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Happy New Year

To all fellow Bobcat and Catalac sailors

Many thanks to the members who have sent stories with their cheques. I think some of you are still suffering from the New Year festivities, as many of the cheques are dated 2003.

In last year's December newsletter I asked "Has anyone seen any Easter eggs for sale yet?" This was done as a gentle reminder- the subs are now due. Imagine my surprise as in the post with a 2003 cheque arrived one easter egg found on the east coast this year. It will be a prize

in the next B.C.C.A. raffle. Also, **now is the time to send us your stories/articles please**
The venue of the Meet and Eat will be on the South coast and we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible:

" Meet and Eat".

Saturday 21/February

At

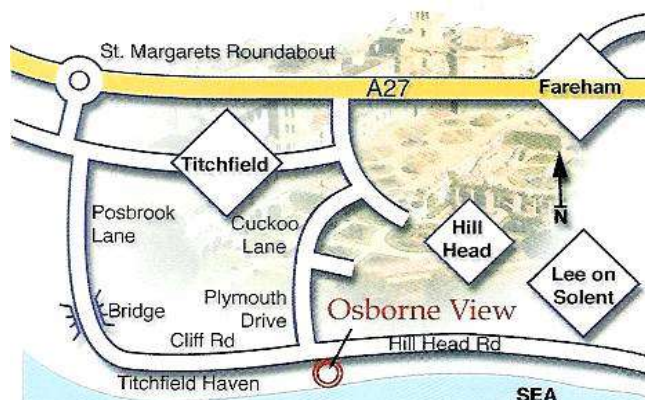
"Osborne View"

Hill Head Rd. Hill Head, Fareham, Hants.

The venue at "Osborne View" is famous for it's panoramic views across the Solent towards Osborne House and the Isle of Wight. They offer an extensive range of home made cuisine.

Excellent value main course meals from £4.95 to £10.95 plus Specials board.

If you plan to attend, please let us know how many in your party, so we can reserve tables. You and friends are all welcome.



From ‘*Pipers Dream*’ to all fellow members:

Sorry we are too late to wish you all a happy Christmas however we wish you all a happy and safe new year.

We would like to say thank you to all we have met on our travels as well as the members who have offered us support and advice through this, our first year as new owners of our Catalac 900 and new members of the Association.

In particular a big thank you to Peter for his invaluable advice and obvious hard work in keeping the information flowing through the news letters, and all the work he does in keeping the sails filled to enable the Association life, for the benefit of all the members.

We look forward to another year of membership in 2004, as we consider the £20/£25 per year is well spent, as I’m sure you all do.

Yet more advice we request please: Hopefully our questions will assist other new members as well as us, and set some of you ‘oldies’ a thinking.

I apologise if this is all old hat to some and maybe you have discussed this in the past but as we are on a very steep learning curve it is helpful to turn to established and experienced owners. Enough creeping!!!!

How do you heat both sides of a Catamaran? When in a marina we use a fan heater which is moved about and an oiled filled radiator, we also use a dehumidifier to help keep dry.

We also have an eberspacher heater when away from land which, fitted by the previous owner, stops at the heads bulkhead so only sends heat forward towards the double berth.

So come, what ideas can you come up with without us spending lots of money?

Also how do you stop the condensation and therefore damp in the hanging lockers in the forward berths

One side we have made slatted shelves, as in an airing cupboard; this will help air to circulate but still doesn’t stop the condensation.

To offer a little help in return. We came across a brilliant storage idea; Suction bags, this does combat the damp clothing problems, you put the clothes, quilts, towels etc into the bag, various sizes and suck out all the air with a vacuum cleaner. When filled they take up a good $\frac{1}{4}$ of the room and by sucking out all the air there is no problem with damp. We were very surprised to see a king size quilt and pillows shrink down to such a small size. They would be excellent for those who have an end of season and have to carry quilts, blankets, sleeping bags etc home.

We have been using ours for some months now and can recommend them. At first we thought they were only a gimmick but they have proved a worthwhile investment. I’ve sent Peter some details, I’m sure there are various makers about but these are the ones we use. If you want to know more from our own experience please give us a ring. We are on a mobile but can call you back after 7pm or at weekends if you wish. We have neither connection nor profit from the company.

Wishing you all the best
Antoni & Elma McRae.

Hi Pipers Dream,

When one first graduates from a mono (half boat) to a cat the space and storage seem enormous but within a short time the storage space shrinks as every nook and cranny is filled with bits that we may or may not need at some time. How many of you have found the odd pair of shoes or spanner when the boat is emptied for winter? The advantages of being able to shrink jumpers towels coats etc. is good when sailing, to hang them in the lockers leaves them scuffed as they sway with the rock of the waves.

The condensation in the forward lockers, John Green fitted solar vents on “Madeleine of Netly” to allow ventilation. I drilled three 12mm. holes in the bulkhead between the hanging locker and fender locker about 100mm. from the top. The wind passing over the outside fender locker sucks air from the hanging locker preventing condensation. Keep the holes high to prevent any water ingress from the odd wave that brakes over the foredeck and also make sure the fender locker drain is not blocked. I keep a plastic mesh basket over the outlet to help prevent the odd warp, or any other offending article that will block the outlet, at bay.

I am sure our members will be able to help you with the heating problem. ED.

Add from "Pipers Dream"

FORE SAIL

1. 2 Volvo 2001 9hp (1994) diesel engines, inc panels, looms, rev-counters.
 2. Avon Redcrest dinghy with wooden floor & engine bracket. £200.00 ono.
 3. Gimeg-Rinnai gas water heater. Little used £75.00
 4. Helm seat & pedestal and base 50.00
 5. 8 of Fenders 24" cylindrical med (Black). £5.00
 6. Anchor Danforth type 25lb. £25.00
 7. 1 Davit 19" high 34" arm White. Ideal for fitting outboard on dinghy only £70.00
 8. Original gold kemp Roller reef boom complete with windy handle.
 9. CAMCORDER SANYO VM-EX26P inc. unused tapes, two batteries with loads off goodies £125.00
- Ring Toni 07990528016
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Dear Peter,

Please would you include the following query in the next news letter.

My current Yamaha 9.9 has been misfiring above 2500RPM for some time and is now in the hands of a Yamaha main agent. The main agent has after some considerable time been unable to trace / repair the fault and after some discussion I have been persuaded that an economical diagnosis / fix which will provide a safe and reliable main engine is not on the cards. Hence the fact that I have had to bite the bullet and purchase a replacement.

Has any of our members any experience of the performance and fuel consumption etc of the new 323cm3 Yamaha 9.9 in comparison to the older and smaller capacity engined 9.9 ?.

Any ideas on what to do with a 1999 9.9 engine with a good service history (clocked 400 hours running time)?.

Any info or suggestions greatly appreciated.

Best wishes and A Happy New Year to all.

Barry Gisborne

Jazzcat of Bucci

Currently Moored at Hardway Marine Gosport.

I'm sorry to hear about your Yamaha 9.9 and would be pleased to include details in next newsletter.

Did you drain the fuel or use an additive at the end of last season? How do you know it is over 2500rpm?

Have you a rev counter?.

Does the problem occur when engine temp. is cold, ie on choke or only when warm?.

Is the engine using more fuel? Is the choke shutting off when engine warm?. To cure the problem:

1. Try fitting new spark plugs first, then run at revs to cause misfire for half an hour, then switch off engine. Remove and inspect plug electrodes for white or black deposits. The cylinder that is misfiring will be a different colour.
2. Check toothed timing belt and timing.
3. Compression test both cylinders.

I had a problem with dirty fuel which I now filter and that seems to cure the problem. However, I still had to keep water and salt out of the petrol.

How much/little dosh, do you want for the old engine?.

Good Luck and Happy New Year to you all.

ED.

NEW AUTOPILOT VENTURE

Reply from Mark Blaydes

I had to respond to the letter from Martin Minter-Kemp about the wind vane steering. I have been investigating autopilots for my projected long trip, on the basis that my old Autohelm 3000 has done sterling service, but would turn its toes up if asked to work for more than 24 hrs continuously. I wanted to go the wind vane route because it offers good steering for no electrical energy. As I have a power budget problem anyway, I thought that I should avoid an electric autohelm replacement.

I received a lot of information from a number of sailing forums and the overall consensus from all the multihull owners was that it was a bad thing to use the wind driven steering for the following reasons:

1. They are at their least effective down wind, which is the type of sailing I want to do!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
2. When used up-wind on a multihull, they can be OK if the wind is very steady, however, if there is any variation in wind speed/direction the multihull tends to accelerate too quickly for the system to be able to respond, and you have very quickly got yourself in a difficult/sometimes dangerous situation.

It was not just the wind vane type steering that came in for this criticism, but also the electric type that made use of a wind vane. The very strong recommendation was that I should go totally electric, and that for continuous use I needed to get a proper system. Thus I have purchased the new autohelm S1 system, which will be installed when my sugar scoops get done - which may not be this winter after all as I have not yet got my boat out of the water!!!

Regards Mark.

Many thanks Mark. That's very interesting. I have not tried a wind vane autopilot either but

- 1) **I have noticed with electric autopilots the downwind performance is also least efficient on most mono and multihulls because the main tries to turn the boat in a gust. The autopilot then tries to overcorrect causing the main to gybe as such, I have found it safer with reefed or no main, just genoa or poled spinnaker.**
- 2) **Our Bob's and Cat's are designed for cruising and as such don't tend to accelerate as quickly as do the more racier multihull models.**

I for one would like to try one for myself. ED.

From The design team.

WIND VANE

Wind vanes come in all shapes and forms with varying degrees of efficiency and engineering.

Although this particular vane was designed for the 9 meter CATALAC catamaran it can easily be adapted to drive a wide range of sailboats. The trim tab servo system allows the design to be small with lots of power.

Some of the contributing factors which have influenced the design.

The vane must be robust, be able to withstand prolonged use with the ability of working in most conditions. It must be simple in design and user friendly, with as few working parts as possible. The vane must be self contained, easy to install with a quick release system. The vane must be aesthetically pleasing. The blade will knuckle under impact.

Although an auxiliary rudder is a beneficial spin off of this design the facility has been made to incorporate the ships main rudder into the auto steering system. The vane is made of 316 marine grade s/s which incorporates simple design techniques. All bushes are made of delrin and are limited in numbers to reduce friction. The blade is made of wood. The vane should be able to be repaired at most fabrication shops using pipes and bushes of a standard size.

Although this vane is still under scrutiny and is undergoing rigorous testing. All the above criteria have been met and the tests done so far are encouraging.

We wish you Good Luck with your venture. ED.

Dear Petal, sorry, Peter, (payback time for wrongly spelt name)

In the last newsletter you requested some recipes so I have enclosed three, hope they are ok. Should you need any more then let me know, I've got quite a few! For a tasty snack or starter try this;

Elma McRae.

Apologies for misspelling your name in previous newsletter, I must confess to being a two fingered typist. Many thanks for recipes, I think we will make them wait for the other two and as you say---

*It's tasty snack time
Sailing Dish for the month is.*

Fried camembert cheese.

You will need;

A fairly firm camembert cheese, cut into sections

1 egg, beaten

Flour

Oil for frying

Golden breadcrumbs

Dip the sections of cheese first into egg, then into flour, back into egg and finally into the breadcrumbs making sure they are completely coated. Fry in the oil until crispy and golden brown, taking care when turning over. The inside will be gooey and very hot. It is lovely served with cranberry sauce or red current jelly.

The Adventures of 'Squib'

2002/3

(Continued)

by Judy and Paul Thompson

Barmy Bohemians

For a recent birthday present, my very good friend Anne who just happens to be a fan.....atic of the Beatles sent me a tee-shirt with the words "Hey Jude" emblazoned across the front and when we arrived at our next port of call, Cameroto, I was on the bow ready to pass the marina staff the lines when they, and a boat full of Germans all chanted the song at the top of their voices....what a welcome!

Everyone we met in this town went out of their way to be friendly and to help in any way and we thoroughly enjoyed our 2 day stay. We also joined in the festa which was being held for whatever reason and watched a band playing in the village square and a vibrant firework display just a few metres away from *Squib*!

This hospitality was duplicated at the next stop in Vibo Valentia where on arrival the guy working there took and secured our lines then disappeared after asking how many people were on board. Must be something to do with customs? Wrong - he came back a few minutes later with 2 glasses

of a local cocktail on a tray with some nibbles! Yet another warm welcome and again the rest of the staff and nearby town echoed this.

And yet again we were reluctant to leave, but nice as these places were, we wanted to be further south for the winter. Our pilot book had extolled the virtues of the town of Tropea informing us it was 'picturesque' so heading south the following day, we went to find out.

The description was no exaggeration and we soon found a spot on a fishing quay next to Dutch boat and a German boat and had a chat to both as you do. After a couple of hours we decided to explore the town which overlooked the marina and which both the Dutch and Germans had said was full of character. We politely said "buona sera" to the nearby old guys fishing for their dinner on the quay nearby and climbed up what seemed like a thousand steps in search of the town. The quaint old place with its narrow streets, washing strung out, the whole bit, unfolded in front of us.

We discovered a very popular pizzeria down a narrow side street with tables and chairs strewn haphazardly blocking the way naturally; mamma was inside cooking the pizzas in the enormous wood oven and we couldn't resist. A most delicious pizza, a carafe of vino rosso and an hour and a half later we ambled back to *Squib* for coffee and bed for an early start in the morning.

What happened next is almost beyond words.

I climbed aboard first and noticed that the cabin door was open - strange when we always lock it when we go out. On closer inspection I could see that it had been forced. I shouted to Paul as I went in and discovered to my horror that we had been cleaned out.

It was Friday 13th. We'd never been superstitious, always making a bee-line for propped up ladders, spilling salt and breaking mirrors you know the things, but from now on we're not so sure!

Now we can laugh but then no. I felt sick as we both saw that the electronic equipment had been stolen - autopilot, GPS, VHF, SSB, a mobile phone, CD player, Game Boy and both the old and the new computer and printer along with all the software. The binoculars had gone too, but what upset me the most was my jewellery box was also stolen and it not only contained my jewellery, most of which were presents, but also my Mum's jewellery.

They had very kindly left us 1 mobile phone, the one with the Italian SIM card (we'd taken it with us) and we used it to phone the police.....Much later we had wondered why we'd bothered. We waited for nearly 2 hours and then they had a problem finding us, despite giving them an exact location and shining our very powerful search-light on their approaching car. We then had a language problem even though one of the two spoke a little English (our fault I suppose for not learning Italian) and then we had to supply a piece of paper and pen for them to write down their report. We were told that in order to get a crime number we would have to go to the police station at 9am on Monday and complete a Denunzia. Ok but where's the police station? "About 5 kms away."

That night we had a thunderstorm to beat all others and didn't sleep at all.

Over the weekend we went through a series of emotions - anger over the violation, sadness over Mum's jewellery. Paul made a temporary repair to the broken door and we started to think about the impact the theft would have. With no autopilot, steering would be tedious; we had a spare



GPS and VHF so no problem there; no binoculars would be a problem when identifying shipping around us and when coming into port; the spare mobile with an English SIM card we would miss only when back in the UK; the SSB meant no weather apart from Popeye; CD player and Game Boy, not life threatening, and with both computers and the printer gone, no birthday cards for anyone. I also couldn't finish the newsletter I had been halfway through - writing a newsletter with no computer is like riding a bike with no pedals not impossible but a bit awkward!

We spoke to a lot of people of all nationalities in the marina who had sadly heard nothing on Friday evening, but were very sympathetic. We spoke also to the guy who runs the marina to ask for directions to the police station and a taxi service. He was appalled when he heard what had happened and offered to give us a lift, he said it was 20 minutes drive and he'd be ready at 8.30 on Monday morning.

All over Italy we have seen and chuckled at the Ape car - Italian for bee. These are 3 wheeler small trucks, a bit like a motorized wheel barrow, that buzz around all over the place and reminiscent of the Tuk-Tuks in Bangkok. When we turned up at his office on Monday... yep you guessed it, he had an Ape! After a very sombre weekend, we just burst out laughing. For 20 minutes we both sat in the back in the open air, on a plank of wood 4 inches wide, going up a 1:1 hill with fumes spilling out and in the intense heat. When we arrived at the police station (we'd never have found it) he offered to wait for us to take us home again - we refused saying we'd walk back and thanked him politely!

Armed with our crime number and having completed our Denunzia, we walked home via the markets and second hand shops in the hope of finding some of the stolen goods, but nothing doing. Then we had to inform the insurance company which is when the real stress began. Staying in Tropea was the last thing we wanted to do, but we knew there was a shop to receive a fax. After several phone calls and attempted faxes we finally managed to get the form and completed it in the town square on a bench in the heat and fax it back; we then made the long trek back home and got ready to leave ASAP. We went to see our 'friend' to pay our bill, but he wouldn't let us saying we could have it on him, because we had a "beeg problemo".

The weather remained unsettled with storms alternating with blue skies, but luckily as we travelled south over the next few days we managed to dodge them. We stopped in a few places before arriving at the mouth of the Messina Strait, the stretch of water dividing Sicily and mainland Italy. Our plan was to stay in a small port there called Scilla and find out the state of the tide and weather pattern before heading through the Strait and across to Sicily, but there were only 2 places and they were both full. We deliberated for a few minutes and decided to go for it. Behind us in the distance we saw another whale gliding along and blowing, but again not close enough to identify which kind.

The sea had been a little choppy but had calmed down and as we sailed across the separation zone, we spotted the famous peculiar sword fishing boats with their enormous bowsprits. Amidships is a man perched on a tall tower on the lookout for the sword fish who like to swim slowly on the surface and bask in the sunshine. He lets the guy on the end of the bowsprit know who in turn harpoons the unsuspecting fish.

The other hazard we encountered was the busy commercial traffic. We saw only 2 other yachts and they were heading towards us making us think that we may have got it wrong! When we'd managed to dodge all the ferries and at times there were 3 or 4 very close to us travelling in different directions, we sought refuge in the Marina Nettuno in the town of Messina, Sicily. Founded by the Greeks and subsequently occupied by the Romans, the town of Messina has a history of earthquakes and in 1908 an earthquake killed almost 70,000 and the town was

completely flattened and destroyed. Today it's a very large, bustling town with a flat appearance, with buildings said to be earthquake proof.

Cruising on *Squib* without the lost equipment was beginning to take its toll, having to steer constantly was very taxing and no binoculars was frustrating to say the least. We took turns to steer and used the video camera when desperate for magnification. We also felt that communication with the insurance company may be a problem as finding an internet café was hit and miss and letters normally take weeks to catch up with us when cruising. The phone was our only direct means, but our insurance company seemed to have a problem with any communication! On the basis of this we decided to head for Syracuse approximately another 80 miles.

We stopped in a couple more places on the way, firstly at Riposte in the shadow of the mighty Mount Etna, who at this time was peaceful, but was soon to get angry.

Our last stop before Syracuse was Acitrezza with 3 curious basaltic rock pillars arranged at the entrance to the harbour. According to Greek legend when Odysseus and 12 of his crew landed on Sicily, the one-eyed Cyclops monster, Polyphemus took them prisoner and ate 6 of them. Odysseus blinded him with a burning stake and escaped with the remaining 6 men by clinging underneath the Cyclops sheep. The rocks known as the Ciclopi were said to have been hurled at the fleeing Odysseus.

With the F4/5 wind on the nose the next day we punched the 30 miles south and arrived at Syracuse. We had to look at everything with a critical eye if this was to be the place where we'd spend the next 6 months. The greeting was friendly, there was water and electricity and the marina had showers, the town was close by and we were given a favourable price, but what appealed to us most was the 24 hour security in light of our recent catastrophe. So after a couple of days exploring, we finally decided to settle down for the winter - the temperature was in the mid to late 20's.

Soon after arrival we sought out the nearest reasonably sized supermarket to stock up. We found one after walking round in circles for miles and yes they would deliver; we just bought a couple of necessary goods that day, but made the trek the following day for the big one - did we think to bring the marina address with us? No. Paul stubbornly refused to go a third time so off I went on my bike to do the shop. Armed with everything including our address I got to the check-out. It was obvious the assistant was not happy about something, but despite listening intently and trying to find the 10 words of my Italian vocabulary, si, no, ciao, buono, completo etc. I understood nothing until a lady behind me stepped in to offer some help. She explained that they couldn't deliver everything and I would have to take half with me. On my bike....?! On your bike! No. The lady spoke fluent English and sorted everything out for me and introduced herself and said she had just come back yesterday from spending a year in England, where? Croydon, our home town - small world.

The following week I signed up for Italian classes in the local primary school.



Many Thanks to all who have already paid this years subs.

For those who have forgotten please forward asap. ED.

