

# THE COMET FLYER

Welcome to the late! September 05 newsletter. For many of you the badminton season is starting again, so, drop those tennis rackets and remember the score goes 1-2-3 not 15-30-40!!  
Enjoy - Jon Kendall

[www.cometsbc.co.uk](http://www.cometsbc.co.uk)

See the **Comets Time Line - back page**

Over the next few of issues, this high class glossy will be taking you through the history of Comets Badminton Club, from its birth in 1978 'til the present day. Can you remember when (or why) you joined? See the back page to see how the club has changed over the years.

## The Christmas Event

Fri 16<sup>th</sup> December

BEALES HOTEL

Drinks at 7.00pm

Dinner at 8.00pm

Dancing from 10.00pm

Dress code: smart/ casual

Cost: £42 per head



Places are limited but still available... see board to add your name, or to see who else is going



**Malta Trip Update.** The Queen and Prince Philip will be in Malta for the duration of the tournament. However they're unable to attend, due to prior engagements. When speaking with her majesty earlier, the chairman received this message for the players: *'One must remember that winning is only one part of the game and individuals should recognise the importance of taking part. However you must do your duty for the country, and bring back the trophy, at the double'*



**Tales from the big Chair:** Welcome back to all of our returning winter members! We are now a month into the new season, so here's a quick round up:

### o Court time in September

As previously mentioned, the committee booked additional court time in September to cater for the increased attendance that usually occurs in the first month of the season. It was good to see this working effectively with a much reduced waiting time between games compared to last year – though this was also partly due to the high number of our members who attended the County practice sessions on Thursdays. We will consider doing this again next year – so if you have any feedback, please pass it on to a member of the committee.

### o Herts Open and Restricted tournaments – how did Comets fare?

These tournaments were held on 17-18 September and 2-3 October respectively. In the Open, Kate Lester made it through to the finals of the doubles, before being beaten – see photo on next page. Congratulations to Kate for such an excellent result.

In the Restricted, entry levels from Comets were very high – in fact, in some competitions, we made up over a third of the total entries! Well done to Nick, Romana, Hannes and Ronel who all made it through to the second round in the mixed & level doubles. Next year, we will be lobbying for a plate competition – there was sufficient court time to hold it, and it would encourage a higher number of entries to the competition from a broader number of clubs. It would also have improved the chances of some Comets players getting some silverware!!

### o Social events

Many thanks to Razinah for organising the BBQ back in August. The sunny day may seem some time ago now, but it was good to see some old and new faces joining in – all present agreed it was a very enjoyable afternoon.

We have booked 30 places at the Beales Hotel for the Christmas Dinner on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December. It should be a fun evening, with dancing and the Comets Flyer awards to look forward to. So far, 28 people have signed up, so do hurry and put your name down if you would like to join us. The hotel still has some additional spaces we can book if there is demand, but time is running out...

### o Teams and matches

The season is now well underway with most teams having played their first games. The county league this year showed its highest level of entries for 5 years, with most divisions increasing in size. We have entered two extra teams this year (County Ladies II and County Mixed III) and so the opportunity for people to sub into teams is likely to be high – if you want to sub but didn't note this on your form, please let the selectors know so they can inform the captains.

The first home matches of the season were the CX1 v CX2 (won convincingly by CX1) and SWHX1 v Feathers (won by Comets). The games were followed by a post mortem & drinks at the Comets Hotel bar until 12:30am!!

See you at a club night soon – Tracy Barnard

### My Pet hates - losing the competitive edge

On the occasional time that I try, concentrate, and play as well as I can, I am troubled by my partners constant 'walk in the park' attitude. Let me be clear, on receiving serve, I normally play two consistent shots, a push to the back corners or sides, or a net shot. Take the net shot, on the odd occasion that I play it well, the opposition will have to lift to my partner (follow me so far) hence we are on the attack. Wrong! My partner hits a straight clear and gives them the attack back. At which point I want to pull my hair out, give a lesson on men's doubles tactics, and make my partner do 50 laps around the hall. **Know how I feel? If you have any pet hates please feel free to submit them (anonymously of course!) Email [agony.aunt@cometsbc.co.uk](mailto:agony.aunt@cometsbc.co.uk)**

One of Comets very own stars made it to the final of the Ladies Doubles Herts Open!! Unfortunately for Kate Lester than was as far as her glory went! Here she is in action, concentrating and playing an awkward shot.



## CLUB TOURNAMENT DATES

### Straight Tournament

Men's Doubles / Ladies Singles	13 Nov 05
Men's Singles / Ladies Doubles	6 Nov 05
Mixed	4 Dec 05
Finals Night	11 Dec 05

### Handicap Tournament

Men's Doubles / Ladies Singles	5 Mar 06
Men's Singles / Ladies Doubles	26 Feb 06
Mixed	19 Mar 06
Finals Night	26 Mar 06

**Web Update**, the website is still there, and will be undergoing serious change over the winter months. We have had a new site designed with a professional look and are happily taking pictures during club nights for it - you could be the star!

### Blonde Moments.....



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The World Championships 2005, provided some tricky situations for these two super players, just look at the confusion caused, imagine if they had to partner **Richard** (Don't worry girls; I have some photos of the men's doubles for the next edition!)

## The Player Profile

How much do you know about you fellow players? Over the coming months I shall endeavour to find out. Are you prepared to enter the hot seat? Or would you like to ask the questions?



The Player: **Karen Willis**

Membership: *Long time*

Favourite style of game: *Mixed*

Annoying Habit: *Length of time it takes me to serve*

Your strengths: *Serve*

Your Weaknesses: *Everything except my serve*

Number of grey hairs: *2 + 2 :-)*

Last thing bought on eBay: *A Kitchen waste disposal unit*

How long have you been playing: *30 + yrs*

Step forward or backwards after serve: *forwards, unless I flick serve*

What inspired (?) you to start playing? *My Mum and Dad*

Interesting fact about you – outside badminton? *I'm currently living in a caravan in my back garden.*

## Gossip Gossip Gossip and a few rumours...

- ? Congratulations to Dave & Helen Spring - just married, and honeymooned on Safari in Kenya (a few close encounters with rhinos, so I hear, 350 photos to see, just ask Dave!)
- ? Kate has a new tattoo!
- ? April Tavener has given birth to a baby girl, Olivia
- ? Graham has another fast car / fast woman or something! Not sure what, but he's grinning a lot these days...



### Ashaway T5 Classic Shaped Racket!

- ? The choice of the majority of Ashaway's sponsored team.
- ? Titanium 5, strung in Ashaway Micropower at 20lbs.

Special price - **£45** - for Comets Badminton Club members

Hand this voucher in at Goode Sports (01707 321 397) or the editor to take advantage of this great offer! **Valid until 31Nov05**



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## As requested by members some info on Tactics – this edition. **The Aggressive Return of Serve in Doubles**

All of us know that "hitting down" on the shuttle is the way to win in doubles. But do you apply this principle on the return of serve? Since you know the serve has to be lifted, there is no excuse for not aggressively returning serve so that your side has the offence. It is easy making points against opponents who lift the service, and likewise it is difficult playing against those who are always near the net and forcing us to hit up. In fact, remembering to "hit down" is simplistic; one should conceptualize and execute shots that force the other side to hit up, even when forced to hit up yourself. This little paradigm shift, from "hitting down" to "make them hit up," is the key to winning doubles and the key to effective returns of serve. Before the serve As you get set to receive serve, first note where each member of the serving team is standing. Their position and stance influence the next step, which is your decision on where to return the shuttle from each corner of your service box. Receiving serve prepared this way decreases your indecision and surprise should you be flicked; visualize what you are going to do. There are nine returns of serve to choose from.

1. Net shot down the line in the alley
2. Net shot to the middle in front of server
3. Net shot cross court in the alley
4. Half court down the line in the alley
5. Half court through the server's body
6. Half court cross court
7. Flat drive behind server partner down the line in the alley
8. Flat push to server partner's chest or face
9. Flat drive cross court

In general, establish your down-the-line and down-the-middle returns of serve before doing a cross court shot, which is only effective if the serving team is not expecting it. Cross courting while your side is up and back (as it should be when receiving or serving) is very risky since it exposes and surprises your own partner and gives the opponents a bona fide opening, as opposed to the illusory open space you think you are attacking when cross courting. Also in general, the half court to the alleys is the most difficult shot for the serving team to handle: this return is the one to develop.

Your goal here is not to win the rally outright with your return, but to hit a shot that makes the serving team lift to the back. Once you have done that, your job as a receiver is done, and the rest is up to your partner, who should be behind you and smashing. As the receiver, you can only do your job by maintaining control of the net, in other words, by remaining there and preventing the serving team from executing a net shot. Remember, they are trying to do the same thing as you are, namely, make you lift. Players who return serve and then hang back away from the net anticipating a clear over their heads are not playing doubles, but singles.

Written by Eugene Kumekawa ([www.BadmintonCentral.com](http://www.BadmintonCentral.com))

## Anger Management

As the new season and matches begin again, team members are reminded that, no matter what, they must **WIN!** Cheating cannot be tolerated, but good gamesmanship; (winding up the opposition, racket throwing, abuse, self abuse, picking on opposition serves, questioning their eyesight and parentage) whilst frowned upon, is within the rules and should be considered a potential tactic to ensure Comets wins every game.

If you are struggling to lose your cool, our experts Carl, Chris will be on hand most club nights, and the editor personally runs a racket throwing session at most home matches for no charge!!

## The Player Profile

How much do you know about you fellow players? Over the coming months I shall endeavour to find out. Are you prepared to enter the hot seat? Or would you like to ask the questions?



The Player: **Martin Gouldstone**

Membership: *About 7 ½ years*

Occupation: *A freelance in the pharma biotech industry – hence free to play badminton during the day!*

Favourite style of game: *One where I can run around like a madman*

Annoying Habit: *Annoying? Moi!*

Your strengths: *Talk for England*

Your Weaknesses: *Anything to do with connecting a shuttle to a racket*

Number of grey hairs: *None that I will admit to*

Fav person to partner: *Mel – she's very forgiving*

Fav opponent: *Paul K and Russell – they make me think!*

Last thing bought on eBay: *Hard top for my sports car – from an ex-Bond girl.*

Step forward or backwards after serve: *usually tripping up*

How long have you been playing? *Too long*

What inspired (?) you to start playing? *I used to be put against 3 opponents at once at school – teacher strategy to wear me out!*

## How you can be a star, at Comets... .

### Shuttles

As you may have noticed, we've improved the shuttle system. Please return your dead ones and knockers to the appropriate red bin before taking a new one. Shuttles left around the courts:

1. can cause accidents
2. mean perfectly good ones are wasted, so next year's subs rise
3. mean some poor sod has to pick them all up again at the end of club night, when they'd rather be going home or heading off for a beer

So please help us out on this one....

### Prize competition

We need a politically correct but eye-catching A4 sign for the "knockers" shuttle bin. There's a free drink for the best design, and another for the design which most amuses the committee. Email your designs to [graham.hall@talk21.com](mailto:graham.hall@talk21.com) (closing date October 31<sup>st</sup>.)

### Peg Board – Picking Games

When you pick a game, it's your job, not only to round up the other 3 players, but, just as importantly, to tell the next person who is to choose. If you've ever wondered why we have empty courts at club night, and you get fewer games than expected, the reason is that people pick a game, and then forget to do this. Please don't be one of them.

### Visitors

When picking a game, don't forget to include visitors rather than leaving them on the board to choose the next game. Leaving visitors to pick games is unfriendly and unfair – Imagine how you would feel... ? It also helps the selectors to make a better decision more quickly if we have feedback from members who have actually played with or against them.

Graham Hall

Coming in the next edition

⚡ Santa Claus! –on how to get a racket down the chimney without breaking it

⚡ Club History Continues We are going live! Web site update!

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The tournament results?

My interview with an SAS interrogator ... ..can't wait

NEWSLETTER: COMETSOct05

(send your comments and articles to [jkendall@dial.pipex.com](mailto:jkendall@dial.pipex.com))

# Comets Badminton Club – timeline

## 1978 – 1983: The early years

**September 1978** – Gosling Badminton Club is formed following a one-off tournament at Gosling Stadium. The club meets once a week (Sunday evenings), for 2 hours each night, playing on 5 courts and has approx 60 members, with a further 20 people on the waiting list. It plays with plastic shuttles. Founding members include: Frank Lane (Chairman), Arthur Walker (VC), Kevin West (Treasurer) and Pam Wright (a very diligent Secretary as you will read) as well as Anne and Dave Norman and Peter Shadbolt and his wife.

Membership fees : £12 per year                      Visitors fees: 35p per week  
Court costs: £1.25 per court hour                      Shuttles (plastic): £3 per tube

**February 1979** – A Wednesday evening club night is added to the Sunday to meet members' demands. Efforts are made to play friendly matches against local company teams, such as Polycell and Smith Kline and French on Fridays. The team is selected by one person and have mandatory team practice nights.

**April 1979** – The first sacking from the committee occurs – on account of poor attendance at committee meetings. Naturally, the sacking occurs in her absence! As far as we can discover, no-one has yet to be sacked from the committee for poor punctuality, so this season could see a first.

**2 September 1979** – At the first AGM (attended by 30 members, despite its start at 9pm), there is much discussion about whether members should be segregated according to ability (eventually rejected as unworkable), about the abuse of the peg board by some members – two of whom 'had left as a result of this malpractice' – and the need for everyone to 'treat shuttlecocks with care'. Good to know some things never change!

**October 1979** – GBC were invited to play in the 'Imperial Leather Showerfoam Trophy' (!?! ) as part of the Gosling stadium multi-sport team. Mike Roantree was a member of the original squad which made it through to the second round. Due to the close nature of the match, it was decided to enlist the help of a ringer in the next one. Who said GBC didn't used to be so competitive!!

**November 1979** – After a 'disappointing' attendance of only 69 members and friends at the river trip in September, the first Anniversary Dinner and Dance is held at Knebworth House on 4<sup>th</sup> December, attracting 96 people. The Treasurer was 'suspended from taking part in the club's activities' and 'threatened with membership curtailment' if he did not reply to the Chairman on 'the matter of Bank Statements and Cheque Stubs' within 10 days. Ooo-er - dodgy dealings were clearly rife in the early days!!

**December 1979** – Our editor was born - delivered as a bundle of joy on Christmas day! ...exactly 9 months after Rod Stewart had reached number 1 in the charts with *Da Ya Think I'm Sexy*

**September 1980** – GBC withdraws from the North Herts League and instead enters 3 teams into the Stevenage Mini Badminton League (SMBL). This is a medley league, with each match including mens, ladies and mixed doubles games. It is decided to split the club into two ability levels – playing on different courts.

**August 1981** – Application forms were sent out to the 45 members who wanted to re-enrol and the 11 players who the committee had selected to become members – including Gill and Dave Bartlett. If monies were not received within the week, vacancies would be offered to those on the waiting list.... No messing.

**6 September 1981** – A list of those showing interest in joining GBC, 'but whose standard of play was unknown', should be 'invited to come to the Stadium on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September for assessment'. Fortunately, Paul Kaye was playing well that night and was allowed in!

**September 1981** – Another Kay joins the club – this time young and feminine, and is promptly smitten by the sporting artistry of the similarly youthful Mike Roantree. The first GBC wedding results.

**December 1981** – A novel solution is found to the problem of having more men than women wanting to play in the mixed tournament. A first round of knockout matches would be held, with all partnerless men entering at the second round stage. All the women would be re-drawn with new partners at this point! Genius!!

**April 1982** – Social events were continuing apace, though attendance had dropped somewhat. GBC held a fund raising disco at £2 a head. According to committee minutes, LADY members who wished to provide food items would receive a free ticket. Presumably, 1982 pre-dated man's discovery of the kitchen.

**September 1982** – The disco had to be cancelled due to lack of interest. The social secretary 'wished her view to be recorded that she was disgusted that there was so little support'.

**February 1983** – It was noted that there had been poor attendance over the winter with numbers usually being about 30 and exceeding 40 only twice! GBC's friendly handicap tournament – including a buffet – attracted approx 50 entries.

**In the next edition will shall continue this adventure - the next decade. If anyone has any memories of the club from its earlier years, please contact Tracy Barnard so they can be included in our timeline.**