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June 2003



Hello fellow Bobcat and Catalac sailors every where.

***** *Help Wanted* *****

Fellow Catalac enthusiasts

Does anyone have the time and inclination to help disabled, particularly those in wheelchairs to enjoy our wonderful sport? **The Bournemouth Sports Forum** for the Disabled have a **9 metre Catalac** adapted to take wheelchairs and provide a real 'hands on' experience of sailing.

The boat has just completed a refit which will probably shock dyed in the wool enthusiasts, but it works and is now one of only a handful of boats in the world truly able to cater for disabled. We have a skipper who is always happy to have help but is unavailable on Mondays, which is a day we are keen to develop into a regular sailing day.

If you have a sense of humour and are interested in giving some time to a worthy cause, please look up our website on www.sportsforum.org.uk and/or contact
Richard on 01202 520249.

Happy sailing and sorry we were unable to attend your recent events

Report on the Bembridge Rally 3/4/5/May

By **Jeremy Bretherton**

The weather forecast for the area Wight issued at 0500 on Friday 2nd. May 2003

*"winds south 4 or 5 becoming 7 to severe gale 9 for a time,
veering west, backing southwest overnight."*

The forecast did not bode well for our weekend Catalac rally at Bembridge. I am pleased to report despite the forecast and last minute cancellations: 8 cats, 1 dog and 23 people, were at Bembridge on Saturday for the rally.

CatalacsAllez Cat, Haptic Duo, Scuba Cat, Cats Eye, Euraka 11, and Channel Clipper, on her maiden voyage with new owner Peter Evans. The **Oceanic** 30 Cariana and the new **Solaris** of Steve & Julie Lymn completed the party.

Another rally to be held at Bembridge was cancelled due to the bad forecast making berths available on the Duver pontoons. Most of us made use of them, Euraka 11, however, preferred remaining on the beach.



Steve Lymn (the Commodore of Brading Haven Sailing Club) and his wife Julie made us all extremely welcome. We sat down to a splendid meal of chicken chasseur or braised steak all with plenty of vegetables followed by a choice of sweets, coffee and mints. All washed down with a good house wine at £6.00 per bottle.

Sunday was fine and sunny spent mainly in exchanging experiences and visiting each other. Almost everyone left on the rising tide on Monday morning to another sunny day with a fresh south westerly wind.

Altogether a successful and enjoyable weekend.

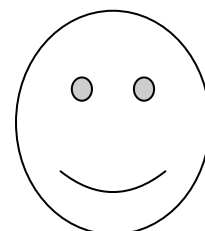
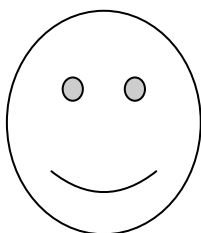
WELCOME TO NEW OWNERS

John Walters,
11 Woolverton Gdns.
Ealing, London W5 3LJ.
johnjwalters@britishlibrary.net
CL.8.134 "FABULOSO" (Birdham. Chichester)

Dave and Iris Merson
2 Market Rasen Way, Holbeach Lincs.
irisanddave@aol.com
CL.9.201 "LEGLISS" (Wisbech. Cambs.)

Ray Badman,
3 Priory Mews,
Weston-Super-Mare, BS23 3HX
CL.9.24 "KISKADEE" (Weston-Super-Mare)

Bob Swann,
CL.8.52 "MARICAT" (Thornham Marina.)





"Weather"

By Bob Freeman

(Part 2)

As I showed in part 1 of this article weather can be quite complicated and have a lot of different ways and systems of interpreting it, most of us rely on the radio and television for our forecast information and using a radio system while afloat. Technology is changing all the time and how many of us wander around boat shows looking at all these sophisticated black boxes that seem to do wonderful things but the cost ! As people say owning a boat is like pouring money into the sea !

I have recently been looking into data systems used by radio hams (amateur radio enthusiasts) who talk and receive information from around the world and from that point of view things could get quite complicated but we will try and stick with the basic principle of receiving weather information from around the world for as little cost as possible.

While I think of it there are quite a few radio hams that send out voice weather information for sailors just because they enjoy doing it. You might say, but I haven't got a licence but in most cases you don't need a licence just to listen and receive.

I have been looking at a software system that is available to all who wish to download it, it is what they call freeware which means you don't have to pay to use it, it is called JVFX.7.0

You will need what they call a demodulator which connects your SSB radio to your computer, which is quite a simple circuit that can be built yourself or purchased for less than £20.

To start off, this is not a switch on and go system, you require a little patience as it can be a bit of a learning curve !

Let us say we have downloaded our JVFX software, now the running of this program may depend on the type of computer you are using, the program itself runs in what they call DOS you may have to change a few settings to get it to work but you can play with this at home during the cold winter months. There are help pages within the program but I found these a bit limited.

There are 2 pages to look at when you have the program running this is the Mode page and the Configuration page, which I will mention later.

Then to run the program click Fax and enter and you should have a black screen with a menu box, this should show that you are running wefax 576 and a Deviation of 400 you can change these by clicking M and D respectively, the bottom line shows your signal - when you are connected to the radio and then click A which will start the data scrolling down the page.

To most of you this probably sounds very complicated but having set it up and put a short cut to your desktop it is surprising how quickly you can be up and running.

A few points to note :

- 1 : You will need to find out one way or another, the weather stations that you are going to receive from and the radio frequencies that they use, on a fairly good SSB radio.
- 2 : The aerial that you have is as good as you can get it ! of which there are different types available and it is well worth experimenting if you can.
- 3 : That you have a good earth to the radio, preferably connected to something that has direct contact with the sea.
- 4 : Web sites giving out good information relating to this article

Remedial work to our 900 No.906

By John Green

Chapter 6.

The last furlong~

The windows on our 1995 manufactured Catalac 900 are tinted polycarbonate, solidly fastened and as tough as old boots. The windows are fitted into preformed GRP rebates and rest on a bed of mastic sealant, then thru fastened with screws. They are strong and do not leak. They are, or rather were; far from elegant. Knowing something of the legendary impact resistance of poly carbonate -I remember reading an account by a Marine Fire Service attempting, with their axes to break into a burning sailing yacht via the windows, to no avail, the impact resist-ance was too great -I have never bothered to make storm boards. If I ever decided to go 'blue water', I would make and fit poly carbonate 'see thru' storm boards to the five front windows.

Not so close examination of the GRP window rebates showed that they had been very badly trimmed by the manufacturers after release of the deck moulding from the mould. The exposed GRP rebate edge was ragged, so much so that its appearance detracted from what was becoming a smart, neat looking vessel. The only way that I could see of dealing with this problem, was to apply an external aluminium or stainless steel cosmetic trim whose sole purpose was to hide the unevenly cut GRP window rebates. Was it possible to find this, without recourse to a special order placed with specialist fabricators? What I needed was something 'off the shelf', that could be, if needed, adapted for my purpose.

The route to B & Q is a familiar one.

I looked for and checked various metal extrusions; but concluded nothing that resembled the profile of a hockey stick. I then remembered that during my unskilled attempts to – at various times - fit carpet, I had used a bridging or threshold aluminium extrusion for joining carpet at doorways. I quickly found the item I wanted. They came in 8 foot lengths and were pre-drilled with holes about every 12 inches. I measured and cut the 'ally' according to the outside line of the fitted glass window. The corner mitres were difficult, ranging as they did thru many varying degrees. Fixing was not a problem. A dab of black Sykaflex mastic at about 12 inch intervals on the inside of each piece, then held in place during the bonding process with strips of masking tape.

Over a period of about a week, I fitted all the windows. The total material used being about 150 feet. The finishing touches were to mask the window above the strip and below on the fibre-glass with one inch wide tape and using a fine cut nozzle on my mastic gun apply a good bead of black mastic as a seal not only to the upper gap but to the lower as well. I bought a box of tiny (3/16) length, pan headed screws and with a dab of mastic inserted them into the pre drilled screw holes merely for effect. Jeremiah's, of whom there are many, said, that as the ally was not marine grade the job would not last a year. The ally would be attacked by salts in the atmosphere and would rapidly degrade. Five years later I'm still waiting. The aluminium has performed well. It has admittedly lost a little of its original shine and lustre -not a problem. Every two or three months I go around with a tube of Solvol Autosol metal polish and give it all a rub~ It looks very good. It is permanent, and no one who has seen it has guessed its origin. More importantly, and the reason for its use in the first place, the ragged GRP edges of the window rebates cannot be seen and the ally strips

have given a more defined and therefore neat and tidy edge to the windows.

A previous chapter mentioned, but not in any detail, batteries and battery chargers. I am convinced that many owners become seduced/frightened by powerful advertising in marine magazines. I am sure that many owners are familiar with subtle and not so subtle trade ads: "Do you really go to sea without our patent thermonuclear deck shoes?". "Are you prepared for the worst? Fit schmucks self tacking galley kettle - guaranteed never to leak and boils in ten milliseconds".

Our 900, bought second-hand in 1998 came with just two one hundred amp hour batteries, one, in each engine compartment, serving each engine and supply-ing the rather slender domestic requirements. Whether they were deep cycle or trick cycle, traction or faction, I knew not. They had been in service for three years prior to our purchase of the boat. I had no way of knowing whether they had been properly maintained or not. I assumed, that, in line with most manufacturers limited two year battery guarantee that they were past their 'sell by date' .I located four competitively priced (£65 each) 100 amp/hr, deep cycle, lead acid batteries made by Fiamm. Two of the batteries for the by now vastly inc-reased domestic supply and two for the engines start. All batteries are interchangeable in function via a battery selector switch. Casting around for battery charger prices, I was astounded. Prices ranged from £150 to upwards of £300 for all kinds of clever and sophisticated chargers. Halfords provided the solution. For just under £40 each, I bought two neat, voltage controlled, polarity protected, 25 amp DC maximum output battery chargers. These are permanently plumbed into the vessels charging system via the battery selector switch enabling me to charge the batteries individually or collectively. The only problem with these chargers is that they are not waterproof.

Condensation on the underside of the GRP surfaces in the engine compartments plus the odd drip from side deck fittings would, if allowed, quickly result in terminally ill chargers. But I had an idea. Jacobs Ltd. make lots of lovely biscuits. They sell their biscuits in red plastic boxes measuring about 10 inches by 10 inches by about three inches deep. Buy two boxes, eat all the delightful bicies, then throwaway the lids. Cut out one side of the box to form a sighting aperture. Now, after placing the box upside down on top of the charger as though to form a little umbrella, with the cutaway side towards you, the dials, switches and knobs on the charger become accessible. All this works well and the chargers remain dry. At this point in the exercise I had no means of checking the battery state either in remaining charge (volts) or consumption (amps).I looked at the options. Most of the battery state monitors were very clever in that they delivered lots of information; but they were expensive, with an average price of about £150 and I needed two. I reasoned that I could easily calculate amp consumption knowing as I did what each piece of on: board electrical equipment consumed. What I at all times needed to know was the charge state of the batteries. Datel (UK) Ltd. provided the answer. They make a neat -match box sized, volt meter. This little gadget has a digital display in large, easy to read, format. It's wiring is simple. One connection to the battery selector switch and one to the battery bank common, enables me to see at a glance the charge level per battery. These voltmeters cost between £30 and £40 each. In terms of peace of mind, they are worth every penny. Having looked at and dismissed most of the high tech solutions such as invertors, switch mode chargers, smart controllers for alternators etc. I have a cost effective AC and DC power supply which relies almost solely on regular battery maintenance backed up by probably the best small, portable petrol generator on the market; a 2 kilowatt Honda. Robustly built and as quiet as a loud church mouse when running, this generator, unlike others, does not spike or surge, thus it is suitable to run laptops and other sensitive electrical equipment. I've tried a wind generator, solar panels etc., none, but an independant engine generator can deliver power in the amounts that you need and more especially, when you need it. The exception I make to all of the above, is that if I were disappearing off to the wild blue yonder, especially to some-where with a constant wind circulation -like

some parts of the Caribbean, I would have on board one of those newish wind generator imports from the USA that reputedly deliver bags of amps at rather low revs. I cannot remember their name. They look a bit futuristic and are sometimes referred to as a wind turbine. A liveaboard friend of mine, currently in Portugal, has one on his Ocean Twins and swears by its performance. He reckons that in a gale he gains enough power to cook a five course dinner in his 3Kw oven and do the ironing at the same time~
I'm suspicious.

There are few situations more satisfying than setting a cruising chute under a gentle summer c-r breeze for a blissful down-wind romp. How often does it happen? Hardly ever. When it does, heaven opens its front door. This all too rare event can be better savoured if after setting the autopilot, or other-wise securing the helm, you amble up to the front end to admire the easy gliding motion of just the most adorable craft in the universe. This 'top job' pleasure is much enhanced if you can do it from the comfort of bow seats. How to do this in the most cost effective way, put me into deep thought. Our pulpit -unlike some -does not follow the plan contours of the bows. Our particular pulpit forms a right angle at each bow. Material options were: GRP, timber, stainless steel and aluminium. Some readers may recall my antipathy towards external timber. Stainless was possibly too heavy. Aluminium would not provide the necessary stiffness. So, it would be GRP or something similar. Where would I find panels of sufficient length, thickness and rigidity? Moulding them was not on. Apart from the lack of somewhere to work under cover, DIY would be too time consuming. B & Q, here we come. My local store, or should I say, Hyperstore, is at Leigh Park, just off the Portsmouth end of the A3. It is huge. Its sheer size prevents you from quickly finding whatever you are looking for. Eventually the building materials section provided the answer. What I found was a thru coloured white board. It looks like GRP, feels like GRP, but isn't. It is rotproof, unaffected by oil or water or anything the weather can throw at it. I believe that it is the material that modern windows and doors are very often made from: UPVC, or poly vinyl chloride. It comes in a variety of lengths. Widths are from about 6 inches to fifteen inches. Its common use is by builders in forming soffits and facias on houses etc. It has a preformed curved edge to one side which conveys extra stiffness and rigidity. I bought a ten feet length measured the angle formed by the front and side of the pulpit and cut the board to the desired shape and length. The board is about half an inch thick. so, after cutting to shape, I glued a half inch white plastic angle strip! to the cut edge to provide a neat, protective trim. The next problem was the two wet lockers positioned in, each bow, just underneath where the two bench seats would be fixed. Stowed in these lockers are various items such as spare anchors, chain, diesel fuel jerricans and spare water containers -so, ready access is important. With the two bench seats fixed permanently in place, the locker lids could be only partly lifted, so access was limited. The solution was to fix the seats with one inch diameter, plastic pipe clips, the sort you can find in any DIY or plumbing shop. These pipe clips are open jawed and when in place are under tension and very robust. When I need access to the wet lockers, I simply remove the seats, and replace takes one minute or less the time scrabbling around in the locker. This PVC board, while suitable in most respects, had one fault. Being just half an inch thick and spanning a gap of about three feet, there was a tendency to deflect or sag about one inch or so, from the horizontal, when sat on by someone weighing about eleven or so stones -me~ I cut and fitted two short lengths - about twelve inches of one inch stainless steel. One end secured to the underside of the seat, by means of a screwed wardrobe rail fixing the other end that rested on the deck, or rather the lid of the locker, fitted with a walking stick rubber ferrule. This support eliminated the deflection and being detachable, gave me ready access to the lockers.

Friends ~ who needs them

You might think it could be fun to go sailing, get away from the wife the daily humdrum and every thing else but what are you letting yourself in for ?

What do you know about the boat ? not a lot, only what the friend has told you.

How well do you know your friend ? life on a boat is very different from life at home.

Questions :

Is he competent, is he domesticated, how is his health, what is his general attitude and conversation like, is he a Jeckle and Hyde ?

Is it worth joining him overseas, spending your own hard earned money, for what could be the trip of a lifetime, a thought ? can you get back home if need be ?

I recently travelled St Malo to join a friend in the Morbian, he met me by car and whisked me into the French country side, this is lovely, I thought.

We parked the car, put on our wellies and waterproofs as the month was May and the weather was still a bit changeable, we loaded up launched the dinghy and away to a mooring in the middle of the river, this is nice I thought to myself.

We boarded the boat, I thought she looks alright with new antifouling and reasonably tidy.

I was shown my cabin and told it might be a little damp but it will soon dry out, there was quite a lot of water in the bilges and some of the lockers but he made no attempt to dry them out, the wood work needed some tlc, it had mould appearing and very little varnish on it.

I went to put the kettle on for a cup of tea my friend said it takes five pumps of the tap to make one cup of tea so only pump it ten times for two cups we don't want to boil water unnecessarily ok I thought, quite a sensible idea. He also gave me a mug to use in the heads that was my allowance of water to wash and clean my teeth.

A quick look at the cooker it looked a bit greasy the washing up hadn't been done *lately* and the bowl that it was in was covered with antifouling and the work surface was a bit stained and rather cluttered.

Any way we had a cup of tea and we discussed a few proposals for our pending trip to the Mediterranean! but we can't go yet as I am waiting for a letter to arrive said my friend.

He showed me how he had changed all the interior lights for led's (light emitting diodes) to save battery power. Possibly a good idea but the wiring was stretched around the cabin like numerous washing lines.

I went to use the heads (toilet) he said make sure you sit down as I don't want you spraying it around, which is a sensible idea but one look and it was disgusting, brown stains around the seat and extending down into the bowl the pipe work looked as though it had never been cleaned and the sink was more black then white, have you got any bleach I asked and the answer being no, so it was the first thing to go out and buy the next day.

His priority seemed to be the computer playing with Maxsea navigational and weather programs he also had a health problem that he wouldn't admit to, he had developed thrombosis while in France and although he had received treatment there was still a problem and he had a various supplement of pills to take. During the day he would often say he was tired and disappear into his cabin or he would say he was hungry and make himself a meal, not asking me if I would like some.

There was quite a lot of food on board so I thought at least we wont go hungry, but it turned out that some of the tins were 8 to 10 years old, he admitted that he had brought them cheap, one day he wondered where the fly's were coming from and one of the tins of meat had rusted away and was alive with maggots, he was eating yoghurt and ham amongst other things that were at least 3or 4 months past there sell by date, he would cook a stew and leave leftovers in the pan for days and then just add some more to it, I asked if there was another pan to cook some potatoes in and he said there was one in the bottom locker, when I found it, it was heaving, having been put away dirty, I'm afraid that was my final straw the next day I jumped ship and came back home.

My other concern is that he has advertised internationally for crew, a male teacher coming over from America for a couple of months, a lady university lecturer also wanting to gain sailing experience is preparing to join him, perhaps I should have made an entry in the log.

Warning >>>> Health hazard Beware all who sail in her