

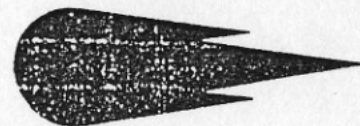
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# PERIHELION

## Newsletter 8



**Comet Class Association**



## Comet Class Association

\*\*\*\*\* NEWSLETTER NUMBER EIGHT \*\*\*\*\*

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September 1988

Keith Lordin

COMMITTEE MEMBERS 88/89

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STEVE KIBBLE	SECRETARY	"IVYBANK", Broad Street, Cuckfield, West Sussex. R17 5DY. (0444 454730)
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CARR WITHALL		"A Happy Landing", Chesham Road, Berkhamsted, Herts. HP4 2SZ. (Berkhamsted 2577)
MIKE CRAWSHAW		Park House, Long Marston Camp, Stratford upon Avon, Warwickshire. CV37 8OR. (0789 720635)

Responsibilities

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

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

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

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Writing this at the end of August it seems that the season is flying by and soon it will be time for our final event at Kingsmead and then putting the boats away for the winter - all except those keen on frostbiting!

What a poor summer it has been but, nethertheless, we have managed to have some good meetings with excellent turnouts and weather at Chipstead and Aylesbury. Our first meeting at Walton-on-Thames attracted a rather disappointing entry on a Saturday with a poor weather forecast perhaps being a major factor. However, Walton is an excellent venue with a large clear water and I hope we will be able to return there in greater numbers next year.

Of course, the most important event recently was the Nationals held at Sovereign S.C., Eastbourne which attracted our record entry of 31 boats - there can't be too many classes with over a 50% increase in turnout from the previous year! The event is fully recorded in this issue and, although it was disappointing to be blown off under a clear blue sky on the Sunday, everyone who attended seemed to enjoy the event. Our thanks are due to Hayley Penfold who arranged a supply of Nationals '88 sweatshirts and teeshirts and to the ladies who sold them and this effort provided over £70 to Association funds.

The Annual General Meeting was held on the Saturday evening and provided some interesting talking points which are recorded in the minutes and in a follow up article from Mike Crawshaw. If you have any other views on the AGM and particularly the concept of Comet class sponsored training then please let me have them for inclusion in the newsletter which hopefully can become the forum for ongoing discussion within the Class.

One area touched on at the AGM but, not really with any firm conclusion, is the provision of facilities or activities for those Comet class members whose interests do not include racing. One suggestion is that of a class holiday at one of the popular family sailing weeks such as Poole or Chichester which can include training, racing or just pottering with social events. Again, if this idea meets your needs then please let me know so that we can gauge the level of interest and plan accordingly.

As you will see from the AGM minutes, Chris Robertson and Andrew Cowser have stepped down from their posts, and we should be grateful for their efforts on our behalf since the beginning of our Association. In their place I would like to welcome Steve Kibble and Neil Beaton to the Committee and Craig Moffatt as our Auditor, and look forward to their assistance in further developing your rapidly growing Class Association.

Now, as we move into the Autumn, we look forward to events at the new venue of Bewl Valley and returning to Kingsmead, home of the largest single Comet fleet of over 15 boats. At Kingsmead we are hoping to provide, with the kind permission of the Club whose Commodore, Henry Jagers, sails Comet 100, a major end of season event. On Saturday (29th October) afternoon there will be a series of informal training sessions intended for all Comet sailors and covering boat rigging, sailing to windward and downwind, starting and capsizing recovery. In the evening we will have a social event including supper and then on Sunday we have 3 races for the Open Meeting with the Kingsmead Comet Trophy for the winner. Why not come along for either day, or both, and make this an event to remember to round off the season? Details from Henry Jagers on Burnham (06286 64237) or myself.

Keith Lamdin

## BEWL VALLEY OPEN MEETING NOTICE

BEWL VALLEY SC

MULTI FLEET OPEN MEETING

SUNDAY 16 OCTOBER

Bewl Valley SC end of season Open is a multi-fleet handicap with separate starts for classes mustering more than 10 entries. 800 acres of sailing water and excellent clubhouse facilities! Details from Mike Crawshaw on 0789 720635.

Bewl Bridge Reservoir is signed off the A21 about 1 mile SOUTH of LAMBERHURST.

Follow Comet direction signs to check-in.

First race 1100 hours. Entry fee £3.00

## MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

- 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** Apologies had been received from Philip Nunn and Andrew Cowser.
- 2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS AGM** The section covering AOB was read to the meeting with the remainder of the minutes being taken as read. The minutes were agreed to be a fair record and the Chairman signed the minutes to that effect.
- 3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES :** A new format of Owners Manual had been produced and would be shown under AOB. The suggested joint open meeting with Mirrors at Kennet Valley had been successfully held and dates of open meetings published fairly early.
- 4. SECRETARY'S REPORT :** The Class Association has had a pleasingly active year since the last AGM in August 1987. The Committee has met formally on the 25th Oct 1987, 6th Jan 1988 and 19th May 1988, in addition to informal discussions at Sailboat 88 in early March and at various open meetings. The minutes of the formal meetings are available should any member wish to read them. In November '87, Neil Beaton of Kingsmead S.C. very kindly volunteered to audit our annual accounts, and his offer was gladly accepted by the Committee. In December '87, Mike Crawshaw attended a lively RYA Class Associations Forum in London, and his report of the proceedings is also available should anybody wish to see it. At the present time there are 203 boats on the Association Register, but I know that 215 boats have been delivered up to today. Since there were 120 on the register at the last AGM, this illustrates the accelerated growth of the Class over the past eleven months. The order list at AMS Marine now extends into September/October. The Open Meeting circuit for this season is quite ambitious in that there are a total of 11 meetings from April through to October. However, I am pleased to report that of the five so far held, the attendance has mainly been most gratifying, with up to 21 boats at three of these meetings. Apart from the weather, the two-day meeting at JCB, Uttoxeter was excellent, although the attendance was very disappointing. It is hoped that the Class will be invited back to JCB's next season, and I would urge all of you to attend if possible, and can assure you that you won't be disappointed. As you may be aware, I am stepping down from the post of Secretary, and wish to take this opportunity to thank all Committee and Class Association members for their support. As at the last AGM, I would particularly like to thank Keith Landin for the excellent job he is doing as our Chairman, very often he does far more than the call of duty. Acceptance of the Secretary's report was proposed by Mark Laity, seconded by Craig Moffett and carried unanimously.
- 5. TREASURER'S REPORT :** The statement of accounts was available for all those present and, as required by the Class Constitution, a copy of the accounts is presented with these minutes.

Andrew Cowser had decided to step down from his position and in the absence of the Treasurer, the Chairman read the following notes to the accounts;

a. We have chosen 30th June as the year ending date for this current year, and anticipate that this will be a suitable 12 monthly year ending for subsequent years, coming mid season and almost certainly before the Nationals event each year.

b. The current accounts show a healthy surplus of £610 in credit.

c. There are a number of large payments shortly to be paid out from our credit surplus. The main expenditure will be between £250-£300 as our share of the new handbooks, the cost of which are being split between AMS Marine, Dinghy Leisure and ourselves.

d. No expenses are shown on the current accounts for open meetings as this year the host clubs have collected entry fees and paid for prizes and expenses for each event.

The following questions and comments were made regarding the accounts:-

The low cost of secretarial expenses was due, largely, to the major contribution made to the Association by AMS Marine in printing and posting the newsletters without which our balance would be greatly reduced. Our thanks were again given to Andrew Simmons for his continuing support in this area.

The increased cost of the Sailboat 88 exhibition over the previous year was not due to the cost of the stand but, rather, the payment of lunches by the Association for those members and helpers who manned the stand throughout a busy weekend.

Craig Moffett commented that there might be problems with an audit point relatively early in the season and suggested that the accounts should include an accrual for expected expenses for the period when membership fees would provide little income. He also suggested, based on experience with another class, that membership fees might be increased annually even though the current balance was encouragingly good.

The accounts were proposed for acceptance by Craig Moffett, seconded by Henry Jagers and passed unanimously.

**5. CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS :** Firstly, I would like to thank Chris and Andrew for the work they have done on behalf of the Comet Class. Both are original committee members from the inception of the Association at Crystal Palace in 1986 and will be greatly missed, mainly by myself. Chris, as well as being our Secretary, has organised the Open Meeting circuit and is recording results for a Traveller's Trophy. Andrew, in addition to the money side, has improved the newsletters tremendously with graphics, layouts and photos.

Now, at our 2nd AGM, it is worth reviewing our progress and considering our objectives for the future.

Our current membership of around 120 is a good proportion of boat numbers sold at just over 200. However, some 20+ members did not rejoin from the previous year and giving a loss of around one third. Carr Withall is in the process of contacting these members and also earlier owners who never joined the Association to find out the reasons for leaving and also to build up a second-hand boat register if appropriate.

Mike Crawshaw attended the Class Association forum and we represented a view to retain the Classes Junior championship which hopefully will resume in 1989. Otherwise nothing of major importance transpired but at least we

are now part of the Class Associations group and can obtain advice when needed.

We had a successful Sailboat 88 with a professional looking stand in the well placed Hall 2, Jeff Penfold's boat number 99 looked very smart all in white, and excellent video and photographic display. A continuous flow of visitors showed great interest in the boat and queues for demo sails. The only problem was the lack of second-hand boats of which we could have sold 20 in the weekend!

Looking back, it is only a year ago that AMS began to build 2 boats a week and already it is 3 a week and a lengthy waiting list. The Committee feel that, beyond the current activities, further publicity is unnecessary as production is now the limiting factor and we need to build the second-hand market. If you know of any Comet owner not in the Association, ask them to join and, if they are not using their boat, ask if they would be prepared to sell. The best publicity we can have is Comets sailing and the worst is sitting in the boat park not being used.

The Open circuit is thriving and, from a once per season event just 2 years ago and 5 events last year, we now have 11 events attracting an average of around 20 boats. Jackie Hudson has done an excellent job of finding prizes where necessary. The circuit will grow naturally if demand is there but it is still centred too much on the South-East and we need more venues in the Midlands. However, we must remember that not all owners race and we need to consider what the Association can provide beyond the racing side and some of our ideas are as follows:-

The Perihelion newsletter can contain articles on a wide range of Comet related activities and we need more reports on holidays and general sailing from all members.

A new owners handbook has been produced fitting into a 2-ring, A5 binder and printed with the Comet logo. This book contains sections for the constitution, measurement rules, boat handbook, insurance and certificate, as well as technical articles and newsletters. We hope this all-in-one format will prove popular with all members.

The class membership details are now held in a small data-base and this can be sorted in many ways and can be used by members to make contact with other Comet sailors e.g. when on holiday in a new part of the country.

We are also considering some form of Class rally or holiday in 1989 which could comprise cruising and training sessions with informal racing in a casual form.

Finally, I would like to thank both Andrew Simmons of AMS Marine and Margaret and Barrie Hylton of Dinghy Leisure for the continuing support they have given to the Association over the past year.

As always, the growth and future of the Association is dependent on you, the members. If you have ideas and comments, then let the Committee know and with the joint efforts of all concerned, the Class can continue to make the progress shown in the past year.

Thank you.

## 7. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The following were elected as Officers for the year 1988/89.

Office	Nominee	Proposed	Seconded	Voting
Chairman	K.Lamdin	M.Laity	M.Hylton	Unanimous
Secretary	S.Kibble	R.Rowe	W.Ward	Unanimous
Treasurer	N.Beaton	C.Moffett	H.Jagers	Unanimous
Auditor	C.Moffett	M.Laity	R.Rowe	Unanimous

## 8 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The following were elected unanimously "en-bloc" as Committee members.

Nominee	Proposed	Seconded
J. Hudson	M. Hylton	N. Beaton
M. Crawshaw	"	"
C. Withall	"	"

## 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following items of other business were discussed.

a. Peter Francis, Senior Instructor at the Calshot Activities Centre, requested permission to address the meeting which was granted. The Centre has recently purchased 2 Comets for evaluation in filling the slot between the Laser and Topper for training purposes. If approved after evaluation, this could result in considerable expansion of the Comet Class through other sailing centres. He considered that there were insufficient Class members involved in events such as the Nationals and that training weekends would be beneficial to a wider range of owners. He would be willing to hold such training sessions at Calshot at a cost of around £50 per head for a weekend or elsewhere on payment of his travelling expenses. Peter strongly advised the Class to consider such training as major opportunity for growth. On other subjects, Peter said he would like to see some modification to the bungee for more secure retention of the centreboard during capsize and he also queried the need for the Association to formalise the membership rules for sailing in Open and Championship meetings.

Peter's statement prompted considerable discussion summarised as:-

Mike Crawshaw expressed a doubt that we were yet large enough to support training weekends. Perhaps a training session could be arranged for the weekend of the Kingsmead Open in October and the members canvassed for interest in more formal training weekends.

Wendy Ward stated that block memberships should be available for schools and other organisations but would not encourage people to borrow a Comet solely to attend championships.

Mark Laity expressed the opinion that anyone should be allowed to enter and be eligible for Association prizes and that facilities should be available for anyone to join the Association irrespective of ownership of a Comet.

The Chairman pointed out that this facility already exists within the Class Constitution for those people having an interest in the Comet but felt that events and prizes organised by the Class Association should inherently go to regular members of the Class and not to outsiders whose sole interest was in winning prizes with little concern for the Class.

The general view expressed was that, although this was the preferred idea, it was inevitable that entries would be received from outside of the existing membership and this should be accepted.

b. Further to the question of retaining the centreboard more securely, Craig Moffett offered the suggestion of a retaining line from the board to the toestraps. Wendy Ward asked whether it would be possible to install a grab rail in the cockpit area, possibly on the side buoyancy tanks, to assist in getting back into the cockpit after capsize.

The Chairman reminded the meeting that the Comet is a one design boat and that such ideas should be considered by Andrew Simmons on the basis of

sensible improvements to the boat without change to the performance of the boat relative to those already built.

c. Peter Francis returned to the question of training which he felt had not been adequately considered by the meeting.

Margaret Hylton queried whether there was a real need from the members and said some members do not want to get any better but are already enjoying their Comet sailing enough.

Ralph Rowe said we should encourage sailing schools and Barrie Hylton said it was not club members that might benefit as much as those owners who are not part of the sailing club scheme. He felt it would be worthwhile putting a Comet owner weekend in the Calshot calendar and promoting it as a class event. Peter confirmed that he could make a commitment of such an event in the Calshot calendar at a cost of around £50 per person.

Wendy Ward reminded the meeting that not everyone could commit a weekend but it was agreed to progress the idea further dependent on support.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked those members who had taken the trouble to attend and closed the meeting at 2205.



The outgoing Secretary Chris Robertson receiving a special commendation at the AGM for services rendered

**AUDITED ACCOUNTS**

COMET CLASS ASSOCIATION

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

FOR THE PERIOD FROM 26TH AUGUST 1987 TO 30TH JUNE 1988

	10 November 1986 to 25 August 1987	£	£
<u>RECEIPTS</u>			
Membership subscriptions	378	188	
A.M.S. Marine			
Initial payment	-	110	
New boat subscriptions	270	175	
National Championships 1987 Entry fees	90	52	
Open meeting entry fees	-	92	
	<u>£ 738</u>	<u>£ 617</u>	
	----	----	
<u>PAYMENTS</u>			
R Y A affiliation fee	21	28	
Stationery, postage and telephone expenses	39	19	
Bank charges	25	6	
Sailboat '88 Exhibition expenses	139	58	
National Championship 1987			
Gunfleet S C	-	100	
Prizes	.15	80	
National Championship 1988			
Trophies and prizes	170	-	
Open Meeting expenses	-	20	
J C B Open Meeting			
Donation to N S P C C	25	-	
	<u>£ 434</u>	<u>£ 311</u>	
	----	----	
SURPLUS FOR PERIOD	304	306	
BALANCE AT BANK at beginning of period	306	-	
BALANCE AT BANK at end of period	<u>£ 610</u>	<u>£ 306</u>	
	----	----	

Audited and certified to be in accordance with the books of the association.

*A. Cowser*

A. Cowser  
Hon. Treasurer

N. Beaton FCA  
Hon. Auditor

15th July 1988

**THOUGHTS FROM THE AGM**

This year's Annual General Meeting of the Class Association, held at Sovereign S.C. during the Nationals, was a fairly lively gathering. Beneath the sometimes quite forceful views expressed from both the floor and the Committee table there was a definite feeling of questioning as to the direction in which the class is, or should be, going. These notes are an attempt to pull together the various strands of thinking which I detected, and to re-float some of the ideas which were winging round the room. I stress that this is all based on personal recollection and if I have misrepresented anyone's ideas, please put it down to subjective interpretation slanted towards the aim of this piece.

The basic situation, as I see it, is that the Comets are in a state of transition from a very small, chummy class into something larger which is not quite sure whether it wants simply to be a bigger version of its earlier form, or to become like, and adopt the procedures of, larger classes. I think that at the bottom of this lies our approach to open meetings. Our travelling fleet represents a very healthy proportion of the total sail numbers, particularly when we take into account the number of Comets which have been bought by the non-racing element. We have and will continue to have a policy, which perhaps I should state here as the Committee line, that open meetings and the Nationals are all-comers events and that we hope to see a mixed ability fleet on the water. Any Comet sailor is welcome, and the opens provide the environment in which individuals can pit themselves against opposition of all standards, develop their skills, and progress up the table as they improve. If you want to sail Comet against Comet in a large fleet you have to go on the open circuit. The feeling in the air at Sovereign was, perhaps prematurely, that all this might change as the standard at the top of the fleet improves and as more high class operators in other classes are attracted to the Comet. My own view is that the principal factor in changing the make-up of the travelling fleet will be the growth of club fleets, and that we are likely to see, after the next 3 years or so, individuals other than those at the top end of the ability range doing more club racing and less travelling. May I stress, however, that it hasn't happened yet and the policy remains come one, come all; to those who haven't tried an open meeting, please come along.

The other issue which raised a great deal of discussion at the AGM was training. Should we, as a class, be doing more formal training to develop performance standards. Peter Francis, of Calshot Activity Centre, was quite vocal on this point, and is prepared to run a Comet-oriented training weekend at a cost of about £50 per head. If any member is interested please contact me (phone number below). As a taster for the training idea, the Kingsmead Open on Sunday 30th October will be preceded on Saturday 29th by a fairly informal training day. Saturday evening will see our end of season social so why not make a weekend of it? Again, bids to me or to Keith Lamin.

A few ideas, a few thoughts. A final one: Pehelion is the newsletter for everyone in the Association - racing or pottering, club member or not. Any views anyone has - even one-liners - send them in. The class needs your ideas to keep it going and growing.

Mike Crawshaw  
(0789 720635)

## COMET IMPRESSIONS

Twenty weeks into the sailing season without a ducking. Three duckings in two separate sails in a Comet ruined that record so why have I just ordered a Comet?

Two years ago my initial impressions were of a good layout and equipment, easy maintenance and transport, at an attractive price. This year, for the first time, I have sailed one on a number of occasions, whilst assisting with beginners courses at Thames Young Mariners, but always in light to medium winds.

On flat water; on a small lake surrounded by trees I found it a delight to sail being comfortable and extremely manoevrable. I could lie down in the cockpit and generally sail with ease - real luxury sailing. Follow my leader exercises including 720 degree turns round buoys, stopping and sailing backwards were all child's play. The acceleration and pointing ability proved useful when 'encouraging' beginners sailing their first races.

However, in a blow I was required on Rescue or teaching in Wayfarers. In all I managed ten minutes sail in such conditions. The boat was clearly sensitive to correct balance and trim and in the gusty conditions prevailing I never felt in proper control.

Not withstanding that he would have to drill out the rivets that joined the mast permanently, Mike, the warden at TYM, kindly agreed to loan me a teaching Comet for an Open Meeting at my club, Walton-on-Thames where clear winds across a half-mile wide reservoir could be expected. With no special preparation I picked a boat off the water 'as seen'. Teaching modifications included no self-bailer, no burgee and a simpler kicking-strap. The car-top exercise proved remarkably easy as did reassembly, launch and the fitting of a standard kicking-strap.

The first race involved a downwind sail to the start line in a force 3-4. Single sail boats downwind are potentially unstable and I was pleased to find that a reasonable balance could be obtained. A clean start was spoilt by a bad tack - that tiller extension is long! With no self-bailer, sailing and manual bailing proved interesting and not very competitive. The toe straps came adrift on the second beat but spilling wind resulted in a less energetic sail. The Comet's manoevrability proved my undoing at mark 7 - twice I had to reround after trying too hard for the inside. Overall an interesting sail!

The toe straps fixed and the wind increased to force 4, the second race was entered with less apprehension. Planing was particularly attractive and seemed to require less leaning out than was expected. Upwind I seemed to be for ever untangling the main sheet, as it floated in the cockpit getting caught up with the bailer string. Thank goodness self bailers are standard or do Comet sailors never get water in the cockpit!

Number 7 again proved unlucky. A bad gybe ended in a ducking. Up with ease it proved equally easy to pull over again. It did however come up remarkably dry - is that the way to drain the cockpit?

Starting the third race late I worked my way up the fleet as boats capsized in a force 4-5, only to have the shock-cord securing the dagger-board become detached - just as I was turning onto a planing reach! Coinciding with a force 6 rain-storm the boat displayed its orange bottom to the sky minus daggerboard. The rescue boats had a queue of customers! Being convinced the daggerboard was lost I sat the storm out on top of the hull. Bags of buoyancy here and quite comfortable too! Relief too - the daggerboard does float! (The following day a number of improvements were



WINNERS AT CHIPSTEAD OPEN



11/1





## NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS REPORT

NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS  
23RD/24TH JULY AT SOVEREIGN S.C., EASTBOURNE

A record entry of 31 Comets braved a disappointing weather forecast and travelled to the South Coast for the class National Championships at Sovereign S.C.

The fleet launched for the first race through a swell breaking on the beach into a southwesterly force 3 to 4. Craig Moffett quickly established a clear lead on the first beat followed by Alastair Banks and Neil Beaton. With the wind easing and the sea flattening rapidly, Simon Allison and Gary Kibble gained places to finish a shortened course behind Moffett and followed by Beaton and Banks.

The second race was firstly delayed through a rain storm and then by a wind shift requiring the windward mark to be moved. Finally the start coincided with another rain storm and, with the wind dying and the incoming tide strengthening, the fleet began a long slow beat to the first mark. Kibble and Moffett, on the shore, found a wind shift which tempted them to tack out into the adverse stream too soon. The early leader, Kibble, stayed out in the stream failing to lay the mark whilst Moffett and Beaton came back to the shore, overstood the mark and eventually squeezed round from the lay line. Kibble rounded next followed by defending champion, Jeff Penfold, of the home club and these positions remained to the end of the triangle where the race was mercifully shortened.

With clearing skies, pleasant evening sun and a light force 2 southwesterly, the third race was started back to back although with an inevitable postponement while the wind went southerly.

At the end of the triangle, Moffett was leading Kibble and Allison with David Bourne and Gary Bullock in the frame for the first time. At the next windward mark, Allison was inside Moffett and the two ran down the sausage side by side followed closely by Kibble and Bourne having their own duel. Moffett got the overlap and rounded first to cover Allison as they tacked onto starboard with the following pair splitting tacks. The lighter Allison pointed high whilst Moffett footed off and, at the finish, Allison crossed and covered Moffett to take a well deserved win.

The Race Officer's perseverance in completing 3 races was fully justified when Sunday dawned bright and windy, building to force 6 with a nasty sea, which caused cancellation of the remaining races and, with all 3 completed races to count, the final results were:-

- |          |                |                       |
|----------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1st      | Craig Moffett  | Walton-on-Thames S.C. |
| 2nd      | Gary Kibble    | Crawley Mariners S.C. |
| 3rd      | Simon Allison  | Kingsmead S.C.        |
| 4th      | Neil Beaton    | Kingsmead S.C.        |
| 5th      | David Bourne   | Chipstead S.C.        |
| 6th      | Gary Bullock   | Kingsmead S.C.        |
| 1st Lady | Hayley Penfold | Sovereign S.C.        |
| Over 45  | John Windebank | Blue Circle S.C.      |

made to the toe-strap and daggerboard elastics which should reduce such problems in the future.)

That evening I found that the car and boat on roofrack would just fit my lockup garage with 2 inches to spare. With no standing space for a boat at my mid-terrace house this just had to be the final bonus.

Teaching boats receive more ill treatment in a week than most boats receive in two years. The Comet has been well received at TYM by both staff and students alike and more have been ordered. I had thoroughly enjoyed my sail and any problems with the boat were essentially of a minor nature, easily corrected. The helm might be a different story!

The Comet gives the opportunity for comfortable sailing (reefed if necessary) or exciting racing at new locations with the minimum of transportation or launching hassle. A centre main is more attractive for racing but the rear transom gives more flexibility as to use.

My remaining doubt will only be resolved with time. At Walton the Solo fleet regularly turns out a higher number of starters than attended the Comet Open meeting. It is therefore unlikely that my 16 year old Solo will be retiring yet and at least I can't capsizes the Solo whilst furling the sail round the mast!

Attractively priced the Comet fights to carve its own niche against well established competitors. Its success depends both on the builders and on those fortunate to own one. I hope the Class gets the recognition due.

Brian Hunt



Prizewinners at the National Championships, Sovereign S.C., Eastbourne

## COMETS IN CHICHESTER HARBOUR

This year my family decided to take part in the annual Chichester Yacht Club family and junior week. We had previously attended open meetings at the club and were always very impressed by their friendly attitude, efficient organisation and superb facilities.

The participants can either opt for the racing series - eight races over four days - five or more of the same class have class starts - five races to count or opt for the development series - four races - training sessions - harbour cruises in company, all plus a variety of evening social activities. My son borrowed a 420 for the fast handicap, my daughter sailed her Optimist with the Mirror fleet and I sailed my Comet in the slow handicap. Fellow Comet sailors Debbie Egan from Hillingdon S.C. (141) took part in the development series and the Rye family from Bristol (98) enjoyed cruising in the harbour. We were disappointed that the resident C.Y.C. Comet sailors (69) were not in evidence.

Friday was a fun day for all which we were unable to attend because we had to travel to Scotland for the Optimist National championships.

So impressed again were we with the organisation that I am suggesting that we put this event into our programme for 1989 - dates are 31st July to 4th August. This will give the opportunity for Comet families to meet in a very friendly, social environment - particularly those who are not members of sailing clubs. Accommodation is plentiful - camping/caravan sites and guest houses are nearby.



Steve Kibble (144)

## A BREATH OF SEA AIR

In the week before the Comet Nationals I watched the weatherman with avid interest, willing him to give me a sunny force 3 for the weekend event because, I was going sailing. I poured over the weather maps in the daily papers, trying to make sense of the Highs and Lows.

"I'm not going out if it's blowing a gale" I kept repeating.

Friday came and went. All packed up and ready to go, I settled myself in front of the television that night, to watch the weatherman for the last time before we left.

"A particular warning for all about to set out to sea in small boats", he began.

"I'm not going out in a gale", I cried.

The numbers 25 flashed upon the screen alongside little arrows directed at Eastbourne, from the south-west.

"I'm not going out in a Force 6", I whined.

"If that forecast is right", I was told, "No-one will be going out".

We didn't rush off at the crack of dawn, as we fully expected to drive into a hurricane along the south coast; and we didn't allow for a large population of slow moving vehicles on narrow roads either, so we arrived a little late. Half the boats were heading out to sea as we drove up, so I missed the first race. Breathing a sigh of relief I went off in search of coffee.

A little later, viewing proceedings from the comfort of the shore, through my binoculars, I noticed a friend of mine clinging to her upturned dinghy as she awaited the services of the rescue boat. Anticipating that she would eventually require the services of a beach party as well, I went off to change. So I was suitably dressed in good time for the second race and ready on the beach, to be launched into the swell, well before the start. I wasn't willing though; ominous black clouds were bearing down on us from inland. What are they bringing, I wanted to know.

"Rain!" answered some wit.

I arrived in the vicinity of the start without mishap, turned slightly into wind and pushed my sail out as I hove-to: none of this racing up and down the line for me' or trying to research the best way up the beat. It was my intention to sit tight and await the signals.

It started to rain. I was glad I hadn't bothered to wash my hair that morning. The rain trickled down my neck and, finding vulnerable points in the seal of my dry suit, then trickled down even further. I turned my head and blinking away the rain drops, looked longingly towards the shore - but it wasn't there! The rain was so heavy the visibility was seriously reduced and I could no longer see the shore. When it had cleared, I promised myself, I was going back in!

My personal beach party appeared out of the gloom in a motor boat and enquired as to my well-being. I didn't mince words. I told him that I didn't like it and that I was going in as soon as I could see the shore. When the visibility had improved, however, and I could see the shore, I realised that I had no-one there to help me, as Barrie was out at sea, so I opted to take my chance and stayed with the others.

The race started, and the wind dropped. Barrie zoomed up again to tell me that I was going backwards, but as I was going backwards no faster than anyone else I didn't let this bother me. All I wanted to do was get round so that, at least, I had sailed one race. I concentrated on sailing free and where the tide was weakest; and get round I did.

In fact, I went out for the third race with some enthusiasm. I even tried harder to improve my position: especially, on the last beat when the wind picked up a bit. I watched my tell-tales carefully and tried to keep the boat level, only to find I was being overtaken both to windward and to leeward. So much for trying!

On the way in, wave-planing on a broad reach, I thought to myself, "I'm enjoying this".

A little competitive spirit began to stir inside me as I looked forward to the next day's racing.

Day dawned and I saw white horses on the sea. Again I said: "I'm not going out in that".

I walked along the front just to confirm my decision and by the time I reached the clubhouse I was adamant - I was definitely not going out. The weather I had been worried about on Friday had arrived.

In fact, the coastguard warned of worsening conditions and sailing was abandoned for the day. We arrived home earlier than expected and I went straight to Keith's article on setting the sail; and I flicked through books on boat tuning and using the waves in preparation for the next sea sailing event at Gunfleet.

In the days before that event though, I abandoned the T.V. weatherman in favour of the Marine Call Service. Torrential rain and gale force winds preceded the weekend, but a message got through from Keith in Clacton, on the Saturday, to say that the weather was perfect and boats were out sailing. Marine Call forecast a Force 3-4, increasing to 4-5, but decreasing in the south to even less than 3. I thought Clacton must be south, relatively speaking, and Saturday being calm and sunny, my depression lifted. The promise of a good day got me out of bed really early the next morning, and by 9 a.m. I was there, my boat ready to launch, and in plenty of time for breakfast on the prom outside the sailing club.

It seemed as though nothing could dampen my enthusiasm as I set off for the start. The two hour journey there and the two hour journey back, yet to come, couldn't have been further from my mind. Contentedly I jogged along after the others, zig-zagging my way to the windward mark. Ever conscious of the usually nasty effect tides have on boats trying to round a mark, I was continuously revising what I knew about the strength of the tide at various times within its rise and fall. I knew that it was approaching low water and the tide, though not strong, was still going out as we headed for the first mark. What I didn't allow for was that, although it was going out, it wasn't flowing downhill towards the Channel but uphill, towards the North Sea! The tide wasn't taking me away from the mark but pushing me onto it. Eventually around it, I determined to catch up with the others. I let my sail out and bore away a little. My boat lurched to leeward, the gunwale dragged in the water, acting like a rudder and boat screwed up into wind. A wave hit me from behind as I frantically hauled in an armful of mainsheet and over we went, boat and I - to windward.

All competitive instincts vanished in that moment as the port side deck raised itself above my head and I came face to face with the toe-strap. As I clutched at a tangle of control lines I allowed myself the satisfaction of a most unladylike exclamation - though, according to what the papers say, a not inappropriate observation on the state of our coastal waters. Another page of the sailing manual sprang to mind as I now revised my capsizing drill.

"Maintain contact with the boat at all times" I reminded myself, "and let's keep this thing simple!"

By now, resting against the boom and with the boat still on its side, I

placed my right foot on the mast and then lifted my left cautiously onto the dagger board. The boat turned turtle as I transferred my weight onto my left foot. I wrapped both arms around the board and drew my right leg up alongside. With my right foot I felt for the far side gunwale and as I pressed my weight against the board the boat came up onto its side again. Everything had to be done very slowly to allow me plenty of time to adjust my balance to the changing situation. I lifted my right leg back onto the board and changed my grip to the gunwale that was now out of the water. Standing up, I looked down at the sail, hovering just below sea level. The wind blew into my face and I knew just what else would be blowing into my face if I raised that sail too fast. Slowly, slowly, taking my time I freed the sail from the water and the bow turned a little further into the wind. If I thought things were a little too fast for comfort, I dropped the sail back into the water until I felt happy with the situation. At last it was time to make my final move and, lifting my right leg over the side, I straddled the boat. As the sail lifted free of the water the boat came upright again, spinning head to wind as I flopped inside.

I didn't win, but I did finish the race. Then, I indulged myself with a long lunch break while the rest went out again. In the last race I kept a tight rein on my mainsheet while running, but having by then been in the water twice I lived dangerously and attempted the gybes every time. None could be described as controlled, but by the end of the day they were beginning to show signs of improvement.

By 7 p.m. I was packed up and ready for the two hour drive back.

If you have never tried sea-sailing, or any other open event, you should. I can recommend it because ..... it's so nice to come home!

Margaret Hylton



It usually takes just ONE person to handle this boat

## BUILDERS REPORT

Way down here in Devon we have been building Comets at 3 a week since mid May apart from our well deserved annual holiday which began with the Nationals at Eastbourne. I expect the event is reported elsewhere but I must say I was delighted to see so many Comets on the sea.

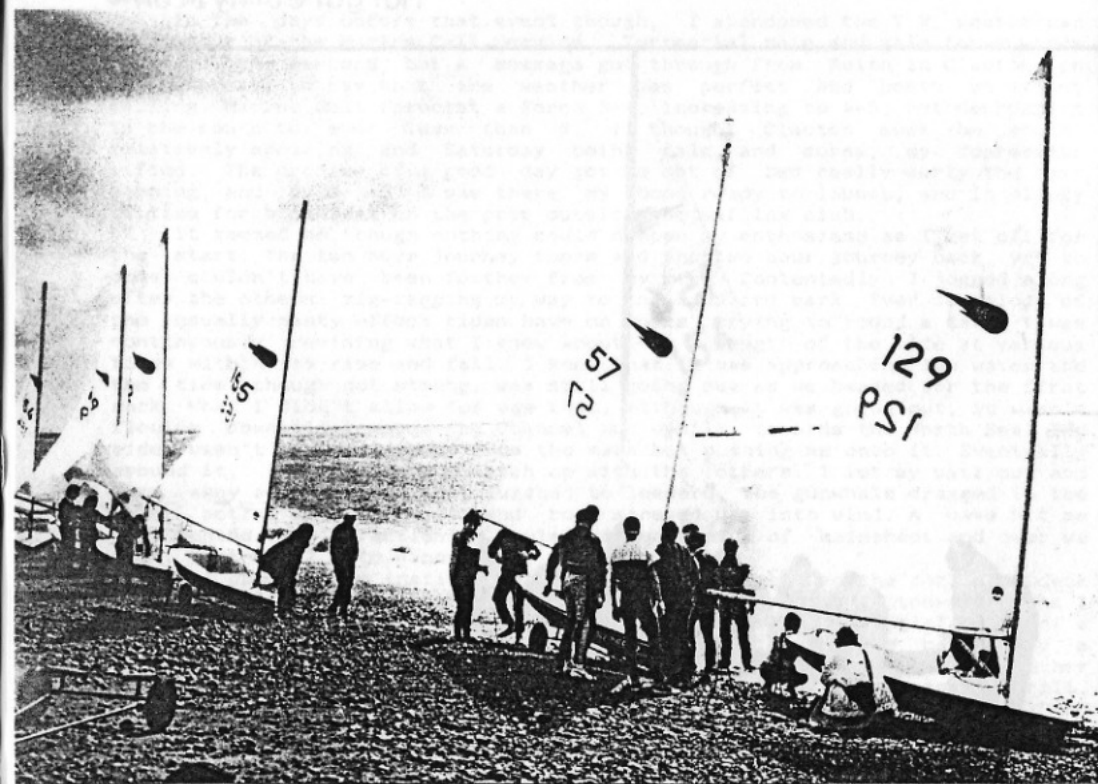
I've just returned from Clacton-on-Sea where, although the turnout was not as good as some of the other meetings, all those that went really enjoyed themselves. I know I did and not just because I won a prize! Some of the opposition were rather surprised to see me taking "action photos" whilst racing!

Talking of photos, I'm planning some new leaflets soon and would be grateful if anybody can lend me any that might be suitable.

As you are reading this, the Comet is being shown at the Southampton Boat Show. Dinghy Leisure are helping out with Ian sailing the demonstrator from the pontoons. At the moment the order book is quite healthy, about 80 Comets built so far this year, and so around 110 by the years end.

See you at Bewl Valley and Kingsmead.

Andrew Simmonds  
AMS Marine



Lining up for the Nationals at Eastbourne (Photo:D.Hudson)

## DENHAM S.C. OPEN MEETING REPORT

Denham S.C.'s second Comet Open Meeting, on 19th June, almost started with a bang as Class Association Chairman, Keith Lamdin, arrived with smoke pouring from the front of his car!

On the water, 17 competitors from 8 sailing clubs faced brilliant sunshine and light, but generally steady winds.

Henry Jagers opened a lead from the start of Race One, followed by Damon Perrin and Vic Laming, and these positions were maintained to the finish.

A wind shift at the start of Race Two led to several boats being shut out at the end of the line, including Jagers. Perrin and James Withall avoided a calm patch and built up a substantial lead on the rest of the fleet. Perrin led across the finish line with Jagers recovering well to finish third, followed by Sue Laming in fourth place.

With the top places wide open, Race Three was a closely contested event. Perrin port tacked the fleet with Jagers becalmed at the other end of the line. After considerable place changing, Perrin again led down the final run, but capsized, allowing Jagers through. Jagers led up the beat, but Perrin found the inside of a shift to pass him and maintained close cover to win the race and the meeting. Peter Adlington pipped Ralph Rowe for third and Withall came fourth to secure third place overall.

Results: 1st	Damon Perrin	Aylesbury S.C.
2nd	Henry Jagers	Kingsmead S.C.
3rd	James Withall	Aylesbury S.C.
4th	Peter Adlington	Kennet Valley S.C.
5th	Vic Laming	Kingsmead S.C.
6th	Chris Robinson	Aylesbury S.C.

Colin Wilcox  
Denham S.C.

## SAILING YOUR COMET - Part 1

Having considered the principles of sail theory and control settings this article is the first of a short series aimed at improving the sailing of your Comet in the various conditions we encounter.

The articles will cover:-

- sailing to windward
- sailing downwind
- controlling the boat
- sea sailing, tides and currents, wind shifts

Before going into the details of sailing in any specific manner there are some definitions not previously covered in my articles and some general points about setting your Comet up for sailing which need to be covered.

### DEFINITIONS:

a) Weather and Lee helm: The statement of whether a boat is carrying weather or lee helm is a question of balance between the position of the centre of effort (CE) of the sail and the centre of lateral resistance (CLR) of the hull and its foils. Simply put, if the centre of effort of the sail is behind the centre of resistance of the hull, largely controlled by the centreboard, then the boat will have a tendency to be twisted and turned towards the wind. This will require the helm to be held to weather of the boats centre line in order to bear the boat back off the wind and maintain a straight line course and hence the term weather helm, (fig 1).

Conversely, with the centre of effort in front of the centre of lateral resistance, the boat will have a tendency to slew and bear away from the wind and require lee helm in order to maintain a given course, (fig 2).

In the extreme, either case is damaging primarily because of the extra drag resistance created by the rudder being held permanently at an angle to the course being sailed and acting effectively as a brake on the boat's progress. An ideally balanced boat has the centres of effort and resistance roughly in line vertically and a rather neutral helm with, ideally, a very slight amount of weather helm which will tend to aid the helmsman in sailing as close as possible to the wind when beating.

The Comet, with its single sail set well forward in the boat, appears to be naturally well balanced with a generally neutral helm and being easy to control. However, dependent on the sail control settings, some weather helm can be experienced when sailing to windward and, in stronger winds, may well become excessive leading ultimately to broaching and capsizing.

b) Apparent Wind: In looking at sail theory and the setting of the sail controls I considered the wind as if it was coming from one fixed direction, the true wind, which is, in fact, only true whilst the boat and rig is stationary. Once the boat is moving, it creates a wind equal in speed and of opposite direction to its own movement and course. This induced wind (I) then interacts with the true wind (T) to create an apparent wind (A) which will lie between the true and induced winds in proportion to their strength, (fig 3).

The positioning of the sail relative to the centre line of the boat in motion is actually dependent on the apparent wind as being the wind shown by a burgee and felt by the sail. The direction of the apparent wind is most affected by changes of boat speed on a reach, particularly in planing conditions, but there is still some effect on the beat and run largely in

light winds when the boat speed is relatively a larger proportion of the true wind speed, (fig 4).

c) Sail Twist: The angle of attack of the sail is not constant through its height to the peak but widens slightly as the sail twists towards the peak, (fig 5). This is quite natural and advantageous to a limited degree as the angle of the apparent wind also widens slightly towards the mast head due to the slightly increased velocity of the true wind away from the frictional effects at water level, (fig 6).

However, the effect of sail twist needs to be controlled, particularly in stronger winds, and one use of the kicking strap, in addition to controlling mast bend and sail depth, is to reduce sail twist by holding the boom end down and tightening the leech of the sail.

There is a relatively greater wind gradient between water level and mast head in lighter winds and, in these conditions, reduced kicking strap tension will naturally allow an acceptably greater amount of sail twist.

SETTING UP THE BOAT: The Owners Handbook supplied with the Comet by AMS Marine gives the basic guidance necessary to initially start sailing and the following tips are intended to expand on certain areas which are required to obtain improved performance from the boat.

a) Wind Indicators:- It is essential that you are well aware at all times of the wind direction reaching the boat and the air flow around the sail. I use three forms of wind indication to help in sailing the boat.

Firstly, I have a soft burgee fitted to the mast head, in my case through a hole drilled in the top mast plug although a better arrangement is with tape around the mast top and inside the sail sleeve. This burgee shows the apparent wind at the mast head and, being soft, gives an indication of wind strength which is particularly useful in light winds.

Secondly, I have a wind vane indicator fitted at deck level and a more recent version fits on a collar around the mast at gooseneck level. Both these indicators are directly in the helmsman's line of sight when sailing and show the apparent wind at water level. My vane indicator has secondary arms which I arrange at an angle from the centre line of the boat which is approximately the angle at which I normally sail the Comet to windward. This gives me a simple, if crude, guide for beating where the vane should roughly coincide with the secondary arm. If the vane points inside the arm then I may be pointing too close and if the vane points outside the arm then I may be too far off the wind.

Finally, I have tell-tale wind flow indicators attached to the sail itself which will show the direction in which the wind is affected by and flows across the shape of the sail. The number of tell-tales is a matter of preference but I have two fitted at approximately one-third and two-thirds height and about 18 inches to 2 feet back from the luff. These are the main guides as to the air flow as it starts around the aerofoil and it may be of use to have two at similar heights attached to the leech as a check for air flow leaving the sail. The use of the tell-tales will be covered in the sailing articles but basically the key is the leeward tale which shows the critical attachment of air around the back of the sail. If the sail is sheeted too close to the centre line for a specific direction of apparent wind then the air flow will not adhere to the sail but will separate and cause the tell-tale to collapse rather than stream with the air.

b) Control Lines:- From the articles on sail theory and the proper use

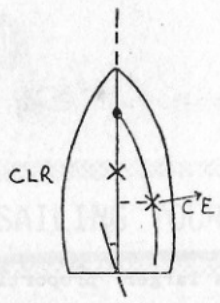


Fig 1 WEATHER HELM

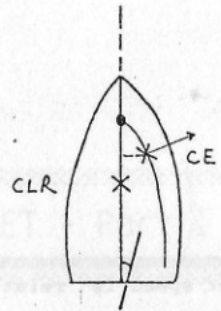


Fig 2 LEE HELM

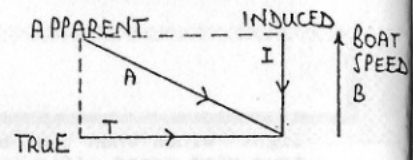


Fig 3 APPARANT WIND

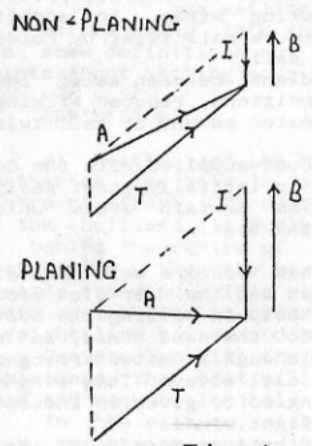


Fig 4

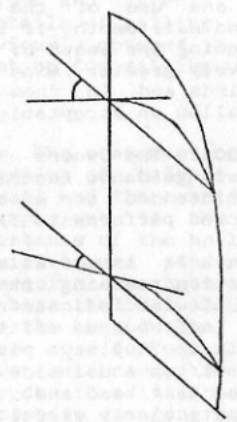


Fig 5 SAIL TWIST

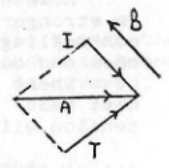


Fig 6 WIND GRADIENT

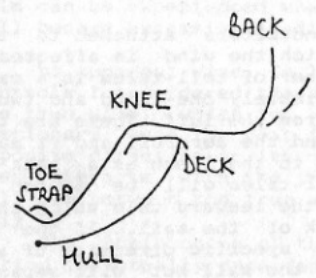


Fig 7

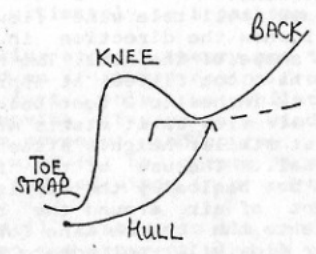


Fig 8

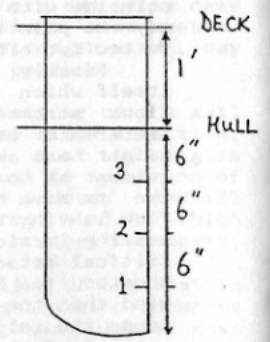


Fig 9

of the control lines it should now be fairly clear as to the principles of setting a given sail shape for specific wind conditions. However, once you have established the preferred settings for your own requirements, there is always the problem of repeatability in the settings. Unless you are certain in your ability to judge the required settings before and during a race it is well worth calibrating your boat for the settings which you find through trial and error to be best suited for yourself and the boat.

Calibration can be recorded in the form of numbered strips stuck on the boom and mast at the outhaul and cunningham control points or, more simply, with marker lines on the spars to coincide with settings for the three basic conditions.

In addition to such calibration, it is extremely useful to be easily able to adjust the settings of cunningham, kicker and outhaul at any point during a race. The control line purchases as supplied new from AMS Marine are certainly adequate for all normal sailing purposes but may not be fully adjustable in more extreme conditions whilst racing where easy and instant response is required.

I find the kicker purchase, with the swivelling block feed at deck level is perfectly adequate but I prefer to add a 2:1 purchase on the cunningham control and to double the outhaul purchase to 4:1 advantage.

The cunningham is most simply achieved by fixing a small block to the down haul cringle at the tack of the sail and passing the control through this block back to deck level.

The outhaul is achieved by either fixing a double block to the clew cringle and a single block on either side of the boom end fittings or by a cascade system of another single block positioned mid-boom with the outhaul line in two parts.

c) Toe Straps:- One very nice feature of the Comet as supplied is the provision of a simple adjustment facility to the length of the toe strap. To be able to sail the boat properly, particularly in any wind, it is essential to have the length of the toe strap properly set to the most comfortable and effective position.

I set my toe strap such that, with the strap over my feet at the instep, the back of my knees fit comfortably to the rounded inner edge of the side deck. This allows my lower thigh to sit out on the side deck with my backside firmly wedged outside the boat and avoids any tendency to slide back into the boat through the pull of the mainsheet. In this position, I can sit out for lengthy periods without undue stress on the back which remains fairly upright and is only leant out further and more horizontal to the water to power the boat through stronger gusts, (fig 7). Having set the strap to the right position for your length of leg then do not forget to set the shockcord to hold the toe strap tight and clear of the cockpit floor.

It is a mistake to set the strap such that you are sitting with your backside on the side deck and attempting to hold the boat upright solely by leaning back as this puts undue strain on the back and stomach muscles, (fig 8).

d) Centreboard, and Rudder:- The two foils are essential to the proper performance of the boat and must be maintained in perfect condition in order to avoid any unnecessary water disturbance and resulting drag.

The rudder must lock down very positively under the shockcord and the wing nut should be tightened to avoid any possibility of vibration at speed.

The centre board must be positively held in any required position by tightening the retaining shock cord and you may find it helpful to mark the board for 1/4, 1/2 and 3/4 positions, (fig 9).

## THE J C B VIEW



A dozen members of the National Comet Association were welcomed to the JCB Sailing Club over the weekend of 4 and 5 June where they successfully staged a round of the Comet series and open meetings races. They enjoyed an evening meal and entertainment in the Lakeside Club on Saturday and a Barbecue on Sunday where donations were also taken for the JCB NSPCC Workforce Appeal to the total of £160.

Five Comet class races were held, two on Saturday and three on Sunday, the best three counting towards



Saturday Comet class racing started gloomy but the weather brightened on the Sunday. The newer boats tended to be faster.

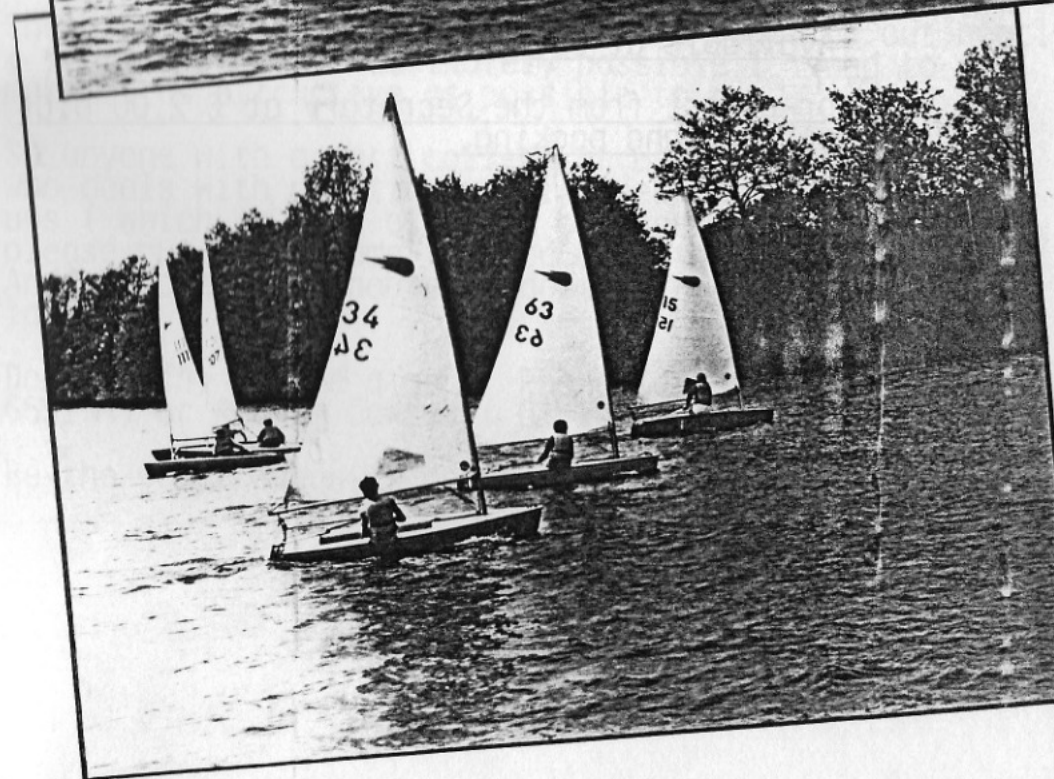
## JCB SAILING CLUB

the result. Conditions were very variable on Saturday as it started gloomy and damp with light winds. These increased to very gusty with a bright sunny spell for the second race. On Sunday there were almost windless periods and the first race was reduced to one lap, though conditions gradually improved.

JCB members did well with Adrian Gosling, the JCB Club commodore, coming second overall with a first and four seconds. Hugh Mack (Associate Member) was fifth overall with results of 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th and 7th. Both were sailing demonstration boats supplied by Dinghy Leisure of Great Missenden, Bucks, whose loan boats made a sig-

nificant contribution to the success of the event. Will Turner (JCB Research) obtained 9th overall, a good result considering his commitment as organiser of the event. He also sails a somewhat elderly boat with sails to match. It was clear that the newer boat the faster they tended to be.

All in all the weekend was enjoyed by everyone involved and thanks must go to all who contributed; the race officers, the rescue boat operators and all the wives who did all the catering. It is hoped that this could be the first of many such ventures for the sailing club. But we could always do with a few more members to help next time.



Kennet Valley Open (Photos by Ralph A Rowe. Comet 30)



## COMET OWNERS MANUAL

### COMET OWNERS HANDBOOK

The new Handbook is supplied in an attractive and convenient A5 hardback format.

Sections in the Handbook cover the class constitution, measurement rules, technical articles, useful names and addresses, open meeting locations, etc., all for the very good value of £ 2.00.

Available at open meetings

or direct from the Secretary at £ 2.00 plus postage and packing.

## A Graphics Layout person required

A graphics or layout artist is required to help with the preparation of the Comet Newsletter. It takes a day and a bit over a weekend, only 4 times a year, and its great fun!

Script is supplied from Word Processor ( from Editor ) and photographs and other visual material supplied to the lucky person.

The creative challenge is to lay the magazine out neatly ( improvements are definately possible ! ) and to make it as attractive as possible to read.

So anyone with an art college or design background, or who deals with printing, or is used to cut and paste ups ( which is many of us in our work ) could they please put their name forward asap, as unfortunately Andrew Cowser is unable to do this for much longer.


Don't be shy - have a go. Phone Keith Landin (0582 655194) or Andrew Cowser ( 01 221 3030 ).

Be the Comet Graphics person !



Start of second race at Chipstead Open

( Photo : David Hudson )

Memo 

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Windhawk

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self bailer

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Praddel

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tiller extension

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new sail      new boat?

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boat cover      launching trolley

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**Dinghy Leisure!**

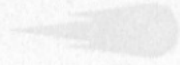
For a by return service from our full range of spares and accessories contact:

Margaret Hylton  
The Comet Dealer

Sales, Demonstrations  
Spares and Accessories

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Comet



Lesson

Simply



Memo

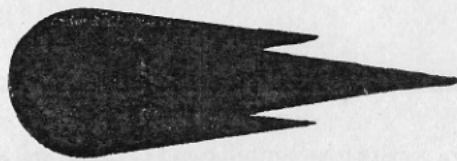
166  
104

Windhawk

self ballast

Prudal

2000 engine



# Comet Class Association

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association