



WINSFORD FLASH
SAILING CLUB

2021 Comet Class Association Championships



30 Comets competed in the 2021 Comet Class Association Championships hosted by Winsford Flash Sailing Club over the weekend of the 17th and 18th July 2021



2021 is also the 40th Anniversary of the building of the very first Comet Dinghy. We were delighted to welcome the builder, Andy Simmons to celebrate this event, who also competed in a brand new Comet, and a special birthday cake was cut in his honour.



Lucas Sproul (WFSC) in 746, well on the way to winning the 1st Youth Award and an overall 12th place.

Race reports

Saturday 17th July 2021

Competitors were met with radiant sunshine and glorious 28 degree temperatures at Winsford Flash for the 2021 Comet Class Association Championships. Race one start was delayed for lack of wind until the northerly filled in down the lake giving 3 or 4 knots by the time the hooter sounded in anger.

Race One

With the wind coming straight down the lake the 30 competitors had a wide choice of lines, and Bob Dodds of Crawley Mariners SC, Peter Mountford of Staunton Harold SC and John Sturgeon of Hawley Lake SC got the best of the scrap for the windward mark from the eastern side of the Flash after a massive lift from the committee boat end of the line.



As the fleet became strung out, Bob (869), consolidated the lead with a great downwind leg sailing by the lee, adding distance to a fiercely competitive chasing pack consisting of ten boats. In the middle of the fleet there was close racing between Pete Chambers and Steve Bellamy.



With the wind rising slightly to around 5 knots and light gusts working down the lake Bob took race one by some margin from Eddie Pope of Ogston in second and our own Pete Coop in third, a great third place having initially rounded the windward mark in 7th.

Race Two

The course remained the same after lunch and after the wind dropped again at the start it rose steadily through the race, with Peter Mountford and Pete Chambers making great starts, again on the Committee boat end of the line.

After a tricky initial leg the windward mark rounding order was Eddie, Bob and a strong start from another local competitor Jonathan Latham. Two distinct groups formed with 8 boats battling for the lead and the rest of the fleet fighting hard with some great battles all through the midfield.



Eddie Pope (377), followed by Bob Dodds, Charlotte Coop, Pete Chambers and Alan Bennett.

Local sailors Pete Coop, Pete Chambers and Steve Bellamy led the chasing pack and had a good dice on the upwind leg on the second lap, while at the front of the race Eddie pulled out a big lead as the breeze rose to around 6 or 7 knots before dropping once again to near zero setting all helms a real challenge.



Eddie Pope (377), lead boat to Mark 4, pursued by Bob Dodds (869) and Ben Palmer (867).

As Eddie Pope coasted over the line followed by Jonathan Latham, 7 boats battled it out for third place with honours going to Ben Palmer.

Race Three



After a short break the feast of Comet fun resumed in the third race, yet again almost unbearably hot, with 3 or 4 knots of wind at the start. First to the windward mark was Ben Palmer of Baltic SC with Henry Jaggers of Beer SC and WFSC's Charlotte Coop hot on their heels.



Eddie rounding mark 2, pursued by the following pack.

A leading pack of 6 boats developed with everyone else seemingly using the same piece of the Flash at the same time around the gybe mark at 2, the ensuing pandemonium saw a number of boats either doing turns or going back to round the mark.



The following pack hot on the heels of Eddie Pope



Mayhem at mark 2!

And a spectacular capsizes as Linda Shaw pushing hard downwind was hit by a gust that nearly caught out half the fleet.



After that the fleet spread fairly evenly but with good close racing right the way through and the second beat up to Four saw every millimetre of the Flash being used as competitors tried every imaginable line.



Eventually building another storming lead Ben Palmer took the honours from Pete Coop in second and Henry Jagers in third and the wind yet again changed down a gear as the fleet crossed the line. A great days racing in glorious sunshine.

Sunday 18th July 2021



Competitors awoke to another radiant day on Sunday with even more sweltering heat and no wind at all, not a breath of air to break the surface. Sadly racing was abandoned but it takes more than a cancelled race to dampen a Comet sailors spirits and with excellent speeches from CCA Chairman Peter Mountford, past chairman Henry Jaggers and of course the man who started it all 40 years ago, Andy Simmons who had travelled up from Devon with urgent Comet supplies.

It was an honour to have Andy Simmons at Winsford Flash Sailing Club and a pleasure to see him competing in Comet 896, 40 years after he created the boat we all love so much.



Andy Simmons giving Nigel Miller some rigging tips!

Ros Stevenson from Winsford Flash SC prepared a superb cake celebrating the event and the 40th Birthday of the Comet and finally the presentation of the winner's trophy to Eddie Pope of Ogston Sailing Club, a well deserved win after a consistent performance over the three races on Saturday.

The magnificent Comet at 40 Birthday cake prepared by Winsford Flash Sailing Club member, Ros Stevenson (who owns three Comets!), - the wording reads "Thank you Andy for 40 years of Comet Dinghies"



Eddie Pope with his winner's trophy and commemorative plate provided by the Comet Class Association.

Second place was taken by Ben Palmer from Baltic Wharf SC with a valiant third going to local sailor Pete Coop. Well done all, a great day of racing and wonderful to see the Flash filled with 30 Comets.



Ben Palmer on the water in Comet 597, finished the Championships in 2nd place



Pete Coop receiving his 3rd place award and Top Home Helm awards from Peter Mountford, Comet Class Association Chairman



Charlotte Coop receiving the 1st Lady Helm home award from Peter Mountford, Comet Class Association Chairman



The very impressive display of trophies, awards and momentos presented to the winners and all of the entrants by the Comet Class Association



Charlotte Coop from Winsford Flash SC in 877 finished overall in 9th place and on course to winning the 1st Lady helm home



Pete Chambers and Janet Gaukroger from Winsford Flash SC setting their watches ahead of the start of the first race.

Janet is one of the five home fleet lady helms who entered the Championships plus Catherine Whittaker from nearby Nantwich and Border Counties Sailing Club. The Comet is extremely popular with our lady sailors at Winsford Flash SC.

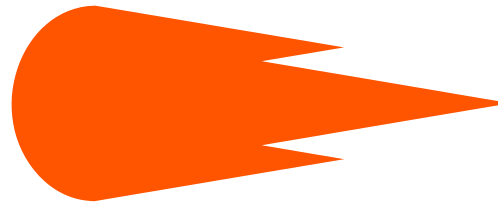
Many thanks and congratulations to all involved in delivering this event under considerable difficulties with a special mention for Winsford Flash Sailing Club Comet Fleet Captain Martin Loud whose tireless efforts and indefatigable spirit carried the whole Winsford Flash team through months of planning and re-planning.



Comet Class Association Championships Prizewinners

Congratulations to -

First Place	Eddie Pope
Second Place	Ben Palmer
Third Place	Pete Coop
Fourth Place	Bob Dodds
Fifth Place	Alan Bennett



Pete Coop	Top Winsford Flash SC Helm
Alan Bennett	Ancient Mariner
Jonathan Latham	Veteran
Charlotte Coop	1st Lady
Lucas Sproul	1st Youth
Lee Purslow	1st Newcomer
Roger Harrison and Dominic Oakshott	Race Committee Prizewinners

Complete Competitor List

Special thanks to all who travelled from far and wide to make this such a great event,

Andy Simmons 896 from the home of the Comet, Devon
 Allan Bennett 126, Nigel Fern 845, Peter Mountford 864 all from Staunton Harold SC.
 Bob Dodds 869 from Crawley Mariners SC
 Roger Harrison 382 from Redditch SC
 Henry Jagers 800 from Beer SC
 Paul Hinde 844 and Helen Leivers 857 from Severn SC
 Ben Palmer 597 from Baltic Wharf SC
 Eddie Pope 377 and Lee Purslow 190 from Ogston SC
 Chris Robinson 867 from Burghfield SC
 John Sturgeon 400 from Hawley Lake SC
 Catherine Whittaker 293 from Nantwich and Border Counties SC



And a great turnout from the home sailors -

Derek Armstrong	235
Steve Bellamy	311
Claudie Black	98
Pete Chambers	236
Charlotte Coop	877
George Coop	610
Pete Coop	47
Janet Gaukroger	697
Jonathan Latham	888
Martin Loud	705
Nigel Miller	727
Fiona Niddrie	745
Dominic Oakshott	321
Linda Shaw	643
Lucas Sproul	746



And a farewell from Comet sailors - see you next year for the Comet Open!

Link to Sailwave results

<https://www.winsfordflashsailing.com/comet-class-association-championships>

Race Report by Rick Hough

Photography by Colin Bosomworth @ Cheshphotography