As the wind dropped to a zephyr the back markers only just managed to finish within the time limit.

### **Results**

#### **Roger Day**

Helm	Boat Number	Club	Race #1	Race #2	Race #3	Pts	Place
Chris Hatton	48	Severn	1	2	1	2	1
Eddie Pope	804	Ogston	3	1	2	3	2
Henry Jaggars	800	Beer	2	4	4	6	3
Paul Jago	856	Attenborough	4	6	3	7	4
John Coppenhall	532	Hunts	6	3	7	9	5
John Twiggs	559	Ulley	5	7	8	12	6
Chris Robinson	867	Burfield	7	5	10	12	7
Josie Adams	624	Attenborough	8	13	6	14	8
Andrew Beaumont	556	Attenborough	10	9	5	15	9
Nigel Fern	845	Staunton-Harold	9	10	12	19	10

## Editorial

Hi,

It has been a long time since the last Perihelion so I hope you enjoy this edition. My thanks go out to the open meeting authors who have written some nice accounts this time. We have three reports of the National Championships, one of the racing and results and two of personal experiences, These latter ones are the sort of thing that I hope you will find as interesting as the “real account “ as they are the things that happen to most of the helms. Thank you Mary who, I am glad, did not need too much badgering!



I am also glad that I did not venture to our new Open at Gunfleet . I am also happy that we have a good account from our President Keith and some spectacular photos go go with it.

Thank you to David Chesworth for his passionate plea to revert to the single class racing for the Standard, xXra and Mino rigs. I included as a part of “letters to the editor”

Those of you who attended a lot of Open meeting in 2016 will (may) have missed me but I put it down to too many days with strong wind and my age is creeping up on me!

**Brian Welham C801**

## COMET DATES FOR YOUR 2017 DIARY

Jan. 7 <sup>th</sup>	Bloody Mary at Queen Mother
Mar. 5 <sup>th</sup> & 6 <sup>th</sup>	Dinghy Show at Alexandra Palace
Apr. 8 <sup>th</sup>	Shearwater Open
Apr. 22 <sup>nd</sup>	Burghfield Open
Apr. 29 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Sutton Bingham probable</i>
May 6 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Fishers Green probable</i>
May 7 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Hunts Open probable</i>
May 13 <sup>th</sup>	Attenborough Open
May 20 <sup>th</sup>	Winsford Flash Open
May 27 <sup>th</sup> -29 <sup>th</sup>	National Championships at Burghfield
May 28 <sup>th</sup>	Annual General Meeting
Jun 3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>Cotswold probable</i>
Jun 4 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Baltic Wharf probable</i>
Jun 10 <sup>th</sup>	Chipstead Open
Aug 26 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup>	Association Championships at Attenborough.

These are the expected dates for Open meetings – some negotiations are still in progress for the events shown in italics. Keep an eye on the website for updates.

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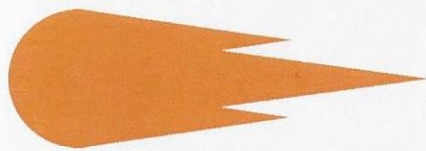
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Email: [davidtarr3@gmail.com](mailto:davidtarr3@gmail.com)

**Comet Mino sail** for training use at Severn Sailing Club

Contact: Paul Hinde

Email: [paul\\_hinde@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:paul_hinde@yahoo.co.uk)



**Comet Class Association**  
Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association