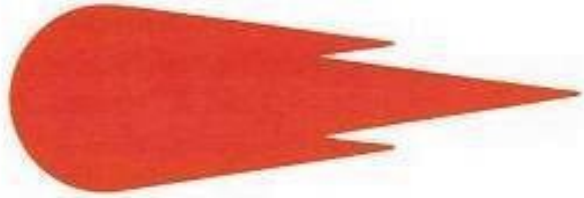


PERIHELION 140



Comet Class Association

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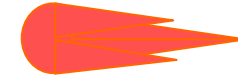
Perihelion 141

Please send your contributions for the next issue of Perihelion by

September 10th 2023

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The place to be in August

**Comet Class Association
Newsletter**

Early Summer 2023

NEWSLETTER NUMBER 140

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Unfortunately Chipstead SC and Baltic Wharf SC have not sent in Reports so here are the results.

Club		Chipstead Sailing Club								
Date		10/06/2023								
Boat No.	Helm	Age Category	Club	R1	R2	R3	O/A	Pos		
886	Guy Wilkins	Ancient Mariner	ChSC	1	2	1	2	1		
864	Peter Mountford	Ancient Mariner	SHSC	13	1	4	5	2		
867	Chris Robinson	Veteran	BrSC	6	3	2	5	3		
869	Bob Dodds		CMSC	2	5	3	5	4		
123	Louise Curry		ChSC	5	4	5	9	5		
323	Annette Walter	Adult	WGSC	4	9	6	10	6		
174	Meg Warren		ChSC	3	11	9	12	7		
701	Issac Dodds		CMSC	8	6	DNS	14	8		
890	Marion White		ChSC	11	8	7	15	9		
430	Chris Sutton		ChSC	12	7	DNF	19	10		
700	Nick Mumford		ChSC	10	10	9	19	11		
383	Cliff Webb		ChSC	17	12	8	20	12		
903	Simon Pratt	Ancient Mariner	ChSC	9	13	11	20	13		
893	Richard Salmons		ChSC	7	15	15	22	14		
232	Lorenzo Coelho		ChSC	21	14	14	28	15		
703	John Dean	Ancient Mariner	LiSC	18	23	13	31	16		
868	Helen Evans	Veteran	SWSC	14	17	17	31	17		
828	Ian Forsdyke		ChSC	20	16	16	32	18		
892	John Taylor Ingle		ChSC	15	19	20	34	19		
677	Kay Mathieson		ChSC	19	18	19	37	20		
466	Angie Forsdyke		ChSC	24	21	18	39	21		
399	Zuzi Ledger		ChSC	16	RTD (24)	DNS	40	22		
475	Iain Tytler		ChSC	23	20	21	41	23		
14	Cath Linney		ChSC	22	22	DNS	44	24		

Club		Baltic Wharf Sailing Club									
Date	08/07/2023										
Boat No.	Helm	Age Category	Club	Sail type	R1	R2	R3	Total	O/A	Pos	
377	Eddie Pope	Ancient Mariner	OgSC	Xw	1	1	3	5	2	1	
597	Ben Palmer	Adult	BWSC	S	2	2	1	5	3	2	
800	Henry Jagers	Ancient Mariner	BeSC	Xw	3	4	2	9	5	3	
864	Peter Mountford	Ancient Mariner	SHSC	Xw	4	3	5	12	7	4	
867	Chris Robinson	Veteran	BrSC	Xw	5	5	4	14	9	5	
294	Mark Pilgrim		BWSC	S	6	DNF	DNS	22	13	6	
28	Richard Walker		BWSC	S	DNS	6	DNS	24	15	7	
1	Nicole Neo		BWSC	M	DNF	DNS	DNS	25	16	8	

Club Shustoke Sailing Club

Date 16/07/2023

Boat No.	Helm	Age Category	Club	Sail type	R1	R2	R3	Total	O/A	Pos
377	Eddie Pope	Ancient Mariner	OgSC	Xw	1	3	2	6	3	1
597	Ben Palmer	Adult	BWSC	S	4	4	1	9	5	2
840	Cole Briscoe		ShSC	Xw	5	1	4	10	5	3
815	Dave Turtle	Ancient Mariner	ShSC	Xw	3	2	3	8	5	4
867	Chris Robinson	Veteran	BrSC	S	2	5	5	12	7	5
698	Nigel Wilkins		ShSC	Xw	6	9	7	22	13	6
694	Alun Bevan	Adult	MTSC	Xw	9	8	6	23	14	7
311	Stephen Bellamy	Ancient Mariner	WFSC	Xw	7	7	10	24	14	8
845	Nigel Fern	Ancient Mariner	SHSC	Xw	10	6	9	25	15	9
705	Martin Loud	Ancient Mariner	WFSC	Xw	12	10	8	30	18	10
864	Peter Mountford	Ancient Mariner	SHSC	Xw	8	DNC	11	33	19	11
852	Zara Frankton		ShSC	M	11	RTD	DNC	39	25	12
800	Henry Jagers	Ancient Mariner	BeSC	Xw	DNC	DNC	DNC	42	28	13

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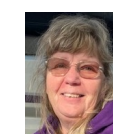
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Editorial

Our annual holiday caused me to miss the Silver Wing and Cransley Opens, I have heard good things about Silver Wing and hopefully I will get to visit in the future. As for Cransley, if you don't come away from there with a smile on your face you have an even weirder sense of humour than I have! From the report see later it would seem that I dodged a bullet as the wind was possibly beyond my skill level - I suppose I could have reefed! That's the beauty of having a reefing White Xtra.



Like a number of you I had got myself geared up for a West Midlands double only for the Redditch Open to be cancelled because of the weather forecast but Sunday at Shustoke was a real pleasure. Shustoke SC have an open water with few trees to cause sudden shifts together with a centrally positioned club house to give spectators a good view of the action. On arrival I found a queue of Comets awaiting entry, Peter Mountford made the queue even longer before Andy Simmons received the gate code and we all filed in. For once I got on the water early and managed a practise lap and formulated a plan. This plan worked for the first two marks, 2nd place behind Eddie, after which I sailed into a hole, got passed by just about all of the fleet then allowed Steve Bellamy to get me as windward boat and right to the back I went!! Enough said!

With the Nationals coming up I hope to get some shifty wind practise in at the rearranged Redditch Open. This is a tree lined water with the ensuing problem of the shifts caused by the wind making its way through them. The following day at Carsington will bring some much needed big open water experience.

Nigel Fern
Comet 845
ps NA - where were the photos??

Cole Briscoe led at the first mark from Dave with the rest of the fleet closely bunched behind. As the race progressed Eddie worked his way through to challenge for second place but was held off after a close tussle all the way to the finish. Meanwhile Cole had established a comfortable lead to take first place.

There was then a well-earned break while competitors and supporters enjoyed various baked potatoes and plenty of cakes provided by Dav and the team. There was another downpour during lunch which resulted in a short delay to allow the storm to pass.

A change of course for the final race added to the growing excitement with any of four boats able to win the event at this stage. However, at the first mark it was Ben Palmer (Baltic Wharf) setting the pace and went on to extend his lead throughout the race. Eddie and Chris had a long battle for second which left Chris in a wind-shadow allowing Cole and Dave to slip past on the last lap.

So, three races with three different winners but, after the number crunching, Eddie was a clear winner on three points with the next three boats all on five points. Ben claimed second place by virtue of his win in the last race and Cole third by winning the second race.

The day was concluded by prize-giving and a very welcome afternoon tea to sustain the visitors on their way home. Thanks went to the race team, safety crew and galley without whom these events just wouldn't take place. In conclusion, a successful event providing enjoyable and exciting racing from both on and off the water.

Dave Turtle



© David Reade

Comet Open Meeting at Shustoke Sailing Club

Shustoke Sailing club hosted its first ever Comet Open on Sunday 16th July. There was some doubt, in the days leading up to the event, whether or not the meeting would take place due to the forecast of high winds and thunderstorms. However, the decision to go ahead was agreed and turned out to be correct with the wind having moderated overnight to a pleasant force 3-4 blowing straight down the 100+ acre reservoir. It was going to be a good sailing day!

The club is located close to Coleshill in the West Midlands with excellent motorway links and attracted ten visiting boats from across the country. There were representatives from Baltic Wharf, Beer, Burghfield, Merthyr Tydfil, Ogston, Staunton Harold and Winsford Flash. Also, we were honoured by a surprise visit of the Comet designer and builder, Andy Simmons.

The Comet event was run successfully alongside normal club sailing using the same course with a five-minute interval between starts. There were two back-to-back races before lunch followed by a third race in the afternoon. The race team set some excellent courses making full use of the lake; there were no general recalls and on the few occasions where penalty turns were required, these were done without a fuss so often evident in some other classes!

The first lap of the first race saw several different leaders with close racing throughout the fleet as sailors became accustomed to the conditions. There were many place changes on both the upwind and downwind legs but on the second lap Eddie Pope (Ogston) was out in front and maintained that position to take first race honours. After many place changes, Chris Robinson (Burghfield) claimed second place and Dave Turtle (Shustoke) third. A sudden squall towards the end of the race swept through the fleet but everybody survived the gybe. However, nobody could escape the torrential rain which, thankfully, didn't last too long.

At the start of the second race there was a slight shift in wind direction giving port bias to the start line and the home boats took full advantage.

Chairman's Report

I find it hard to believe that my three year term as your Chairman finishes in just a few weeks' time and that this is my final report for Perihelion. I want to thank the members of the Committee individually not only for the hard work they have put into their individual roles and into dealing with the regular business of the Committee over the last three years, but also for the support and advice they have given me which has made my job so much easier.



As well as expressing my thanks in general terms, I am going to follow Clive Chapman's example in his final Chairman's Perihelion report (P111), and give my thanks individually:-

For providing administrative support to the Committee, for generally making sure things happened as they should and for regularly providing advice on the end of a telephone, thank you Liz.

For handling the finances and keeping the Association financially sound, thank you Rhian.

For handling all aspects of membership applications and records, thank you Steve G.

For organising the programme of Open Meetings and Championships and liaising with each club, thank you Eddie.

For editing and producing Perihelion, the monthly Newsletter and managing the website, thank you Nigel.

For collating, recording and analysing the results of all the events, thank you Ben.

For organising the stand at the RYA Show, being a continual source of advice on the Constitution, giving us the benefit of his

experience as a past Chairman, and managing the Facebook accounts, thank you Chris.

For choosing and buying the Trophies, thank you Steve B.

For volunteering to join the Committee in the last year and for your help in the running of the Association, thank you Helen and Andy.

After being marooned on the shore for all of last season, I have been determined to enter as many events as possible this year and I have managed to get to all ten Open Meetings held so far. It was a pity that a second event (Nottingham being the first) - the Redditch Open - had to be cancelled because of the forecast strong winds, but fortunately the club was able to rearrange it quickly for a date later in August.

During these ten events, I have been reminded of Clive's description of the Comet Class Association as being a dynamic organisation, and I believe it continues to warrant this description. The process of the loss of a few venues for various reasons each season being replaced by a similar number of exciting new places to sail continues year-by-year, and already I have sailed at three venues which have appeared on the circuit just within the last two years. Similarly, it has been a pleasure to meet new Comet sailors who have decided to try out their skills at an Open Meeting.

I have experienced a wide range of wind conditions at these ten events from next to nothing (and what there was, alternated between widely different directions!) at Hawley Lake and Baltic Wharf, to "blowing a hooligan" at Cransley. A stand-out memory for me was the first race at Shustoke when, on rounding the leeward mark on the last lap, the universal joint on the end of my tiller extension snapped apart leaving me sitting near the back of the boat clutching in one hand the main tiller and in the other, the mainsheet whilst spilling wind because I could not sit out, and waving the tiller extension with this other hand at any passing Comet! Luckily for me, Andy Simmons was at the club to deliver a repaired boat, and he fitted a new joint in time for me to sail the third race.

(with these 2 being arch rivals during club racing for many years!). None of the Cransley sailors had read the Notice of Race or Sailing Instructions and thought that if you were tied on points then the one with the better discard would prevail. Well behind close doors and upon reading the SI's, it was noticed that Rule A8 had been inserted at some point in our history (witch hunt started immediately), and that Ben was therefore the winner (well done!). At the prize giving this needed to be explained as Arran exploded with uncontrollable joy when he was wrongly announced as having beaten David, only for the race officer to cruelly reverse this (timing was perfect, John!) when Rule A8 was pointed out, the joy was transferred to David – a truly comic moment.

Great sailing and such a great fleet with fun, friendliness and fair play. Also great to see along with all the visitors, Andy Simmons, the Class builder/designer.

Nigel Austin

Club		Cransley Sailing Club										
Date		25/06/2023										
Boat No.	Helm	Age Category	Club	Sail type	R1	R2	R3	Total	O/A	Pos		
597	Ben Palmer	Adult	BWSC	S	5	2	1	8	3	1		
875	Nigel Austin	Ancient Mariner	CrSC	Xw	2	1	2	5	3	2		
377	Eddie Pope	Ancient Mariner	OgSC	Xw	1	4	4	9	5	3		
867	Chris Robinson	Veteran	BrSC	Xw	4	3	3	10	6	4		
323	Annette Walter	Adult	WGSC	S	6	5	5	16	10	5		
800	Henry Jagers	Ancient Mariner	BeSC	Xw	3	RTD (9)	RTD (8)	20	11	6		
864	Peter Mountford	Ancient Mariner	SHSC	Xw	7	6	6	19	12	7		
64	Arron Britton		CrSC	S	10	7	7	24	14	8		
724	Rhiain Bevan	Adult	CrSC		8	RTD (9)	DNS (14)	31	17	9		
48	Gretta Davies		CrSC	S	9	RTD (9)	DNS (14)	32	18	10		
718	David Hodgson		CrSC	S	11	8	DNS (14)	33	19	11		
18	Tim Hawkes		CrSC	S	12	RTD (9)	DNS (14)	35	21	12		
904	Nick Baber	Ancient Mariner	NSC	Xw	13	DNS (14)	DNS (14)	41	27	13		

Cransley Comet Open

Sometimes it takes a while to find the words to describe things/events – Cransley Sailing Club's Comet Open is one such instant. It happened on 25 June 2023 with 7 visitors and 6 home sailors fortified by some wholesome breakfast butties, taking to the water. Unfortunately for some it was literally that for a lot of the day. Having cajoled a couple of club sailors (one sails a Wayfarer and one a Laser) to take part as they were "easy boats to sail", the wind decided to test this theory to the limit with a building Force 2-3 for Race 1 ending in a Force 4-5 by Race 3 – their antics provided much entertainment for those watching over the course of the day!.

The racing itself was both close and frantic wherever you were in the fleet, with a superb performance from Henry Jaggars in the first race pushing Eddie Pope and myself (Nigel Austin) before accepting 3rd. Even the delicious pasta bake lunch could not provide the staying power in Race 2 when 4 retired and 1 decided to observe. The result was a win for yours truly after half a dozen changes of lead with Ben Palmer, with the high wind specialist Chris Robinson coming in 3rd. The course set by the duty officer John Townsend was ideal for testing every element of sailing these wonderful dinghies and they were flying at times – even for me at 94kg! With the fleet reduced to 8 at the start of the 3rd race, there was a chance of glory for Ben, Eddie or myself, however the wind was unrelenting and Eddie was unable to challenge from the off. Ben had a great start and despite getting close at some stages, Ben's nerves of steel held to with Chris 3rd and Eddie 4th. At this stage it should be mentioned that Annette Walter sailed very consistently throughout the day, with the only other 2 to finish all 3 races being David Hodgson and Arran Britton – the Laser and Wayfarer sailors respectively (showing dogged determination despite capsizing over 10 times each over the 3 races).

Exhausted everyone retired to the clubhouse for a welcome afternoon tiffin – and the highly contentious prize giving! Now Cransley is a great family club and rules and racing come 2nd to having fun and a bit of banter, however once everyone started totting up the points in their heads, thoughts of stardom occurred. We had Ben Palmer and myself on the same points after discard and further down the field, David and Arran

We are very fortunate to have a builder who is prepared to travel round the country at weekends, delivering new and repaired boats, sails, spars, and goodness knows what else, and also to provide practical support at open meetings and championships, especially at clubs new to the circuit – on behalf of the Association, thank you Andy, for all that you do!

Talking of Championships, I hope to see you at Ogston which is the venue for this year's event to be held over the August Bank Holiday weekend. The AGM will also be held there - this is your chance to have your say about any issue. In particular, the Committee wants to know your views about publications and communication with members, and about the issue of Comet PY Number(s). Both these items will be included for discussion at the end of the agenda. Don't forget the Association Championships to be held at Bowmoor on the 23rd/24th September. It is a joint event with the Byte class and should prove to be a lively and sociable event.

Also at the AGM, Nigel Fern retires from the Committee after 9 years membership and will step down from his role as News Editor at the end of the season. I should like to thank him for making so many effective contributions to the business of the Committee, and for all the hard work he has put into editing Perihelion, producing the monthly Newsletter, managing the website, and making such a resounding success of them all.

I would like to express my very best wishes for the future to the new Chairman and Committee.

For more than twenty years, I have derived an awful lot of enjoyment out of Comet sailing and out of the activities organised by the Comet Class Association. I am most grateful to the Committee and to the membership for giving me the opportunity to serve the Association and above all, to put something back in. The last three years have seemed to have shot past, but as is sometimes said, time flies when you are enjoying yourself, and that is exactly what I have been doing as the Chairman. To quote again from Clive's final report:- "I have had a blast".

Peter Mountford C864

Secretary's Report

The sailing season seems to have started a little breezy, hopefully not too much, but something we on the Committee cannot arrange! Sorry I haven't been able to attend many Open Meetings this year so far but fingers crossed looking forward to the Championships at Ogston.



A little reminder that the AGM will be on **Sunday 27 August** at Ogston Sailing Club. The meeting could be any time during the day so please, if you are attending the AGM and are not sailing, let me know so that I can inform you if there is a change of time. The usual time is an hour after the last race of the day but we have in the past had time in the day when it could have been held i.e. No wind first thing so sitting around. You can get in touch with me via email secretary@cometsailing.org.uk or mobile 07801 656662.

See you all at Ogston

Liz Hossell

Great care needs to be taken on getting the position and rake spot on. I used to avoid putting an inspection hatch in the deck but nowadays a white one put on the foredeck forward of the mast hole could help a repair. With the boat the right way up new GRP is added to the new mast tube and hull join, and with the boat upside down, new GRP could be put around the deck and mast tube join.

ANOTHER HOLE IN A COMET

In the past, Comets have taken their masts down when derigged. Invariably there is usually a bit of water in the tube, and I always recommend you wash it out with a hose now and then.

Nowadays with the introduction of Zippers on standard sails and the Xtras more masts are being left up, some all year round. Water from rain running down the mast and whilst sailing never goes. Weighing up the pros and cons I have started drilling a 4mm drain hole in the bottom of the boat dead central or alongside the keelband on older boats exactly 2664mm from the transom with a tape measure end hooked on the transom and the tape running alongside the keelband or down the centre. Pieces of masking tape can hold it in position. The hole will emerge towards the side of the mast base when viewed down the hole. An off-center hole helps the mast hole drain away from the bottom mast plug. When sailing, only a bit of clean water is in there lubricating the mast swivel. As soon as the boat is out of the water it drains away and stays dry. We are also drilling a 4mm hole in the side of the mast bottom plug just below the end of the tube to drain water in from rain and capsizes. RS Aero's have a similar hole in their hulls.

I apologize if this article has caused any panic but like me and you the majority of the fleet are getting on a bit and cracks are starting to appear! If you're worried, feel free to send me some sharp photos of your mast hole but even if it looks OK, I would check your wear in the bottom of your wear in the bottom of your mast tube using your bottom mast as described. Or even get me to have a look if you see me at your club.

REPAIRING THE WEAR

The boat must be levelled so that the mast tube is dead vertical. Using a 2' piece of wood, say 1 x 1/2" with a piece of rag wrapped round the end, the bottom couple of inches of mast must be cleaned. The rag can be wet but use kitchen paper to make sure it's thoroughly dry.

To repair this, you can pour a small amount of gelcoat resin neatly down the middle of the mast tube trying not to get it on the sides. This makes a new mast base (put a bit of masking tape on the hull if you actually have a hole through).

Use a 1" "throwaway" paint brush taped to the stick to paint a thin coat a couple of inches up the sides of the tube. Ideally this renews the bottom of the mast tube taking away most of the play and delaying further wear. Rather than paint the resin in the bottom up the sides, I would paint the sides first dipping the brush in the jar of gelcoat outside the tube and painting it on like painting rather thick gloss paint. Then pour the rest in but don't let it touch the sides at the bottom.

Sometimes too much resin is put on the sides, or the resin sets too fast, and the bumps don't flow out. The day after, check the resin has set hard and see if the mast goes fully in. It should be obvious when it's properly in but if it's tight to twist and not fully down it needs to be sanded in there. We have and can supply pieces of tube with sandpaper on or a "cutter tube" to sort this.

Another ideal would be to fit a 6" hatch in the foredeck, clean the inside around the bottom of the mast tube and surrounding hull and add an extra layer of GRP on the joint area. This isn't as easy as it sounds but can be done. I could make up a "kit" with all the materials, even protective gloves.

REPAIRING DECK MAST HOLE

When the mast tube breaks away from the hull, the damage around the deck hole is usually so large that after grinding back to sound GRP on the deck the hole exposed is big enough to get your arm in with an angle grinder to clean the inside of the hull before a new mast tube back in.

Builder's Report

I've recently collected a couple of repair boats including a Comet with a "downed" mast, from Shustoke. The pictures of this one showed the rig laid flat back on the deck, like a tired windsurfer! I was keen to get this one back in time for the Open Meeting, which was a reasonable turnout considering the forecast. That evening we carried on to Ely (a lovely town we'll visit properly some time) to collect another Comet where the mast had done a similar thing. This weekend I'm heading to Chipstead where I'm bringing back an elderly Comet with, you've probably guessed already!



I've just finished a revised version of an article I wrote a few years ago, it should be in Perihelion (It is! See page 14) or on the main Class website. It basically describes the problem, causes and prevention and repair, but if the worst happens it's usually a 12-hour repair so it's worth reading!

Business wise, apart from the repair work, things aren't as busy as in recent years, which is understandable. White Xtras are still selling but a lot of the "active" Comets now already have them.

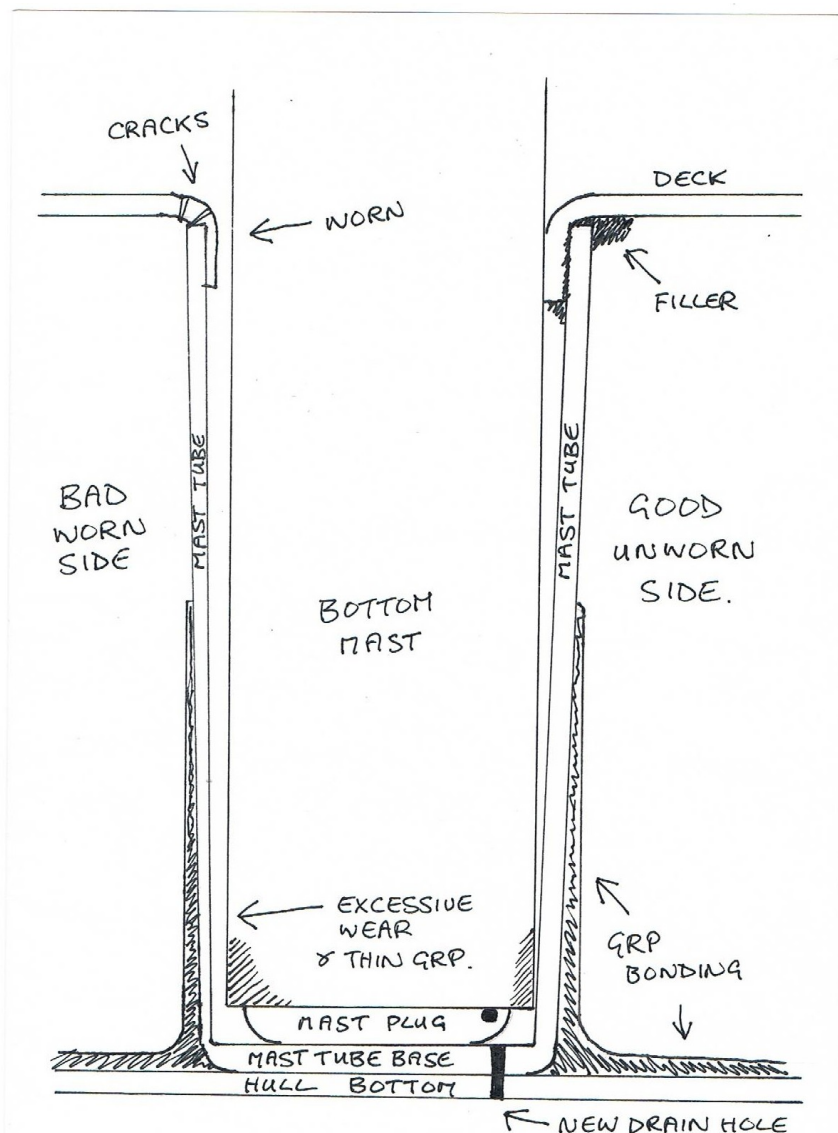
Talking of White Xtras or Comet Xtras brings me to the PY "problem" but I shouldn't really call it that. In the Perihelion before last, I said my piece and I still stick to my opinions.

I sometimes wonder if I shouldn't have called it Xtra or even had the x on the logo! (Only half-joking). This was done for marketing reasons rather than refer to it as "that different shaped Comet sail".

As the designer and only builder of the Class I feel quite strongly that they are all raced on the same PY. I'm assuming the Class Association feel the same and are asking all the clubs racing Comets to treat the different rigs the same with one PY number.

My next trip will be to the Nationals at Ogston via Ely. If anyone wants any bits brought up to save the postage do let me know. To send a new sail currently is £50!

I still have a new Comet in stock and if it's still here in September, you'll find me sailing it somewhere near the back at Bowmoor.



The hull side can also be damaged if the mast falls sideways 45° or even more.

Excessive wear in this area can be weakened by the boat blowing off the trolley with no apparent damage, but the final “break” usually happens after a slamming capsized or even a very hard gybe.

If a boat is left all winter, or more, nose down, with a gallon or two of water in the bows, this water seems to “stew” going stagnant and slowly softens and weakens the hull/mast tube bond.

If your Comet stays dry inside, then fine but it can get in around the hatch if nose down, so I would always prop the nose up to allow a bit of drain out of the drain bung.

CHECKING MAST TUBE BOTTOM WEAR

Put bottom mast in and using a couple of thin wooden wedges, a disassembled wooden springy clothes peg is ideal, jamb them in the gap between mast and deck to take up any play. With your hand on the mast 15” above the deck, check how much the mast moves side to side and fore and aft. The movement of the mast 15” above the deck is the same as the play or wear at the bottom of the mast. Even on a new boat there has to be some play but if the mast can move more than 6mm or ¼” total side to side etc. then I might worry.

Don't forget that if the bottom 3 – 4” of the mast is worn then that will show as play as well.

The mast can also wear downwards especially if it's lost its mast plug. Eventually the mast can wear a hole right through the bottom of the hull. This can give a false reading when checking for wear as the mast has effectively worn a new tighter hole. The standard depth for the hole is about 15”, so if it measures 15 ½”, lift the mast up ½” when checking for wear.

COMET MAST HOLE

With the vast majority of Comets being built way back in the late 80's and into the 90's we are beginning to see a few age-related problems on some of these older Comets.

The most important one of these is the mast hole at the deck and the bottom of the mast tube.

The drawing shows a cross section of the mast tube in a Comet. It's actual size in width but not in height! One half shows, in theory, how it is when new, the other shows how it wears.

HOW THEY ARE BUILT

The bottom of the mast tube is bonded into the bottom of the hull with a jig when the hull is still in the mould. When the deck is bonded on to the hull, there is an overlapping join with filler at the deck hole. On later boats 450? onwards there is a flange on the top of the mast tube for extra bonding area plus the front screws of the downhaul and outhaul blocks pass into this flange as well.

HOW IT WEARS

Depending on how clean the mast tube is kept, the mast will always wear through the anodizing at the bottom and around the deck hole area. This shouldn't cause alarm as the metal mast tube is 4mm thick. If a Comet's here for repair and even if the mast deck hole isn't damaged, I will often paint a new coat of gelcoat around the deck hole if it looks worn with the GRP showing instead of gelcoat. This sometimes needs a bit of sanding to get the mast back in! Don't forget there will always be a bit of play as the unworn part of the mast has to go through.

Even if the deck hole looks fine, it's a good idea to check the wear at the bottom of the mast tube as serious wear here can have disastrous results! Basically, the mast wears the GRP tube so thin that the tube becomes detached from the bottom of the hull and the mast tilts over maybe 10 or 20 degrees causing a lot of damage to the deck.

Silver Wing Comet Open

Saturday 17th June saw Silver Wing SC hold its second Comet open meeting. We welcomed fourteen competitors from as far away as Ogston SC (Derbyshire), Baltic Wharf (Bristol Docks) and Beer SC.

The forecast was for a light wind from the East, but on arrival it was very light, and from the North. The plan was for four races - two 40 minute races back-back either side of lunch. With the wind not looking like shifting the course was set with what we had. The wind however, had decided to be sneaky. It shifted right just as the fleet started, allowing the fleet to almost lay the first mark on starboard. Eddie Pope in 377 led round the first mark, followed by Carol Butcher in 614 and Ben Palmer in 597. By the end of the first lap Henry Jaggars in 800 had pulled up into third after a poor start and was in second place by the end of lap 2.



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By this time Eddie Pope had pulled out an unassailable lead. We did, despite the wind's best efforts still have a beat - just not on a leg that had originally been set as a beat. This, plus the instability of the wind, kept the rest of the fleet close together and gave lots of place changing, Steve Gregory in 231 and Carol Butcher in 614 gaining many places by sailing over a number of boats in a gust.

By the end of lap 3 it was Eddie Pope first, Henry Jaggars second and Peter Mountford in 864 third. With that done it was time to shift the entire course by about 60 degrees. With the



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AP up the committee boat escorted the fleet to the new leeward mark while the rescue team shifted the two windward marks. This, with luck, would be the course for the rest of the day.

This time the first beat decided to stay a beat. Eddie Pope was first round the windward mark again, followed by Peter Mountford and Annette Walter in 323.

The wind promptly went soft on the first run, but then filled in on the second beat. This kept the fleet nice and compact, and Eddie Pope was not able to pull out anything like the lead he had in the first race. The front of the fleet stayed pretty much as it was for the second lap, at which point it was decided it was time for lunch. Eddie Pope won again, Pete Mountford second and Annette Walter third.

After lunch we re-convened for race 3 at 2pm. The wind appeared to have settled in overall direction, but was still patchy and shifty. The committee decided to keep the same course as race 2.

Jolly good as they say, however the wind was still unstable, resulting in a rather annoyingly port biased start line. Pete Phillips in 695 was observed doing a 720 as a result of the bunch at pin end. The wind then settled back giving a nice even first beat.

Once again Eddie Pope was first to the windward mark, followed by Peter Mountford, Ben Palmer and Helen Evans fourth in 868. A gust then filled in from the left side of the run, shuffling the middle of the pack and creating a nice bunch at the leeward mark. The wind then backed right making the



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second beat rather one sided. With the wind settling in strength if not direction we were able to get 3 laps and 40 minutes out of this race.

Eddie Pope won his third race, Henry Jaggars second and Ben Palmer in 597 third. As soon as the last boat had finished the committee boat team, keen to use the wind, were straight into the start sequence for race 4.

As with race 3 the line was port biased, but with the wind veering back to its mean direction during the beat. For the first time during it was not Eddie Pope round in first, that honour went to Peter Mountford. This didn't last long, and by the end of the first lap Eddie Pope was back in first.

The wind had appeared to settle, giving everyone two good beats, however it died towards the end of the 3rd lap so it was decided to call it a day and send everyone in for an afternoon tea of scones and cake. Eddie Pope won the race and the event with four firsts.



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Adam Wickenden

Club		Silver Wing Sailing Club												
Date		17/06/2023												
Boat No.	Helm	Age Category	Club	Sail type	R1	R2	R3	R4	Total	O/A	Pos			
377	Eddie Pope	Ancient Mariner	OgSC	Xw	1	1	1	1	4	3	1			
800	Henry Jaggars	Ancient Mariner	BeSC	Xw	2	4	2	7	15	8	2			
864	Peter Mountford	Ancient Mariner	SHSC	Xw	3	2	5	3	13	8	3			
597	Ben Palmer	Adult	BWSC	S	4	5	3	2	14	9	4			
323	Annette Walter	Adult	WGSC	S	5	3	4	6	18	12	5			
614	Carol Butcher	Ancient Mariner	HLSC	Xw	6	8	10	4	28	1	6			
400	John Sturgeon	Ancient Mariner	HLSC	Xw	8	12	6	5	31	19	7			
231	Steve Gregory	Ancient Mariner	NSC	Xw	7	9	7	9	32	23	8			
868	Helen Evans	Veteran	SWSC	Xw	11	6	11	8	36	25	9			
695	Peter Phillips		SWSC	Xw	12	7	8	11	38	26	10			
879	Joanna Loveland		BWSC	Xw	10	11	9	10	40	29	11			
904	Nick Baber	Ancient Mariner	NSC	Xw	9	10	13	13	44	31	12			
703	John Dean	Ancient Mariner	LiSC	Xw	13	13	12	RET	53	38	13			
43	Charlotte Mendes Da Costa		SWSC	S	14	14	14	DNS	57	42	14			