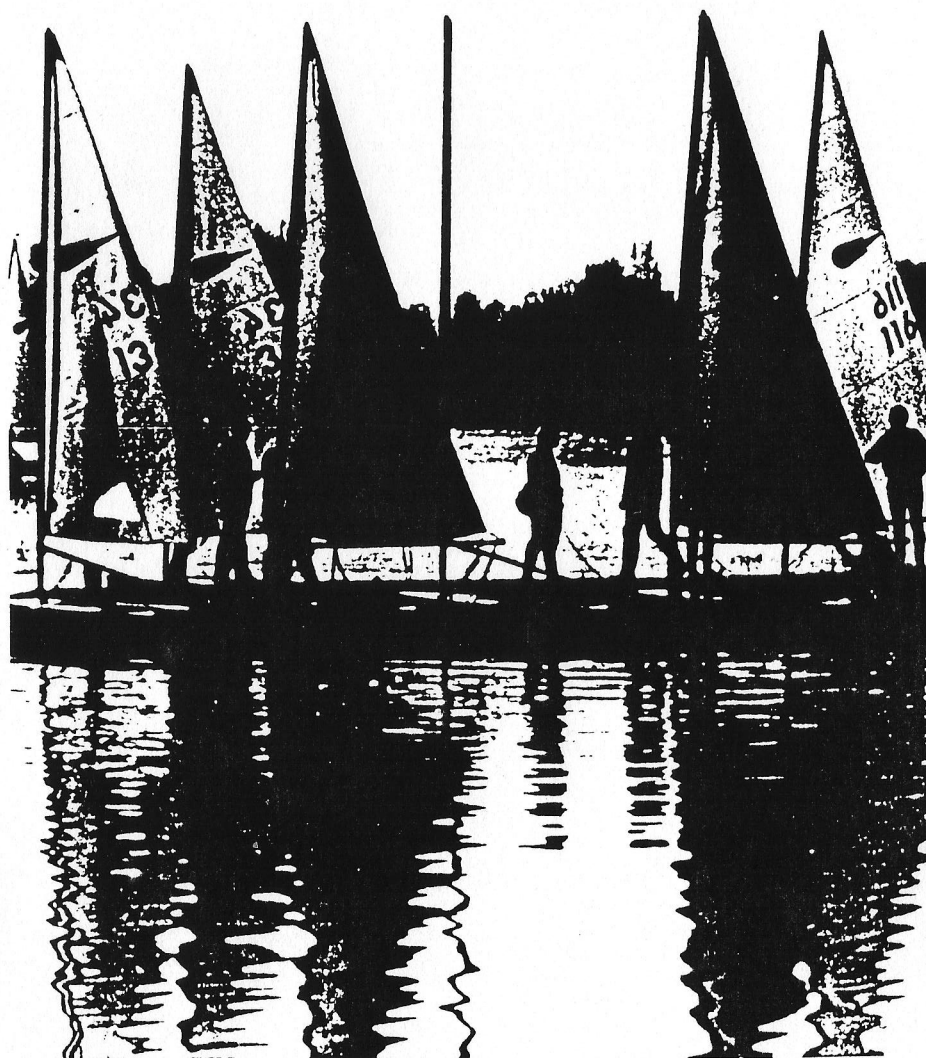


FILE

PERIHELION

Newsletter 14



Comet Class Association

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FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Writing immediately after the Crystal Palace Sailboat 90 Show, and with the sun shining and mild spring-like temperatures outside, I can officially declare the 1990 sailing season OPEN.

It hardly seems like there has been a winter at all and the term "frostbite" has almost been redundant for those of you who have sailed through the past months - no doubt it will change yet and probably in time for our excursion to the river Cam. I do hope that your boats have survived the storm force winds recently sent to do damage to sailing club compounds. When I checked my boat, I was lucky to find that the lashings had held and the boat was safe but the pile of other boats in the leeward corner of the club was not a pretty sight.

We had an excellent weekend again at Crystal Palace and the continuing interest in the Comet, particularly from people wishing to start sailing in a simple but well equipped way, was most noticeable. My thanks to Andrew, the Hyltons, the Committee members and, particularly, Ralph Rowe for helping to man the stand and promote the class so successfully. Ralph allowed us to use his boat on the stand and very smart she looked whilst our video had a steady audience throughout.

On the Committee front, I should like to report that we have co-opted, with his consent (?), Andrew Pearce of Kingsmead S.C. which not only reduces the average age of the committee significantly but enables us to hear the views of the younger members more directly. Also, as part of the devolution of responsibilities, I am very grateful to Stuart Lines for taking over as Newsletter Editor and I trust you will assist him in providing copy for future issues. On the Chairman front, I have been asked by the Committee to stay in office until the AGM at the Nationals in June and this I have agreed to do - but no longer! Volunteers step forward.

You will find within this issue various notices of coming Open Meetings and our two Championships. I do recommend these events to you as a means of meeting other like-minded people who sail and race Comets, and also as opportunities to sail different waters and conditions. Please do support the Association and the Clubs who provide our facilities by entering as many events as you can and, specifically, by advising us as early as possible about the National and Tidal Championships.

Talking of supporting the Association brings me inevitably to the question of membership renewals! To date we have had a total of 154 renewals or about 50% of the 1989 membership total. It is vital for the long term development of the Comet Class Association that we retain as high a proportion of members to boats sold as possible and, if you have not yet renewed in 1990, then I would urge you to do so. The cost of membership is a very reasonable one at £5 and arguably, the newsletter give good value for this fee. This newsletter is being sent to all previous members but, clearly this cannot be repeated for future issues - please rejoin!

May I wish you all a happy sailing season for the year - may the sun shine and the winds blow, but not too hard!

Keith Lamdin

SHAKING HANDS WITH A COMET

The builders put me on to a Comet locally and I bought it. The dinghy had been used for a fortnight a year as a holiday toy, sailed from a stony beach. The owners were not sailing people so the bottom of the Comet was scored and the sail neglected. However, a call to the builders produced prompt action and I went to work with the kit they sent me. When it was respectable, time had passed and the day coincided with Porthpean S.C.s regatta and, of course, it was blowing force five offshore. At Porthpean, the shape of the cliffs and the valley next door funnel gusts across the line of the wind. That day, black gusts of a force 6+ and totally unpredictable in direction within 20 degrees were the result. However, I had come to sail and sail I would, as there were plenty of safety boats out.

At 66 years I sold my state-of-the-art Scorpion as although the boat was exceptionally fast, my lack of stamina and slowing reactions meant that it was a middle of the Channel Fleet boat and young eyes envied the capabilities of the dinghy. The new owner proved its capabilities this year when we held the Championships. I bought a Comet so that I could quit when tiredness won and I would not have to press on because a keen crew would be let down.

So, the attempt to take things easy started with a broad reach in force 5 and switching at times to a run force 6, sometimes requiring prompt action to avoid a gybe. Not an ideal introduction to a single-hander. The shaking hand stopped quaking when the Comet, although skittish and quick to react, never felt unstable. In fact, when we reached the gybe mark I was all set to do a controlled gybe dead before, when the Enterprises which had not pulled away fell in. I crash gybed and joined them. It was not easy to climb back in (hand rails, please!). However, the broad reach on the other gybe was in a steady 5 and it was totally enjoyable. The beat was more of a problem. Beating into a chop clearly was not going to be learned in one go.

Two more rounds with highly successful gybes and a feeling of confidence in the Comet left me delighted, but it was a huge fast handicap course and although the sea was littered with Contenders, Scorpions, Larks, Enterprises and Lasers inverted, I felt too tired to go on and retired. The handicap sheet showed the Comet third on the penultimate round, so I thought the next two races should be interesting.

The next day a force 4 was blowing offshore and a windward start was planned. An hour before the start a high speed Customs vessel came in and dropped anchor. Off I went to take a look and half way out to the boat the Comet braked hard and began to dive to port and starboard unpredictably with a mind of its own and ignoring the tiller! A strange wake revealed the cause. The rudder blade had divided vertically and each part was doing a rumba on its own. Rudder-off, I beat back to the beach. That is quite a recommendation for the balance of the boat, the depth of the dagger board and sheeting angle gave control. Not bad in a single hander.

Once the boat was beached, trolleyed up the mountain tack to the boatyard, washed down and covered, I looked at it with affection. It had proved a kind boat and my reaction time is not up to the standard. Off the wind it flew and I put down the problems beating in a chop to inexperience. I tried nose down and pointing high, balanced and fairly free, so if anyone can help, I'm listening. How do you do it?

Alan Mitchell

TRAINING DAYS

2nd June - Kennett Valley
28th July - Aylesbury
20th Oct - Kingsmead

The above are informal training days open to all Comet owners. Topics to be covered range from rigging the boat to launching, recovers and improving your racing skills. A little race training if you wish. Arrive ready to start at 11.00, finish when you like!

Steve Kibble Class Secretary (0444 454730)

KEITH LAMDIN

You will have seen from the Chairman's report that Keith Lamdin, has been reducing his administrative duties recently. One result is that I have now taken over editing and producing this newsletter.

I am sure everyone in the Association would join in thanking Keith for his work for the Association and in particular for his contributions to the newsletter. Not only has he typed the magazine to date, he has also found time to contribute a number of lengthy articles on sailing the Comet. Thanks, Keith.

Stuart Lines

COMET NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Ardleigh S.C. 29th June - 1st July

This event looks like being our best Nationals ever. Please enter early as numbers are strictly limited. Entries close on 31st May with late entries being accepted after this date subject to the event not being oversubscribed, and to a late entry levy of £3.

PROGRAMME

Friday 29th June

Reception open from 08.00, practice race 11.30.

Briefing 13.30, first race 14.30.

Evening meals available from 18.00 to 19.30, cost approximately £2. Clubhouse open all night.

Saturday 30th June

Breakfasts available, Continental 50p, full English £2. Reception open from 09.00 - 10.00, second points race 10.30, bar open 11.00 - 24.00. Lunches approximately 50p. Third points race 13.30, fourth points race 15.30. Evening meals as before. Association A.G.M. 20.00, BBQ and disco 21.00 - 24.00, cost £3 per ticket.

Sunday 1st July

Breakfasts as before. Fifth points race 10.30. Lunch approximately £2. Prize giving 14.30.

Camping is available adjacent to the Club at no charge, but must be prebooked, places limited. Committee members have details of local accommodation. Limited casual sailing for those not entering the Championships is available and subject to the same entry criteria.

Entry forms for this event are included with this edition of Perihelion and should be returned to Steve Kibble as early as possible.

SECRETARY'S NOTES

The Class sailing programme for 1990 once again provides a varied selection of events around the country.

Our first visit this year is to Cam S.C., a very friendly club situated on the River Cam providing easy launching and simple courses over a short stretch of narrow river. The early May Bank Holiday sees us at I.C.I (Slough) S.C. for our second visit to the flooded gravel pit. The following weekend we have the 1990 tidal championship hosted by Weston S.C., situated on the eastern side of Southampton Water. This Club is renowned for its well run events. The weekend is shared with Europes, plus Optimists on the Saturday.

A new venue on 20th May is Sutton Bingham S.C. On 2nd/3rd June we have two venues, Redditch S.C., another newcomer, on the Saturday, with old favourite Kennett Valley S.C. on the Sunday.

One of our most popular and friendliest venues is Chipstead S.C. on 9th June. Paxton Lakes S.C. on 16th June offer camping facilities and the opportunity for those, who wish, to stay and join in the club racing on the Sunday. The Nationals are to be hosted by Ardleigh S.C. over the three days at the end of June. A fun type event will be held at the same time for any of our cruising members, who are welcome to come along.

Two old venues follow; Aylesbury S.C. on 29th July, and for those of you who like sea sailing, Gunfleet S.C. on 2nd September. A second visit to Wilsonian S.C. for estuary racing completes our tidal events for the year.

A fun sailing day at Chew Valley S.C. is on offer on 14th October, with our grand finale as usual being held at Kingsmead S.C. on 21st October.

Our informal training days at which you can learn anything from how to rig the Comet, launch, recover and perhaps a few racing tips are being held at Kennet Valley S.C. on 2nd June, Aylesbury S.C. on 28th July and Kingsmead S.C. on 20th October.

Contacts for further details for all events are included in the programme. So there it is, seventeen events, something for all. See you on the water!

Steve Kibble

PERIHELION

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this edition of Perihelion, including several first time authors.

As the next edition will be published in June, I would be grateful if articles could be submitted to me by the end of May.

Stuart Lines

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

ARDLEIGH SAILING CLUB, SATURDAY 30th JUNE 1990

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of previous AGM
3. Matters arising
4. Secretary's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Chairman's address
7. Election of Officers
8. Election of Committee Members
9. Any other business

Note that any motion to be put to the AGM shall be proposed by two full members and shall be submitted to the Secretary in writing prior to the meeting.

COMETS AT WELWYN GARDEN CITY

Following the lovely summer and the, so far, mild winter, I thought that I would write to tell you fellow avid readers of Perihelion and followers of Comets everywhere that 1989 was a very good year for the Comet at Welwyn Garden City Sailing Club.

Stanborough Lake, just off the A1M, though small in size, is well suited to the familiar charms of the Comet, placing emphasis on the pilots to keep them upright in a blow due to the natural surrounding terrain which can, and often does, produce spectacular wind shifts, so the ability to read these, together with boat handling skills will always ensure an enjoyable and rewarding sail.

Racing takes place every Saturday morning, come rain or shine, summer or winter, and is hugely enjoyed by all. Two races are sailed, either handicap or pursuit, with handicap fleets being divided into fast and slow boats. The fast fleet comprises of International Moths, Lasers, Kestrels, and Lasers 2s, and the slow fleets is formed by Solos, Comets, Miracles Mirrors and Toppers.

There are now four Comets sailing regularly at Stanborough Lake and this represents an increase of 100% over the previous year. Much interest and enthusiasm is evident in the class at W.G.S.C.C. and it would be nice to think a similar increase could be forthcoming in 1990

I am pleased to say we have made considerable impact in the Trophy and prize winning stakes and we have the Laser boys worried, as we appear to be regularly up amongst them when the results of the races are announced; indeed I was fortunate enough to win the summer handicap series of races in Comet 136 in 1989, closely followed by John Franklin, Mike Fairman and Alan Maurice, my fellow Comet jockeys. So to all you fellow Comet sailors out there, if you fancy a good sail, with a small friendly club with the added attraction of some not very serious, but very enjoyable and competitive racing, why not join John, Mike, Alan and myself. You would be assured of a warm welcome from your fellow Comet sailors and W.G.S.C.C. members alike; and of course, it gets you out of doing the shopping.

Richard Burnside
Comet 136



Comet

Class Sailing Program 1990

Event	Date	Venue	County	Contact	Tel. No
Open	Apr 29	Cam SC	Cambs.	Rod Bryant	0223 290420
Open	May 7	ICI (Slough) SC	Bucks	Derek Chiddell	0753 884939
Tidal Champs	May 12-13	Weston SC	Hants.	John Hall	0421 213706
Open	May 20	Sutton Bingham SC	Somerset	Bob Innes	0458 223360
Open	Jun 2	Redditch SC	Warks.	Peter Appleton	0527 25504
Training	Jun 2	Kennet Valley SC	Berks.	Geoff Addlington	0252 622085
Open	Jun 3	Kennet Valley SC	Berks.	Geoff Addlington	0252 622085
Open	Jun 9	Chipstead SC	Kent	Bernie Wakeling	0732 823703
Open	Jun 16	Paxton Lakes SC	Cambs.	Harry West	0480 455013
Nationals	Jun 29-1	Ardleigh SC	Essex	Stewart Curtis	0206 561710
Training	Jul 28	Aylesbury SC	Bucks.	Keith Lamdin	0582 665194
Open	Jul 29	Aylesbury SC	Bucks.	Keith Lamdin	0582 665194
Open	Sep 2	Gunfleet SC	Essex	Richard Walker	0255 813150
Open	Sep 23	Wilsonian	Kent	Jackie Hudson	01 854 2861
Open	Oct 14	Chew Valley SC	Avon	Errol Edwards	0272 565060
Training	Oct 20	Kingsmead SC	Berks.	Henry Jagers	06286 64237
Open	Oct 21	Kingsmead SC	Berks.	Henry Jagers	06286 64237

Note: Orbit Trophy (Travellers) - all except Chew Valley.

AN ALTERNATIVE VENUE

The day of the Kingsmead Comet Open. Clear blue sky, sunny with the temperature already rising quickly. Not the day as you remember it? This was the weather on the south coast of Turkey.

We were nearing the end of a two week charter on a Beneteau 41 having had excellent sailing conditions almost every day. The wind was almost guaranteed to "arrive" at about midday, building quickly to force 3 - 5. It even blew force 6 - 7 on a couple of days, so we just reefed a lot and went out to continue our exploring.

By staying away from the main harbours as much as possible, we spent many nights anchored in quiet bays with very few other boats.

Eating out was a new experience too. If you do not like tomatoes, then do not go to Turkey, as they are served with everything. The quality of food was only average, however the quantity increased as the restaurants became more remote. One evening we ate and drank to bursting point, were presented with a bill for £2 per head and had our tip declined! Another memorable meal was at the Bozburun Yacht Club, which for two crew members shortly afterwards came up quicker than it went down.

The whole coastline is rocky, with numerous ruins to walk around and even some ornate tombs cut into the cliff face.

So if you want good sailing wind with warm temperatures and interesting scenery, cheap food and no crowds then go to Turkey, but be quick because building development is taking place everywhere.

Anyway, getting back to the title, how about Turkey for the 1991 Comet Worlds?

Andrew Pearce

COMET TIDAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

This is a two day event, with a practice race starting at 11.30 on the Saturday, followed by the first points race. The second points race will start at 12.30 on the Sunday, followed by the third points race. Two races to count.

Situated at Netley, Weston S.C. offers superb sailing from the eastern shore of Southampton Water. Directions to the Club are to leave the M27 at junction 8 and follow road signs to Bursledon and Netley. The Club is located just past Netley Abbey (ancient monument).

Entry to this event is open to all Comet Class Association members. The fee is £5, payable on the day. Further information can be obtained from Steve Kibble.

RACING YOUR COMET - PART 1

Over the last few issues of the newsletter I have covered the theory of rigging the Comet and covered the basic sailing techniques for the boat in different conditions. Incidentally, if any of you have any queries concerning these articles, please let me have your questions and I will answer them separately.

In these final few articles I would like to discuss the aspects of racing, which add a further dimension to the pleasure of sailing the Comet purely for fun. In this first section I will cover the basics of putting together a racing programme and then go on to cover the following areas in more detail:

- Wind effects and windshifts
- Racing rules and responsibilities
- Racing tactics
- Starting and finishing

So, why do we need to race at all? Well, of course, you need not, particularly if you have wide open waters to explore or, as we saw in the last issue, if you can use the boat as a means of transport to the bank in the Mediterranean! But if, like me, you sail on restricted waters, then eventually it can become somewhat boring sailing basically the same course, time after time, to the same parts of the lake or river.

The logical extension of purely sailing the water is to start racing against other boats and preferably other boats of the same class, where a direct comparison of performance is available.

The main advantages of racing are, I believe, that comparison of boat performance against other helmsmen quickly tells you just how well you really are sailing the boat in any given conditions. With just a normal level of competitive urge this comparison leads you to improve your sailing prowess in order to sail as fast or faster than any other competitors and, quite quickly, an average sailor can progress to a good level of performance through racing.

The disadvantages of racing stem mainly from that competitive urge, to the degree that some helmsmen seem to lose enjoyment from being overly concerned with their race placings, rather than their sailing performance. If placings become a paramount concern, then a further disadvantage occurs, because the only really guaranteed way to improve performance is through regular and planned practice. This can easily involve considerable time which may not always be available.

An additional disadvantage is one of increased cost due to the need to maintain the boat at a high specification with perhaps a new sail every few seasons and the general costs of travel, and even accommodation on the broader racing scene. However, such costs may well be acceptable in pursuit of a pastime which can provide real pleasure and satisfaction.

So, my advice is to enjoy your racing as a means to improve your sailing performance and, if some prizes come your way then fine, but the greater reward is knowing that you have sailed the boat at or near its full potential.

At the Club level there are two main forms of dinghy racing, known as Handicap or Class racing and they do require a slightly different emphasis as follows:-

In Handicap racing, a range of different classes of boat of varying speed potential will be racing together and the finishing positions of the boats on the water will be adjusted according to a time handicap to give the final race positions. From a tactical point of view, this means that positions on the water are hardly relevant and the race becomes an exercise in sailing the course in relatively shorter time than another boat, dependant on the boat handicaps in force for the race. If a Comet has a time allowance of say 5 minutes in 2 hours over a GP14 and you are within a couple of minutes of a GP after an hour-long race then you will have beaten that boat, irrespective of the number of places between you on the water. It follows that you must concentrate solely on boat speed and not get involved with other boats on the water - the old adage that, while you match race another boat, those ahead of you get further ahead and those behind get closer is especially true in handicap racing.

In Class racing the fleet is comprised of boats of the same class and, of course, there is no time differential applied to the finishing positions of the boats. Therefore, the finishing positions of the race are the same as those on the water and there is no intrinsic value to being further ahead of another boat than the requirement to cross the line ahead of him. In this situation the tactical view is slightly different, with a primary aim of sailing faster than other boats to establish your position and a secondary aim of retaining your position on the water by various defensive covering techniques. In this case, it does not matter if the boats behind you get closer as long as they do not overtake you - a win by one second is the same as a win by five minutes, even if a heartbeat tells a different story!

Once you have sampled the delights of racing at Club level and reached a degree of competency which enables you to enjoy the racing process, then you may wish to consider slightly wider horizons. With a degree of competitive urge and an interest in trying your sailing ability out on different waters against a range of different helmsmen, then the Open Meeting circuit and the Class Championships beckon.

These events are generally of a Class racing form although you will see Open Handicap events advertised, mainly at larger venues such as the Autumn Bewl Valley Handicap which, confusingly, gives class prizes for the larger groups of boats within the format of an overall Handicap prize.

These Open and Championship meeting events are really nothing more than a large Club Class race and certainly there is nothing different from a racing and tactical point of view. The number of boats entered will be larger and the sailing standard generally

rather higher, particularly at the head of the fleet. However, no matter what your current standard of sailing, there will always be others of about the same level of performance and it is a normal characteristic of big fleet racing to find close competition at the back of the fleet as well as the front.

What is certainly true is that if you start racing to improve your sailing, then the Open circuit will improve it still further and the continual access to better or more experienced sailors will rub off in all areas of sailing technique and racing tactics to a degree which will surprise you when you next enter a local club race. It will also surprise your friends at the Club as there is many a local expert who found he had a great deal still to learn when he tried the Open circuit.

Once you have taken the decision to enter the racing side of sailing there are certain organisational aspects to be considered. It will prove to be very difficult and disappointing if you enter races purely in the way you have previously gone sailing and a little effort to be prepared for racing will pay considerable dividends.

LOGISTICS: Quite simply, you and the boat need to be better prepared for racing than is absolutely necessary for sailing. The boat should be carefully checked to ensure that all of the fixtures and fittings are in good order and that the sailing aids and controls work properly. There is nothing worse than a twisted kicker which cannot be quickly adjusted during a race or a badly adjusted toestraps that hinders the quick tack needed to stay ahead of a boat at the finish line.

These details are very much less important when just sailing and, with a simple rig such as the Comet, a couple of hours at the beginning of the season is all that is necessary to ensure trouble-free operation for the racing and thereafter a quick check at the end of each day's racing.

From a personal point of view, it is important to have a good set of sailing clothes including wetsuit, nylon overall, sailing boots and gloves. While you can sail with a less expensive outfit, at the end of a long or hard race, those properly equipped helms will be sailing more comfortably and efficiently than others and it is often possible to pick up places towards the end of a race for reasons not directly influenced by racing skills.

Finally, when you progress from the Club racing scene to the travelling circus of the Open circuit, it is well worthwhile to spend a little money on an efficient roofrack system with easy load facilities or a good trailer/trolley outfit. The ability to quickly unload and load the boat with sensible tie-down straps and lashings with spar bags and foil bags all help make the process a little easier and time-saving. It is surprising how much hassle can be saved, leaving the helm a little more time to change and check the course before setting his mind into gear for the race which all helps make the event rather less daunting than it might otherwise appear.

PRACTICE PROGRAMMES: It does pay dividends also to practise a part of your introduction into the racing world. By practice I do not mean the kind of religious work programme needed to succeed at the highest levels although it is true that to win at those level does need enormous commitment.

What I mean is the kind of individual practice that can easily form part of your normal sailing where, instead of just sailing around the water in a random way, you specifically try to improve certain part of your sailing by repetition until you are really confident in your own ability to make the boat do what you want quickly and cleanly, in a variety of conditions.

An obvious example is the ability to tack and gybe the boat so easily that the functions become automatic and you can effect them in the race amongst the other boats without concern. To do this just select a stretch of water no more than about 100 yards long and short tack upwind and then run back with and without gybe before repeating the cycle. Do this one quiet afternoon or evening for no more than an hour and you will be amazed how time flies and your sailing improves.

Another area where most people can improve is mark rounding and an hour spent sailing into a mark from every possible angle and concentrating on leaving the mark as close to and cleanly as is possible will repay itself on the race course many times over and in particular on the congested courses of inland waters.

Another exercise that I try, preferably on my own, is starting practice, where I will try timed runs to a buoy acting as a star mark or trying to hang almost stationary at a starting mark prior to hauling in the sail to accelerate across the line coinciding with an imaginary gun. I know this is an unrealistic exercise in some ways without other boats buzzing around the start line but the practice at boat control to alternatively slow and accelerate the boat against both time and position and position relative to the start line will again help your real-life starting procedure enormously.

There are dozens of these little self-made practice efforts which you can devise, including time efficient recovery from capsize. The whole idea is just to add point to your normal sailing activity by relaxed practice where a mistake is of no real consequence and you can always try the action out again. Arriving at the windward mark on port tack during a race is no place to find out that your tacking technique leaves a little something to be desired!

SETTING TARGETS: Many people have entered enthusiastically into racing, only to be disappointed in their results because their expectations and targets are basically unrealistic. The problem with this is that they become disillusioned and unhappy with racing such that they no longer obtain the main objective of enjoyment from the exercise. It is vitally important to set some realistic target which will meet your expectations and which is neither overly optimistic or, indeed, too simple to achieve and therefore lacking challenge.

If you have never raced before, then a perfectly sensible target for your first season is to complete the vast majority of the races you enter and have someone below you in the overall series results.

If you have completed one season, then a target might be to end in the top half of the class series results for your Club and, for your third season, to be in the top few places both in regular races and the series overall.

Clearly setting targets is a highly individual thing but it is a mistake to be over-optimistic over your performance and chances until you have a reasonable degree of experience. It can be quite dispiriting when results do not live up to expectations and, quite the converse when one's targets, however limited, are exceeded.

The important thing is to have the outline of a programme in your mind that will lead logically through higher places on a real and regular basis at Club level (beware the occasional and fluke results), and then on to the wider and more competitive aspects of Opens or Championships. This does not mean that you should not try some Opens or Championships before you have won a Club race or series but rather that you should expect to be further down the fleet than normal!

There is no need to announce your targets to the world because they are purely for your own benefit. The objective is to have a quantitative measure against which your average performance can be measured and compared with the amount of time, effort and money that you are prepared to invest in achieving the target. If you achieve a target through the full use of the resources that you are prepared to put into the programme then perhaps you have reached the right place in the racing fleet and the future is just more enjoyment at that level.

If, however, you reach a target with something in hand, such as more practice time being available, then raise the stakes and go for a higher target in the next season.

This process enables you to reach an appropriate level in the "pecking order" without undue hassle or strain whilst still being true to the objective of enjoyment.

If the process leads you to be Comet National Champion with no serious competition then you have outgrown the Class and you may wish to move on to the really serious stuff - what price a Finn at Barcelona in '92?

If, like me, you enjoy the more friendly and relaxed style of the Comet Class then join us in Comet class racing this year somewhere, no matter where, and I will see you in the middle of the fleet!

Keith Lamdin

TO ALL JUNIORS

I have been competing in the Comet open meetings for the last two years, but this last winter I have started sailing Lasers on the RYA youth training scheme. However, at 10.5 stones, I am a bit on the light side for my more powerful new boat. You may be thinking this has also been a problem for me with the Comet, but it has not! For the most part of my Comet sailing, I have been about 9 stones which, to the disgust of the more 'mature' sailors, has let me slip past them in the lighter winds, but also my slightly fitter and more nimble state has let me survive for longer in the stronger winds. An example of this was at the Grafham Inlands last year where on the last day, when it was blowing 4 - 5+ I finished 3rd in one race and 2nd in the last race having led for most of the first lap.

The Comet has given me the chance to compete on equal terms with other older and larger sailors. I am unable to do this in Laser without wearing weight, so the Comet gives an opportunity for those lighter and younger sailors, who may feel the Topper is too much of a toy and the Laser is too powerful, to win races.

Another advantage with the Comet is the ability to reef the sail easily. This came in very useful at Clacton-on-Sea last year, with gale force winds lashing the coast I was able to compete on equal terms with other sailors and actually win one race as I was able to control the boat more easily.

I am now able to handle the Laser in stronger winds as the RYA coaches have given tips on reducing power. However, it does prove that although the Laser may seem attractive because of its power and speed, you can only compete on equal terms if you have a boat that matches your physical ability.

I have not left the Comet circuit and I will hopefully be doing most of the series, parent willing, but this year I hope to see other young people on the start line. So if you are at all concerned about improving your sailing ability, come and join myself and all the other circuit sailors at the various clubs around the country. These meetings are fun and friendly, and we are willing to give advice and help. There are plenty of prizes to be won and if I can win them, anyone can. So this year try and get out and about and join the in the fun.

Pink and Deadly
(James Withall)

Memo

new sail { standard £150-00
with window £162-00

self bailer (£16-00)

tiller extension { standard £9-00
telescopic £21-45

gelcoat touch-up kit (£5-00)

cockpit grab rail kit (£7-00)

covers, spar bags, foil bags, hawks

blocks, shackles,

pins, clips, trolleys

trailers, roof racks,

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new boat?

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COMET CONVERT

I thought you may be interested in how we came to buy our Comet. My mother had the first Comet, no. 91, at our Club - Nantwich & Border Counties S.C. I had often thought it looked a nice boat on the water but I had never sailed it myself. However, when the Autumn Points Series (Scratch) started, I was asked if I would like to race it. Not one to turn such an offer down, I accepted.

I sailed the Comet in the menagerie fleet, which consists mostly of Solos and a few Toppers. The menagerie fleet is the largest fleet at the moment, with as many as eighteen boats racing at times.

Comet rigged, I sailed off to the start. I did not make a particularly good start, as I was still getting used to the boat. Not expecting to do well but trying hard and concentrating on wind shifts, I found I was in front of some Solos and catching up with others. This was difficult to believe, especially when I finished with the leaders and had a good result.

The second race started and my confidence was growing. I had a good start and crossed the line ahead of all the Solos to finish first! I also won the final race of the day. Having got two wins under my belt, Mum offered me the Comet to sail for the rest of the points series, at the end of which I came second overall. I felt I did very well (or was it the boat?) although I have yet to sail it in a blow. I will work up to windier conditions gradually.

One Solo sailor said to me on arriving at the Club a few weeks later:

"Which boat are sailing today?"

"The Comet" I said.

"Oh dear" he said.

It was at this point that the owner of the only other Comet at the Club put his boat up for sale. How could I resist! After all, we had the money as we had been saving up for a new three piece suite.

Jane Clarke
Comet 266

P.S. Both my husband (Laser sailor) and son (Topper sailor) will be sailing this Comet, so we will fight over it!

COMET CLUB
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Comet

WANTED

Second hand Comet. Price around £600 - £700

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WANTED

AMS Folding Launching trolley

Contact Geoff Kempton on 0753 885782 (Chalfont St. Peters, Bucks)

FOR SALE

Comet No. 177 Post Office red hull, keel band, hatch, tiller extension, cover, paddle. Very good condition. Located at Kingsmead S.C. £1,100 (Cost new £1,463). Contact Geoff Kempton on 0753 885782 (Chalfont St. Peters, Bucks)

FOR SALE

Two Comets, both in excellent condition

No. 93 - White hull and deck with stowage hatch, stripes and rubbing strip; Morrison sail with window; praddle, cover, folding trolley. Very good condition. £950

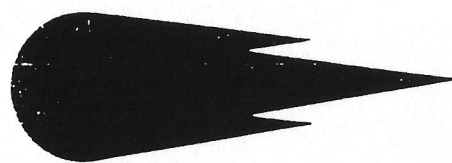
No. 94 - Mid-blue hull and white deck with stowage hatch and rubbing strip; Morrison sail with window; praddle, cover, folding trolley. As new, very little used. £1,000

Contact Daryl Matthews on 01 658 1482 (evenings or weekends)

FOR SALE

Comet 243 Folding trolley and cover. Little used - £1,150

Contact Tim or Hilary Wade on 0722 72 729



Comet Class Association

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association