

President: BOB FREEMAN
71 Longleaze, Wootton Bassett
Wiltshire, SN4 8AS
e-mail: BOBatLongleaze@aol.com

Bobcat & Catalac

Founder: MARY LACK



Cruising Association



Treasurer: RICK HARVEY
44 Southway Carshalton Beeches.
Surrey. SM5 4HW.
e-mail: june.rick@btopenworld.com

196 Harewood Avenue,
Queens Park, Bournemouth,
Dorset. BH7 7BQ
e-mail: P.Gimson@Bmthonline.net

Secretary
PETER GIMSON
Tel: 01202 773749

www.bobcatandcatalac.btinternet.co.uk

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Hello fellow Bobcat and Catalac sailors every where.

<<<E.Mail reply to July B.C.C.A. newsletter query 'Anchors':

Catalac Anchors

- 1 : Probably 90 % of Catalac owners use the standard Danforth Anchor with out too much of a problem.
- 2 : You should have 3 to 5 metres of 3/8 inch or 1/2 inch chain connected to your Anchor which will help the Anchor to set properly on the sea bed.
- 3 : Also enough chain or rope to cope with the 3 to 5 times the depth you expect to Anchor in.
- 4 : When Anchoring you need to have some idea as to the condition of the sea bed you are Anchoring on, problems can arise with seaweed or rocks.
- 5 : Try to Anchor in an area were the Anchor stands a chance of digging in and holding.
- 6 : Try to Anchor across tide to allow for minimal movement when the tide turns.
- 7 : If the weather changes and the weather starts the boat lifting up and down, pay out extra chain to limit the pull and lift on the Anchor and Anchor chain.
- 8 : You can try the various Anchors available on the market but at the end of the day the option is up to you, what you feel happy with.
- 9 : But you can improve your Anchoring technique by fitting a good quality bow roller and a Anchor winch which can be electric or manual.
- 10: When you have Anchored and let out approx 3 x depth, go slowly astern put your hand or foot on the Anchor chain, if the Anchor is secure there will be no movement from the chain apart from the steady rise of the chain as it comes taught, if the Anchor is dragging you will feel it through the chain and you will also see the chain rise and fall.
- 11: Deck stowage of different types of Anchors can be difficult. If on passage I prefer to have the Anchor inboard and secure but if you are on a pilotage make sure your Anchor is free and can be dropped in seconds rather than minutes it has got me out of trouble a couple of times when the engine has failed.
- 12: We have also had 5 catalacs anchored on one danforth in Poole harbour during calm conditions, this worked ok, extra anchors were laid before nightfall.

Bob Freeman

The Adventures of 'Squib'

2002/3

(Continued)

By Judy and Paul Thompson

This was to be my longest journey so far. Paul being an old sea-dog tried to reassure me by reminding me of all the things that could happen and what to do in a MOB (man over board) situation and if he had a heart attack, or we lost the mast, you know the usual and promptly told me I was on the dog watch from midnight. When I mutinied he relented and said "only joking!" The watches fortunately passed with little incident. I kept warm, sane and awake by doing some strenuous jogging and dancing in the cockpit, which amused a passing school of dolphins so much so that they took one look at me and dived straight to *Lady Bear*! Day 2 and the sun came up (I watched it) and produced a beautiful day with a steady 4/5 knot NW wind which sped us nearer our destination. At night fall the wind dropped and we were becalmed so we motored for the duration. Perhaps because Paul spent most of his life working shifts in the Fire Brigade he is nocturnal, whereas my body clock tells me something entirely different, so Paul took pity on me and did the dog watch again and I did the later one with more activity but this time no dolphins. It always amazes me how at sea with no light pollution from the land the sky is so dark and how the stars shine so brightly, so eerie yet magical. I promised myself then to learn celestial navigation one day. At day break the wind was still non-existent, but it did manage to make an appearance later and with land sighted, we sailed for the remainder of the way.

Our course had been plotted on the chart and our GPS set for Oristano Bay, approximately halfway up the western coast of Sardinia. We dropped anchor off a beautiful sandy beach in the vast bay at around midday, felt completely exhausted, but equally exhilarated at having arrived safe and sound and wasted no time joining Len and Gill and getting out the champagne (ok cava again) to celebrate, followed shortly after by a very long siesta. Ciao Italia!!!

After taking stock the following day and getting ship-shape we set off for our next destination heading south for a place called Buggerru (real name, I kid you not), but on arrival found the entrance to be so silted up that it was inaccessible so we renamed it 'bugger off' instead and moved on. We eventually arrived at an anchorage off the small, south eastern island of San Pietro and discovered a fascinating, quaint town called Carloforte.

We went ashore, made our first steps onto Italian soil and tasted our first real Italian pizza.

"What is this strange tongue?" we said "What's Italian for coffee/beer/wine /toilet/how much?" we said. "I wish we had a dictionary!" I said. All part of the adventure!

We wandered around the narrow streets lined with ice-cream shade houses with flower covered balconies and drying laundry. We smelt the pizzas and coffee, garlic and the drains. The tiny shops wrestled for space with their wares and loud patrons spilling out onto the streets. But down to business, a mobile phone shop for an Italian SIM card to replace the Spanish one. Our connection to the internet proved to be short lived as the local numbers Compuserve had given us drew a blank and AOL had taken over our account providing even more chaos (it's a long story). It was back to pigeon post and SMS.

The weather forecast on the SSB promised F6/7 winds so with this news we settled down for a few days of exploring, sunbathing and laundry. At the local museum we encountered a bunch of 7 year old school kids who were eager to try out their English with questions like

"Where are you from? What is your name?" and "How old are you?!" Ouch, dodgy subject!
We also met an Aussie couple in the harbour who had sailed from Perth, they kept us entertained us with tales of piracy in the Red Sea.

The neighbouring island of San Antioco was a different story and at the main town of Calasetta we found Basil Fawly alive and well in the supermarket and Dick Turpin in the harbour, so we sailed back to the mainland to Portoscuso where the famous Italian hospitality was alive and well, the locals were welcoming, chatty and didn't try to charge extortionate rates. Soon after a young couple with their 2 daughters aged 9 and 13 arrived next to us; they were on their way back to their native Norway, after a circumnavigation of the world taking 3½ years - more fascinating tales.

It was from Portoscuso we made our Italian first bus trip and discovered that you need to buy a bus ticket, before you get on the bus, from a bar or edicola (newsagent). Our trip to the capital Cagliari involved 2 buses and was interesting to say the least, but everyone was very helpful.

We made our way a few days later around the southern coast of Sardinia anchoring in some beautiful calas, we took our first dip of the year and discovered that it was the jellyfish season, but with temperatures approaching 30°C we were desperate.

We moored in some intriguing harbours and found much in the way of Roman ruins.

A mooring on the town quay next to the local fire station in the capital city of Cagliari provided a safe and free place to leave *Squib* whilst we made a trip back to the UK, with the friendly and obliging fireman on the fireboat offering to keep an eye on her for us for a week. *Lady Bear* was due to leave for the east coast in a few days so we said our farewells and flew off. Our trip was hectic as usual, but we managed at least to almost finalise our house sale, visit most of the family and some friends and see the girls and gangs. Sam had a party on her birthday with a 'Cyber Funk' theme which produced some very interesting costumes!

We bought a new laptop to upgrade our old one and to (ever the optimists) connect to the internet, but back on *Squib* and we found that Bill Gates was ahead of Nokia and had brought out Windows XP before Nokia had produced the necessary software so we had to wait a few weeks for them to catch up.....and of course connect!

(Renamed Bugger-off)



Squib had behaved herself in our absence and was champing at her anchor and raring to go, so who are we to stop her. Winding around the south western tip we dropped anchor in Villasimius

for the night and the next day headed for Arbatax, but had such a good sail decided to carry on to Santa Maria Navarrese and got so carried away sailed straight past it and had to do an about turn for a half a mile!

The east coast of Sardinia is quite straight with long stretches between safe havens, but stunning nevertheless and we spent a while cruising and exploring the bays and coastal towns including Cala Ganone in the gorgeous bay of Orsei, La Caletta, Puntadia, and after weaving our way through some very pretty islands we arrived in the large harbour and town of Olbia where we spent a few days on the free town quay relaxing and catching up with some chores. We explored the old historical town and met up with yet more Aussies (are there any left down there?) for a couple of stubbies (we're even copping on to the lingo!). Sadly we couldn't stay too long as the evening temperatures had now reached 34°C and the harbour was too dirty to have a swim, so off we went with the wind right on the nose up coast a bit to the very posh Cala di Volpe on the famous Costa Smeralda where, it is rumoured, Princess Di spent her last day.

We were convinced God had got his paint palette out and painted the sea it was so blue, naturally we dived straight for the long awaited swim. On the subject of nature we noticed that the Italians seemed to have a bit more shame and topless sunbathing is a rarity and nudity is almost non existent in contrast to our experiences in other countries! Into the dinghy to explore ashore and apart from a local very expensive general store, all we found was a very posh 5* hotel with its own marina- the purchase of a postage stamp seemed a good excuse for a nose around! A couple of days later, we moved around the coast a bit to the even more classy marina, Porto Cervo. This is Millionaires Paradise! The yachts were liners and the town was wall to wall designer shops. We plumped for the free anchoring and window shopping, people-watching was definitely on the agenda. After meeting up with *Lady Bear* a few days later, we crossed to La Maddalena, the largest island in the archipelago and belonging to Italy between Sardinia and Corsica.

This old and historical town had a character of its own.

We hired some scooters to discover what the rest of La Maddalena and the neighbouring island of Caprera had to offer and were not disappointed, we found beauty and ruggedness in perfect harmony and all got sore bums in the process.



(L-R) Paul, Judy, Len & Gill. we all got sore bums.

Squib is center stage

Bonjour Corsica!

We had to recover the fragments of French from the depths of our memories when we reached the astonishingly beautiful town of Bonifacio. After a short spell back on mainland Sardinia, we had negotiated the notoriously windy and hazardous 11 miles across the strait with no mishaps; we found an anchorage, but inadvertently got drawn into a commotion involving the wind, a French boat and a shortage of mooring spots and promptly forgot our own advice to use a tripping line to help us ultimately up anchor from this apparently debris littered sea-bed. Yep you guessed it, after a wonderful 4 days seeing the sights, try as we may the kedje would not come up! Len and Gill came to help from another perspective, but eventually it was donated to Neptune.

Bonifacio has a long and chequered history dating back to the Neolithic period; Odysseus' fleet sheltered here, the Romans utilised it and the Genoese ruled for a time. The medieval town perched precariously on the limestone cliffs, guards majestically the calanque, a slit in the cliffs and the entrance to the natural harbour. Corsica is a place I have wanted to visit for a long time, it always seemed mysterious.

If Bonifacio was any example I couldn't wait to see more!



The kedge anchor was not our only problem. We had used our dinghy to go ashore and couldn't believe it when it sprung a leak on a seam! Maybe you can cast your mind back to the saga in Aigues Mortes involving our other dinghy and similar leaks, Yamaha finally, under duress, had replaced it with a brand new one 2 years ago - is this how long they are designed to last?!

The prevailing winds dictated which direction to take and dodging the many reefs around the south eastern tip, we arrived at Rondinera, a large but sheltered anchorage on the eastern coast. By now we were taking regular dips to cool down and whilst we were snorkelling Paul saw a fish with large teeth. We somehow got our wires crossed and I thought he told me to look at the anchor, which I did and unwittingly came face to face with a monster - and yes he had big teeth and yes he was at least 2 metres long! With bowel emptying fear, I torpedoed back to Squib and safety and a very amused Paul who had actually said "Look towards the anchor!" We watched it for a while getting a similar reaction from other unsuspecting boats.

Bastille Day and the sky looked ominous. Our hopes of getting into Porto Vecchio to latch on to any planned festivities were slim as every man and his spaniel had the same idea. So instead we found a very tranquil and deserted bay, dropped anchor and went ashore. The tranquillity was short lived when the impending storm broke and brought torrents of rain. We sat in a camp site bar and watched helplessly as Squib was alone and at the mercy of the storm. We worried needlessly as she took it on the nose and came up smiling. Later when the clouds had cleared we witnessed the most spectacular series of firework displays all around us.

Heading in a northerly direction along the east coast we stopped in the small town of Solenzara where we managed to the replace the lost kedge anchor, stock up with provisions, do some laundry and use the electricity to charge everything. We bumped into Len and Gill again and sailed northwards once more to Campoloro and with a very windy forecast took the decision to hire a car between us to find out what the rest of Corsica had to offer. We travelled the length and breadth of the island over the next three days from the bustling northern city of Bastia and onto the 'finger' and the wild northern extremities, around the Cap Corse, stopping only to admire some

of the most stunning scenery, to Saint Florent which nestles affectionately into the land in the western corner of the 'finger'. After a delicious meal we headed back via the mountains negotiating some very narrow and perilous cliff roads,

which had us fighting for the 'inside' seats of the car! This set the theme for next 2 days, for Corsica we now know is very mountainous. The upside was the landscape and scenery which were breathtaking. The capital Ajaccio and birthplace of Napoleon Bonaparte was our destination the next day and we ambled through the fascinating old streets and unsurprisingly checked out the local harbour and hostelryes. On the route back to Campoloro, the fortified town of Corte in the centre of Corsica provided us with a pit stop for a meal. Day 3 and we were to explore the elusive town of Porto Vecchio and found an interesting walled town built on a precipitous bluff with panoramic views over the vast and natural harbour. For lunch a picnic in the foothills by a babbling brook with a swim afterwards sounded romantic, but although we know we had passed one previously, it now eluded us and we got so desperate we had a sandwich on the roadside. Around the next corner after lunch we found our babbling brook!

Light south-easterly winds ferried us 40 miles across to Elba. We had relinquished the car, had a day to catch our breath and said au revoir to Corsica. We arrived on the northern side of this Tuscan island and were immediately bowled over by the beauty of this tiny, but stately island. After laying at anchor in a gorgeous, but swelly bay for a night, we sailed in a westerly direction with the intention of exploring the southern coast. Discovering turbulent seas on the west coast we were forced to turn back and continue along the north coast to the quaint town of Marciana. We spent a wonderful 3 days at anchor here and had a superb time strolling around the warren of narrow streets. Here was also our first encounter with a peculiar Italian custom of rafting up at anchor, involving 2 or more boats. This is tantamount to 2 or more boats on the same anchor. Ok unless you have a violent thunderstorm and they happen to be 10 metres from your bow and that bow just happens to be *Squib*. Fortunately we anticipated the storm and potential problem and moved very rapidly to avoid a collision!

Over the next few days we circumnavigated Elba and towns and anchorages of equal charm culminating in our arrival at the main ferry port of Portoferraio, where we checked into the marina to await the arrival of my sister Diane, her Significant Other - Clive and our 9 year old nephew Frankie the following day. The marina borders the original steep town walls which generated a tremendous amount of heat adding to the summer temperatures, so whilst it was conveniently situated in the heart of the town with much to do, swimming was not on the agenda in the polluted waters and so cooling down out of the question. So after settling in our visitors, we sailed off back to Marciana for a welcome dip at anchor.

We took a 'busman's holiday' trip to the south coast in a glass bottom catamaran several times bigger than *Squib* with both hulls made entirely of glass, observing the sea-bed en route. The pièce de resistance was the wreck of a passenger liner, tragic but fascinating, which appeared to be only a few feet away and split in two, it was inhabited by a fantastic array of fish of many different colours and species.

Elba was put on the map when Napoleon was exiled here in the early 19th century, so when we hired a car one day, his country pad was our first destination, except it was Monday and we forgot that many places are closed. His town house was the next best thing although it was unexpectedly modest. We toured inland and found some interesting towns and villages, ate ice-creams (a must in Italy!) and generally acted like tourists. We had no trouble continuing this for the remainder of the week sailing up and down the coast discovering the nooks and crannies in the coastline.

COLOURS A PLENTY

By Spike Marlin.

Seafarers the world over live cheek by jowl with all kinds of necessary flotsam; ropes of many shapes and sizes; engine components; spares and widgets of all sorts and tools of every description. The list is almost endless. One boat object which takes many different forms, tend to suffer the most neglect. We sometimes see them fresh and colourful, particularly when a vessel is new or has completed a refit. More often, and this tends to be the norm, They will be faded, frayed and threadbare, that is, if we ever see them at all. I refer of course, to the ship's flag. If it is on board, it is maybe as an afterthought. At the end of the season was it removed, washed and carefully stowed awaiting the first burst of blue sky and fluffy whites? I do not think so. At this point I should like to declare an interest. Flags are one of my passions. Give me yards of bunting. Signal flags by the mile.

Acres of shimmering colours. Give me toggle, halyard and staff by the hundredweight. More is never enough. Give me solid, reliable, never to be denied, vexillological greed. It seems to be almost a rule of thumb, That the condition of the ship's flag and the condition of the ship go together. Rust bucket and rust bucket flags are a familiar sight. Most of us are acquainted with a flag of some kind. Whether it's a national flag flown from a staff, or a back stay, and I do prefer the later, or a club or cruising association pennant flown from a signal halyard, we're accustomed to a bit of colourful bunting flapping away at one end or another of the boat. I cannot explain why it should be so, but the national flag of Norway, Iceland and the Faeroes have for me a special attraction. The Danish flag is believed to be the oldest in terms of it's original adoption and the Netherlands the longest in continuous use. I rather like our St. George's Cross apart from it's rather dubious religious connection to an obscure and some say mythical religious figure. Those of you, who like us plough an overcrowded furrow in and around The Solent, might have been privy to the sight of a sparkling Catalac 900, complete with a ravishingly beautiful, three gold leopards on a dark red background, back stay mounted, flag. Most of you will have seen this emblem shown on England football and cricket shirts. We had this flag made, believing that it represented something truly English, to find eventually, that it's origins lay in the twelfth century and was more representative of Norman/French interests.

In our quest to find an emblem that existed in pre eleventh century England that was, just like the Welsh (Celtic) Dragon or the Scottish Lion, tied to a sense of identity, we looked at The Raven, one of the symbols of our Norse forebears. There is a fine example of this bird depicted on the floor tablet to be seen in the church of The Holy Trinity at Bosham in Sussex. We know that the raven emblem was carried by Viking settlers and we know also, that they arrived on these shores, in vast numbers, in longships some of which displayed carved dragons on their prows. There then is the clue. Various accounts written during the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries A.D. describe battles between The Red Dragon of the Celtic British (welsh) and the White Dragon of the Jutish, Saxon and Angle (English) invaders and settlers. At that time and maybe afterwards there could have been some confusion concerning The White Horse flag of Kent and the White Dragon. They have a certain similarity according to artistic interpretation. The White Dragon flag would have been familiar to King Alfred the Great of Wessex – the flag flies in Wessex to this day. The White Dragon flag of the English was known to King Harold the 2nd – it features on the tapestry commemorating the battle and was seen in Westminster Abby during the crowning of the usurper, William of Normandy.

The White Dragon flag of the English has a pretty impressive pedigree and now that we take a more relaxed view of what flags we can or cannot display on our boats, this would be an opportune time to rediscover a rather beautiful and historic banner which is to the English what the Red Dragon and Scottish Lion are to the Welsh and Scots.

