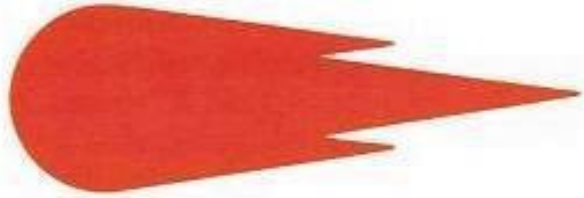
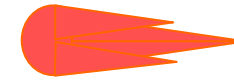


# PERIHELION 138



## Comet Class Association

Affiliated to the Royal Yachting Association



And where are we going this weekend?

© Rachel Vaughan-Jones

### **Perihelion 139**

Please send your contributions for the next issue of Perihelion by

***May 28th 2023***

To Nigel Fern  
3 Cheltenham Drive  
Ashby de la Zouch  
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LE65 2YE

[newseditor@cometsailing.org.uk](mailto:newseditor@cometsailing.org.uk)

***Comet Class Association  
Newsletter***

***Spring 2023***

## ***NEWSLETTER NUMBER***

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### **RACE RIGGING KIT**

185.00

(New Kicking Strap, Outhaul & Downhaul)

All blocks are ball bearing, control lines in 5mm Dyneema,

14:1 Kicking Strap, 4:1 Outhaul and Downhaul, Shockcord on Boom

### **ECONOMY RACE RIGGING KIT**

(New Kicking Strap, Outhaul & Downhaul Ropes)

Same idea as above but with extra plain blocks and 5mm pre-stretched smooth polyester rope.

Uses existing kicker blocks. Full instruction diagram included. Add more power to your controls and smarten up your Comet!

If you are not sure about the state of your existing rigging, you are welcome to send us photos, or even send it to us and we will advise on what needs replacing. We will also re-thread your kicking strap correctly!

#### Kit for Comet up to 517

75.00

3 x Single Blocks, 1 Becket, all Rope & Shockcord

#### Kit for Comet 518 and later

70.00

Shackle, 1 Becket Block, 2 Small Blocks all Rope & Shockcord

**Comet Dinghies, Unit 4, Valley View Farm, Ashreigney, Chulmleigh,  
Devon. EX18 7ND Tel.01769 520545 / 07860 847845**

**email: [cometdinghies@btconnect.com](mailto:cometdinghies@btconnect.com)**

**website: [www.cometdinghies.com](http://www.cometdinghies.com)**

5mm Pre-Stretched Colour Polyester (neon yellow with - black, blue, silver or red flecks)	1.45
4mm Pre-Stretched Colour Polyester (yellow, neon yellow with black flecks)	1.10
5mm Dyneema Grey with - blue, red or green flecks	2.50
White with – blue & red flecks	2.50
Blue	2.50
4mm Dyneema Grey	1.70
6mm Shockcord (black)	1.45
50mm Toestrap Webbing (black)	2.40

### CENTRE MAINSHEET - please ask for more details

<b>CONVERSION KIT</b>	from approx. £80.00.00 - £130.00
<b>NEW SIDE DECK CLEATS</b>	65.00
Large camcleats, wedges and fastenings	
<b>NEW SWIVEL JAMMER</b>	175.00
with adaptor and fastenings (excludes block)	
<b>DECK RACE BLOCKS</b>	70.75
Allen Ball Bearing (Kicker, Outhaul & Downhaul)	
<b>MAST &amp; BOOM RACE BLOCKS</b>	34.30
Allen Ball Bearing (Boom & Mast Outhaul)	

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## Editorial

The new season is upon us with Nottingham SC holding the first Comet Open of the year on Sunday April 16<sup>th</sup>. Peter, in a recent email, reminded me that I had omitted to publicise the full programme of events in previous years so for this years program please see page 7.



This winter has been, as usual, very quiet for me so quiet that I had not seen my Comet from late last year until late February this year!

This initial edition is a bit on the thin side as no-one has sent in any 'over-winter event' reports, it was a bit on the chilly side so I cannot complain especially as I stayed in the warm!

Ben Palmer has kindly sent in some very useful 'Hints and Tips'.

Peter's and Andy's reports contain comments on the Comet's PY which we would like your comments on. In a recent Update I requested your views on the proposed venue for the 2024 National Championships, to date I have only had a hand full of replies far too few to assist the committee to make a decision.

Perihelion 122 was my first edition as your NewsEditor and if everything goes to plan, that is if I get enough material sent in, Perihelion 142, will be my last. I will be resigning from the Committee at the AGM and from my post as NewsEditor once the final edition of Perihelion for 2023 has been published. Hopefully, giving my replacement time to get their head into gear.

Please note that the NewsEditor has, traditionally, been a post outside of the Committee but I was already on the Committee when I took on the role. If you are interested in taking it on please get in contact.

Nigel Fern  
Comet 845

Padded Toe Strap	25.00
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### COVERS

Comet Flat Top Cover	129.00
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Comet Xtra Mast Up & Overboom Cover	159.00
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Bottom Cover	139.00
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Spar Bag	75.00
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Daggerboard and Rudder Bags (pair)	100.00
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### TRAILERS & TROLLIES

Combination Road Trailer - including trailer board	825.00
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Launching Trolley - to fit above	320.00
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New Lightweight Aluminium Trolley – to fit above	420.00
--	--------

Comet Trailer Board Bracket	49.00
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### ROPES (price per metre, phone to check latest colours available)

7mm New Lightweight Mainsheet – white/silver	2.30
--	------

9mm New Lightweight Mainsheet - white/silver	2.95
--	------

8mm Black Polypropylene Mainsheet (rear main 10m, centre main 12m)	1.80
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6mm 8 plait Matt Polyester (black)	1.35
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6mm Pre-Stretched Colour Polyester (black, red, blue, yellow)	1.65
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Allen Ball Bearing Triple Block with Becket	51.17
SeaSure Plain Bearing Triple Block	29.07
SeaSure Plain Bearing Triple Block with Becket	31.25
<b><u>SHACKLES</u></b>	
Small Bow shackle	2.58
Captive Pin shackle	2.50
Twisted shackle	4.74
Deluxe Key Pin shackle	4.61
Inspection Hatch with “O” Ring & Screws - Grey	12.00
“O” Ring	3.89
Storage Bin for Hatch	16.00
Boom Pin	8.50
R Clip for Boom Pin	1.50
Doorstop Kit for Daggerboard (Doorstop, nut, bolt & bush)	9.50
Gelcoat Kit (one colour)	17.50
Gelcoat Kit (two colour)	22.50
Praddle, Single-handed Paddle	15.00
Little Hawk Wind Indicator – Mast Top	14.00
Little Hawk Wind Indicator – New Type fits at boom height	18.00

## Chairman's Report

### Chair's mutterings

At the time of writing (3<sup>rd</sup> week in March), the start of the 2023 Comet sailing season is very nearly on us. For those of you, like me, who haven't sailed through the winter, now is the time to check over your boat and make sure that everything – for instance, fixtures, fittings, control lines - are all in good working order.



Our first Committee meeting of the year was held via Zoom spread over two evenings in mid-February. The main points are given in the Secretary's (Liz Hossell) Report in this Perihelion. Andy Dale had kindly agreed to join the Committee as a co-opted member and it was a pleasure to welcome him to his first meeting.

We had another successful stand at the RYA Dinghy and Watersports Show and I would like to thank Chris Robinson for the hard work he put in to ensuring its success. I would also like to thank those members who helped to support the stand over the two days of the show and Andy Simmons for lending us the brand new boat Comet No. 904 (“Whip Out The Walnut”) to display on the stand. Displaying the Prostate Cancer UK logo on Nick Baber's sail was a first for the Association. It provided a talking point for our stand visitors and we were pleased to be able to display the boat and sail.

I commented in my last Perihelion report that the disappearance of clubs from the Open Meeting circuit and the appearance of new ones seem to be part of the annual cycle and this coming season is no exception. Littleton and Attenborough have always provided such memorable and enjoyable events and it is regrettable that neither club will be hosting an event in 2023. However, it is a real pleasure to welcome Bowmoor, Eyott and Shustoke Sailing Clubs as new venues.

Championship venues and the attendant difficulties in finding a club

willing to host such an event have been the subject of the Committee's attention, particularly the possibility of staging the 2024 National Championships jointly with the Byte class at the Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy, with the entry fee cost per registrant likely to be £105. In his recent March Newsletter, the Editor (Nigel Fern) invited members to send in their views on this venue and the likely overall cost. Please let him know what you think.

If you need reminding of the benefits of renewing your Association membership, then I would encourage you to read the excellent letter from our membership Secretary (Steve Gregory) in that Newsletter. Similarly, if you have considered coming to an Open Meeting but are still hesitating, then read the footnote to Steve's letter which gives all the encouragement you need to join in the fun on the Open Meeting circuit.

Andy Simmons designed the Xtra rig (White Xtra, Reefing White Xtra, and original Mylar Xtra) to have the same overall average performance as the Standard sail. The Association always asks clubs organising Open Meetings and Championships to use one PY number for all rigs (including the Mino rig) and encourages clubs to use just one PY number for their club races. He has provided a further coverage of the topic of a single PY number for all rigs in his Builder's Report in this edition of Perihelion. This matter has been raised by more than one club in the light of the recent publication by the RYA of a different PY number for the Xtra on their limited data sheet. It will be discussed at our next Committee meeting in May, particularly the strategy for approaching the RYA about this issue. The Committee would like to hear your views before this next meeting. Please send them in to Liz Hossell.

My 3-year term as Chairman seems to have flown by and will come to an end during the AGM at Ogston at the end of August. I am very pleased indeed to inform you that Eddie Pope has offered to take over as the next Chair. This proposal has the full support of the current Committee and together with the membership of next year's Committee and the new arrangements to cover his current role, it will need to be ratified at the AGM.

Having been stranded ashore for the last season, I am looking forward to

RWO Large Ball Bearing Becket Block for lower rear mainsheet & centre main	17.37
RWO Large Plain Bearing Becket Block for lower rear mainsheet & centre main	13.54
Allen Medium Ball Bearing Block to fit boom for 14-1 Race Kicker & Race Deck Blocks	15.62
RWO Medium Plain Deck Block	7.13
RWO Medium Old Style Deck Block (Comets up to 517)	7.13
RWO Medium Swivel Block for Standard Riley Ratchet Block & Central Deck Block	12.83
Allen Small Ball Bearing Block to fit lower mainsheet blocks (fits 5mm Mainsheet Horse)	12.52
RWO Small Plain Bearing Block to fit lower mainsheet block (fits 5mm Mainsheet Horse)	6.39
Selden Large Ball Bearing Top Mainsheet Block	31.49
RWO Large Ball Bearing Top Mainsheet Block	14.82
RWO Large Plain Bearing Top Mainsheet Block	9.98
Outhaul Block and S Hook (including clew tie down rope)	21.50
As above with Race Block	26.80
<b><u>KICKING STRAP BLOCKS</u></b>	
Allen Ball Bearing Triple Block	46.21

Rudder Uphaul/Downhaul Rope & Shockcord	7.00
Daggerboard & Toestrap Shockcord & Plastic Tube	5.00
Rear Toestrap Shockcord & Plastic Eye (as fitted to new Comets)	5.00
Mast Loop & Plastic Tube.Single for standard, twin for race kicker	5.00

### **DECK CLEATS**

Allen Deck Camcleat inc.mounting wedge, front & rear fairleads, screws – each	35.00
Standard Deck Clamcleats each (now black anodised, sharper)	8.19 each
New Fairlead Cage for above Clamcleat – each	12.80

### **BAILERS**

Plastic Bailer	59.00
Small Metal Bailer	69.00
Large Metal Bailer	89.00
Drain Plug	3.12

### **BLOCKS**

Allen Automatic Ratchet Block	75.29
(No becket available! For rear mainsheet use a new becket block on bottom & put ratchet block on boom with small bow shackle)	
Selden Large Ball Bearing Becket Swivel Block for lower rear mainsheet	37.78

the packed programme of events over the next 6 – 7 months. However, the last 6 – 7 months have also been quite busy for me:- I have moved house (yes, again!), acquired an adorable, lively, energetic, 4-month old rescue puppy, underwent double coronary artery bypass graft surgery and most important of all, Mary and I got married!

Peter Mountford  
C864

### **Events Calendar**

April 16th - Nottingham SC  
April 22nd - Burghfield SC

May 6th - Fishers Green SC  
May 7th - Hawley Lake  
May 20th - Eyott SC  
May 21st - Up RiverYC

June 10th - Chipstead SC  
June 17th - Silver Wing SC  
June 25th - Cransley SC

July 15th - Redditch SC  
July 16th - Shustoke SC  
July 22nd - Baltic Wharf SC

August 5th - Mundeford SC  
August 20th - Carsington SC  
August 26th to 28th - National Championships - Ogston SC

September 2nd - Severn SC  
September 3rd - Merthyr Tydfil  
September 16th - Crawley Mariners SC  
September 23rd to 24th - Association Championships - Bowmoor SC  
September 30th - Redesmere SC

October 1st - Winsford Flash SC  
October 8th - Bristol+Avon SC  
October 14th - Staunton Harold SC

## Secretary's Report

Just a few notes from Meeting of the General Committee on 14 February are as follows:

Peter Mountford welcomed Andy Dale to the Committee

Membership for 2024 suggested to increase by £2 across the board. There hasn't been an increase since 2018. Suggested Full & Associate Membership: £22, Junior: £12, Family: £28, Temporary: £12. To be put as a Motion for the AGM.



Liz informs the members that the AGM could be at any time on the designated day and contact her beforehand if going to attend.

There are 21 Open meetings and 2 Championship events. An Open at Eyott SC is being held in 2023 for the first time over the same weekend as Up River SC. (20/21 May) to be included in the Aphelions and put into the Southern Area. Arrangements are being made for the weekend to involve camping over at one of the venues. Look out on the website for more information.

Shustoke SC and Bowmoor SC feature for the first time in the Comet programme.

Littleton SC and Attenborough SC have both decided not to have Opens this year.

Nationals 2024 It was reported that it was becoming tricky finding suitable large venues which offer 3 days to hold our National Championships at a reasonable cost and arrangements needed to be agreed well in advance. There is an opportunity to join in with the Byte Class Association at Weymouth and Portland National Sailing Academy on weekend 26-28 July 2024. The costs quoted were £35 per boat per day. W&PNSA would recommend a minimum of 50 boats between the two classes. The committee have decided to put it out to the members of the

You will not be able to fit the new mast top extension as the mast will not then fit through the standard sail sleeve. A standard boom can be used with Xtras and White Xtras.

### SPARS – Black Anodised

Mast Plug (state if bottom mast plug required)	1.00
Standard and Mino Top Mast	100.00
White Xtra Top Mast - with top extension & block	125.00
Standard Bottom Mast	190.00
Standard Bottom Mast – Race Rig	195.00
Mino Bottom Mast	190.00
Xtra & White Xtra Bottom Mast – Race Rig	200.00
Xtra Halyard- 4mm Dyneema 10m	17.00
Boom – Race Rig, Standard or Xtra or White Xtra	170.00
Extra Charge for Centre Mainsheet Boom	20.00
Daggerboard - GRP foam filled	265.00
Rudder Blade – GRP foam filled	220.00
New Style Stock & Tiller – Silver or Black	245.00
RWO Telescopic 30"-48" Tiller Extension	75.00
RWO Black Standard 36" Tiller Extension	39.00
Tiller Extension Joint, SeaSure - Silver Ext. RWO-Black Ext.	6.00



## COMET SPARES PRICE LIST

**FEBRUARY 2023**

**Payment can be by credit or debit card, bank transfer or cheque.**

**This list doesn't include everything! Please phone if you are unsure of the parts needed.**

Postage and Packing – Royal Mail at cost  
Overnight Delivery for sails P.O.A

### **SAILS (including numbers and battens!)**

	£
Comet -Original Standard	440.00
Standard Sail with Zipper	460.00
Zipper Sail Conversion Kit - This includes halyard, cleat, top extension & block	49.00
White Xtra Dacron Sail	460.00
White Xtra Dacron Sail with Reefing (sail only)	475.00
White Xtra Dacron Sail with Reefing (including extra fittings)	520.00
White Xtra Conversion Kit - This includes halyard and parts needed to convert your top mast with the top extension & block and shorten your bottom mast and boom.	55.00
White Xtra Mast Top Conversion. New top extension & block (for current Mylar Xtra rigs)	22.00

To continue to be able to sail as a standard Comet you will need a Xtra bottom mast. The original top mast may fit and can have a small block shackled on for use as an Xtra or White Xtra.

Association whether this is something they would support and attend and discuss at the meeting in May.

Please give your feedback to the Committee.

Nigel Fern asked that more up-to-date images were needed for the website and more content of what sailors have been up to during the winter break.

Peter Mountford will be standing down from the Chairman position and Eddie Pope has agreed to be our new Chair as from AGM in August. Eddie will still be organising our Open meetings. This has the support of the Committee and will need ratification at the AGM

That's all for now. Looking forward to the first Open meeting at Nottingham SC on 16 April.

Liz Hossell

## ***Builder's Report***

I'm writing this late in March and just about to head off up North for a delivery trip. A repaired Comet is going back to Nottingham and a White Xtra rig for another member.



A new Comet was delivered for a seasoned Comet sailor at Redesmere on the Sunday morning, then up to Shotwick, a lake near Chester for a first time to drop off a White Xtra rig. A couple of weeks earlier a new Comet went to Chipstead and another new one is due to go there in April.

The Dinghy Show doesn't get any easier! Maybe it's an age thing. Nick Baber's eye-catching new Comet was on display and I would imagine a picture is in this newsletter. I was on my mini "trade stand" where I was able to sell my wares or a few of them, but we did commandeer a table in the RYA exhibitors lounge to put sail numbers on a White Xtra sail for a Thornbury SC member. That must be an interesting place to sail, on the Severn estuary upstream of the Severn bridges.

My little stand was meant to be directly opposite the Class stand but somehow got moved down a bit so wasn't as obvious to Comet sailors as it might have been. Next year, I'll probably resort to sitting on the Class stand offering words of wisdom and advice.

I've left it to last, but I must say my piece about the current discussion of PY numbers and Comet rigs. For those unfamiliar with the background and history behind the new rigs I'm hoping that Nigel has reprinted my standard info sheet on the White Xtra. **{See immediately after this report –Ed}** I really tried very hard to design the Mylar Xtra and later the White Xtra to be as equal as possible to the original Comet rig. In fact, it would have been quite easy to design something significantly faster!

I wanted to give the Comet an upgrade making it easier to rig and sail, and giving it a more up to date image. There has definitely been more

Gybing, Roll in anything but strong winds.

- Lean back, allow tiller to move.
- Pull in armful of mainsheet to force the sail over, release immediately.
- Flatten boat and centre tiller as soon as the sail moves.
- Don't keep the kicking strap tight. This normally causes the end of the boom to hit the water and results in a capsize.

Ben Palmer

Use the kicker to take pressure off the main sheet and bend the mast. Light wind I use a lot (third green mark on my boat), medium winds I ease slightly (Second white mark on my boat), Stronger wind lots (third green mark on my boat).

I only use the Cunningham if fully hiked all the time upwind. With older sails just pull to take out creases and release again.

Outhaul setting 75mm to 100mm (about 4 fingers gap between the sail and boom) at full belly in most conditions. Tighter in stronger winds if fully hiking and overpowered. Older sails will need more tension as they stretch.

### Downwind

Board up, hand on the top to push it down and stop the “death roll”.

Ease main right out past the mast.

Kicker eased.

Outhaul off.

Heel to windward (away from the sail) so you don’t have to steer to stay in a straight line.

Tiller on opposite deck and hold down so it doesn’t move. Be careful not to hold the end of the tiller extension as a rogue wave can catch it and push the tiller causing a capsize.

Tacking, try to roll tack unless in strong winds when staying upright is more important.

- Allow the boat to lean away from you.
- Ease the main slightly. This makes it easier to get under the boom.
- Allow the sail to come over then stand up and move across the boat.
- Hook under the toe strap and flatten boat.

interest in the Class in recent years, just try and find a secondhand Comet!

Until quite recently I thought all Comets raced on the same PY. They did at Championships and Open Meetings but evidently not in some clubs’ handicap racing. Some of those clubs then inform the RYA of the numbers they are using.

Looking at the Class Measurement Rules. Rule 2.f. states basically that a Comet may be rigged with various rigs. There’s a bit more to it than that but I take that to mean that the Class of dinghy, the Comet, is still the same class with whatever rig, and surely one Class should have one PY.

Lasers, RS Aero’s and Bytes do have multiple rigs of varying sizes using different PY’s, but they were designed with totally different intentions to the Comet rigs which were designed to sail as equally as possible, on the same PY.

Our new 2023 Spare Parts Price list is now available. As ever, we pride ourselves on offering value-for-money but there have been inevitable price rises. There is a very limited number of sails at last years price, but since the Dinghy Show they are going fast. All of our suppliers have put their prices up and in most cases we have had to pass these on.

Anyway, Spring has finally sprung and I look forward to seeing some of you out and about.

Andy Simmons.

## **White Xtra & New Reefing Sail**

It is now five years since the White Xtra was introduced with over 120 sails sold. Designed to fit an existing Xtra rig, the new sail is made with conventional white Dacron sail cloth but uses the same radial cut with battens and zipper as the Mylar Xtra.

Like the original Xtra the new rig makes the Comet easier to sail for lightweights and beginners with its' shorter and lighter mast. Using a zipper luff sleeve and a halyard lets you keep the mast up and use an overboom cover for far quicker rigging.

We tried to make the original Mylar Xtra equal to the standard Comet in overall performance but the fact that it was of smaller area meant that it was a bit slower on a dead run where an efficient shape isn't so important as pure sail area as the dinghy is simply being pushed along by the wind. To counter this, we have made the new sail a bit bigger in the luff and foot and dropped the boom a bit with a longer leech.

The new sail will fit a Mylar Xtra rig but to get a bit more boom height a new fitting can be fitted to the top of the mast to gain a bit of height. I reckon this new sail is about 6.25 sq. m midway between the Mylar Xtra 6.00 sq. m and the standard Comets' 6.5sq. m.

2020 saw the introduction of the final Comet sail, with 60 already sold! It is a reefing version of the White Xtra where the sail area can be reduced to 5 sq. m, similar to a RS Aero 5, Laser 4.7, Topper, or the old Mino rig. The sail incorporates second clew and tack eyes and a new higher sail window.

Long, long ago, back in the last century when Comet only had the one rig, you were able to reef them by winding the sail round the mast. The experts didn't bother or didn't need to but for those less experienced or confident, it allowed them to get out and survive. Often at Championships the wind would get up on the last day and the reefed sail would let them get out and enjoy the race.

Quite rightly the Class Rules forbid changing rigs during an event so

Add bungee to the rear of the toe strap. Use thicker bungee at the front of the toe strap.

Raise the centre mainsheet block higher. Add an extra shackle or rope strop to lift the block. This will reduce the chance of any control lines getting caught in the block and seizing up the system.

If your mainsheet twists at the back add some bungee to stop the bottom block fully rotating. The block does need to move but not twist completely.



Strap down the clew of the sail separately. I have a rope and bobble secured to the boom. This holds the sail down lower to allow you to bend the mast more. This is an extra step to rig.



Clean the hull and check for scratches. This does make the boat faster.

## **Sailing the boat.**

### **Upwind**

Keep the boat flat even if letting the mainsheet out is the only way. If you let the sail out bear away from the wind slightly.

Keep your weight forward. If you are sat on the side you should be at the front of the nonslip. In light winds sit on the centre board case. In strong winds when fully hiking move back to the widest part of the boat. If you sit further back you will unbalance the boat and make it harder to sail.

In Medium/ strong wind sail block to block on mainsheet. This can help to flatten and depower the sail.

If using a Hyde sail use a longer shackle at the top of the mast. The left-hand shackle below is the standard, the right-hand shackle is what I use.

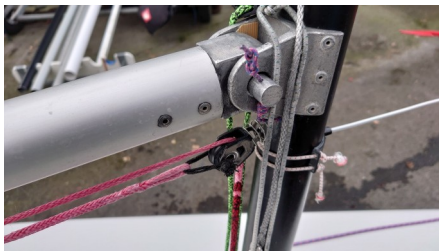


If you have a centre main system, you should be able to use the tiller behind your back. My tiller extension is 1.1M. Do check the length you need as some of the tillers are different lengths and need a different tiller extension length.

#### Items to make the boat easier to sail

Mark the centre board  $\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{3}{4}$  and 1. A permanent marker works fine. Fully up should leave the curve of the centre board showing. The top of the board will also miss the boom.

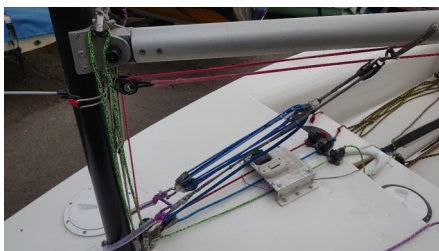
Secure the boom pin with a thin piece of rope. I had an “R” clip pop out.



Add bungee to the outhaul. Crossing this under the boom centres the system and allows the sail to set the same on both tacks.



Mark the kicking strap so check what settings work for you. I have added whipping every 25mm along the single line. For each setting I line the top triple block up with the coloured whipping.



anyone using an Xtra cannot change to anything smaller, until now. Although the Xtra's are easier and steadier to sail they are still powerful and can be hard work for the beginner or lightweights in a blow.

To reef, the sail is lowered about 2' and the downhaul and outhaul re-attached. The “unused” part of the sail is neatly rolled up. Unlike my bigger dinghies we used to build, you can't pull the reef in on the water. The Comet isn't that sort of dinghy, you would come ashore in between races to do it. They say the devil is in the detail and a lot of thought has gone into the finishing touches.

As with the Mylar Xtra, the original bottom mast and boom can easily be shortened to create the new rig.

Sail only £460. Sail and conversion kit £515. Plus £60 for the reefing version.

**For the almost full Spares list please page 24.**



## RYA Dinghy and Watersports Show 2023

This year's RYA Dinghy and Watersports Show was held at Farnborough International Exhibition Centre on 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> February. As in previous years the Comet Class Association had a stand while this year Comet Dinghies had their own stand just across the aisle.

This year we had Nick Baber's brand new boat, delivered direct to the show, on the stand. Nick has recently recovered from prostate cancer and so he has been given an exemption by the Committee to put the Prostate Cancer UK logo on his sail. We used this sail, which provided some additional interest. Nick has agreed to explain more about his experience in a Perihelion article, so I'll let him do the talking then. No doubt you will have an opportunity to see the sail this year, especially if you are from Nottingham SC, Nick's home club. The official show photographer seemed quite interested in photographing our stand, so maybe will appear in some of RYA's future photos?



We had plenty of volunteers from the Association to help on the stand:  
Saturday: Nick Baber, John Coppenhall, Mark Govier, Henry Jaggars, Norah Jaggars, Mick Parnell, Chris Robinson.  
Sunday: Nick Baber, Andy Dale, Steve Gregory, Ben Palmer, Eddie Pope.



In addition, Sarah Jane Critchley moonlighted from the Graduate stand next door for a while and Peter Mountford was able to join us on the Saturday.

## Comet Training Notes

### How I rig my boat.

Essential items to rig the boat up to be fast,

A 12:1 kicking strap is necessary to sail the boat well. The lower mast is very stiff and needs a lot of force to bend.



Tighten the mainsheet horse. Multiple purchase between the two eyelets works best. This allows the boom to set in line with the aft corner. The boom needs to be set at the correct angle to the centreboard upwind. If the horse is slack the boom will move to the centre of the boat.



Mark the outhaul position. I add tape to the boom so I can set the position the same each time. The gap between the boom and sail should be around 4 finger widths. My outhaul sets to the forward black mark (as in the photo) upwind, the green and yellow on a reach and rear black mark downwind.



Add a stopper knot to all the control lines and main sheet to the maximum eased position. I have my outhaul and kicking strap so I can release the outhaul as I turn on the run and adjust later if needed.

Two stencils were produced which I painted with white emulsion stuck on the side of a Comet, took pictures and sent them to Andy for selection and positioning. At this point I realised that the Prostate Cancer UK web address was not on the boat, the only place was the boom which Andy and Gerald sorted out between them with Prostate Cancer UK.

Chris Robinson got permission from the RYA and all the pieces came together at the Dinghy Show. When the sail was unrolled it became clear why Gerald had requested a late design change. The change of the design strategically positioned the tell tails on some of the Man of Men figures. Let's just say when the sails are set perfectly several of the men are very happy!!! The boat was at the show for two days and only a handful of people spotted that aspect of the design.



Given the conversations that occurred at the show I believe the boat succeeded in raising awareness. There are ongoing discussions with the RYA on how they can help to raise awareness. Comet 904 has its own Facebook page which tells my story, provides links to important sections of the Prostate Cancer UK web sites. There are also some A4 posters, with a QR code, that can be printed off and displayed in sailing club changing rooms. The boat may also make an appearance at my Golf Club on its charity day.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Association, Comet Dinghies, Oceanart and Prostate Cancer UK for making it happen and the support from my own club, Nottingham Sailing Club during the last 12 months.

Nick Baber – Comet 904

Many other people helped too, Andy Simmons brought the boat up and along with Nick Baber set up the stand on the Friday. Paul Hinde supplied the display boards and Henry Jagers provided the literature and the photos for the display boards using photos taken in the main by Norah. Ben also organised the breakdown of the stand when illness prevented me going to the show on Sunday.

The show seemed busier than last year, but this may be as this is the first show since 2019 not to be impacted by Covid in some way. The number of exhibitors was similar to 2022, with a few new or returning Associations, and a few Associations dropping out. As in previous years there were talks throughout the show on a variety of topics, although this year I didn't get around to going to any of them!

Next year's show will be 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

Chris Robinson  
Comet 63 & 867

## **Whip Out the Walnut from the beginning - well almost!**

By Nick Baber

As some of you will know in early 2022, I was diagnosed with prostate cancer. After a lot of research and discussions with my medical team I elected for surgery, with post operative PSA results indicating a successful outcome. I was a little naïve, I had no symptoms, Covid got in the way, I did not realise the risk. I have been very fortunate. I was annoyed with myself that I was unaware of the risks even though the information is out there if you search for it.

I had the operation at the beginning of August, the surgeon was very pleased with the result but I was still annoyed that I got in the situation. While sitting in hospital I had the idea of a dinghy with branded sails sailing on the Trent. I discussed this with my better half, Adriana and she though it was a great idea. She was rather puzzled when I told her the boat would be called “Whip Out the Walnut”. I explained the prostate gland was a walnut sized organ that sat just below the bladder and I had just had mine Whipped Out. Her response “You can’t call it that” - decision made!

You get kicked out of hospital the following day and I was on the phone to Andy to discuss the idea. After the initial shock we discussed who could brand the sails, he suggested contacting Bainbridge who suggested Oceanart. Andy had obviously got his sales patter just right when he said “you don’t have to buy a new boat just buy the sail and brand it”. At the time my daughter, Hannah and I had two Comets between us. Hannah’s 402 with grey hull, colour not suitable, and my old 83 with blue hull but very tired. I needed a new boat and if we were going to brand the sails the branding should include the hull, “Prostate Blue” more commonly known as Cyan would be the colour. Andy now calls it “Brilliant Blue” the new standard colour.

The fun then started. I contacted Gerald at Oceanart who was very happy to develop the design but need information on the “Man of Men”, colours and fonts for the wording which the Prostate Cancer UK design team provided. He also required information on the sail layout. I potentially

wanted to brand the Comet and my Lark. I laid the Comet sail on the lawn measured them up and directed him to the Lark Association rule for the Lark sail dimensions. He then developed the initial designs, at this point we realised there was a big problem with show through on the “Man of Men” which completely destroyed the design. Printed patches were discussed and quickly dismissed after a quick discussion with Andy. The only option was to use a reversed image on the back side of the sail.

There followed a number of discussions with Prostate Cancer UK around the copy-write on “Man of Men” logo, but when they realised the problem dispensation was given to reverse the image. We finally had the initial design. I contacted Nigel Fern requesting dispensation to brand the sails on 904 as an agenda item at the AGM. This was approved at the committee meeting at Staunton Harold, Chris Robinson contacted the RYA for approval to display the boat at the Dinghy Show.

Oceanart produced the final designs, version 7, which were approved by Prostate Cancer UK. The sails were sent to Oceanart for painting. I was then contacted by Gerald as they had spotted an issue with the design and needed to “move things around a bit”. A bit strange after all the checks that had occurred previously. A new design was submitted to Prostate Cancer UK which was duly approved and the sails painted.

Attention then moved to the hull and the “Prostate Blue” Gelcoat. A sample was obtained and colour checked by Andy and Karen against swatches that Karen printed off and the printers Cyan ink cartridges and gelcoat approved. Andy decided to double the number of mixes used to coat the hull to ensure there was colour consistency. {For those not in the know Karen does the work and Andy just supervises – Ed}

Next was the name, Prostate Cancer UK asked if we could use their fonts. The question was how big, upper or lower case and where to put it on the hull? Oceanart developed two designs following conversations with Andy.

