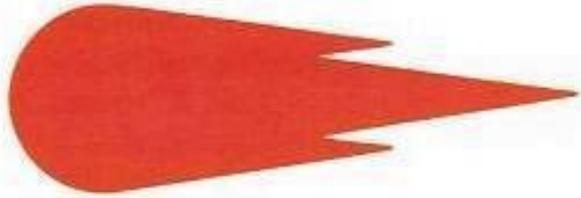


PERIHELION 131



Comet Class Association

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association



The ONLY Comet Open of 2020 - but for SHSC Member's Only!

Perihelion 132

Please send your contributions for the next issue of Perihelion by

Date

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***Comet Class Association
Newsletter***

Winter 2020

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 131

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As a spectator it's often easier to recognise the hull colour than the sail number. When you're acting as trolley-dolly time is often of the essence and it doesn't take long to associate a hull with a helm. By their colours shall ye know them....

Norah Jagers

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NORAH JAGGERS
(Non Committee)

Editorial

Well, who would thought it, a whole year without much sailing at all. Hopefully, you will have been able to sail between the two 'lockdowns'. My club, SHSC, has organised a cut down programme of firstly just 'cruising' then as the pressure eased moved into a cut down racing programme, with no access to changing or galley facilities in line with RYA recommendations. I hope that the situation was similar in your club. The 'damp' drive home has not been too pleasant but well worth it following on from an afternoons sailing. Thankfully I avoided a 'wet' drive home more by good luck than judgement on more than one occasion! We even had a Comet Open, now don't get excited it was a 'Members Only' event and not worth reporting further on!



Steve Gregory is steadily putting together our Open and Championship events. The Association Championships (a 2 day event) is being held at Windsford Flash SC, see page 11 for further details. Bala SC have kindly 'rolled over' the National Championships for us to take place over the August Bank Holiday next year - details of which will be published nearer the time. As soon as the full programme is available it will be in the website.

I, like a number of you, much to Andy's pleasure, have invested in a reefing White Xtra, my reasoning being that age and fitness are not on my side plus the Standard sail is too much to handle in a blow and my Mylar Xtra is on its last legs. The first time I tried reefing it, it was a calm day on our front lawn with my good lady reading the instructions, the second attempt was 'in anger' and it failed miserably, attempting to reef the sail in a blow with the sail hoisted was a complete disaster. I eventually managed it but I was worn out physically and mentally by the time I was ready to go on the water. The 2nd attempt 'in anger' was a lot less hassle as I reefed the sail on the ground. Now I know a lot of you like to keep your sail as clean as possible and so do I but it is, as far as I am concerned, so much easier to roll in the reef without having to think about

Comet tales from the shore.

Who's Who

One of the many attractions of the Comet is the range of colours for the hulls. In the early days this made them stand out from dinghies like the Laser and Topper which had uniformly white hulls. Laser saw this as a badge of honour as it meant that Race Officers found it almost impossible to see which boat was over the line....

Comet 436 is a shade of violet. At the time buyers had a choice of deck colour too – a soft greyish white, cream and a light blue. Andrew felt at the time that a pure white deck gave off too much of a glare. These days most decks are consistently off-white.

When we bought C436 several of the top sailors had grey hulled boats. Guy Wilkins and Errol Edwards come to mind. Rumours began to circulate that the grey pigment had a go-faster pigment in it..... Later this changed to encapsulate the bright yellow hulls as these became popular with the front of the fleet. Chris Robinson has 2 yellow boats, Yellow Peril and Yellow Peril Too.

Over the years Andrew has offered different colour designs. I think that the Charisma is a particularly pleasing design with three diagonal blazes starting at the bow and disappearing halfway along the side of the hull. Ben Palmer's boat is an example of the blue version. There was a beautifully bright orange and yellow option which you may remember in Derek Coleman's later boat, C707. The stern of the Charisma is white, as is that of the Cascade which has three same coloured flashes. John Coppenhall has the red version. Tony Best had a green one many years ago.

Andrew made a few boats which have the deck the same colour as the hull. They were in lovely soft colours – yellow, blue, pink and moss green. John Orchard had one of the yellow ones which I dubbed "Custard Cream", much to his annoyance. Holly at Bristol Avon had a green one and the original pink one was made for Ros Stevenson. We put it on the Class Association stand at the Outdoor and Leisure Show at the NEC where it was inspected by HRH Princess Anne. Her comments to Henry about the colour were interesting!!

sailing Perihelion was considered to be for all Comet sailors and not just racers. Consequently, race reports often weren't included in Perihelion. The Nationals was before I had a Comet, but being a member at Aylesbury I went to watch from the bank. As Aylesbury was a very small reservoir, the leeward mark was close to the bank and I remember the sailors struggling to beat off the mark and having to be rescued when they drifted into the bank. Keith Lamdin, who became our first chairman and is now our president, became the National champion.

I don't have any photos of this Nationals, so the photo is from the Aylesbury Comet Open the following year. This photo, also taken by my Dad, is one of the earliest photos I have of Comet sailing. As you can see the Open was held in very light airs. Number 120, in the centre of the photo, would have been a brand new boat. The winner was a Damon Perrin, an Aylesbury member. Henry Jaggars won the last race which propelled him to second overall.



Chris Robinson
Comet 63 and 867

the boom and sail thrashing about.

A couple of tips tip which I intend implementing are a) to number the bits of Velcro so that the right bit of Velcro goes in the right hole and b) keep the bits of Velcro in a re-sealable bag as otherwise they will stick to just about anything and will slow the rigging process down or get blown away!

If you have any handy hints and tips to pass on please get in touch.

Have as good a Christmas and New Year as you possibly can, roll on the vaccine!

Nigel Fern
Comet 845

Chairman's Report

Conscious of the illustrious members of the Comet Class Association who have preceded me as Chairmen, it is with great trepidation that I have put my fingers to the keyboard to “pen” my first Chairman’s report.



First of all, I must thank John Sturgeon for his three years of hard work as Chairman. His tenure has seen several highlights of which the introduction of the White Xtra sail and more recently, the reefing version of that sail deserve special mention. Before he took on that role, he had organised the Association’s participation at the Dinghy Show for several years and I am grateful to him for continuing to provide his wisdom as a member of the Committee.

I would also like to express my thanks for the excellent service to the Class Association and Committee over several years by two outgoing members of the Committee – Mark Govier as the Membership Secretary, and Mike Ettershank as the recorder and analyst of the results of the open meetings and championships. I would like to thank Eddie Pope for taking on the role of Membership Secretary and to welcome Ben Palmer to the Committee and thank him for agreeing to take on the responsibility for results. Norah Jagers has kindly taken on the task of obtaining the prizes.

I have been racing a Comet for nearly all of the last 20 years, before which time, I owned and raced other classes of single-handed dinghy. I have no doubt which is the best – we are blessed with a boat of a robust design which has stood the test of time. It may have a few bad manners, but what dinghy class does not? Early boats remain competitive, as evidenced by the appearance of low sail numbers amongst the prize-winners. There is no doubt in my mind that the White Xtra sail and its reefing version have allowed the Builder to breathe new life into the class and have helped to give the boat a more up-to-date appearance whilst ensuring it remains “manageable” by all ages of sailor. It has an active Class Association and is blessed with a very healthy and large annual events programme. One aspect of the Class which has always stood out to me is the friendliness, helpfulness and shore-side banter amongst the

Rutland 2004

We have had two National championships and one Association championships at Rutland. This photo is from 2004 and shows a random selection of competitors (if I remember



correctly the raffle winners for the t-shirts). Left to right: Ros Stevenson, Steve Hawley, Annette Walter, Emma Coppenhall, John Coppenhall, Chris Robinson. Ros, Annette, John and Chris are still sailing Comets and Emma occasionally appears at Opens to support her Dad. The photo was most likely taken by Norah Jagers.

Ardleigh 1990

Ardleigh sail on a reservoir in Essex. I remember the three-day championship being very windy and it was where I really learnt to sail a Comet in wind. However, in the last race the wind dropped away which caught out a few people who, getting tired, had reefed. As the wind dropped, I unexpectedly found myself in the



lead. As this was the last race the race officer was in no hurry to finish and left me holding onto the lead for a further lap. It would be twenty years before I won another race at a Nationals. This picture was taken by my Dad.

Aylesbury 1986

This Nationals was also held in windy conditions. I have found no report of this event, but this is not surprising as in the early years of Comet

The second photo shows the Littleton sailors who won the team trophy. Left is Eddie Pope, who also won the National championships that year. Clive Chapman, who went on to become Chairman in 2011, is in the centre. Nick Warren (right) subsequently emigrated to the US. I had thought these photos were taken by Norah Jagers, but she can be seen in the background of the photo, while Henry Jagers is photobombing from the balcony. Perihelion 92 has many more photos of this Nationals and also reveals that the photographer was Richard Woolf.



Hunts 2008

This photo is of the winners and runners up. The winner, Ian Coppenhall in the white jumper, is the most successful Comet sailor ever (seven National Championships, although Guy Wilkins with six Nationals is only just behind). There are a number of former Comet chairman and committee members in the photo.



From left to right: John Windibank (former chairman), Paul Hinde (former chairman), Stephen Lemmon, John Coppenhall, Steve Bellamy (current committee member), Phil Hossell (former committee member), Ian Coppenhall, Catherine Bellamy, Ben Palmer (current committee member), Mark Coppenhall, Chris Robinson (former chairman and current committee member). I'm not certain who took the photo, but it would almost certainly have been Norah Jagers.

members, while at the same time enjoying keen competition on the water.

All this is the result of the hard efforts of many people over the years, and it would be a crying shame if the difficulties of the last season result in a significant permanent downturn in the fortunes of the class. At my first meeting as the Chairman of the Committee held on-line on the 6th October, I expressed this concern and was much heartened by what I was told had been happening, and is being planned, at various clubs, including intentions to try and hold a Comet event next season.

However, there are actions which individual Comet sailors can take to maintain interest in the class. One key element in helping to maintain this interest is our Perihelion magazine. For instance, why not write a short article for Perihelion on how your club kept a sailing programme going in 2020? Those of us who rarely put in an appearance at the front of the fleet would love to read articles in Perihelion on racing and rigging tips from those more expert. When Comet sailors who are not members of the Association are encouraged to join, a response often heard is – what benefits would this bring? These may be sailors who do not feel competitive enough to travel to events and get the benefit of the open meetings and championships put on by the Association. The Committee has been actively discussing how race training could be staged and I would welcome suggestions as to how the Association could support race training at individual clubs. One possibility is to stage a training event at a club which would also be open to Comet sailors from nearby clubs and finish off with a racing event open to those participating in the training event.

At the time of writing, the outlook for next year is starting to look a bit better with promising news about vaccines. However, how that affects the prospects for next season remains to be seen. Let us hope that we can all meet up soon to renew friendships at a venue on the Open Meeting circuit.

It is planned to hold the 2021 Association Championships at Winsford Flash on 22nd - 23rd May, when it will be the occasion on which we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of the Comet dinghy. Please put that date in your diary and come and join in the celebrations. I look forward to seeing

you all there when we may hopefully also celebrate the start of a return to normality.

I hope all of you can have a Christmas which is as full of joy and happiness as the current restrictions will permit, and a New Year which will allow us to return to the sailing activities we all enjoy.

Peter Mountford
Comet 864

The Members' Area password for 2021 is

Boattini21

Comet Nationals

With so many cancelled activities this year TV programmes have turned to producing reviews of previous years events. I don't see why Perihelion should be any different, so here are a few reminders of the Comet Nationals from years gone by.

[2011 Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy](#)

WPNSA is where the Olympics were held in 2012, so the Comet family (including the Comet double handers) took advantage of the Olympic legacy before the Olympics had even happened! Not surprisingly we had a high turnout of forty-one competitors. I remember the event had a fair amount of wind, although others have told me it was very windy indeed.



The photo, taken by Andy Simmons, shows the start of race four. Jonathan Latham (349) started on port at the pin end of the line. As the photo shows, he was easily able to cross the entire fleet to take the lead. As he wasn't over at the start the photo must have been taken a few seconds after the gun and the rest of the fleet must of have been late to the line. Unfortunately for Jonathan he was caught by the first mark, although he did win the following race.

[2009 Waldringfield](#)

Waldringfield is on the river Deben in Suffolk, so this was estuary sailing. I remember the wind dying for the last race, but early races were windier, as shown by the photo of Brian Welham being followed by Michael Ettershank (84) down the run.



Something to look forward to - at last!!



WINSFORD FLASH SAILING CLUB

Comet Class Association Championships
Saturday 22nd & Sunday 23rd May 2021
Race Entry Fee £30



Join us to celebrate the 40th year of the Comet
Briefing 10:30 am first race scheduled 11:30 am Saturday
5 races over the weekend with 4 to count



Galley, Food, Bar, Camping & great Comet Racing!

W.F.S.C.
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M6 Junction 18

Contact Martin Loud
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Email: transdecmartin@aol.co.uk

www.winsfordflashesailing.com
Windsford Flash Sailing Club
Stocks Hill, Darnall, Winsford, Cheshire, CW7 4EE

Secretary's Report

Hi all

Such a shame we haven't met up this year. We have fingers crossed for 2021 with Steve Gregory busy arranging our Open Meetings all ready for when we get the go ahead.

We had a Skype/Zoom back in October and here are some notes from that meeting.

Peter Mountford (our new Chairman) thanked John Sturgeon, Mark Govier and Michael Ettershank for all their work on the Committee and welcomed Eddie Pope (Membership), Ben Palmer (Results) and Norah Jagers (non-Committee Trophy buyer).

Plans are being made to try and have some Training days in 2021 to encourage non Comet Association members to join in.

The 2020 membership are able to have a 50% discount on their 2021 membership.

The 2021 Dinghy Show has been cancelled but there was talk of having a virtual one to be organised by the RYA.

The Hossell Trophy was presented (sent in the post) to Craig Harrison of Ogston SC for encouraging the Comet fleet at his Club.

The Norah Jagers Trophy is to be presented (probably by post as well) to John Windibank for his articles in Perihelion 130.

The National Championships are to be held at Bala in 2021 as had been planned for this year over the August Bank Holiday.

The Association Championships are to be at Winsford SC - date to be finalised.



Ideas for the Comet 40th Anniversary celebrations were discussed. These will be announced if we are able to go ahead with them.

We are having meetings in December and February to keep on top of plans for next year. All details will be put on the website and Comet Facebook page so keep looking on the sites for information.

That's all from me for now.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year and lets hope we can meet up soon.

Liz Hossell



STOP PRESS

2021 RYA Virtual Dinghy Show 27th-28th February 2021

The RYA have confirmed that the 2021 Dinghy Show will go ahead in a virtual format on the original dates. The show will include the usual programme of talks and stands. As the show is virtual it will be free to enter and you don't have to travel!

Registration to the show is now open via the RYA website at

<https://www.rya.org.uk/dinghy-show/Pages/home.aspx>

The Comet Class Association will have a presence, so as in previous years we are looking for volunteers to be on the stand for a few of hours over the weekend. This will involve answering queries and talking to visitors just like the normal Dinghy Show. However, in this case communication will be via chat (i.e. text) with the option of voice or video conferencing. If you are interested please contact Chris Robinson.

The show will, hopefully, return to its normal format in 2022 at its new venue at Farnborough.

Chris Robinson robinsoncm69@gmail.com

If the show moved to a virtual format the RYA would have to pay cancellation fees to Farnborough. Not surprisingly they were unable to make any predictions on what COVID-19 restrictions might be in force at the time of the show. The RYA took a straw poll of the exhibitors present and the largest vote was for the virtual format with only a few votes for a postponement. This was hardly surprising as the Southampton Boat Show, BOATS2020, had been cancelled due to new COVID-19 restrictions the day before it was due to open the week before. The RYA then went away to undertake further consultations and then announced about a week later that the Dinghy Show will go virtual in 2021.

The date of the 2021 Show remains unchanged, 27th - 28th February 2021. There are no details of the virtual format at present, although there will be opportunities for class associations to be part of the show.

Chris Robinson

Builder's Report

I'm writing this late November and in theory you're reading this some time before Xmas. Anything could have happened (and probably has!) in the meantime but I'll recap on the past year and plans for the next from the Comet Dinghies viewpoint.



Three new boats have been delivered in the year, two to Chipstead and I've just delivered one to Bowmoor in the Cotswolds. Chipstead have always had a reasonably big active fleet of Comets but they have really pushed the Comet and the new rig. When new Comets have gone to the club, to existing owners, they try to keep their old Comets in the club boosting the fleet. Ladies especially have taken a shine to the Comet there, encouraged by the RYA's "Ladies who Launch" training scheme, but Chipstead re-branded it "Women on Water". Almost the whole active Comet fleet have now converted (or bought new) White Xtra's with a few reefing versions as well.

I can't stress enough that the White Xtra has kept us "ticking over" this year. We have also been grateful for any government help including the furlough scheme. I'm fully aware that sailing dinghies aren't "essential items" but are part of our leisure time, which is in it's own way, I think, essential for a meaningful life.

Talking of sails, we still have plenty of the original Comet sails and the zipper version which is identical and just requires a cleat and block to be added to the mast. I was a fit twenty five year-old when I designed the Comet forty years ago, so it isn't surprising how that mast seems to have got heavier over time. The standard sail with a zipper's real bonus is you just undo the halyard and throw an overboom cover on (oh, and take the rudder off). Not all white Xtra's have had overboom covers though, maybe Father Christmas will bring one!

Looking forward to next year, I hope to go to some of the new open

meetings like Nottingham and Ogston and of course the Nationals at Bala. Well done to the committee and the clubs for endeavouring to get these organised.

Sailing Comets may not be “essential” but its damn good fun!

Andy



RYA Dinghy Show 2021

By now you have probably heard that next year’s RYA Dinghy Show will be a virtual show, with the show returning to its usual format in its new home at Farnborough in 2022.

At the beginning of the year, before COVID-19, the committee agreed we would have a stand at the 2021 Dinghy Show as we did this year. The RYA usually sends out applications for exhibitors in June, but this year they only asked for expressions of interest and delayed the applications. The Comet Class Association expressed an interest and waited for the application form. The date was continually pushed back and the RYA started the organisation of the show based on the expressions of interest. This was not surprising given the COVID-19 situation. In September the RYA held a webinar for potential exhibitors which I attended on behalf of the Comet Class Association. The RYA explained that if the show was to go ahead in its usual format they would start incurring costs, so a decision had to be made now on whether to go ahead. They had three options for the 2021 show:

Continue with the show in the original format on the original date.

Postpone the show until the end of June.

Move to virtual format.

For the first two options to go ahead they would need a minimum number of exhibitors to sign up. As the RYA runs the show on a not-for-profit basis they explained that if the show went ahead in its usual form but was then cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions they would only be able to return the unused portion of the deposits and fees paid by the exhibitors.