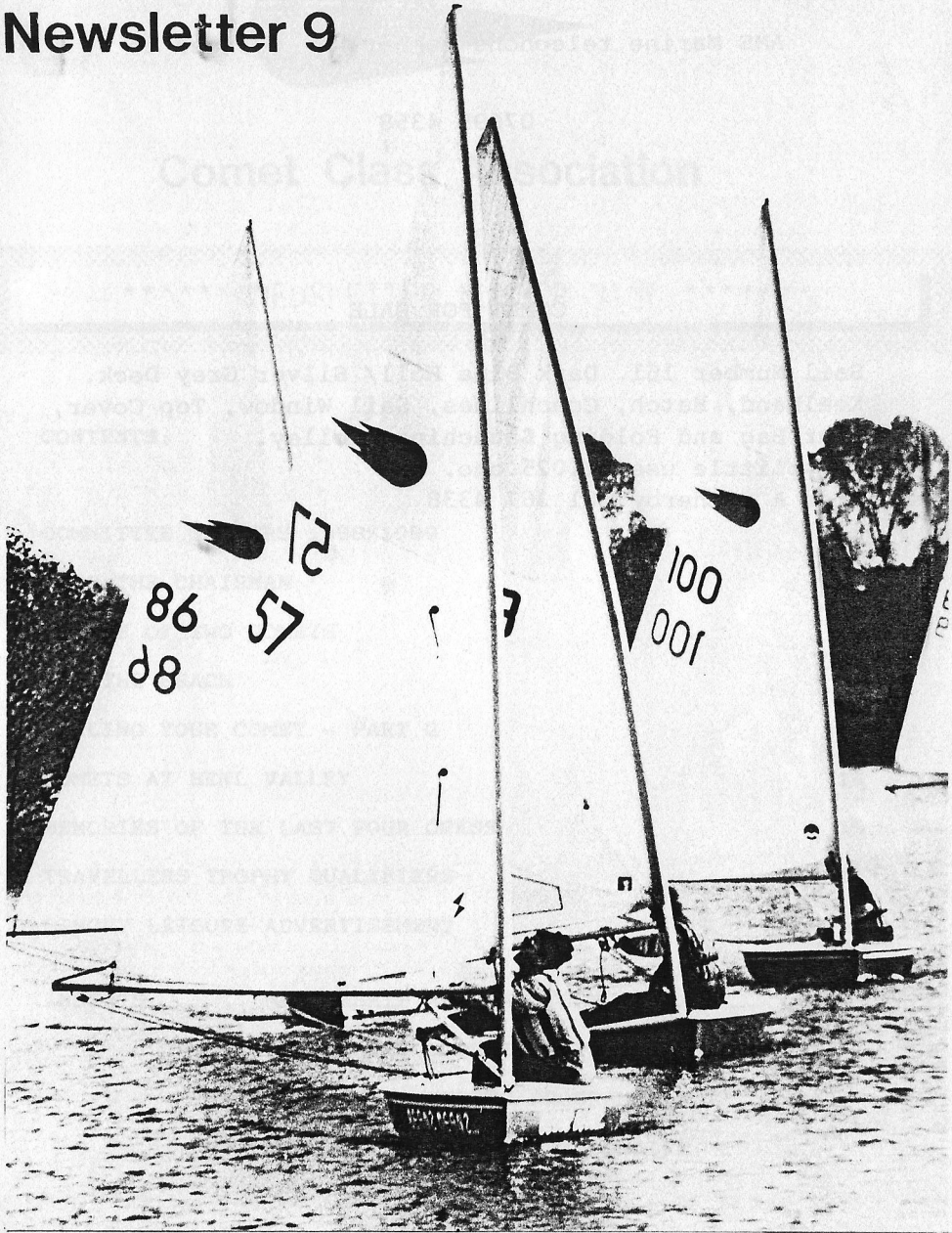


FILE

# PERIHELION

## Newsletter 9



**Comet Class Association**

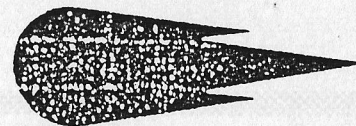
\*IMPORTANT\*

AMS Marine telephone number has changed to

07695 4358

#### COMET FOR SALE

Sail Number 161. Dark Blue Hull/ Silver Grey Deck.  
Keelband, Hatch, Coachlines, Sail Window, Top Cover,  
Spar Bag and Folding Launching Trolley.  
Very Little use. £1025 ono.  
Miss A Fotherby 01 367 4338



## Comet Class Association

\*\*\*\*\* NEWSLETTER NUMBER NINE \*\*\*\*\*

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## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

KEITH LAMDIN	CHAIRMAN NEWSLETTER EDITOR	13 Beacon Avenue, Dunstable, Beds. LU6 2AD. (0582 665194)
STEVE KIBBLE	SECRETARY	"IVYBANK", Broad Street, Cuckfield, West Sussex. R17 5DY. (0444 454730)
NEIL BEATON	TREASURER	24 Priors Road, Windsor, Berks. SL4 4PD. (0753 863339)
JACKIE HUDSON		33 Warland Road Plumstead, London. SE18 2EX. (01 854 2861)
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 8QR. (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

With dry bright autumnal weather and light to medium winds the Kingsmead weekend at the end of October proved to be an excellent way to finish the Comet Class season for 1988.

There were 16 boats on the Saturday for a training session where I was helped by Henry Jagers and John Windebank and, as some had come from a distance to attend, I hope and believe it was of use to them. This was followed by a social evening with supper kindly provided by the Kingsmead ladies and replays of various AMS promotional videos.

The Sunday racing saw a turnout of 41 boats, the largest ever gathering of Comets as a fleet, with 15 home entries and 26 visitors with particular thanks to those who made the effort to attend from the Midlands. With my old friend, Denis Cook, doyen of the Graduate Class as Race Officer, it was bound to be a good day's racing and, although the top local boats dominated the results, I am sure everyone thoroughly enjoyed the event.

Following the presentation of Kingsmead prizes by Club Commodore, Henry Jagers, and including one to himself (thanks, Neil!), I was pleased to be able to announce the prizewinners of the first Comet Class Travellers Series and to thank Andrew Simmons for his donation of a lovely wooden half-hull model of a Comet as our Travellers Trophy. The only thing missing is a suitable name for the Trophy - any ideas?

The full results are shown elsewhere in this issue but I would like to commend Richard and Andrew Crawshaw's efforts in supporting the circuit. Also Chris Robinson and James Withall who are the most improved helms on the circuit this season whilst no one will be surprised to see that Craig Moffett was the overall winner.

Whilst members were enjoying themselves, your Committee also met on the Saturday to start planning for next year with the Class Forum and Sailboat '89 looming. We are planning another full programme of events for next year with more attention paid to the non-racing owners through more training days and, hopefully, a class holiday week at one of the popular dinghy weeks on the South Coast.

We also hope to be able to expand the facilities offered by the Class Association and, in particular, the provision of a Comet Class insurance scheme through a recognised dinghy insurance specialist which has been requested by many members.

I would like to thank those members that have contributed articles for this edition of Perihelion and I commend their efforts to you all! Keep it coming and your Editor guarantees to use whatever you send, however, we are still looking for someone to take on the graphics and layout side of the newsletter so please can I have a volunteer as it will be quite expensive to have it done professionally.

I have enjoyed the Comet year of 1988 and I hope you have all done so as well. The progress of Comet sales and the Comet Class Association this year must mean that, on a growth basis, we are now the first choice in the middle ground between the youth based Topper and the Laser with some significant advantages over both and this must auger well for the future.

With best wishes to you all from your Committee for a Happy and Successful New Year and looking forward to meeting you again in 1989.

Keith Lamdin

## A TALE OF TWO COMETS

**STARTING TO SAIL:-** We had been living in East Anglia for about a year after moving from Bristol when Jan, my wife, announced that we were going sailing for two weekends on an RYA dinghy course. Both of us had never sailed before but we looked forward to the first weekend, until it arrived. East Anglia is flat, consequently, there is nothing to stop the wind. The first Saturday started in a force 4-5 and we all went aboard heavily reefed Wayfarers in the rain. The RYA course was run just outside the tiny village of Mepal in Cambridgeshire, the instructors in those days (1978) were mainly volunteers and we shall always appreciate their good humour, patience and excellent tuition.

At the end of the second weekend we were all proud owners of the RYA dinghy certificate and eager to continue sailing.

This we did by returning to Mepal most weekends and hiring Toppers, Otters, Minisails, etc, and dutifully filling our RYA log books. Hiring at this rate was obviously expensive, but luckily my firm had some GRP Enterprises based at Grafham Water, near Huntingdon. The Enterprises, being communal boats, were somewhat neglected and impossible to reef. Grafham Water, however, is a large reservoir approximately 1.5 miles long x 0.5 mile wide and very deep. It also has very good facilities in terms of a bar, showers, and good launching facilities. Being so large, even when 505 and Fireball meetings were held, non-racers could always find plenty of space, and cruise around the nature reserve. Day sailing for visitors was also allowed, and probably still is, at about £3 a day if you brought your own boat. We sailed the Enterprise for about a year, except that is, in high winds when the Enterprise would sail us. Jan would scream when crewing, 'take me back, I've had enough'. I would shout back words of encouragement such as, 'I've been trying to get back for the last half hour!'. After many terrifying escapades in the Enterprise we decided we needed a boat of our own. Incidentally, despite many moments of panic in the Enterprise, we never capsized it! This was quite lucky as we later found out that it had insufficient buoyancy and would probably have sunk.

**BUYING OUR OWN BOAT:-** By now we had a reasonable knowledge of sailing a variety of dinghies and had also chartered several yachts. But we still preferred dinghy sailing.

We now decided that instead of fighting and shouting orders to each other in one boat, perhaps we should look at single handers. We had read adverts about Tonics and Lightnings, so off we went to the Southampton Boat Show.

When we saw the Comet it was love at first sight. Her clean lines, excellent finish, good sized cockpit and fittings, all indicated that she was the boat for us.

Using the premise that you only live once, we gagged the Bank Manager and ordered a Comet each, and ate beans and fish fingers. The sacrifice was well worth it. Andrew Simmons delivered two gleaming Comets, one red (No 39), one blue (No 38) in December 1984.

We quickly gave them pride of place in the garage and invited friends in for Christmas drinks, only to drag them into the cold garage to admire our new boats. Our first sail was by taking No 39 on the roof rack to Peterborough Leisure Park for a day sail. This was during the

week before Christmas one Saturday. The watery sun shone giving the leafless poplar trees along the lake long shadows, but some warmth. We easily launched No 39. It was a perfect day with a gently breeze. Many passers-by stopped in the park to admire our gleaming new toy, or was it our sailing? The boat handled every bit as well as we had anticipated. After the clutter of the Enterprise the cockpit was very comfortable and there were also three coloured sheets to play with. By the end of the day we had both taken turns of her and were further convinced that we had made the perfect choice. Our next sail was in April 1985 after we had joined Grafham Water Sailing Club. We have never been mad on racing so we were more than happy cruising around Grafham chasing each other, or sailing in formation. Grafham is only two miles off the A1 near Huntingdon and it would probably make a good race meeting venue. Camping and a caravan park are also available nearby. We only really had one seasons Comet sailing at Grafham as we were to move south to Dorset in early 1986.

**A LIFE ON THE OCEAN WAVES:-** Our first sail in the Comets on the south coast was in Poole Harbour. As we were not too familiar with the harbour we decided to join a local club and practice racing until we had the confidence to set sail on protracted cruising.

Our first race was around several channel marker buoys in the harbour. However, there are probably more than 50 such buoys in the harbour, some numbered, some named, and after an hour's sailing I could not find the next mark. Our small fleet had scattered and several more from adjacent clubs were confusing me. Furthermore, Jan in Comet 38 had also disappeared. It was now about 3 pm on a sunny Bank Holiday. The harbour was now like Piccadilly Circus; speedboats, racing yachts, cruisers and ferries all jockeying for space. I located our rescue boat and asked if they had seen Jan. "No" they replied. After thirty minutes I found her merrily bobbing up and down in a dying wind beside the main channel. Over the next year things improved and we happily sailed our Comets in the harbour.

**GOODBYE NO 39:-** During the summer of 1987 Jan started to suffer from pins and needles in her left arm. This was later diagnosed as arthritis. Although practically cured now, this has left her arm weak and she can no longer sail single handed. Reluctantly, Comet 39 was soon on it's way to a new home in Berkshire.

To continue sailing we bought a Wanderer in February 1988. Therefore, we are now back to a two person dinghy and frequently cruise and race around the harbour.

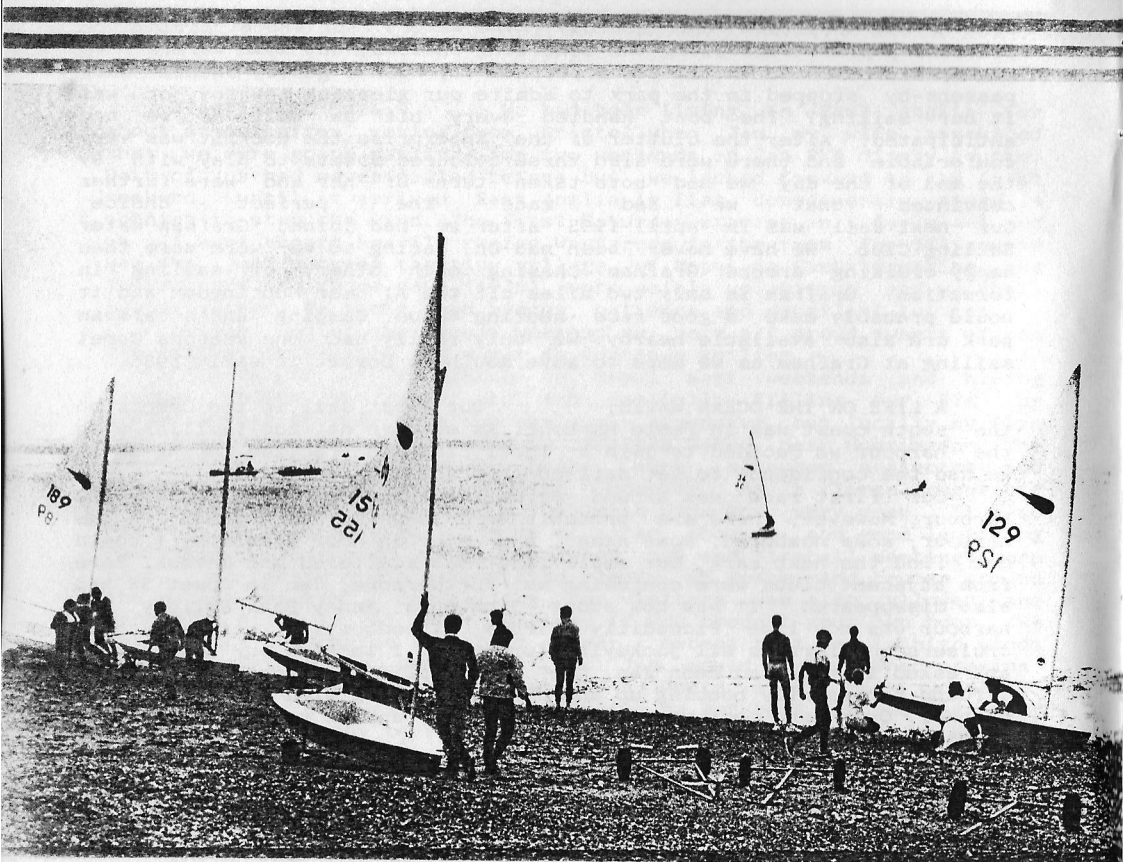
**GOODBYE NO 38:-** After sailing the Wanderer for several months it soon became apparent that there was too little time for me to sail two boats. Reluctantly I decided that "Blue Skies" (NO 38) should be given more use in a new home. No 38 was duly transported up north to Hull, and it seems that her new owner is already in love with her.

I think that our first boats were like first loves, always remembered with fond memories, particularly so due to Andrew Simmons' excellent design. How ever, perhaps when I retire, I may have time for sailing both the Wanderer with Jan and another Comet.

Can I reserve Sail No 10038 now Andrew?

Mel Dallen

## OFF THE BEACH



I sailed the first race at Gunfleet in a force 3-4 southwesterly and a rather lumpy sea and thoroughly enjoyed my first race for sometime. I finished in 4th place behind a couple of youngsters without any obvious reaction from the knee but, rather than push my luck, I decided to sit out the remainder of the day. Incidentally, this allowed Mike Robinson to sail as well as Chris and Philip but somehow we couldn't persuade Ruth to make it a full-house!

We stayed down at Clacton for a weeks holiday and luckily the weather stayed fine with a couple of superb days for a gentle sail in medium winds with blue skies and generally flat seas.

Gunfleet SC kindly let me leave the boat in the club compound and so, around low water, I rigged the boat and trolleyed it down the ramp to set sail at the flat beach area at the bottom. Margaret pulled the trolley back up the ramp as I waded the boat out into deeper water and jumped in while Margaret went off for a couple of hours knitting.

The first day the wind was southwest with a beat along the beach towards Clacton Pier and then a broad reach back down to Holland Haven with a couple of miles between either point. With no rescue boat or other dinghies around I kept fairly close inshore and enjoyed a simple and relaxing sail without any thought for time. Then a Thames Barge hove in sight past the end of the Pier heading down tide with the ebb to Pin Mill and looking majestic with its enormous tan coloured gaff loose-footed mainsail, foresails, mizzen and a white topsail. It seemed to move very slowly and I was tempted to sail out and have a close-up view.

When I got there it was actually moving deceptively quickly and I struggled to keep pace while I studied the sheer size of cordage, blocks and the leeboards which stop such a flat-bottomed barge from making leeway. She was the "Ironsides" and, of course, built out of steel and it was with reluctance that I left her and broad reached back to the shore.

The next day the wind was round to the southeast and stronger and I had a most exhilarating sail. With a rock steady wind, I was fully extended on the beat with a lumpy chop to negotiate, planing quite quickly on the reaches and rolling with the sea on the runs. It was great fun and time flew by as I concentrated on brushing up my sea sailing techniques.

All the time I had been the only dinghy out on the water as far as the eye could see but suddenly a multi-coloured sail shot out from the beach down by the cafe as someone realised it was good weather for sail boards as well. After a while I thought I should go and say "hello" and so I planed down to meet the board which was being expertly handled by a bikini-clad young lady! I was surprised to find that the Comet was a bit quicker than the board on a beat out to sea and held its own on the planing reach back to the shore.

As the tide began to flood the wind began to increase and having had a really memorable sail I headed back to Lion Point and Gunfleet SC for the final time. Margaret was there and after a bit of a struggle we got the boat back up the ramp to the prom where I gave the boat a good dowsing with the fresh water hose and put it back in the compound.

Keith Lamdin

## SAILING YOUR COMET - Part 2

In these articles I will be covering the basic requirements of sailing the boat without consideration of any racing tactics but purely on the basis of sailing for speed as this must be a pre-requisite for any success at racing. As the majority of our sailing is done inland in relatively sheltered conditions, I will assume we are sailing in flat water and consider the requirements of sailing in waves separately.

The first and perhaps most important area to be covered is sailing to windward or beating as this is the point of sailing where variations in technique show up as creating the biggest differences in boat speed.

So, what are the essential principles of sailing the boat?

**SAIL THE BOAT UPRIGHT:** This is the most important consideration as the hull and underwater foils can only operate most efficiently with the sail aerofoil if the whole is maintained in a vertical plane with respect to the horizontal flow of wind across the sail and water past the foils.

If the boat is allowed to heel then the centreboard will present a reduced cross-section of area to the water in performing its major function of preventing leeway. The boat will sail a course made good which is relatively further off the wind than the optimum and giving a poorer ability to point close to the wind.

Further, as the sail heels to leeward, the forces generated by the action of the wind flow across the sail include a downward component which exaggerates the boat heel and places the whole boat in an unstable position.

As the angle of boat heel increases, the rounded bilge of the hull on its leeward side is forced down into the water, the windward side comes clear of the water and the new asymmetric hull shape presented to the water flow causes the hull to tend to broach towards the wind. This destroys the normal balance of the boat and creates quite large weather helm requiring excessive tiller movements in the attempt to retain control of the boat.

All of these points can interact and ultimately lead to capsize but any one of them will be causing the boat to sail more slowly than the optimum and so, SAIL THE BOAT UPRIGHT.

**SAIL THE BOAT CLOSE:** Real boat speed is a combination of actual hull speed through the water and the distance being sailed by the boat in getting from one point to another.

In sailing a small singlehanded boat, such as the Comet, on the beat we are limited to what is known as displacement sailing where the hull remains in the water and, by virtue of the considerable water resistance of the hull, there is a maximum hull speed which cannot be exceeded. This maximum windward boat speed is a function of water line length and is limited by the effect of wave making created by the hull moving through the water.

As there is a maximum windward boat speed which can be generated by the action of wind flow across the sail aerofoil, it follows that it is very important to sail the shortest distance possible compared with any other boat. This seems obvious but it may not be appreciated just how significant this effect can be when sailing to windward.

Kenneth S. Jacobs in "The Science of Sailing" shows that a small

increase in windward sailing angle from 40 degrees to 45 degrees requires an 11 per cent increase in boat speed to compensate for the extra distance sailed whilst an increase to 50 degrees requires a 25 per cent increase and such increases are just not possible in the displacement sailing mode, (fig 1).

A good example of this situation occurred at the end of the third race at Eastbourne where two boats rounded the leeward mark together and sailed a long starboard tack towards the finish line. One boat sailed very slightly free and a little faster whilst the other sailed slightly "pinched" and a little slower. Whilst the equation was complicated by the different weights of the helms, at the end of the tack the boat that sailed closest to the wind had come from behind to be ahead when the boats next crossed tacks.

It is possible to overdo the concept of sailing close to wind or "pinching" to the extent that the boat is starved of forward thrust from the sail and slowed excessively but, in general, it is better to be too close than too free and so, although there are exceptions that I will cover later, SAIL IT CLOSE.

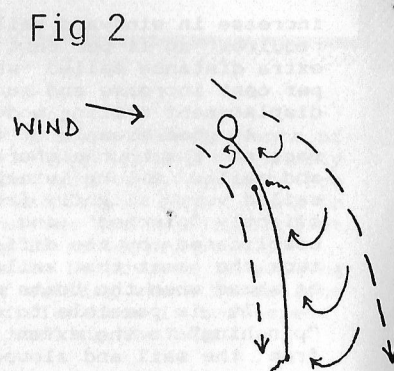
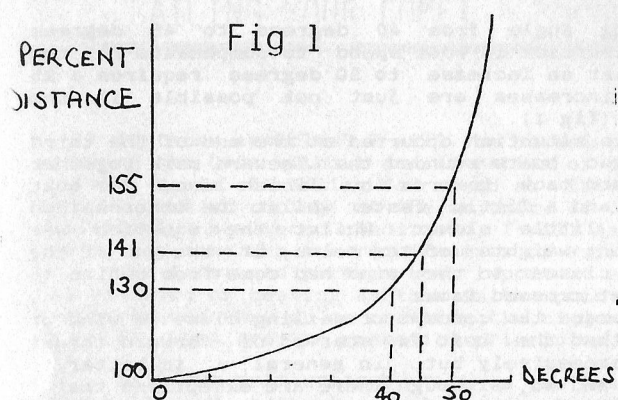
**USE THE INDICATORS:** There is no point in having wind indicators of any type unless you really use them to improve your boat speed and sailing generally.

The mast head burgee and deck level indicator will show you the direction of the apparent wind with the slight variation between them accounting for the normal wind gradient and sail twist. This shows you where the wind is coming from but only gives you a rough indication of the correct position of the sail relative to the direction of the wind.

Much more important are the sail tell-tales because they show the real direction of wind flow across the sail and therefore indicate if the sail is generating the maximum possible thrust to create the greatest boat speed. The essential requirement is to have the greatest possible wind flow speed around the back of the sail and for it to adhere to the sail for the greatest possible distance of the chord from luff to leech. As the sail generates thrust through pressure difference it is also important to have air flow across the front or windward side of the sail and, for all practical purposes, if the leeward flow is correct then so the windward flow will also be correct.

If the boat is sailed too far off the wind on a beat then, although air will still flow across the front of the sail, it will find it impossible to adequately curve around the shape of the sail to leeward and to flow across the leeward side from luff to leech. Instead, an area of turbulent air will be set up to leeward of the sail and, in reducing the pressure difference through the sail, cause a great reduction in the thrust generated by the sail, (fig 2).

If the boat is sailed too close to the wind on a beat then, the air flow will firstly drive into the curve of the sail shape just behind the mast and tend to blow the luff of the sail into the characteristic back-winded shape before flowing on around a reduced width of chord to the leech. The air on the windward side of the sail aerofoil will tend to take a short-cut from the disturbed position of back-winding across the face of the sail and both effects combine to reduce the pressure difference through the sail and cause a reduction in the thrust generated by the sail although not, perhaps, to the extent caused by sailing too far off the wind, (fig 3).



In the ideal situation the sail is positioned such that the air flows evenly on both sides of the aerofoil and across the greatest possible part of the sail width to create the maximum amount of forward thrust. In this condition, both sets of tell-tales will stream evenly and a tell-tale on the leech will also stream to show the adherence of the air flow to the point of leaving the sail at the leech, (fig 4).

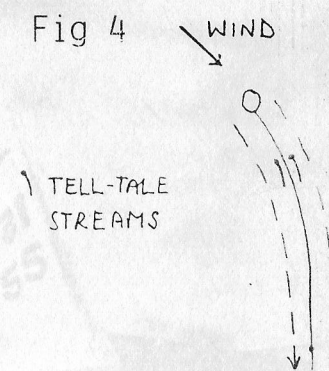
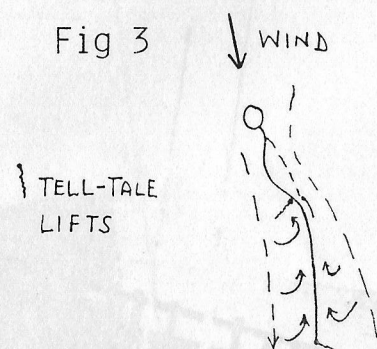
**PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE:** So, if the points covered so far are the major elements in boat speed to windward, then how do we put them into practice when sailing the Comet.

The easiest wind strength to attempt to achieve maximum efficiency in boat speed is the medium wind strength condition when the helm is not overpowered but there is adequate wind to provide sufficient forward thrust from the sail. Other wind conditions bring different problems when sailing to windward and these can confuse the basics of obtaining boat speed.

**MEDIUM WIND TECHNIQUES:** The first thing to do when setting up a tack in medium wind is to position yourself properly in the boat.

In the fore and aft direction position your weight such that the boat is level with the maximum amount of waterline length of hull in the water to promote maximum hull speed. In most cases this means sitting at the front of the cockpit just behind the daggerboard bulkhead.

In the athwartships direction position your weight such that the boat is upright with the mainsheet pulled in tight, tensioning the

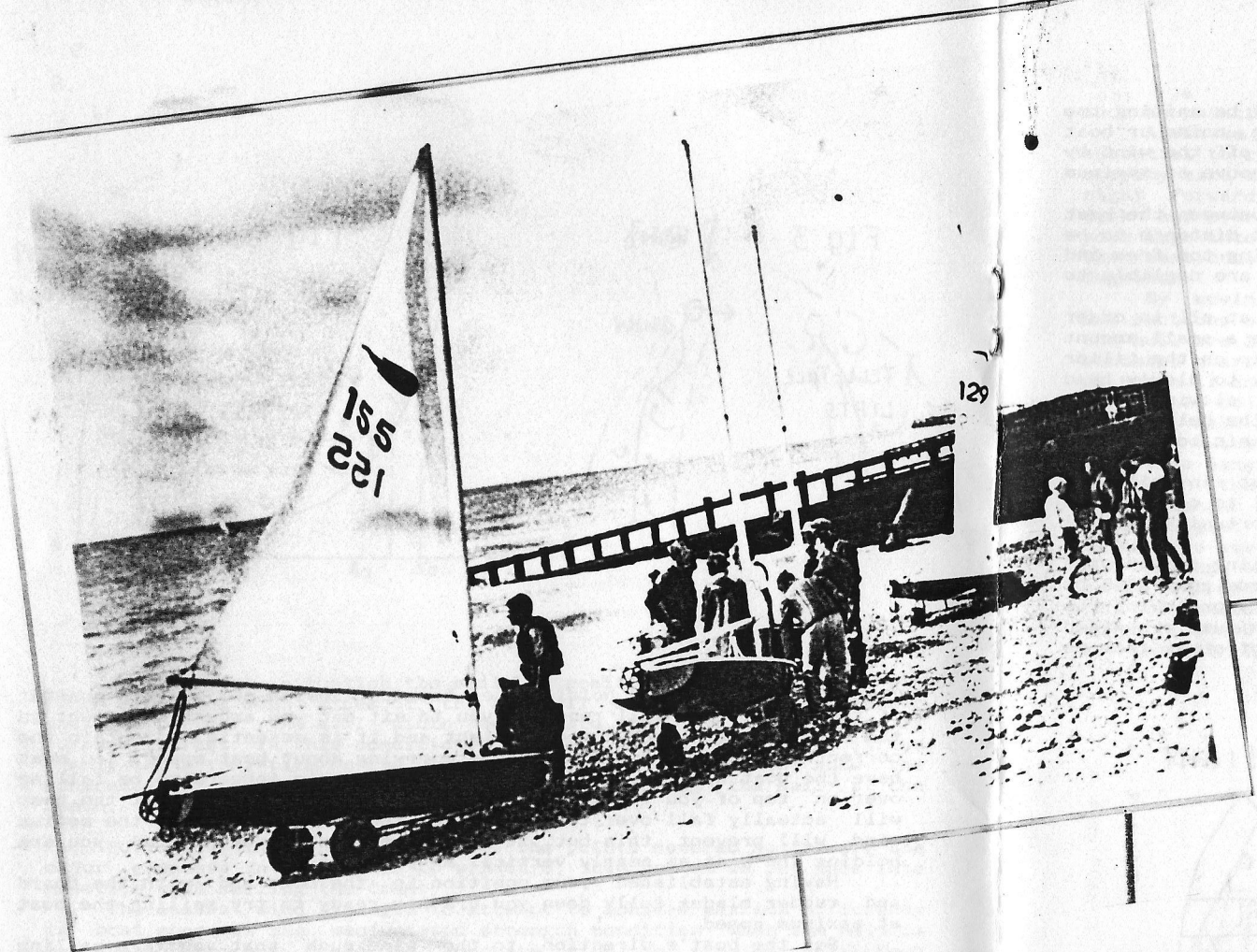


leech of the sail and holding the boom end inside the leeward quarter of the boat. This will require you to sit out an amount dependent on the wind strength and your own weight and it is essential to obtain the correct sitting out position before worrying about boat speed. You must have the boat upright to the degree where the rig appears to be falling over on top of you to windward. There is no possibility that the boat will actually fall over to windward as the heel thrust from the medium wind will prevent this but it will, at least, ensure that you are holding the boat as nearly vertical as possible.

Having established your position in the boat and with the board and rudder blades fully down you are now ready to try sailing the boat at maximum speed.

Set the boat's direction to the wind such that you are sailing fairly free with no tendency to pinch and establish that both the windward and leeward tell-tales are streaming together with the leech tale. It may take a little while to establish this position and you need to persevere in finding the right direction whilst still keeping the boat upright.

Having found a windward direction which allows maximum thrust to be generated through the air streaming then allow the boat a few seconds to build up to the maximum momentum and boat speed in this direction. Then, very gently and very slowly, luff the boat's direction towards the wind and watch the mainsail for the signs of the luff area beginning to back-wind and for the windward tell tale beginning to lift. At the same time, listen to the water noises as the boat begins to slow and feel for a reduction in the liveliness of the boat as it begins to lose momentum.



All photos in this issue courtesy of David Hudson





Once you see any sign of an indication that you may be sailing too close to the wind be it back-winding, tell-tale lifting, noise or boat momentum dying then quickly but gently ease the boat off the wind by just those few degrees necessary to get back in the groove of maximum speed.

What you are trying to achieve is the compromise between the best boat speed possible for the conditions and the shortest distance to be sailed against the wind. The dividing line between sailing too free and too close is quite fine and the movements of the helm are negligible to achieve the right balance of direction.

In fact, you really should not be moving the helm at all in order to sail close as most properly balanced boats still have a small amount of residual weather helm and, just by relaxing your grip on the tiller extension, you will find the boat has a natural tendency to slowly head up into wind. This is acceptable until the signs of slowing become apparent and then by just strengthening your grip on the helm you can ease the boat off the wind again to reestablish your basic boat speed.

In general, medium wind conditions are the easiest in which the boat can be sailed most efficiently and it is essential to concentrate on the techniques outlined and make the most of the opportunity (fig 5).

**LIGHT WIND TECHNIQUES:** The simple problem of sailing to windward in the lightest of winds is that there is not enough force generated by the air flow to produce hull speeds through the water approaching the maximum displacement speed. Therefore, all of the techniques are aimed at maximising the possible speed even to the detriment of other factors

Fig 5 MEDIUM

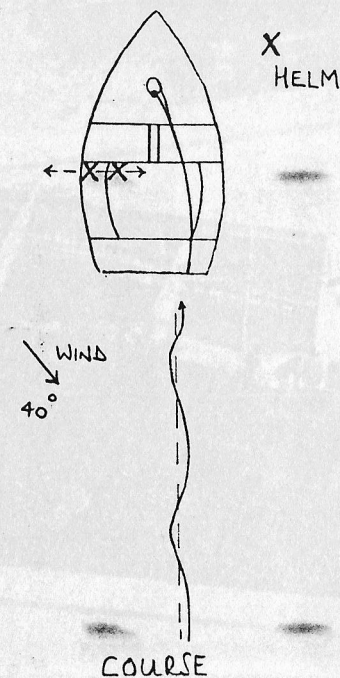


Fig 6 LIGHT

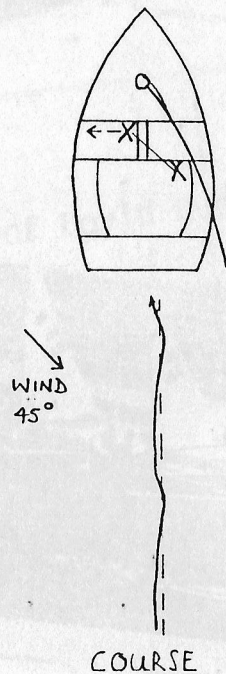
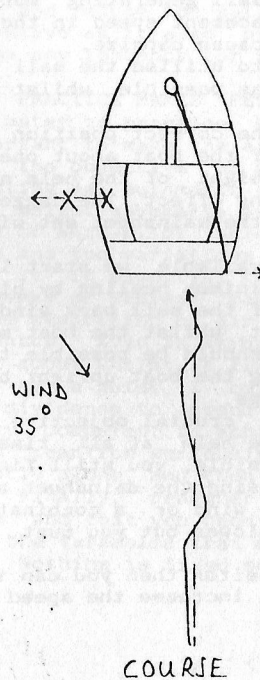


Fig 7 STRONG



such as pointing ability.

Again we start by positioning ourselves properly in the boat. It's essential to reduce the water resistance of the hull to the minimum and thereby make maximum use of the available wind forces. Move your weight right forward in the cockpit and sit on the bench seat behind the fore deck and over the dagger board, which should again be right down. Move your legs into the front leeward corner of the cockpit and slide across the seat until the boat has a slight angle of heel of between 5 - 10 degrees.

By moving the helm's weight to this position, the relatively fine bow sections of the hull become immersed and the flat after sections of the hull are lifted clear of the water, particularly in the area of the windward quarter. The effect is to substantially reduce the wetted area of the hull and reduce the resistance of the hull in moving through the water. In addition, the slight angle of heel allows the cloth of the sail to fall naturally into its designed shape and curvature without wasting valuable air flow energy to create the shape from a sail cloth otherwise hanging limply.

With the helm in this slightly cramped position the boat may feel rather tender but, in light winds, the boat can be readily brought back upright just by leaning the upper body to windward and there should be no need to move the basic position.

Having set the boat into the correct position and with the rudder blade full down, it is now time to try and develop whatever boat speed can be obtained from the available light wind. The mainsheet should be slightly eased such that the boom is just outside the leeward quarter and the air flow is encouraged to adhere to the leeward side of the

sail.

Now, without being too concerned with pointing ability, set the sail at an angle to the wind where the sail fills as naturally as possible and concentrate on getting the leeward tell tale to stream. As the sail fills and the boat begins to develop some speed, consciously hold the tiller a touch to windward such as to hold the sail at the same angle to the wind. The reason for this is that, in very light winds, whatever boat speed is produced is relatively high compared to the wind speed and so there will be an initial tendency as the boat accelerates for the apparent wind to swing slightly forward.

If you do not hold the boat off the wind a touch there is a slight tendency to pinch just when you want to concentrate on building up the maximum possible momentum for the conditions.

Once the boat is moving and the sail appears to be full and with an established air flow then is the time to bring the boat more upright and to start slowly heading closer to the wind without ever getting to the point where boat speed begins to reduce.

In these conditions it is better to pay a penalty of sailing more distance by being a couple of degrees off the wind rather than take any chance of losing momentum by sailing too close. Specifically, it takes a large amount of energy to overcome the inertia of a stationary boat and, once this has been achieved, all of your concentration should be on retaining the forward momentum that has been built up even at the expense of sailing a longer course, (fig 6).

**HEAVY WIND TECHNIQUES:** At the opposite end of the spectrum is the heavy wind condition characterised by the sail generating more than enough thrust to produce maximum hull displacement speed in the water and sufficient heeling forces to potentially cause capsizing.

In these conditions, the objective is to utilise the sail thrust to sail as fast and as close to the wind as possible whilst making every effort to negate the effects of heeling.

Again we start by setting ourselves in the correct position in the boat which is at the point of maximum beam of the boat about one third back in the cockpit. In this position the weight of the helm sitting out on the toestraps has the maximum righting effect. The daggerboard and rudder are initially set full down and the mainsheet set with the boom end on the quarter of the boat.

As there is an excess of sail thrust available we start looking for the compromise of good boat speed with minimum heeling by pinching the boat tight into the wind with the luff of the sail back winded and the windward tell-tale lifting. At this point, whilst the boat may not be moving at the maximum possible speed, it should be possible to keep the heeling forces under control and to bring the boat upright by full extension of the helm's weight in the toestraps.

It can not be over emphasised that the crucial objective is to keep the boat upright with the rig over the helm at all times. If, after sitting out to the maximum extent possible, you still find that you can not hold the boat upright then try easing the mainsheet a touch or pinching the boat even further into the wind or a combination of both. At this point you may be going even slower but you must, at all costs, get the boat UPRIGHT.

Once you have established an upright position then you can try, by bearing away fractionally from the wind, to increase the speed of the

boat through the water. Bearing away will reduce the backwinding of the luff and establish better airflow around the sail to increase the thrust and begin to build up the momentum of the boat. Of course, the increased forces in the sail will also increase the effects creating heeling. However, with the boat already upright, the weight of the helm and the daggerboard are acting at their most efficient to oppose the heeling forces and you will be able relatively to hold the boat upright more easily.

Eventually, although the boat speed will have increased, the effect of heeling will predominate and, as soon as this occurs, it is essential to pinch the boat once more tight into the wind allowing the boat's inertia to maintain momentum whilst ensuring the boat is once more held upright.

In a sense, the technique in strong winds is the reverse of that in medium winds, whereby, instead of easing off to get boat speed and then gently heading into wind to save distance, you start by heading tight into wind to get control of the boat and only then bear off to ensure the boat does not stall.

If, despite your greatest efforts to keep the boat upright, you find that you cannot overcome the heeling forces then you may try just raising the daggerboard to the 3/4 position. This has a significant effect on the heeling forces generated, by reducing the lever arm between the CE and CLR, to make the boat more manageable but at the cost of increased leeway and is a last resort.

Alternatively and particularly if you are not racing then the best course may be to take a couple of reefing rolls of the sail around the mast and reduce the sail area by around 20%. This is particularly effective as it also brings the CE forward over the daggerboard and stops any tendency for weather helm to cause the boat to broach (fig 7).

**PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT:** It is not always easy to find the space of water to practice some of the techniques outlined but it is very important to make the attempt.

The objective of practice is to make the basic operation of boat handling as automatic as possible such that the tiller movements and the weight movements are smooth and gentle with the boat sailing on a kind of auto-pilot which then allows the helm to concentrate on sail trim and the variations of wind and water.

It is essential that carefully built-up boat speed is not ruined by jerky or violent movements of either weight or tiller which will cause separation of air flow across the sail and immediate loss of real momentum. Even in strong winds there is nothing gained by bouncing the boat about whilst in light winds any movement must be "cat-like".

As a guide, I believe that for every hour spent racing it will pay dividends to spend five hours just sailing the boat and becoming fully competent to achieve good boat speed in all conditions. Do treat such practice seriously and concentrate on sailing as well as you can, firstly alone, and then preferably with another boat as a partner.

Finally, remember that the techniques are a basis for you to work from and that you need to find the precise positions and settings of all the variables that suit your sailing style to best advantage.

Nothing is fixed so experiment to suit yourself!

## COMETS AT BEWL VALLEY

Eighteen Comets came to the line to race as a class at Bewl Valley SC's multi fleet handicap meeting on 16th October, in excellent sailing conditions marred only by an autumn murk which refused to clear through out the day. In the first race Craig Moffett (57) led to the windward mark followed by Damon Perrin (153) Will Turner (6) and Andrew Crawshaw (107). Moffett was feeling the effects of a back injury and was passed by Perrin out in the fog, while behind him a battle for third place developed between John Windebank (195) and James Withall (68) which set the tone for the rest of the day. This pair pushed Moffett back into fourth position and then disputed second place in variable wind conditions which favoured in turn the lighter Withall and heavier Windebank. Neither could make any impression on Perrin, who finished in an unassailable first place with Windebank second, Withall third, and Moffett holding onto fourth ahead of Hayley Penfold (102) and Ralph Rowe (30).

In the second race, the three leaders from the first carried on from where they had left off, with the essential difference that Perrin did not succeed in breaking clear until well into the second of the three laps and was at no time totally free of pressure. Windebank held second place at the end of lap 1, but Withall overtook him on the second, only to drop back to third at the finish as Windebank took full advantage of a freshening wind. Behind the leading three there was some close and interesting infighting in the middle order from which Ian Nylton (151) emerged to take fourth place followed by Jeff Penfold (99) and Andrew Simmons (168).

### Overall placings:

1st Damon Perrin	Aylesbury S.C.
2nd John Windebank	Blue Circle S.C.
3rd James Withall	Aylesbury S.C.

Mike Crawshaw



Chipstead Open 1988 - Start of 1st Race

## MEMORIES OF THE LAST FOUR OPENS

### WALTON-ON-THAMES

The first person to meet me was Craig Moffett who made me feel most welcome in spite of having a lot to think about. I rigged old faithful Number Six and we were winched up the rim of this extinct volcano. I found the view from the water just amazing:- no trees, no landscape at all until the South Downs. Just the odd top of an electricity pylon, blocks of flats starting at the tenth floor!

The sailing was superb, beautiful steady winds that one could lean out against and enjoy. I got into the swing of getting round the course, and by the end of the second race I was starting to improve my technique. (After all when so many go past you, there are plenty of techniques to copy!)

The third race started well, then Chief Thundercloud arrived demanding his volcano back. By the time I had decided that pulling in the sheet a little bit wasn't going to make me capsize, I looked round and everyone seemed to have gone home! Being resolved to get "me money's worth", me and Number Six zigzagged about doing a very liberal interpretation of the last lap to arrive at the finish line to find ..... no finish boat! The race controllers very sensibly retired to the warmth of the clubhouse long before I arrived. Never mind, the sense of achievement overcame the soggy sensations.

Graig invited us all back to his home which I thought was incredibly brave of Mary. The food, hospitality and chat was wonderful and I was reluctant to leave at 9 pm for the homeward journey.

### GUNFLEET

Arrived somewhat too early but thank you Margaret for the last 10 miles navigation. Double Comet trailers are easy to spot in traffic. I rigged the old warrior and bagged a good spot on the prom. Do you remember the sky that morning; a fabulous shade of blue, not the usual grey September day.

People arrived and started talking knowingly about tides and shore line drift. I was not reassured when Andrew Simmons and others reached into their gadget bags and produced ..... yes, you guessed it; a crystal ball. This high tech item has an orange back and lots of numbers inside, but, nonetheless I saw these so-called dinghy racers give the ball a rub, peer deep into the crystal sphere and mutter dark incantations!

So I set off to show these sons of darkness what could be done with a pure heart and an empty bit just behind the mast. The beats were great, I got "ligged out" as they say, and concentrated on boatspeed and keeping away from the crowd. I was so surprised to arrive at the windward mark in third place that I capsized trying to "get into the queue". I've never had a Comet turn turtle before but a couple of minutes climbing up a slippery boat as well as a new learning curve, and I was in my customary position of litter warden to the fleet. Two more capsize in the day allowed practice to make perfect (see Margaret's instructions P16 Pereheliion 8).

Still, I had a lovely day's sail, getting better at beating; and thanks to the "sausage" reaching practice was plentiful. I emerged

tired but happy with a big thank-you to Chris Robertson for helping me to put Number Six into motoring mode.

### BEWL VALLEY

Again, thanks to Chris Robertson and his family for putting me up for the night allowing a fresh start on race day. It was only on getting into a rigged Number Six that I discovered we were floating two inches over the plimsoll line! Curses to this Southern hospitality. But we had another good day for a sail, fresh breeze, nice and steady, pity it was misty. The course was intriguing requiring light intensifying specs and allowances for the curvature of the earth.

We seem to have got this beating business sussed which only makes people going by on the runs even more infuriating. I just cannot bring myself to sit on the foredeck with one leg round the mast and the other round the daggerboard. I will admit to getting so carried away with beating that I kept forgetting the transit off the finish line. Very frustrating sailing back to go round it.

Does anyone recall the ominous hiss as a 505 spinaker reaches towards one's transom; and in a timid voice one suggest that overtaking boat keep clear? Then that sudden stillness as all the wind for yards around gets vacuumed up by that marquee of sail whizzing by three feet to windward. Someone suggested luffing but I haven't checked my policies lately (Yes, Mr Turner, how many shards of fibreglass were floating after the accident?).

Still, the weather held, the wind was good and I had one of the best day's sailing I've ever had.

### KINGSMEAD

Arrived 8.20 am on a very frosty morning. Clubhouse looked cosy; water looked island and tree infested. Initial suspicions turned out correct, I could not fathom out all the twists and curls in the gentle breeze. And thats from the bloke who elects to potter about under a 60 foot high wall quarter of a mile long. The islands and shallows all added flavour to the day's sailing. I just wish I had grasped the significance of some of them before it was too late; and I ended up as rear of the fleet welfare officer again.

Having spent fifteen minutes trying to locate the hand-brake between races 2 & 3, me and Jackie Hudson staged the battle of the Titans, a most pleasant tussle. Night followed dusk by at least twenty seconds and we all learnt to de-rig in total darkness; I'm still trying to establish the practical spin-off of this training exercise, apart from sweeping up the shackles in the carpark on Monday morning.

The Travellers Trophy is a beautiful piece of craftsmanship and I was glad to be there when it was presented to Craig. Suffice to say I really have enjoyed sailing with such a nice crowd; so much that points and positions really didn't matter.

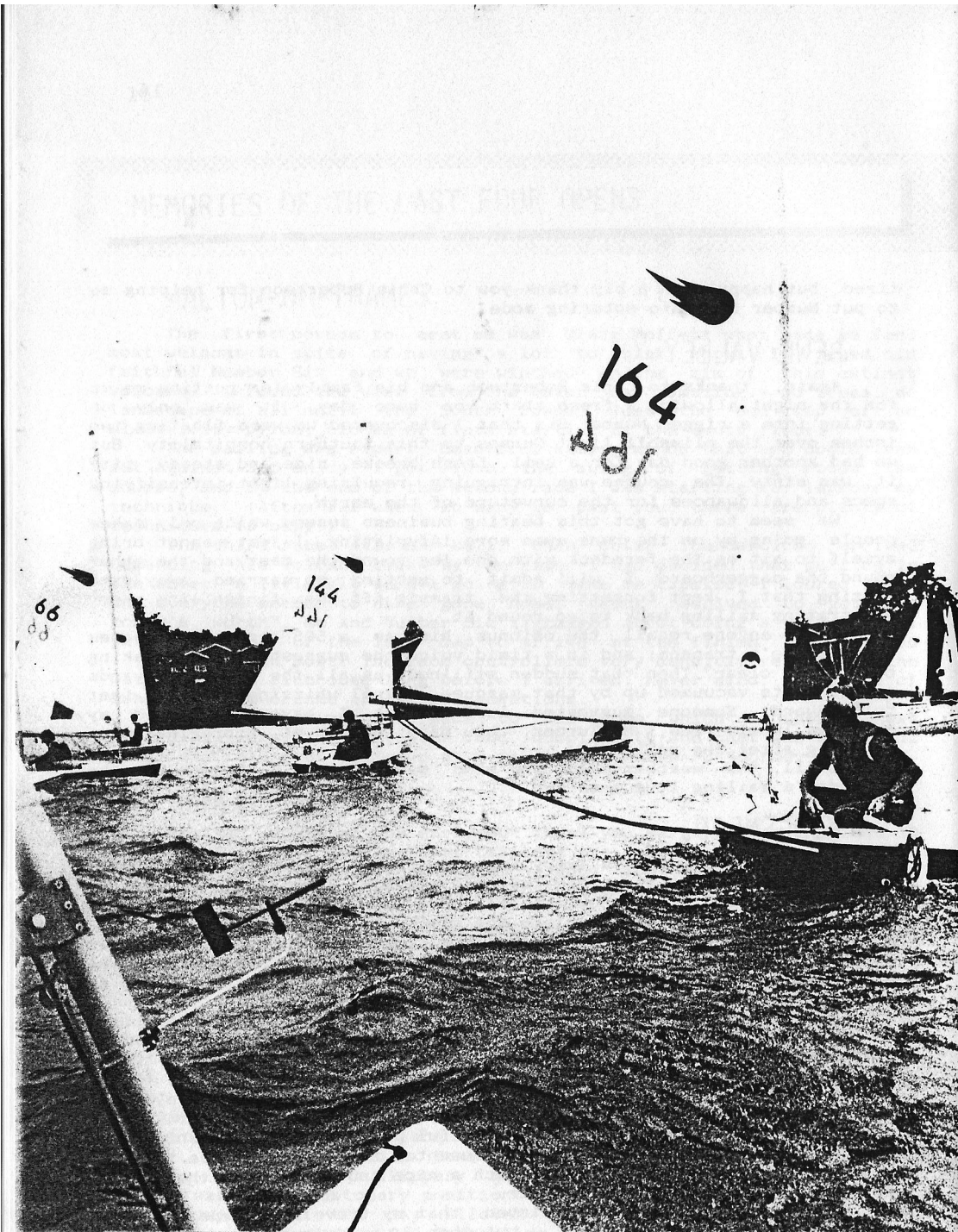
I do wish I hadn't calculated that my travelling expenses would have bought that new sail ..... but then I wouldn't have an excuse any more, now would I?

### TRAVELLERS TROPHY QUALIFIERS

HELM	CAM	KSC	JCB	DSC	CSC	NAT	ASC	WOT	GSC	BEWL	KSC	PTS	POS
A. CRAWSHAW	16	15	3			14	9			7	24	64	7
R. CRAWSHAW	15	17	7			21	12			10	36	82	8
H. JAGGERS		2		1	2	18	3				2	28	4
S. KIBBLE	14	11			5	13	11	6		8		55	6
C. MOFFETT	3	1			1	1	2	1		9	41	8	1
C. ROBERTSON	9	10	5		12	17		8	6	13		50	5
C. ROBINSON	5	3		5	4			2	2			21	2
J. WITHALL		6	2	2			6	4		2	8	22	3

- CAM SC
- KENNET VALLEY SC
- JCB SC
- DENHAM SC
- CHIPSTEAD SC
- NATIONALS - SOVEREIGN SC
- AYLESBURY SC
- WALTON-ON-THAMES SC
- GUNFLEET SC
- BEWL VALLEY SC
- KINGSMEAD SC

COUNTING THE BEST 6 RESULTS OUT OF 11 EVENTS



Chipstead Open 1988 - Start of 2nd Race

# Dinghy Leisure

 **Comet**

Memo



Windhawk

self bailer

Praddel

tiller extension

new sail

new boat?

boat cover

launching trolley

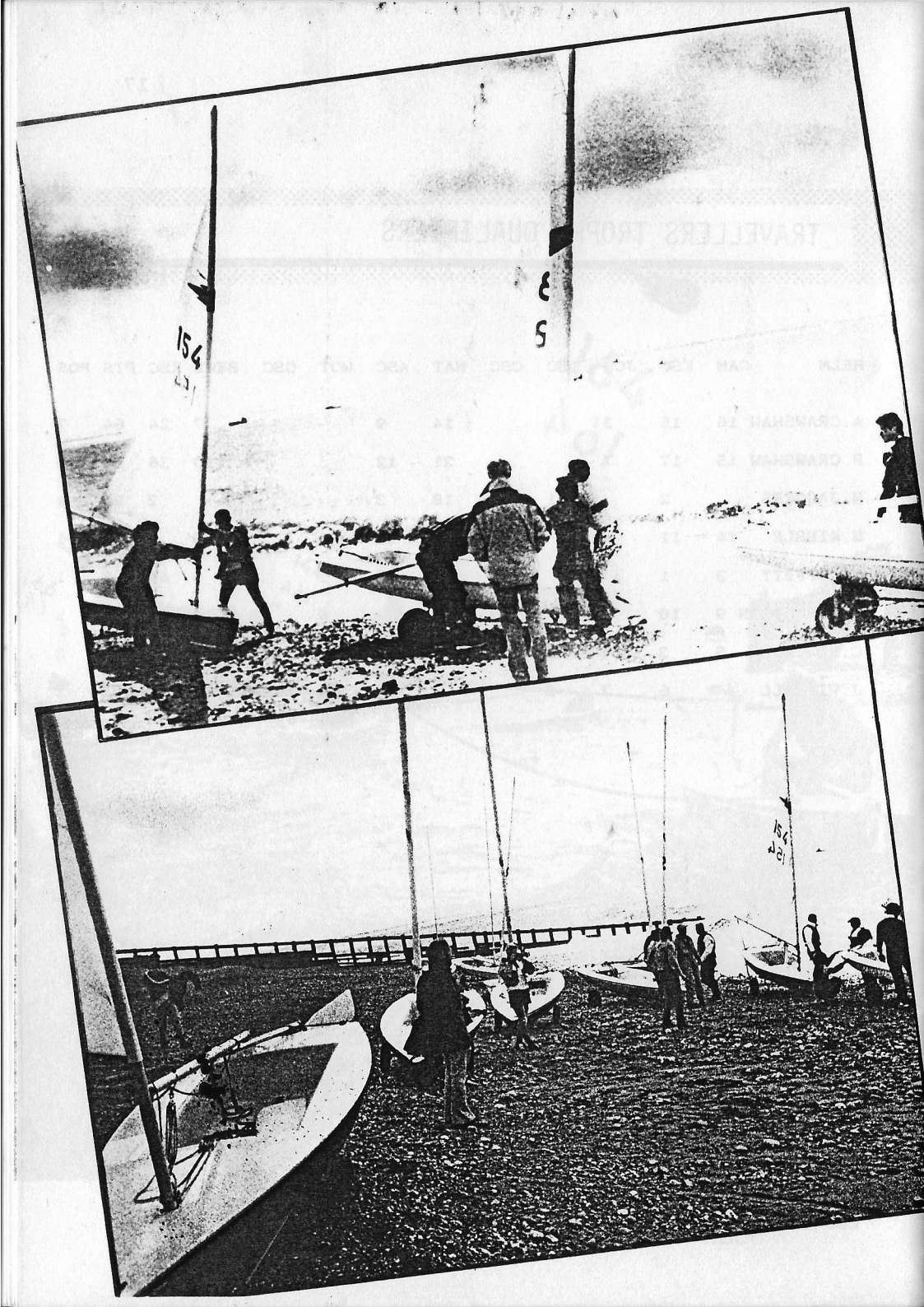
**Dinghy Leisure!**

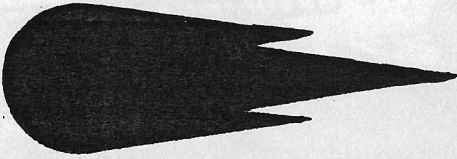
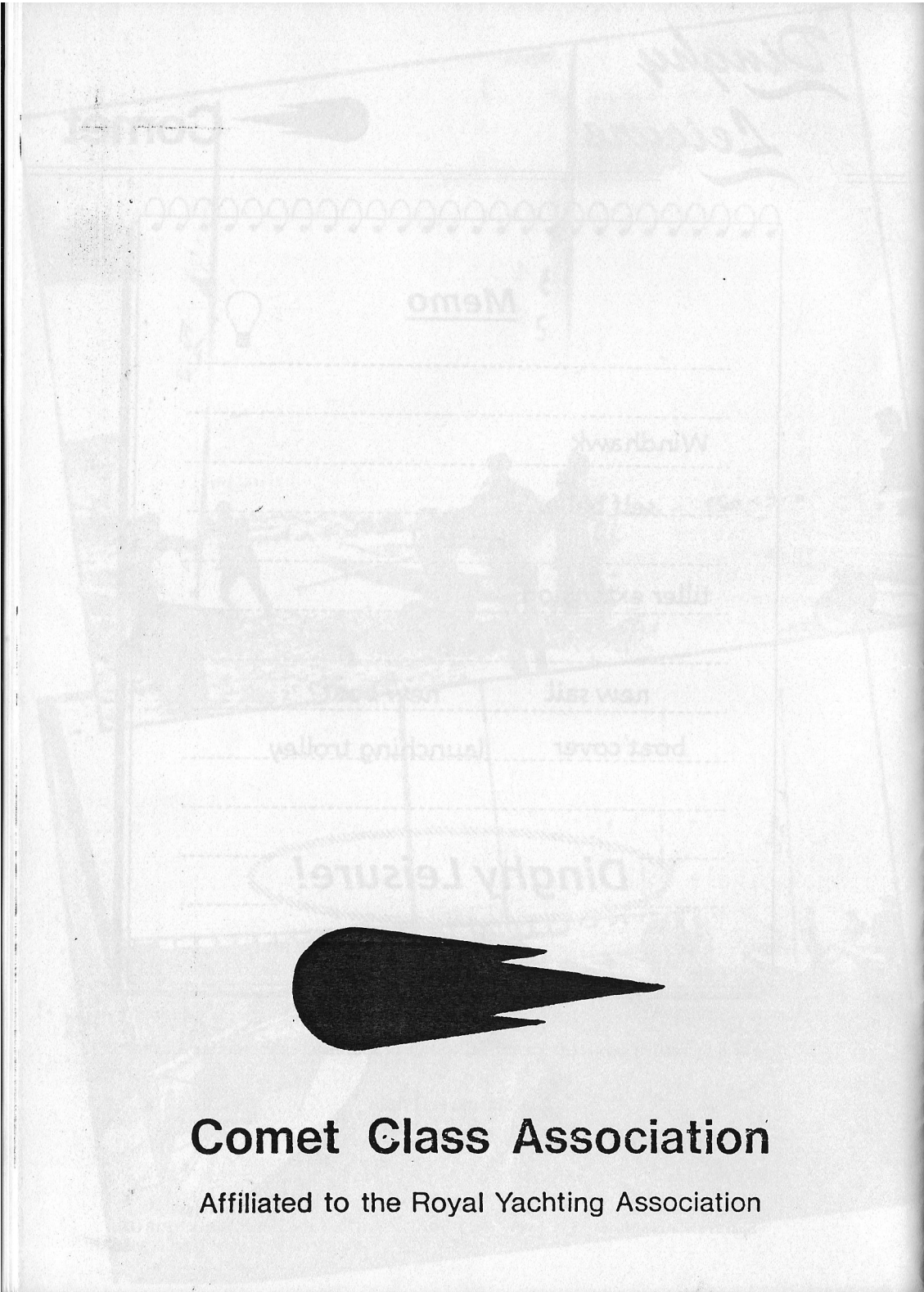
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