

## Zero Maintenance – But...

Barrie Hylton. *Perihelion* 30

The Comet really is a low maintenance boat but, as the new sailing season approaches, there are a few simple tasks which will ensure enjoyable sailing throughout the year.

Tools required: a medium size screwdriver and a can of WD-40 or similar fluid.

1. Check the screws are still tight, particularly those securing the rudder fittings to the transom and the 3 blocks to the deck by the mast hole. DO NOT OVERTIGHTEN.
2. Check the mast bungs, particularly the hard nylon bung at the bottom of the lower mast, are secure.
3. Check for gelcoat chips and minor knocks. If the gelcoat is missing, cover the damaged area with a PVC tape to keep the water out until you have time to get and use a gelcoat touch up kit.
4. Wash the ropes thoroughly in mild detergent. There is nothing worse than old hard rope to spoil your sailing. New ropes are readily available.
5. Ensure all the blocks still turn freely, particularly if you have been sea sailing.
6. Check the self-bailer is operating smoothly. Flush out any grit with clean water. WD-40 applied regularly will extend the life of the bailer seal considerably.
7. Check the rudder wing nut still clamps the rudder. The wing-nut bolt seems to collect corrosion inside the rudder blade. Free it with WD-40 and use WD-40 regularly to keep it free.
8. Clean up the boat — it makes you feel good (when it's done). Put a water hose down the mast hole and flush out the debris. The anti-slip can be cleaned with detergent and a nail brush. You can use "T-cut" or similar to restore the shine and lustre to the deck and hull.
9. Finally, you can clean the sail, but not in the washing machine or in the bath (well you can but ...). The best method is to lay the sail on the patio and rub mild detergent in with a soft brush. Leave it for an hour or so and then thoroughly hose it off. incidentally, if you have covered the top of the sail with mud (when sailing?) don't: pull the whole mast through the sail sleeve When de-rigging. Get someone to help you and take the top

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mast section out from the top of the sail. This avoids the near-impossible task of removing mud from the middle of the sail sleeve.

Have a good year.

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