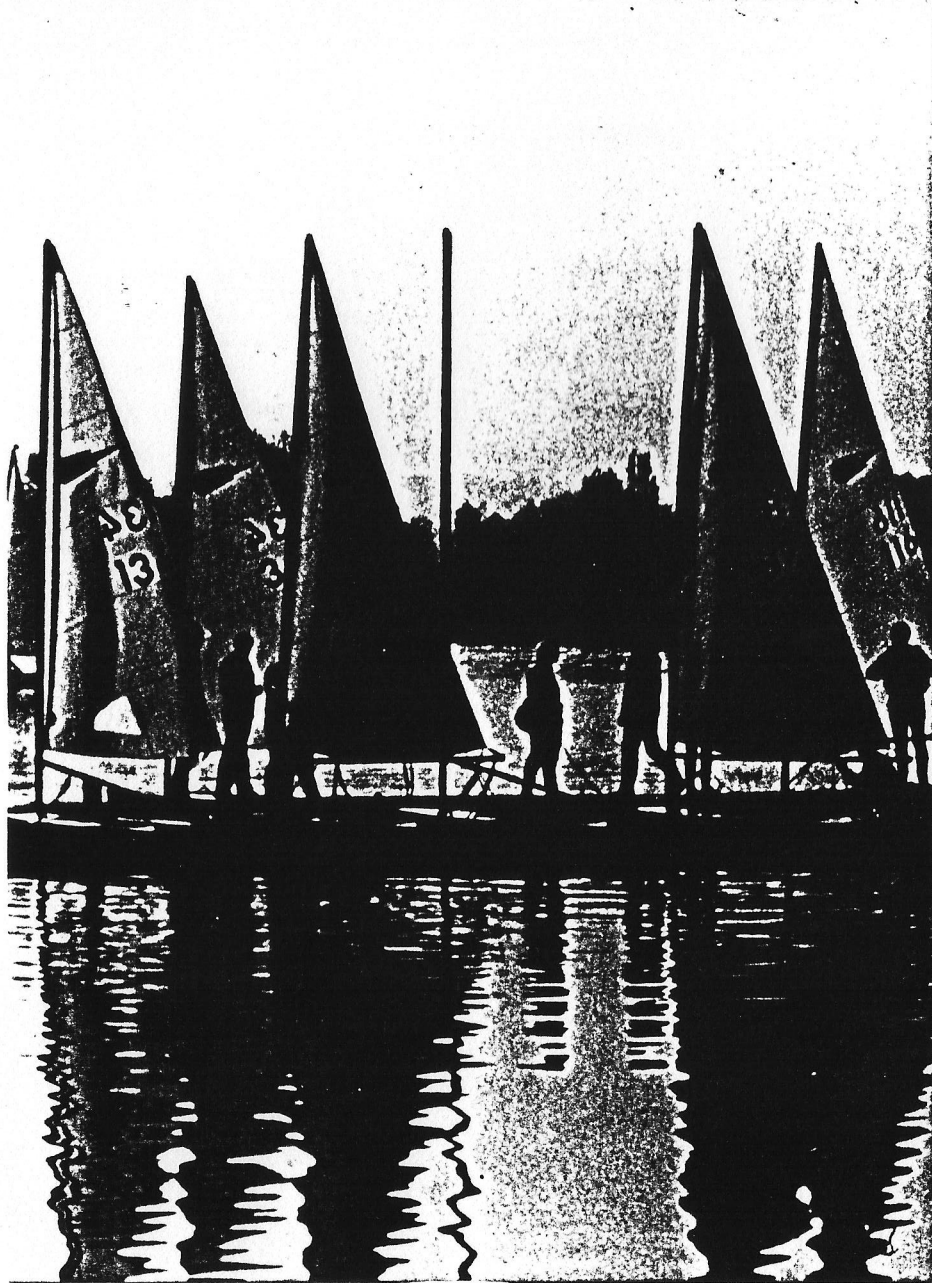


PERIHELION

Newsletter 20



Comet Class Association

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

CHAIRMAN

ERROL EDWARDS	SECRETARY	60 Ridgeway Road, Fishponds, Bristol BS16 3EA, (0272 354494)
MARTIN PRESTON	TREASURER	6 Tangmere, Heywood Avenue, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 3JA (0628 826101)
JACKIE HUDSON		33 Warland Road, Plumstead, London SE18 2EX (081 854 2861)
HENRY JAGGERS		43 Haymill Road, Slough, Bucks SL1 6NE (06286 64237)
STUART LINES	NEWSLETTER EDITOR	1 Portobello Close, Chesham, Bucks HP5 2PL (0494 771430)
JOHN WINDIBANK		2 Dogwood Close, Northfleet, Kent DA11 8PJ (0474 325653)
DEREK COLEMAN	AUDITOR	5 Agars Place, Datchet, Berks SL3 9AH

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 20 AUTUMN 1991

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entry fee

£3.50

for further details ring

Geoff Kempton

0753 885782

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

So here we are again, just about at the end of another summer sailing season. Despite the unseasonable start, it has been another dry, warm summer and I hope all Comet sailors have had an enjoyable season. From the number of articles I have received for this newsletter, I assume you must have spent a lot of time on the water! At the risk of becoming boring, I do need the occasional article if Perihelion is to continue to be published.

Since the last edition, the Association A.G.M. has been held and you will find a report elsewhere in this issue. Despite my prediction in the last newsletter, the meeting did not manage to find a new Chairman, so the position remains unfilled. Steve Kibble did achieve his aim of retiring at the A.G.M. and we are pleased to welcome Errol Edwards as our new Secretary. However, I cannot let the moment pass without paying tribute to the hard work performed on our behalf by Steve over a number of years. Particularly since the retirement of Keith as Chairman, Steve has been the driving force behind the organisation and without his efforts, many of the Open events would not have taken place. Thank you, Steve. Enjoy your sailing.

While preparing this newsletter, a familiar packet dropped through my letter box. It contained a number of photographs from the camera of David Hudson. It is good to welcome his work back to these pages after his accident last year.

You see from the notice board towards the back of this newsletter that there are a number of second hand Comets for sale. Purchasers are a bit thin at this time of the season, but if this spring was any guide, there is likely to be an active market again in the early part of next year.

Finally, my apologies for this newsletter appearing slightly later than scheduled, due to pressure of work. I will try harder next time!

Stuart Lines

KINGSMEAD S.C.

DATCHET RD HORTON, BERKS

SLOUGH 686016

an OPEN MEETING for

COMETS

will be held on

SUNDAY 20th OCTOBER

first race 11am.

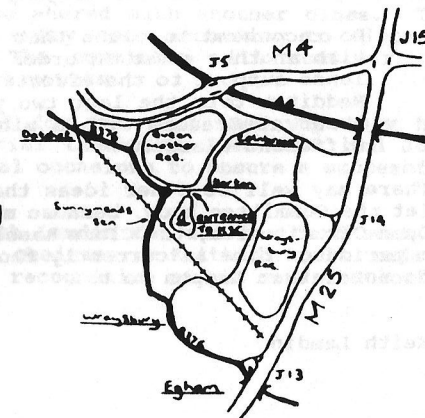
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Geoff Kempton

0753 885782



TRAVELLERS TROPHY

Traditionally, the outward signs of a successful class association are shown by a regular and interesting newsletter together with a thriving travellers circuit. I have always thought that another sign should be a social circuit of holidays with fun sailing, but this seems almost impossible to organise effectively. So, we seem to be left with the obvious elements and should consider our current performance in these areas. Perihelion is successful and benefits greatly from Stuart's expertise as Editor although, as always, I am sure he would be grateful for more copy from more sources - it is up to you to make his task easier.

My current worry is the Traveller's Circuit. The latest two seasons have seen a decline in attendance which, if continued, will bring the viability of the programme into doubt. There comes a time when a sailing club cannot afford to devote a day of its calendar to an Open Meeting when only a few visitors attend. (At Aylesbury, this has already happened in recent years to our GP, Mirror and Topper fleets!).

Ultimately, if people will not make the effort to travel then there is little that can be done and I have no magic answer to the problems. However, it surely makes sense to encourage people as much as possible and to minimize the risk of low attendance where possible - I think the following points may help:

1. Provide a small memento prize for all qualifiers to the Orbital Trophy at the end of the season. This need not be a costly exercise but it is a small means of saying thank you to those Association members who do support the circuit and possibly an encouragement to others to compete.
2. Do not put artificial barriers in the way of qualifying for the Trophy. I know the idea of zones was to encourage people to travel to different areas for their meetings but that is rather the advanced course! Our problem is to get people to travel at all and if a person can qualify through six "local" meetings, then that is much better than not travelling at all through being unable to attend a more distant location. I suspect this restriction has put more people off attending at all rather than encouraging more extensive travel.
3. Do recommend to clubs that our Open Meeting be a shared one with another class in order that attendance from either class lends support to the efforts of the club. This worked well at Redditch over the last two years and also at our Association event at Grafham with a minimum of interference between the different classes.

There may well be other ideas that people have had; if so, please let the Committee know, because my bitter experience is that if the Open Circuit dies, the Class Association effectively also dies over a period of time as currently shown by the Graduate Class. Please do not let it happen to us!

Keith Lamdin

A.G.M. MINUTES

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Comet Class Association held at Hampton Pier Yacht Club on Saturday, 13th July 1991.

Apologies for absence were received from Henry Jaggars and Stuart Lines.

Minutes of the previous AGM were agreed to be a true record.

Secretary's Report. The class has continued to grow. The committee have held three meetings during the past year. This year we have organised 12 open meetings plus an Association and National Championships. Attendances at most events have again been down on previous years.

Chairman's report. The Association is currently without a Chairman.

Election of Officers and Committee. There were no nominations for the office of Chairman.

The following were elected as officers for the year 1991/92:

Office	Nominee	Proposer	Seconder
Secretary	Errol Edwards	Steve Kibble	John Windibank
Treasurer	Martin Preston	Keith Lamdin	Keith Bullock
Auditor	Derek Coleman	Barry Hylton	Ralph Rowe

The following were elected unanimously as Committee members: Henry Jaggars, John Windibank, Jackie Hudson and Stuart Lines, having been proposed by Barry Hylton and seconded by Keith Lamdin.

Class Rule Changes. Discussion took place regarding rule changes. It was agreed that all proposals for rule changes will be referred to the builder, AMS Marine, for comment and veto. The voting was 11 in favour, 1 against and 3 abstentions.

Any Other Business. Discussion took place regarding the geographical location of the venue for the National Championships and whether the event should be shared with another class. The possibility of having sliding entry fees according to distance travelled was also raised. The committee will consider the suggestions when planning future events.

Hampton Pier Y.C. were thanked for the excellent way they had organised the event, with special thanks to Fred Kent and John Windibank, who had met on several occasions to ensure a successful championships.

A presentation was made to Keith Lamdin for all the hard work he had put in over the years as chairman. Keith in turn made a presentation to Steve Kibble in recognition of his contribution as Secretary.

Steve Kibble

THANK YOU!

May I express my sincere appreciation of the lovely gift of an engraved decanter and glasses presented to me by the Association at the recent AGM. It was particularly appropriate to me that the presentation was by Jackie Hudson, who epitomises what Comet sailing is all about!

It will always act as a reminder of much hard work and many happy hours spent during recent years as we developed the Comet Class Association into the successful organisation it is today. I must again pay tribute to Chris Robertson and Andrew Cowser, without whom it could not have been achieved, and to Andrew Simmons and the Hyltons for their support and encouragement.

It is good to see our current Committee working effectively on behalf of all Comet sailor and the greatest reward to me, for our early work, will be to see the Comet Association thrive in the future.

May I also say "thank you" to others who have said kind words to me recently - Stuart Lines in the newsletter, Alan Browning whose correspondence I enjoy, and Ralph Rowe for his appreciation in Perihelion 18.

It is strange how time dims the memory and I had already forgotten some of the details Ralph mentioned - perhaps we need a Comet Class history before it fades completely! I was not conscious of fixing Ralph and I'm sure his arm never got past the shoulder blades but I remain particularly grateful for his efforts in helping to set up our stands at Crystal Palace.

Thank you all for your kind words and gifts - it is much appreciated.

Keith Lamdin

PERIHELION

The Winter edition of Perihelion will be published in December. All contributions to me by the end of November, please.

Stuart Lines.



Jackie Hudson presenting Keith Lamdin with a decanter set.



Memo



new sail (standard £170-00, with window £183-00)

self bailer (£17-00)

tiller extension (standard £11-00, telescopic £21-85)

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, easi-loaders etc.

new boat?

Dinghy Leisure!

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Margaret Hylton
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Sales, Demonstrations
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Tel: Great Missenden (02406) 3082

This friendly family club, which has been established for approximately 30 years and sails on an idyllic stretch of the Avon in the shadow of Bredon Hill, now has six Comets. Four are sailed by DEGS - Distinguished Elderly Gentleman Sailors, who appreciate the ease of sailing the Comet and the ease of entering and leaving the water. Our most distinguished Comet sailor is the Club Chairman, a founder member aged 78, who promoted himself from a lifetime of Enterprise sailing. He recently broke the Club record for the number of capsizes and still finishing the race, but then he is an exceptional old sea dog.

We are fairly competitive when we try, in a mixed fleet which includes Enterprises and Solos.

We particularly appreciate the Comet's stability on the run in a blow on a narrow river, when we remember to move back in the boat. We do have problems, however, in getting back into the boat after a capsize. A comprehensive review of this problem by the experts would be appreciated by the DEGS of ASC.

Harold Bayliss
Fleet Captain

Comet Class Association

Past Championship Winners

Year	National Champ	Association Champ	Travellers Champ
1983	Ken Potts		
1984	Bob Sandford		
1985	Stuart Ingham		
1986	Keith Lamdin		
1987	Jeff Penfold		
1988	Craig Moffett		
1989	Chris Sinclair	Damon Perrin	Craig Moffett
1990	Chris Sinclair	Guy Wilkins	Andrew Pearce
1991	Guy Wilkins	Henry Jagers	James Withal

Ladies Champion (Moffett Plate)

1988	Hayley Penfold
1989	Margaret Hylton
1990	Tracey Davies
1991	Tracey Davies



Comet National Championship

Prizewinners (left to right)

D. Coleman (Capsize), J. Windibank (7th), S. Monks (3rd),
 Co. Robinson (4th), T. Davies (1st Lady), G. Wilkins (1st)
 G. Bullock (2nd) R. Howles (6th), M. Wilkins (5th) L Dean (1st Veteran)

KNOW THE RULES - PART 3

In the previous article I considered the principal right of way rules for the situation of yachts sailing their normal straight line courses in open water. In this article I will extend those rules to cover the cases when yachts deviate from a basic straight line and manoeuvre through luffing, bearing away, and tacking or gybing.

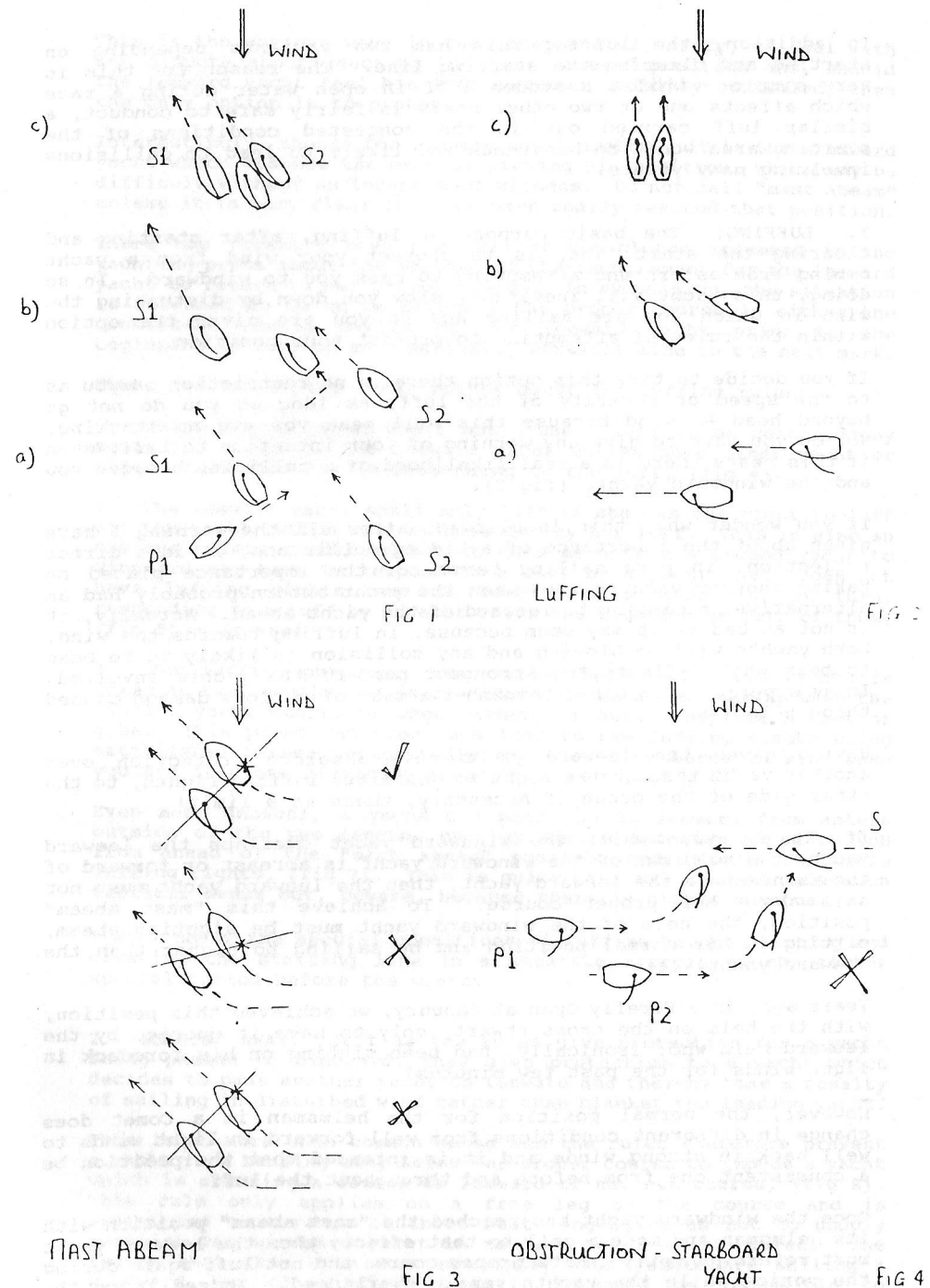
However, firstly some points relating to the previous article.

1. On page 16 of Perihelion 19, 8 lines up from the bottom, the phrase should read "and is now the "windward" yacht". I am sure that keen students (if any!) will have noted the minor error. [Sorry - Ed.]
2. Sailing at Aylesbury recently in a club handicap race I found myself, on starboard tack, faced with a port tack yacht on a collision course and apparently unaware of the position. I called and was surprised to hear the reply "late call" as the port tacker took avoiding action! Please remember there is no onus in the rules for a right of way yacht to hail other yachts and remind them of their duties. It is an inescapable duty of yachts to keep a good lookout and take the necessary avoiding action without relying on other yachts to remind them of their presence.
3. In a Comet Open meeting earlier this season an interesting incident occurred which emphasised the importance of complying with the principal rules at all costs and, if necessary, arguing the point afterwards. Approaching two starboard tack yachts on port, I decided to bear away behind the first in the hope of being able to pass ahead of the second yacht. As it happened, I found myself headed slightly, unable to clear the second yacht, and had to tack to leeward of him. With the three of us all now on starboard tack, the leeward leading yacht pinched hard and the windward yacht behind sailed freer until we all met in a sandwich which must have been amusing if viewed from behind. The windward yacht did not realise that I was being squeezed from below and thought that I was luffing him illegally. Without complying with the basic requirements of keeping clear in the first place, the windward yacht was forced to take a penalty, (fig 1). The lesson is clear - the principal rules are just that and must always be complied with unless there is absolutely no doubt that some other rule will override them in a particular situation. If in doubt, keep clear!

Now to the remainder of the Principal Right of Way Rules.

Clearly yachts do not always want to sail straight line courses for ever more and, indeed, it might well be difficult to complete a race if this was a requirement! So, to avoid potential collisions as yachts alter course, there are specific rules which cover the following cases:-

- altering course through luffing towards the wind;
- altering course through bearing away from the wind; and
- changing tack through tacking or gybing.



In addition, the luffing rule has two variants depending on starting and clearing the starting line. The reason for this is very simple - whilst a sudden luff in open water during a race which affects one or two other boats is fairly safe to conduct, a similar luff carried out in the congested conditions of the starting area would be hazardous and likely to lead to collisions involving many yachts.

1. LUFFING: The basic purpose of luffing, after starting and clearing the start line, is to protect your wind from a yacht coming from astern and attempting to pass you to windward. In so doing, this yacht will inevitably slow you down by disturbing the wind in which you are sailing and so you are given the option within the rules of attempting to protect your position.

If you decide to take this option there is no restriction on you as to the speed or severity of the luff, as long as you do not go beyond head to wind because this will mean you are now tacking. Nor do you have to give any warning of your intention to luff, even if this means there is a real likelihood of a collision between you and the windward yacht, (fig 2).

If you wonder why this is allowed, after all the warning I have given about the importance of avoiding collisions, it is a direct reflection, in pure sailing terms, of the importance placed on taking another yacht's wind when the yacht astern probably had an alternative in passing to leeward of the yacht ahead. Actually, it is not as bad as it may seem because, in luffing towards the wind, both yachts will be slowing and any collision is likely to be beam to beam which affects the strongest part of the yachts involved. In my experience, I cannot remember a case of serious damage caused through luffing.

Having given the leeward yacht this absolute protection over another yacht through the right to unlimited luffing rights, to the other side of the ocean if necessary, there is a limit!

If, at any time while the windward yacht overlaps the leeward yacht, the helmsman of the windward yacht is abreast or forward of the mainmast of the leeward yacht, then the leeward yacht must not sail above her proper course. To achieve this "mast abeam" position, the helm of the windward yacht must be sighting abeam, sitting in his normal position and be sailing no higher than the leeward yacht, (fig 3).

Years ago, in a Firefly Open at Banbury, we achieved this position, with the helm on the cross thwart, only to have it queried by the leeward helm who, ironically, had been sitting on his foredeck in light winds for the past few minutes!

However, the normal position for the helmsman in a Comet does change in different conditions from well forward in light winds to well back in strong winds and it is intended that the position be a consistent one from before and throughout the luff.

Once the windward yacht has reached the "mast abeam" position with its helmsman and made a call to that effect, then the leeward yacht must return promptly to its proper course and not luff again during the period while the yachts remain overlapped. Indeed, once the call is made, whether the leeward yacht agrees that the call is correct or not, there is no option but for the leeward yacht to return to her proper course.

This is the obvious way, in the interests of safety, to deal with any dispute about reaching the "mast abeam" position and, should the leeward yacht feel his luff has been unfairly curtailed, then the only option is to protest.

Interestingly, should the leeward yacht protest, it is the windward yacht which assumes the onus of proving his position, which may be difficult without an independent witness. Do not call "mast abeam" unless it is very clear that you have really reached that position.

There has recently been some rather convoluted argument in the yachting press about the meaning of the requirement for the leeward yacht to return to her proper course. In my opinion, the situation is intended to be quite simple - the proper course is either the consistent course sailed by the leeward yacht prior to the beginning to luff or an essentially straight line to the next mark.

There are one or two finer points about the luffing rules:-

1. The windward yacht shall not cause a luff to be curtailed by being too close to the leeward yacht unless some other yacht or object restricts her in responding to the luff, (fig 4).

2. The leeward yacht shall only luff if she has the right to luff all the yachts which will be affected by her luff. This is also an obvious safety condition but it does mean that a second yacht to windward may have to respond to a luff by a yacht that does not have luffing rights over it because this yacht is, in turn, responding to a luff by a yacht which has rights over both of them, (fig 5) - beware!

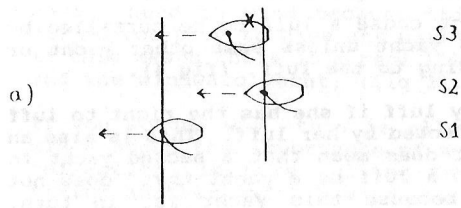
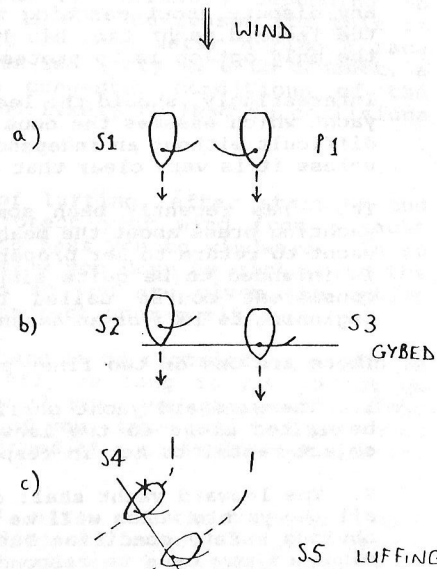
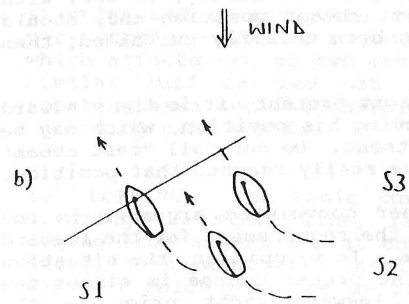
3. For luffing purposes, the overlap between the two yachts is taken as two lengths and is considered to be a new overlap when the leading yacht starts or when either, or both, complete a tack or gybe. This point can sometimes lead to new luffing rights being established rather unexpectedly and should be borne in mind when you are in close proximity to another yacht, (fig 6).

Even more unusual, a yacht can pass you to leeward from astern outside of the two lengths overlap circle and then close on you from ahead of the "mast abeam" position and immediately claim luffing rights, (fig 7). This is quite rare and does not make much tactical sense but, beware, because there is always someone!

I will cover the special conditions of luffing before starting and clearing the starting line in a separate article on the rather special period before the start.

2. BEARING AWAY: Just as the rules give protection for a yacht being passed to windward, they give protection to a yacht which decides to pass another yacht to leeward and thereby take a penalty of sailing in disturbed wind rather than blanket the leading yacht.

This is no more than common sense and the rules therefore prevent a yacht from bearing away below her proper course to impede a yacht which is steering a course to leeward of her own course, (fig 8). This rule only applies on a free leg of the course and is restricted to a range of three boat lengths so as not to unduly restrict the windward yacht in sailing her desired course. The reason that this rule does not apply when yachts are sailing a windward leg closehauled is that it would be impossible to distinguish between the windward yacht bearing away to impede or bearing away because of a small wind shift.



ALL YACHTS AFFECTED

FIG 5

NEW OVERLAP

FIG 6

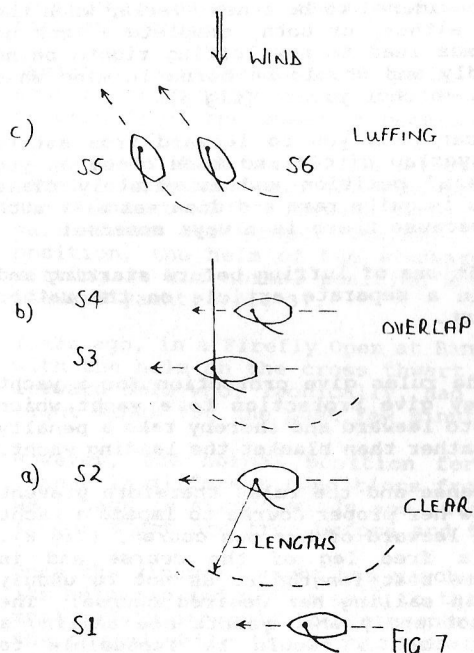


FIG 7

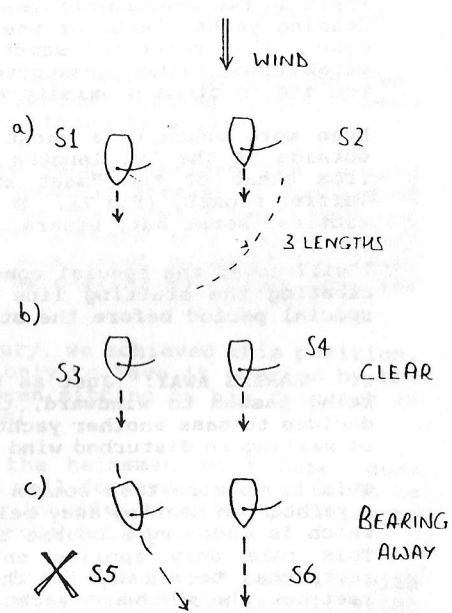


FIG 8

These two rules together provide a sensible set of options for a yacht clear astern to decide how to pass a yacht which is ahead; either:

- pass to windward and risk being luffed; or
- pass to leeward knowing you cannot be impeded.

Having now considered the options for yachts to alter course by luffing or bearing away, it remains to consider the more extreme case of altering course through tacking or gybing.

3. CHANGING TACK - TACKING OR GYBING: If two yachts are on a tack, either the same tack or different tacks then, if one yacht decides to change its course radically by either tacking or gybing, it is this yacht which has created a new situation and possibly may gain new rights or create a position which might result in a collision.

As a result of this general condition, the basic rule states clearly that a yacht which is tacking or gybing shall keep clear of a yacht on a tack.

This is obviously only sensible and it is essential that all yachts realise that, during the actual act of tacking or gybing, they have no rights whatever and must, without exception, keep clear of other yachts which have remained on a tack during the yachts' manoeuvre to change tacks.

However, this obligation is not a continuing one and only applies during the actual act of tacking or gybing which, as the definitions clearly show, may be a relatively short period of time.

Immediately the act of tacking or gybing is over, a new situation is established where the two yachts are both on a tack and the principal right of way rules apply accordingly.

If, in changing tacks, the yacht which tacked or gybed did so in such a way as to remain the give-way yacht then the onus remains on this yacht to continue to keep clear. In this case the yacht which remained throughout on the same tack need do nothing other than sail a reasonable course, (fig 9).

The problem comes when the yacht which tacked or gybed did so in such a way as to become the right-of-way yacht and require the yacht which remained throughout on the same tack to alter course in order to meet its new obligations, (fig 10).

This situation, where obligations to keep clear may change quite rapidly from one yacht to the other, is potentially a rather dangerous one and there is a specific transitional rule in order to ensure that safety remains the paramount consideration.

Therefore, a yacht shall not tack or gybe into a position that give her right of way unless far enough away from a yacht on a tack so as to enable that yacht to keep clear without having to begin to alter course until after the tack or gybe has been completed.

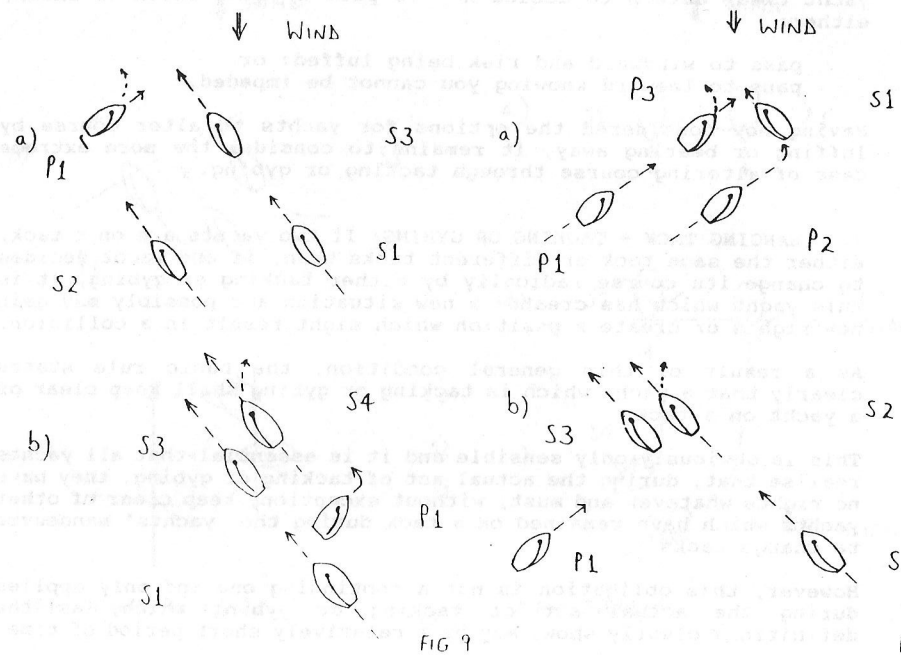


FIG 9

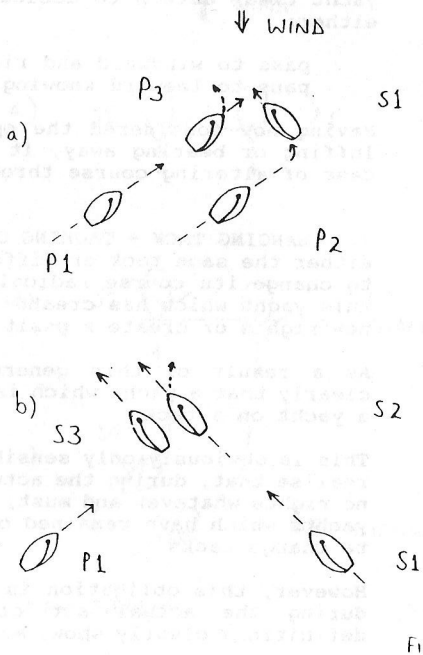


FIG 10

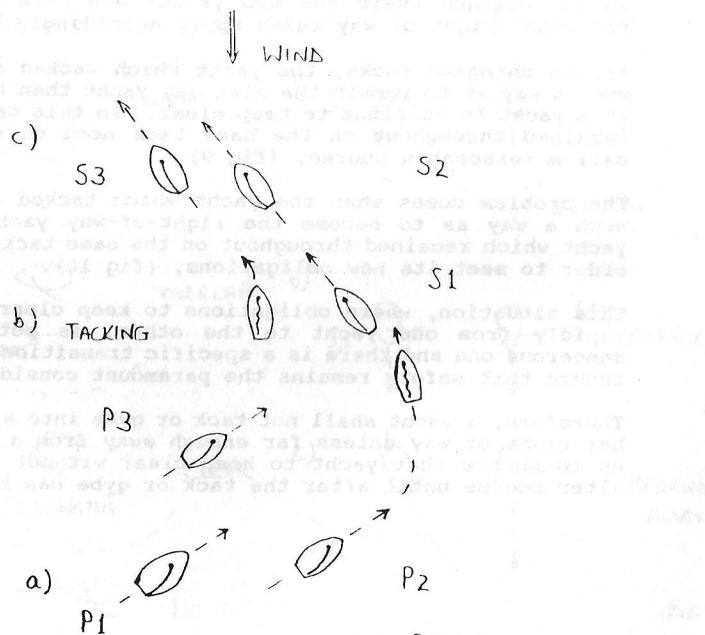


FIG 11

This transitional relief is often not considered seriously enough with yachts attempting to change tacks so close to other yachts that they have little real chance of keeping clear without resorting to emergency action. This is not the intention of the rule and the following guidelines should apply to the yacht which is newly obligated:-

1. It need take no action at all in anticipation of the new situation created by the other yacht's tack or gybe.
2. It need only keep clear by responding in its normal manner whilst taking avoiding action.
3. It is entitled to make any necessary manoeuvre to keep clear and, if while doing so, a collision occurs then the fault lies with the yacht which tacked or gybed.

These guidelines place quite a restriction on the yacht which tacked or gybed, which is only reasonable as it is clearly her responsibility for the situation. Indeed, the rules go further and place on the yacht which tacks or gybes the onus of satisfying a protest committee that she did indeed give sufficient room and opportunity for the other yacht to sensibly keep clear, (fig 11).

I believe this is another example where commonsense is needed to interpret the rules correctly.

Room and opportunity for a 50 foot yacht in an ocean gale is clearly somewhat more than that required for Comet dinghies in a light breeze inland. However, remember that, if you tack or gybe and gain right of way as a result, you must be able to prove your case and, without witnesses, this may be difficult.

As an example, in a Comet Open meeting on restricted water, I was sailing on port tack to windward of another Comet which was headed suddenly and tacked quickly on to starboard. As I went into my normal tack to keep clear, we collided and I believe that the other yacht had tacked too close. The fact that he clearly wanted to get on to the newly favoured tack was irrelevant as he did not have the space to do so and still allow me to meet my obligations.

Finally, if two yachts happen to tack or gybe simultaneously then the rules require the yacht on the other's port side to keep clear - if you are on the right, you are in the right!

This concludes the principal right of way rules which always apply when boats meet on the course in open water unless overruled by specific rules of exception which we will consider in the next article.

Keith Lamin

N O T I C E B O A R D

COMETS FOR SALE

No. 65. Including Combi trailer. £900 ono.
Contact John Franklin, 0727 53430 (St. Albans)

No. 110. Trolley, little used. £900 Contact
Margaret Edwards 02993 4327 (West Midlands)

No. 124. Red/silver grey. £975. Contact
Richard Richardson 0296 713504 (Buckingham)

No. 127. Trolley and cover. Good condition.
£800. Contact Michael Pilkington 0270 68168
(Cheshire)

No. 213. With cover and trolley. Very good
condition. £1050. Contact 0372 453834 (Surrey)

No. 216. Trolley and cover. £1200 ono. Contact
Jim Thomas 0279 726920 (Herts)

No. 237. Trolley and cover. £1150. Contact
Norman Osborn 0202 873026 (Bournemouth)

No. 287. Grey hull, folding trolley, top cover.
Very good condition. Contact Vic Balderson 0474
533602 (Kent)

No. 312. Usual extras. £1300 ono Contact John
Havers 0926 325596 (Banbury)

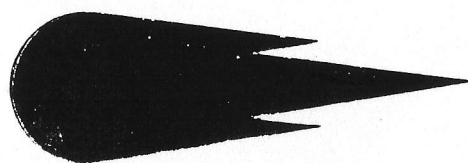
No. 318. Trolley and extras. £1275. Richard
Beecroft 0480 212768 (Hunts)

No. 319. Easi-loader and trolley. £1300 ono.
Contact Les Meese 0384 411267 (West Midlands)

No. 349. Combination road trailer. £1350 ono.
Contact Michael Paine 0285 653844 (Cirencester)

No. 375. Combi trolley and usual extras.
Excellent condition. £1200. Max Sharman 0743
363360 (Shrewsbury)

No. 488. New in May 1991. Trolley, cover.
Contact Arthur Taylor 0706 824534 (Lancashire)



Comet Class Association

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association