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Hi their fellow Bobcat & Catalac Sailors, its time for the second newsletter of the year, this is quite new to me having to write regular articles, so please bare with me while I get myself sorted. I hope last months newsletter arrived ok. I had made a start previously but Ann brought a Laptop for me at Christmas (*which I think she's regretting*) and some of my documents mysteriously vanished in the change over.

I have also been trying to connect to e-mail and the Internet using the laptop and mobile phone. I'm not having much luck, aol said "it was because I am using the latest windows XP and I needed to install aol 7", but to no avail, so in despair I rang nokia and it seems that nokia haven't produced the software for connecting XP it's a bit to new, but is supposed to be in the pipeline and should be ready in a couple of weeks so we will have to wait and see. I would be pleased to hear from any one connecting a laptop and mobile phone while afloat and of course any problems that may have arisen. However moving on.

I am pleased to report that (despite last minute cancellations) caused by rail strikes and flu epidemic 16 members managed to battle through a good tiring day at The London Boat Show (Earls Court), then met up at Scoffs for a very enjoyable meal, banter and suitable refreshments. Thank you once again to Scoffs for making us so welcome, not forgetting the members who made it a night to remember.

We have managed a couple of weekends on *Think Again* since Christmas. I decided to service the toilet. Unfortunately it's ended up with a few leaks that weren't there before I started so I have got to go and find new gaskets and seals and do the job again. I have started swatting up on regulations for *European inland waterways* (CEVNI) as I need to get the necessary RYA certificate for our French cruise this year, so its back to school.

Enjoy your Maintenance Bob Freeman (President)

Maintenance Tip Of the month Plugs and sockets

one of the main problems that arise from being afloat is dampness and this gets in to all sorts of inaccessible places. It can then start to cause corrosion and leave a deposit on the internal metal connections this then creates a resistance to the electricity or signal that the cable and connections are being used for.

You need to strip and examine these regularly especially if they are deck fittings open to the elements. Special electrical cleaners and lubricants are available if you want to use them, but dry out any moisture and clean the connections with a fine abrasive if necessary then remake the connection, and carry out tests using a meter this will show if there is any resistance in the connection and also any underlying problems, like a bad cable connection that needs to be remade. Then cover or seal the connector to give it protection.

**Thank you to all you members who have paid in full or contacted Peter Gimson
The owners who at this point have not paid in full, we understand it may not be
your fault it could be the post or bank, etc.**

To help you rectify this omission a letter is enclosed HOPEFULLY for your immediate attention.

**We are doing our best to sort out changes of address, your boats mooring, and new owners.
Keeping our files up to date is a major problem. We need your help If you sell your Boat please let
Peter Gimson or us know and especially pass on association details to the New Owner.
There is a Committee Meeting next month, if you have any questions for the Agenda please let us
know and we will do our best to discuss it. THANK YOU**

SIMON'S FASTNET RACE 2001

By Simon Lack

Apprehension loomed heavy as I stepped onto the boat on the morning of the start of the Fastnet Race. The crew were busy sorting everything out trying not to leave a stone unturned as in the race ahead gear failure would cost us dearly. For me this was the first Fastnet race that I had ever done and as a result I felt totally foreign to the whole situation. Fortunately many of the crew had raced the Fastnet before and were able to guide me through the uncertain times, of which I can assure you, there were plenty .

We left the pontoon an hour and a half before the start, after having kissed my parents goodbye, and made our way towards the start line off the Royal Yacht Squadron. Full oilies were the call of the day and lifejackets were donned shortly after getting out of the river estuary . Apprehension was only increased when we entered the Solent for the first time that day, as although we knew it was going to be rough, we didn't realized just how rough. The forecast predicted a Force 5-6 from the West, which on its own would have been quite manageable, except for the 3 knots of ebb tide going West. As you can imagine this kicked up one hell of a swell.

The gun was fired dead on 16:30 and we were off.

The line had been packed at the start but we managed to get away cleanly, even though our approach had been cautious, as an incident at this stage would have been devastating. We managed to punch our way out of the Solent in 45mins. The conditions were harsh and the sea state increased further as we broke free of the Needles.

The plan of the day was to continue working our way out to sea to pick up as much favourable West going tide as possible.

Dinner was served that evening but I decided not to partake in the fine cuisine of the night, which was ravioli, a meal I still loathe to this day. Instead, as our watch had now ended, I made my way to bed, but not without a token visit to the heads (and that wasn't for a pee 111). All became a bit of a blur for the next 12 hours, but I still made my way on deck for every watch change and still did all that was required of me but my system had been switched onto auto-pilot.

The sea state remained heavy for 48 hours and the visit to the heads was repeated at which point I wondered "am I ever going to get into the race, is my stomach going to settle at any point?" Fortunately, yes was the answer and after 48 to 72 hours I was able to hold down a decent sized meal. Which was lucky, as I don't think ginger nut biscuits would have been able to keep me going for 4 days! ! .

Lands End was the next most memorable moment in the race as it marked an end of constant beating and finally the sheets could be cracked. The wind had eased dramatically by the time we reached this landmark, but it still came from the West. The only thing we didn't want now was for the wind to swing to the North, as the beating game would then start up again. Luckily it didn't and we were able to pop the 1.5 ounce kite and reach our way out towards the Rock. The aim was to sail high of the Rock in case the wind did swing.

We sailed into the night with the kite up and the wind began to build. Still we were trying to sail high.

The speedometer hit 14 knots and shortly after, a cry of "Shit! Hang on" came from the back of the boat. The boat had screwed up into a huge broach and we were laid flat on our side. The boat recovered well and we were off again, only for a repeat performance as we broached again a few moments later, this time even more heavily than before! The general consensus of opinion at this point was to loose the kite. However, in trying to free the sheets from around the end of the boom they had become unclipped from the sail and were lost overboard. We were in real trouble but the skipper thankfully remained calm and the situation got resolved without too much trouble. Sail change after sail change then proceeded, and with only two people lugging all the sails about we tired very quickly. Never before have I so much appreciated the 4 hours sleep I got that night!

After the sleep we woke to see we were beating again and the breeze had dropped as it continued to do throughout the day. Approximately 12 hours later we made it to the rock in 5 knots of breeze with the lightweight number 1 up. It was hard to believe the night we had just had. The sun was shining as we rounded and for the first time in 2 and a bit days we were seeing other boats around us. It is surprisingly unnerving not being able to see many boats when you consider how many you started with at the beginning and, of course, you always think the worst.

After rounding the rock we headed just south of West for a spacer mark some two miles of The Atlantic swell was now much more apparent and again a new motion had to be got used to. Rounding the spacer saw us on our way home. The kite was popped and we were of surfing down the big swell touching 10 knots in 12 knots apparent wind speed. From then on the kite remained flying all the way home.

During the night, after having rounded the Rock, the wind angle and conditions were perfect to push the boat hard. So we did. All the crew was comfortable onboard and in the 12 hours that followed we covered nearly 200 miles. The next big turning point was Bishops Rock off the Isles of Scilly. A big bear away round the lighthouse put us on route for home. The conditions were brilliant. The sun was off the starboard quarter and the breeze was dead astern. Again 10 knots was being reached and home felt close. The other watch was woken and all were on deck to help take her in to Plymouth. 15 to 20 miles out the wind dropped. The finish felt agonisingly close.

So near and yet so far

At 24:03 on Friday morning we, at last, crossed the finish line, totally relieved and exhausted, but really looking forward to the first beer in the 24 hour beer tent. The achievement at this point had not sunk in. As we plodded into Plymouth's St. Anne's Battery Marina we were greeted by the popping of a bottle of champagne.

My parents had made the trip down to Plymouth to welcome us all in. A real treat that was appreciated by all of the crew, not just me. The beer tent provided the entertainment for the next 8 hours as many were still there drinking after I had gone to bed at 4 in the morning.

The true achievement of the Race took some time to sink in and even now I have difficulty comprehending what I have achieved but one thing is for sure, from this experience, I have acquired a real taste for offshore racing.

Simon Lack crew member IMX 38 Roaring Meg.

Final position 112th in a fleet of over 230 boats... ... satisfactory ~~

E-mail Received from Angela Danby

Dear Peter,

regarding you recent e.mail I am afraid I am not a Catalac owner at present so am still just an associate member. However, my 8 metre 8.150 Double Tot was owned jointly by myself and Terry Dickens for a few years. It was sold four years ago to a French gentleman in Corsica and I haven't managed to get any details from Terry as to name address, etc. So I would suggest it will have to be removed from the Register until someone comes up with her whereabouts.

I returned from a week's holiday in Puerto Pollensa last Saturday night. You will see from the attached photos that I have some sad news.



The first night we arrived at Pollensa Saturday 10th November we had a NE storm with winds officially registering Force 11.

The noise of the wind was horrendous and whilst tucked up in our apartment without electricity or phone lines to the outside world I couldn't help but think thank God I am not on a Catalac in this!

The following afternoon the winds died enough to make it safe to venture outside without fear of being attacked by falling trees. However, on arriving on the sea front the first thing I saw was the sight of 8.116 Chaton smashed into the quay with a yellow boat underneath her and a German yacht on top. The English girl/lady owner, who I presume is Jill Baker, was trying to rescue what possessions she could. She told me they had lived on her for 15 years. She said some owners might remember them because they had a sideboard fitted in the cabin under the mast.



CHATON CLOSE UP

Later next day we travelled down the road towards Alcudia only to find 9.168 Scath Lowen almost up on the road. We did not see anybody about but Chaton's owner knew it was there so probably knows what the position is with it's owner.



I hasten to add that it was not just Catalacs breaking free. There were several large mono-hulls, two large glass bottom boats, and in one small creek we counted 23 small fishing boats tossed up onto the rocks in a heap.

Hope the photos aren't too depressing and that there weren't any more casualties in the storm.

Angela

HAS ANYONE SEEN "DOUBLE TOT 8.150 ON THEIR TRAVELS?"

E-mail News & Mods.... from across the pond.

Marc, Starla & Rosie DeMartini (Night Heron 11. CL 9.53)

Peter,

thanks for the return e-mail. The fee for the Association will be in the mail.

The address in Seattle is correct for us. The boat is moored about a fifteen minute walk from our house. We still have the 9M and have even had contact with another 9M owner, a fellow in British Columbia. We have not met in person, just exchanged letters and phone calls. I discovered him while attending a lecture at a local cruising club.

It was about cruising around Vancouver Island. The lecturer showed a slide and talked about the nice couple they met in the catamaran. It was another 9M and I got the name and number of the owner.

*Rosie is no longer an infant. **She is now a rambunctious 2.5 yr. old.***

Still eager to get out on the boat but much more capable of mischief. Have to use a shackle rather than a knot on her tether. I have installed baby gates and fences(mahogany with titanium tubing which was cheap at Boeing Aircraft's surplus store) across the back of the dinette settees to prevent her from falling into the hulls.

If you know of anyone interested in ideas about baby proofing, we'd be glad to share our experience.

I have also begun modifying the interior. Cut an arc out of the corner of the chart table to make it easier to pass by. Laminated and varnished mahogany salvaged from pallet lumber to the top and laminated a support to cantilever the table off the head bulkhead.

The biggest project is removing the wall between the two forward berths. The previous owner rather haphazardly reinforced this bulkhead which made getting it out more difficult. Will need to replace the poorly glued insulation and I will reinforce the arch of fore deck as well. I understand that a number of boats have had this done. I noticed one odd thing. The mast does not rest on the compression post under it. Steel members and the transverse bulkhead carry the load to the post. The mast is still up so it seems all is well. Any suggestions/experience with this project will be appreciated. I hope to get this done and get back to cruising as soon as I can. I like the winter trips although it is cold up here.

Thanks for your reply,

Marc DeMartini

*******REPLIES OR QUESTIONS TO P.GIMSON PLEASE*******

KEEP US UP DATED WITH YOUR NEWS.

TUGBOAT AKU-AKU

By Dave Thomas CL 9.07

Before setting off toward Macon where there are supposedly repair facilities, Erevan tried her motor, it was evidently very sick indeed! There was little point in her attempting to move under her own steam so we decided to take her in tow from the outset. First we found ourselves obliged to clear a vast raft of flotsam which had collected under our hulls during the night. Huge lumps of timber, tree trunks and branches, plus a

sickly porridge of twigs and leaves were the main components of the mess which was firmly jammed between our hulls by the downgoing stream. Taking our mooring lines around our hull we turned Aku-Aku around in the hope that the debris would depart downstream of its own accord. The manoeuvre was a limited success but a great deal of pushing and shoving with the boathook was still needed. Our unscheduled collection of this material had woken us at intervals during the night as it announced its arrival by bumping the hulls. Most of it must have swept past but that which did not gave us an unexpected form of inconvenience. We rigged a bridle on our stern cleats with which to tow Erevan but still we just could not rid ourselves of the entirety of our forestry. We motored away from the pontoon, circling and weaving in an effort to shake it off. Finally after a great deal more encouragement with the boathook it was all gone.

We picked up Erevan's tow-line by ferry gliding alongside a few feet away. The skipper heaved us the tow-line and we quickly bent it on to our bridle, the other boat letting slip at the same moment. All went well with this stunt and soon we had turned downstream heading towards Macon at a comfortable six knots or more. This meant that we were not appreciably slowed by our tugboat role and we should reach our destination soon after lunch. *A peniche loomed large ahead.* We had looked through our inland waterway navigation books for an authorised signal or flag to warn of our towing status. Finding none we decided to wear flag Delta which means "*I am manoeuvring with difficulty, keep clear*". It was the nearest to our circumstances we could find. I hurriedly rigged it on a lofted boathook where the oncoming peniche could easily see it. In the event the vessel gave us a wide berth, as did another some time later. So far so good, *but sinister great wooden crocodiles* of flotsam littered the fast flowing river and a sharp lookout was required to avoid them. We noticed that the cormorants here had white fronts, giving them a penguinish look. We also observed several grey herons looking amusingly ignominious for they were stood in a field amongst grazing cattle. We become so used to their usual stance on the riverbank they looked very incongruous close to such animals.

The tow was accomplished with relative ease and soon we approached the marina destination. We reduced speed so that we could put Erevan alongside a pontoon without towing her either past it or worse, into it! This done we found ourselves a berth nearby and secured. Erevan's skipper Bernie approached, he grabbed my hand and shook it with the firmness of sincere gratitude. Michele was below and thus escaped the bear hug, which would probably have ensued. Erevan was now in a place of absolute safety and her owner was obviously much relieved. But what of engineering facilities available shoreside. Guess who it turned out to be? Having done my very best to cure the old Volvo engine of its ills, it was running again and starting well without overheating, but had little motive power, not to mention water and oil escaping from many and varied unscheduled places. It was decided that it would best be consigned to *Davy Jones' locker* at the earliest opportunity. These old Volvo engines have become generally uneconomical to attempt to repair where major overhaul is required and fitting a modern lightweight "Beta" type is a proven success, as I had seen demonstrated at Dell Quay.

I was rewarded for my attempt at repair even though it was not entirely successful. It was then mooted that perhaps I might consider staying on and fitting a new engine, to be brought over from England sometime during the winter. Erevan's owner footed our marina bill whilst we considered the viability of this idea and he made a great many calls to England, trying to establish costs etc.

We explored the town, which was interesting enough, but was not anything like as far south as we had hoped to be by now. At last a compromise plan evolved. I would remove the defunct engine thus enabling an accurate drawing of the engine bay to be made. Once Bernie returned to England everything required for the transplant could be prefabricated, ferried over and fitted either by local labour, myself or an imported British engineer. We felt very sorry for Bernie and Tony, things had not gone too well for them. I had always entertained misgivings as to their engine, to my eye it had always belched more smoke than coolant.

Next day I dismantled the errant engine, finding a blown cylinder head gasket in the process! Fortunately Aku-Aku has a powerful portable hoist aboard, so removal of the engine from its mountings was not too difficult. *Getting the heavy bits out of the cockpit and ashore however was not easy.* Next they had to go up the steep ramp from pontoon to the shore for storage in a convenient shed. Thus I earned some more wages. Bernie and Tony are to return to U.K. on both train and aeroplane, where Bernie can decide what to do about his problem at relative leisure.

We are free to continue.

The Mary Lack Fund

Tom Lack has asked that any donations that are received in memory of Mary be forwarded to

AV Ridout Funeral Directors,
414 Lymington Road
Hichcliffe on Sea,
Christchurch, Dorset, BH23 5EN

or direct to

Ocean Youth Trust South.
Spur House,
1, The Spur,
Alverstoke, Gosport,
Hampshire, PO12 2NA

Ocean Youth Trust South have set up a special fund which will be used for the benefit of young people in the Dorset area, to experience sailing on Ocean Youth Trust South's vessel John Laing.

The Mary Lack Fund is a separate fund set up by Ocean Youth Trust South specifically for this request. To achieve the maximum benefit of any donation it would be advantageous to complete a Gift Aid declaration, which will ensure that any donation made will be able to be increased by 28p in the pound for UK tax payers without costing them any additional sum.

Depending on the size of the fund, which will not be known until at least the end of February, when a decision will be made how the fund will be used. There are 2 basic options, where a large fund is in place, use any interest generated on an annual basis to fund, or part fund berths aboard John Laing.

Where the fund is relatively small, the capital will be used to sponsor berths on a limited time scale.

It is hoped that people making a donation will take advantage of this opportunity to use Gift Aid to increase their individual donation.

Gift Aid declaration forms are available from Ocean Youth Trust South.

David Salmon
General Manager