

## Why Sail a Comet?

Nigel Austin. Perihelion 118

I have sailed a many different types of dinghies since I was 7 (now 54!) and have enjoyed all (although the Concept 302 which was not quite as expected). But what sets the Comet apart is that I do love sailing it in any condition thinking that I can eke out a result on handicap (although I think this is only on smaller waters from my experience). I am not the ideal weight but even that doesn't really seem to matter (certainly less so than with my other passion the D Zero), so why???? I have listed the key factors which I think are the reasons why it is such an endearing boat and will sustain its appeal for years to come:

- It appeals equally to all ages, weights and gender
- It is simple to sail – yet the complexity comes with when you want to go a little faster than others in a race!!
- It is an everlasting boat – in vehicle terms something like a landrover - in that as long as it is maintained it will keep going for ever (not too good on vehicles!) - but definitely not a rust bucket
- You can race in a friendly circuit and every now and again everyone can be up the front (and at the back), It still retains an element of danger when sailing in windy conditions – everyone seems to capsize

These are the reasons I can write down, but there is an X Factor that lies out there, that keeps me coming back for more – just can't quite define it (answers on a post card!!)

Nigel Austin 875

## Buying a Used Comet

Clive Chapman and Norah Jagers. Perihelion 110

We've recently been asked what a potential buyer should look at, so here are some suggestions:

Look at the hull to see if there are any obvious large repairs. Check underneath for scratching or evidence of having been "bounced" on a road trailer. Gel-coat cracking isn't usually a big problem as most will polish out, and the builder supplies repair kits in the appropriate colour for bigger chips.

If there's a keel-band, is it firmly attached? This is particularly important if the boat has been sailed off a beach.

The mast-step is one of the more vulnerable spots, so investigate inside, and look for evidence of twisting/gel-coat cracks around it. "Pour a cup of water into the mast step It should not drain away.

Look at the bailer. It should move easily. Beware of large repairs around bailer.

Check the rudder pintle - in older boats it sometimes comes loose and may need to be repaired. Hatches on the transom usually indicate a pintle repair. Not always a bad thing as it is the only way of getting the pintle area to do an effective repair.

Hatches on the fore seat area are useful and not a concern. A hatch on the foredeck is rare and would indicate mast step repair.

Obviously, you'd look at the spars to see that they're straight and that the rivets aren't too corroded (easy to replace). Salt water usage can corrode fittings.

A sail for cruising or club racing can last many years but if you wish to race and compete regularly a new sail will need replacing at least every three years.

Is the boat cover in good condition? If kept outside they will need replacing every five years.

Does it come with a combi- trailer or just a launching trolley?

Find out from the vendor what the boat's been used for. A boat which has been raced hard every week at a variety of clubs for 10 years is likely to have more battle scars than one which has used once a month at the home club. The vendor should be able to give you the log book which, if completed correctly, will give you a history for the boat and its owners.

Last, and not least, take a Comet sailor with you when you go to look at the boat, if you can!

Clive Chapman & Norah Jagers