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December 2002



Hello fellow Bobcat and Catalac Sailors every where.

**Tom and the Lack family,
join the committee of the BCCA in wishing you all
a very Merry Christmas and a prosperous new year.**

Please add this web site address to your list of Favourites

It will save you having to copy it out each time.

If you are receiving this newsletter by e'mail then just click on the address below

www.bobcatandcatalac.btinternet.co.uk

The above Website that I have produced is up and running but I am still working on the site and hope to improve it as time allows, I would greatly appreciate your criticism and/or suggestions that you might like to make. If you have any items/articles/pictures that you would like me to add to it, please let me have them on bobatlongleaze@aol.com or bob.bcca@btopenworld.com

Thank you all for your Articles and pictures that you have sent us this year, please keep them coming.

Ann and I enjoyed our week in Cyprus, we found a 9m in Larnaka Marina "Mata Mata" but nobody on board. I have found the boat in the register and have forwarded them a newsletter.

I am afraid its that time again when **subscriptions** are due and we would like to ask you to check your payments, whether by Standing order / Direct debit / Credit card or Cheque. The correct amount is **£25** for Postal delivery and **£20** by Email. If you want to receive a newsletter for the coming 12 months then please let us have the correct amount.

Don't forget the Dinner at Scoffs (London Boat Show)

Friday 10th January 2003. 7.30pm.

For more information Please Contact Peter Gimson or Rick Harvey

The Ahart Odyssey



By Dan & Jan aboard “Sojourner CL.12.10”

Chapter Twenty Six

We spent two days and two nights at Swansboro. The rain and wind were not excessive; as George was no more than a tropical depression by the time it reached Swansboro. We would not have been unsafe in an open area, but tidal and river currents, wind and reduced visibility due to rain is not conducive to pleasant or safe boating on restricted waterways such as the Intracoastal. Besides, we met a nice couple from Charleston, who were on their way to Solomons, MD and had a very enjoyable visit at the marina. We departed Dudley Marina in Swansboro at noon on the 19th and motored into the 10 to 15 knot wind heading South. By 1700 we had reached the only convenient stopping place on the waterway, which was the Harbor Village Marina. This area of the waterway affords no safe anchorages in that it is narrow with marshes on both sides that are too shallow and too close to the waterway for safe anchorage. The marina is part of a golf course and housing development and is very nice. A courtesy car is available for transients, but we had nowhere in particular to go so we did not use it. However, we did call for Chinese food delivery, which we enjoyed very much. Who says living on a boat has to be Spartan?

The next morning we got away at 0700 and arrived in Wilmington at 1500. We were lucky this time and had tides and current in our favor almost the entire trip. We spent the night tied up at the free city pier by the Hilton and proceeded to the Bennett Brothers Marina on the 21st of September, where we hauled out for a major refit. We are always impressed when we see Sojourner's 23,000 pounds lifted out of the water as easily as one would lift a bag of groceries. The process involves maneuvering Sojourner between two concrete piers that stretch out into the water. A “travelift,” which is a large steel contraption on wheels then rolls out over Sojourner, straddling her. Two nylon straps are then slung under Sojourner; one forward and one aft. The straps are then lifted and up comes Sojourner right out of the water. With Sojourner slung under it, the travelift then motors off the piers and through the boat yard to wooden blocks placed where her hulls will rest until she is next lifted to be placed back in the water. It is an amazing process to observe.

We lived aboard while we were on the wooden blocks. We had electricity connected and fresh water, so we could shower, cook and wash dishes while aboard, but we could not use the toilets. For this, we had to walk about a fifty yards to the boat owner's restrooms. This was ok, but after a month, it really got old, making that trip in that it required climbing down a ladder from Sojourner's deck and then a climb back up. Not fun, especially at night. We learned to consume no liquids after eight p.m. You might ask what happens to the shower water and dish water? They are simply jettisoned overboard the same as we would if we were floating. Most boat yards that allow liveaboards while on blocks, deliberately put the blocks on a gravel area so any liquids dumped overboard simply soak into the ground. After all, Sojourner was washed down several times and we cleaned her hulls of the old paint, all of which disappeared into the gravel. The paint, by the way is a biodegradable ablatives, which means it is supposed to slowly ablate or dissolve in the water over time, taking any barnacles and other stowaways with it.

The work that was done while we were on blocks included both major and minor improvements. First of course was cleaning, sanding and repainting the hulls. This required lots of soap, lots of sand paper, lots of elbow grease and almost five gallons of very expensive paint that is 80% copper oxide and therefore very heavy also. We needed some work done on the top of the mast. There are four sheaves or pulleys up there that were beginning to turn with difficulty. They needed major lubrication. We also wanted to install a new wind indicator that tells us the direction and velocity of the wind via instruments on top of the mast and on the instrument panel. After much discussion with the yard manager, we agreed that the mast should come down for this work. Taking down a mast that is basically an aluminum pole over 40 feet long and weighing a couple hundred pounds is also an interesting process. A huge crane is brought in and the yard's rigger, or person who specializes in masts and the rigging that holds them up, climbs up the mast and connects a belt on the mast about two thirds of the way up. The crane holds the belt. Then the standing rigging or all the cables (shrouds and stays) that hold up the mast are disconnected from the hull. The mast is then lifted up and swung over to the side and laid down horizontally on

sawhorses. Once down, the mast can be examined closely and any work done very safely. After examining the wires and cables for all the lights and antennas on the top of the mast, we decided to replace all of them and when installing the new ones, put them in a PVC conduit inside the mast. This would keep the wires and cables from slapping around inside the mast, which had been an irritation for us in that on quiet nights with Sojourner gently rolling from side to side, we could hear the contents of the mast slap one side and then the other all night long. The internal conduit fixed that little problem. We also replaced our VHF antenna and installed a horn on the top of the mast. The new antenna and the new cables vastly improved the range and quality of our radios and TV reception. The horn eliminated the need to carry a small compressed air horn. A horn or some type of warning device is required by the Coast Guard. While the mast was down the standing rigging was also inspected for durability and the running rigging, or the halyards (ropes) were also replaced. I have climbed the mast several times to make small repairs or change a light bulb, and I must admit that working on the mast while it is off the boat is much more pleasant. One last mast related item, the chain plates or the large steel attachments for the shrouds and stays that support the mast were inspected for durability. When all the work was done, the crane was brought back and the mast re-stepped or re-installed on the deck and all shrouds and stays were tensioned properly. We also had some fiberglass work done on the deck where we had some deterioration due to general wear and tear. The yard did first class work and matched the gel-coat or paint extremely well.

By far the most extensive and expensive project was engine replacement. The original engines were going on 18 years old and had about 6,000 hours on them. Although this is not excessive for diesel engines, we were beginning to have irritating and chronic problems with them involving high lubricating oil consumption and leaks. We thought about overhauling the engines, but they were raw water cooled, which means they are cooled by circulating outside water, mostly saltwater in our case, through the engines. Every mechanic who looked at the engines said overhaul would result in so much time and effort, that it would be cheaper to replace the engines. So, we did. The new engines are slightly more powerful being 40 horsepower instead of 30 and of course, they use heat exchangers instead of raw water-cooling. But, as is true with most complex machinery, one fix leads to another. Our propellers needed to be re-worked and the pitch changed to accommodate the more powerful engines, plus one of the propeller shafts had to be replaced. Naturally, the new engines came with new transmissions and new instrument panels with new gauges, so all of this had to be installed also. Lots of re-wiring and lots of plumbing changes for the fuel lines and water lines.

While we had the engines out, we took out the fuel tanks, which are 72-gallon aluminum boxes and had them cleaned, inspected, and refurbished. This of course necessitated new fuel vent lines and new deck plates or filler caps. Changing the deck plates was really a blessing, because the old ones were rather small in diameter and so many marinas have switched to large diameter fuel nozzles that we had to use a funnel in most cases to get fuel into the tanks. This slowed the filling process and added to the risk of a fuel spill, which is highly frowned upon by the Coast Guard. In fact, any fuel spill that causes a discernable slick on the water is supposed to be reported to the Coast Guard. Most boaters feel that this is rather draconian as far as regulations go, but it does make one extremely careful. Fuel spills are taken so seriously that the marina operators will not fill a boat's tanks, they simply hand the fuel hose to the boat captain; that way if any fuel is spilled, it is the captain's fault. There have been horror stories about people spilling a thimble full of fuel, which can create an oil slick several feet in diameter, reporting it to the Coast Guard, who arrive after the slick has dissipated entirely and still fine the captain a few hundred dollars. As a result, very few people report such minor spills. Which is probably a sane approach. There aren't enough Coast Guard personnel in the world to inspect every minor spill. Anyway, we are happy with our new deck plates. We would have been back in the water in a couple of weeks, but we took two weeks out while Sojourner was on blocks so we could visit family in Texas and Michigan. We figured that was the best time to be away from her. We just didn't want her in the water for two weeks while we were gone. We finally got launched on Friday, October 27th. The new engines are much more powerful and smoother than the old ones and the transmissions shift much easier also. At top speed, the old engines would not move us past seven knots. The new engines push us along at 8.5 knots max and cruise easily at 6.5 to 7 knots. Our new instrument panel is much improved over the old one and overall, we are very pleased with the entire refit. We now feel we can head for the Caribbean this winter with confidence that we have all systems in first class condition. Stay tuned.

.....OWNER'S MOD.....

From Martin Minter-Kemp 9-191 " ECHO"

In response to the January 2002 newsletter, I would like to make the suggestion that with so many members sailing Catalacs often over 20 years old, there must be a wealth of modifications and improvements which could be of value to us all.

We brought Echo in Cyprus and sailed her back home via the Grau du-Roi, Canal du Rhone a Sete and the Canal du Midi, we can recommend the Grau du-Roi in the Med, with mast-stepping at Aigues-Mortes.

Our original engines were single cylinder Renault diesels rated at 7.5hp, they were reliable but very noisy and under powered at 4.5 knots flat out in calm water. Raw water cooled, I believe they were designed for cement mixers and were certainly miserly on fuel at 0.51 per hour apiece.

"ECHO" is now fitted with a pair of Beta 13.5hp diesel engines and with folding Propellers. These have transformed the performance both under power and sail. 6.1 knots from a single engine at 3000rpm driving a 2:1 reduction and a 14in diameter two bladed propeller. Under sail I reckon we are at least half a knot faster over the previous fixed pitch screws.

An added advantage is that with the engines diminutive size, with its shallow sump it gained us nearly 6 inches vertical height space over the Renaults, we have been able to re- install the cosy port quarter berth cabin. So quiet are the Betas that we are not bothering with sound proofing now. The flexible feet and shaft coupling, included in the price, probably contribute to the sewing machine sound characteristics that we now have.

On deck we have been able to improve the appearance of the deck house by taking the roof outboard by five inches and aft by three feet.



Stainless steel legs support the trailing edges which follow the gentle curve built into the original structure. The forward edge projects eight inches in a slight curve forming an 'eyebrow' with radius sed comers. A stainless steel pillar abaft the steering position makes a very useful hand hold and permits a 15 stone crewman to walk on the rooftop, an opening hatch also allows the helmsman to sit on the roof and steer with his feet! There is also ample space here for life-raft stowage and solar panels. The plan now is to fit roll up awnings along the under side edges of this deck so that the cockpit can be completely enclosed.

It would be very interesting to hear from other members about modifications which help to improve safety, performance, accommodation and comfort.

Martin & Bunny Minter -Kemp

**We are not responsibility for any loss or damage caused by any alterations or modifications from your boats original design .
All mods that appear in this news letter are done by owners who may or may not be qualified marine engineers.**

PART 2 NEVER A DULL MOMENT!

From the desk of Judy and Paul Thompson

`Squib` CL.9.200



We had been there for 4 days in very windy conditions already and hadn't moved an inch! Can things get any worse?!

Fortunately the next day was fiesta time in Fornells and we got side tracked with the infectious excitement. With the usual dancing, drinking and general merriment they had some bizarre activities like the on stage chocolate fight which consisted of two people sitting opposite each other with a bucket of melted chocolate in between them and a hunk of cake each. The idea was to dip the cake in the chocolate and stuff it into their opponent's mouth as hard as they could and making as much mess as they could and then diving into the sea to wash off, most peculiar!! Then there was the dancing horses and later a giant people parade. Pomada (gin and lemon) was the most popular drink in the bars but many brought their own ready mixed in 2 litre bottles and a good time was had by all.



Squib at anchor

Squib with a few home comforts

Back to reality and we knew we had an engine to sort out to avoid a repeat performance, so we set sail for Mahon in search of a mechanic. Gold dust would have been easier to find. Mahon was easy, the mechanic no way Jose for at least another 6 weeks as it was their busiest time. Paul had worked out by now that we had 2 problems with the port engine –the vibration and the overheating. We just hoped that eventually a mechanic could shed some light on them.

Whilst all this was happening Emma came to see us for 2 weeks and we all had a brilliant time exploring more of the south and south eastern coasts of Menorca. We found a gorgeous cala at the entrance to Mahon port called Cala Taulera, very sheltered which was just as well because the wind was very strong one night. Shortly after we arrived we went about transferring the outboard to the dinghy when splash! We had forgotten to attach a line from outboard to dinghy. A very costly mistake. With tempers frayed and blame being apportioned right, left and centre, Paul unsuccessfully attempted to recover it from the deep murky waters. He was I however in piercing his eardrum which led to a trip to the hospital. We later realized it would be uneconomical to make an insurance claim so we had no alternative but to buy a new outboard. Putting this behind us we headed south and found Isla del Aire, Binebeca and a few other lovely unspoilt calas before heading north again to Isla Colom and the town of Es Grau, which borders the Albufera lagoon, a wildlife and nature reserve.

Emma's fortnight nearing an end, we went back to Cala Taulera for a night before going into the port of Mahon once more to continue the mechanic trail. Late that evening I was sitting alone in the cockpit and saw a red flare go up just outside the port entrance. In the distance I could see fireworks and doubted myself as to what I had seen. Five minutes later the second one went up by which time I had alerted Paul and he also witnessed it.

Unable to get a reply on channel 16, we rang Menorca radio as we still had the telephone number programmed into the phone. When we rang them though they had already had a call and the rescue boat was on its way. Apparently a yacht had sadly gone aground on a reef and was taking in water, whilst cutting the corner into the harbour.

Back in Mahon and with sheer persistence and determination we eventually managed to get an English speaking mechanic and he endorsed what Paul thought, that the gear box was the cause of the vibration and removed it bringing it back fixed 4 days later telling us that the internal drive coupling had worn only fractionally but enough to cause the vibration. Paul decided we could sort out the overheating problem and by a process of elimination checked everything. As a last resort Paul took the cylinder head off and found the head gasket needed replacing and after a trial run up river it seemed we had at last solved problem number 2.

With Emma's holiday finished and the engine problems sorted it was now nearing the end of August and Sardinia beckoned, but we both felt that the 200 mile crossing was a long way to go with a newly repaired engine. At the same time we had had a text from our Aigues Mortes friends Gini and Ken who we hadn't seen for 18 months saying they had arrived in Mallorca from France on their new boat *Bouba*, having recently sold their old tug *St Bride*.

And so we went back to north eastern side of Mallorca and had a wonderful reunion in Puerto Pollensa. It was amazing to see them again and after dropping the anchor we wasted no time in catching up with each others adventures until well past midnight, when with aching jaws and being a bit worse for wear we called it a day.

The following day we were invited to a beer and a book swap on board another catamaran owned by Mel and Marg who we had met previously in Santa Ponsa, Mallorca. They had previously owned a Catalac the same as *Squib* and introduced us to another couple who had also owned a Catalac. Purely by coincidence a few days later another Catalac called *Scath Lowen* (common as muck these Catalacs!!) sailed into the port and dropped anchor nearby. It transpired that they all knew each other and also had a reunion!

Two nights later at anchor we had an unexpected storm which we found out afterwards created havoc all over Mallorca. We both woke with a start to hear thunder and lightning and the wind howling and got up to check all was ok and realised the awning was still up. While we frantically tried to roll it up, I noticed the dinghy and outboard, which was attached by its painter to the stern, take off and spin several times like a kite (deja vu?!) before landing back in the water upside down. THAT'S OUR NEW OUTBOARD!!! The awning was abandoned for the moment to rescue the outboard before hopefully any serious damage had been caused. This was a difficult task with the wind strength, but thanks again to Paul's strength and good old adrenalin we managed to get it safely onto the stern platform. The awning was by this time flapping like mad and we were freezing cold as we'd had no time to dress! Paul hung on to the awning while I tried to dress him in his jacket and of course the zip jammed. Eventually through the chaos we got the awning sorted and. looked around to see a melee of other craft with similar problems and a few dragging anchor or even totally adrift. Much later we crawled back into bed and slept until the storm passed. In the morning Paul did the necessary to the outboard and thankfully it started and seems to be ok (touch wood), the awning got slightly ripped but not beyond repair. Sam and Richard joined us the next day for 10 days whilst we were there, making this Sam's 3rd trip this year -she just can't stay away, fortunately for us, and we had a great time exploring nearby Pollensa town and Alcudia, before hiring a car to drive up to the Sierra Tremontana and Soller on the north coast We suffered a severe water shortage whilst they were with us. We had grown accustomed to ferretting out the local public taps during our shore visits, but when we made a trip to Pollensa's public tap we found it salty tasting. The nearby marina water tasted just as brackish and they charged for it as well! So whilst we had the hire car we made a journey to Alcudia and furtively and unofficially acquired several containers from the marina pontoons where the water tasted marginally better. This trip was repeated the following week when Gini and Ken hired a car for visitors, but this time we got caught and stopped so then we had no alternative but to buy bottled water from the local supermarket. To think we used to take it for granted Puerto Pollensa is a large bay with many calas and on a day sail we dropped anchor in quiet cala and Sam and Richard went ashore in the dinghy to explore. We watched helplessly when they landed as a military guard swooped on them and sent them packing as they had unwittingly trespassed in a military area! A few days later we took *Squib* on an overnight excursion to a cala on the north side, cala Formentor where Richard perfected his

snorkelling. As one of his hobbies is fishing he found it particularly interesting identifying the different species including bream and the slinky garfish.

All too soon their holiday came to an end and they flew back to England on that fateful day, the 11 September. As time was getting on we thought we ought to be thinking of places to winter and as we had liked Mahon and Menorca so much and it was by now too late to make the 2 day crossing to Sardinia, we booked into, Port d'hivernada in Mahon and after saying our farewells to what had become quite a community, we sailed back to Menorca at the end of September in company with Len and Gill who have also decided to winter in Mahon, soon to be followed by Gini and Ken and Mel and Marg who also: thought it is good safe place to winter. In contrast to Ag'ladulce last year it's much quieter in this marina with not so many live aboards, however we've settled into Mao (catalan for Mahon) life and met yet more fascinating people. In between doing the winter maintenance jobs on our boats we've managed a few games of boules, a fair amount of socialising on each others boats with plenty of yarns and of course regular trips to the local bar to catch up with the rugby. Mao is an extremely interesting town with a chequered history which we are enjoying discovering.

The museum of course has provided us with a wealth of knowledge and each time we go for a walk we see evidence of a bygone era in the architecture and monuments.

We've had a couple of trips up river in *Squib* and also a day sail up the coast in *BolJba* stopping on the way back in Cala Taulera where Gini and Ken who are both diving instructors dived with Paul to see if they could find the long lost outboard unfortunately without success.

Things were ticking along quite nicely when early in November we got wind of (if you pardon the expression) a big wind and a storm coming in. Here we go again, but at least this time we were tucked up safely in a marina. All maritime communication and activity ceased as the islands took the worst battering for decades, the worst drought for 100 years came to an end and the Balearics was declared a disaster zone by Madrid. For 9 days the storm raged bringing down thousands of trees, damaging many buildings and flooding roads. With landslides galore, coastlines and beaches were devastated and many boats destroyed, the hurricane force winds of up to 130kms and torrential rain just went on and on.

On about the fourth day we bought our usual daily newspaper the English Mallorca Daily Bulletin and there on the front page we learnt that our friends Graham and Ann on *Scath Lowen* who had remained anchored in Pueto Pollensa for the winter had had their Catalac completely wrecked when a nearby monohull was knocked down and its mast was forced into the side of their hull. Apparently they had then tried to motor to safety in zero visibility only to be swept by the wind and current onto what they thought was a sandbank. It wasn't. They were in fact on the main road. The Guardia Civil rescued them and took them by car to nearby Alcudia and found accommodation for them for the night. In the morning they returned to *Scath Lowen* to find it had shifted onto a storm drain causing even more damage and had also sucked many of their belongings out to sea. The looters had also been at work and took what was left. Sadly they were not insured so their dream has had to be shelved for a while. They were not alone as we also heard about several other boats in the same port taking a severe beating and having similar consequences. Luckily we suffered little except for a couple of leaks in places which wouldn't normally leak. Life has now returned to normal again and the sun has come out (back to the shorts). Paul tries almost daily to catch the elusive dorado fish around the boat, which are allegedly 'huge'!! and we're visited often by a lone cormorant and more recently a duck which seems to have got lost, but now knows where its daily crust comes from! My Spanish has improved, although the first language here is Menorqui, a dialect of Catalan which also contains some English acquired when the British occupied the island in the 18th century. Paul is still quite happy with his one word -cerveza (beer) and gesticulation for the rest!

All in all we've had a wonderful if not eventful summer and autumn and at least one thing for sure

THERE'S NEVER A DULL MOMENT!!

Salud!!.

>>>>>>>>>>>> **Catalac's For Sale** <<<<<<<<<<<<<<

Squib: 9m Catalac - 9/200 1981 - British registered part 1 - Complete refit 1998 plus continuous upgrading - Epoxy gel shield - Surveyed 1999 - 7 Berths - Head with gas water heater & shower - Eberspacher heating with 6

outlets with s/s dedicated fuel tank

- 2 x main sails
- 2 x furling genoas
- 1 x cruising chute
- 2 x Yanmar 1GM diesel engines (rebuilt 1998) with shaft drive to 2 x 3 bladed Brunton Autoprops
- 2 x 10 gal. S/S fuel tanks
- 2 x S/S freshwater tanks
- 3 batteries –2 x 105 amp hours, 1 x 95 amp hours.
- 4 x manual & 2 electric bilge pumps.
- Dolphin 10 battery charger
- 38W solar panel
- 240 volt shore power system
- 3 x anchors – 2 x CQR & 1 Danforth
- 60m chain
- electric windlass
- various fenders & warps
- 3 x fire extinguishers
- 1 x fire blanket
- assorted flares
- Phillips 800 GPS
- Autohelm
- Navtex Pro
- Hornet sailing monitor
- Swiftec VHF
- Echo sounder
- Brookes & Gatehouse wind instruments
- Firdell rader reflector
- Plastimo 2000 gas cooker –2 rings, oven & grill
- Electrolux fridge –gas –12V & 240
- JVC stereo
- Yam 280 sti inflatable dinghy
- S/S dinghy rack
- Fixed folding s/s swimming ladder
- Sun awning, dodgers, and window covers and cockpit cushions
- Passerelle
- Owners comments – Squib in our opinion is an excellent example of the 9m Catalac. She was originally the boat show example and has been maintained to this high standard. At present we are cruising Mediterranean waters and overwintering in Sicily. Price:- **£32000.00**
Tel:0039 33 95 41 08 25 or email: judypaulsquib@yahoo.co.uk

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WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER

Paul SMITH

78 Blackfen Rd. Sidcup, Kent, DA15 8SW.

CL.9.55 “MOONDRIFTER”

