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Bobcat & Catalac Cruising Association

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Disclaimer

Neither the BCCA nor Committee will accept any liability for personal injury arising out of participating in any event, rally or race organized by or through the BCCA whether sustained by members, guests, or visitors, or caused by the said members, guests or visitors whether or not such damage or injury could have been attributed to or was occasioned by the neglect, default or negligence of any of the officers, committees or servants of the BCCA.

Boat Owners Third Party Insurance

It is the responsibility of all boat owners to have adequate third party insurance in respect of him/herself, vessel, his/her crew for the time being & his/her visitors.

November 2005

To all fellow Bobcat and Catalac sailors

The warm weather in the U.K. is continuing into autumn, although we are now seeing stronger winds sweep through. We have been far more fortunate than our members from across the pond, Steven and Janet Metcalfe whose mark 2 12meter Catalac "IVOIRE" was damaged in hurricane Wilma. They had IVOIRE from new and lived aboard until they recently bought a land based home in Florida. IVOIRE was built to their specification and after much heated discussion with Tom Lack was the first Catalac to be finished with hulls and topsides all white. They are very anxious to find a replacement 12meter Mark 2 ie. Cl. 12.14 onwards. (see below)

Dear Peter,

As I told you on the telephone this morning, on October 24th Ivoire sustained considerable damage at the hands of two boats which broke loose during Hurricane Wilma. She subsequently ended up on the rocks of the Eau Gallie Causeway. I will ask my husband (who is surprisingly literate for an American!) to send you a full account of the incident, suffice to say that she was taken on a barge to Titusville, Fl and placed in a marina. Both hulls have huge holes in them and the Surveyor has intimated that he will recommended that the insurance declare her a total loss! We have a very good fibreglass person coming to inspect the hulls, and dependant on what they say and whether or not the insurers will sell the boat back to us, we will make the decision whether to restore or abandon her. Restoration will be very costly as she will need new engines, generator, watermaker, electronics, wiring etc etc. The deck, topsides and rigging are not damaged.

At this point we are seriously considering the purchase of another 12M Catalac and would very grateful if you could let us know if you hear of one for sale. We would definitely prefer a hull later than Ivoire with the white decks and improved hulls etc. Any information you can find would be very gratefully received.

Our mailing address is: 6100 Live Oak Ave., Melbourne, FL 32904, USA. Tel:321-952-1621

Kind regards Janet Metcalf cativoire@aol.com

I know all our members wish you well. My last Catalac was damaged in 89 while on her mooring in Poole Harbour, she suffered much the same as Ivoire, holed in both hulls. We had only owned her for a month but the trauma of our pride and joy being so damaged is not forgotten. The good news is that she was repaired and we now have many fond memories of the 12 years we since enjoyed on her. While cruising earlier this year ME-AND-ER's wake repeatedly crossed that of a monohull, the owners having spent the last eight years cruising were heading back to the U.K. The couple onboard kept a visitors book on their boat, which they duly asked fellow like minded sailors to sign. On looking through the book I was surprised to see entries from Cl.8.116 CHATON and Cl.9.178 NIHOA both these two catalacs were destroyed with many other boats in Puerto Pollensa, Mallorca in 2002. Whether you just sail at the w/e or live on board we thought the visitors book a good idea, like the log it is a good reference and makes interesting reading during the winter months.

Ps. Having left our visitors book on the boat, the name of the mono and owners I cant recall.

Last month I mentioned that while I was away many members wrote to me about the fact that Practical Boat Owner had printed an article on Christchurch Harbour. No mention of the Catalac. Etc.

A letter from our Commodore to Sarah Norbury, Editor, PBO.

20th.September 2005

Dear Sarah,

Bobcat & Catalac Cruising Association and October Issue No466 -Christchurch -Th Guide P87 -89

Thank you for sparing the time on Saturday last to listen to "my beef" about the absence of any reference to catalac catamarans in the above article. As mentioned Christchurch is the home of these catamarans where over a thousand of various dimensions having been built there by Tom Lack and sold throughout the world. As of now there are five permanantly moored on the moorings at Hengistbury Head. From the enclosed photograph you will see that though they may be ugly they are not invisible. Next to Strides Boatyard mentioned in the article is John Lack (a son). More are moored there waiting repair or maintenance in his yard next to Strides. "Think Again" No8180 is frequently used as a stake boat in local racing. No doubt the author of the article is a dedicated monohull sailor and despite frequent references to the shallowness of the harbour did not think of catamarans as being ideally suited to those waters being able to take the ground at low water. -see the enclosed photograph.

I also made reference to the feeling among catamaran owners and sailors that there is a dearth of interest among the mainstream yachting publications in this branch of sailing activity. I attach an example of the sort of communication we receive. Catamarans are becoming more popular especially among charter fleets (where I came across staff of PBO in the BVI's in May 2002) and with examinees of the practical yachtmaster exam.who are able to navigate from a level chart table! ! From the enclosed photogaraph of two bobcats in front of Mont St.Michel they are able to sail where monohulls dare not go. Lastly, I enclose a copy of our Association's October Newsletter which you may find an interesting read. You will see that our secretary cum editor is quite knowledgeable of the nuts and bolts of catamarans having completed a self build 8 metre in March of this year. You might find his in depth knowledge quite useful to you if you don't already have such a person on tap.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Bretherton
Commodore BCCA

Well done Jeremy I see you received a reply.

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29 September 2005

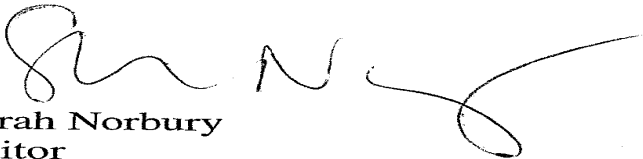
Dear Jeremy

Thank you for your letter.

I'm still going through all my leads from the Southampton Boat Show, but shall give your letter and photos due attention after that.

With kind regards.

Best wishes



Sarah Norbury
Editor

Mark Blaydes owner of CL.9.216 also complained to PBO. we thanked him in last months newsletter.

e.mail from Mark

Peter

Can you pass onto the Boardman's that it is possible to get some steerage from your outboard, either by connecting it to the rudders (good for manoeuvring, bad for motorsailing) or by setting up a separate steering system for the outboard. If they are interested can you get them to email me.

Fast work on the Christchurch link!

My catalac will be featuring in the Jan PBO (unless they change their mind) in part of David Harding's handling in a marina series. This is also relevant to the Boardmans.

PBO are possibly also doing a second hand boat article on my boat this winter sometime.

(I complained about lack of multihull coverage)

fair winds

Mark Blaydes

(mblaydes@ntlworld.com)

Hi Mark,

I would be happy to pass info onto the Boardmans but they have sold Catmandu and are no longer members.

I have to agree with you, without the engine-steering with the rudders cats are a bit of a handful in tight corners with one engine.

Well done about complaining to PBO (Lack of multihull Knowledge) I know of others who have done likewise.

I understand the problem is PBO haven't got anyone on their staff with much multihull knowledge.

I complained to Peter Cumberlidge at this years Southampton Boat show with regard to his book "Secret Anchorages of Brittany" although it is excellent. I asked whether he had anchored in the River Lannion where he suggested as when I visited earlier this year the number of small boats on moorings made it impossible to swing a cat let alone anchor one. That out the way we talked and both made notes regarding other idealic anchorages. That we had been fortunate to find earlier this year.

We look forward to reading about your Catalac in future PBO's.

Many thanks again. Peter G.....

Our question in last months newsletter___**Can we organise a "Cruise to the West Country " or have a "meet & Eat" in the West Country?. This reply from Colin Hastings.**

I'm based at St Mawes/Falmouth. There are quite a few other Catalac's I have seen around there but never got round to getting in touch. An invasion from up the channel would be a good excuse to organize something! Let's pursue it...see how many of your local lot might be interested and maybe put in next newsletter asking any others from Falmouth area who might be prepared to help to identify themselves

Colin Hastings

I think invasion may not be quite the right word, I am going to try for May which is well before the peak season. Is anyone else interested - weather permitting? I would be pleased to hear. Despite excuses we have at least got 3 or 4 boats from this area interested. We should hope to get the same from your area. Watch this space. ED.

With more mishaps to come we now join

PETER & JUDITH BOARDMAN

The Two Week Holiday

This event had been eagerly anticipated, the plan was simple, turn right out of Lowestoft harbour, head south, exploring every river system on the way until it was time to return.

We still had not fixed the windspeed indicator or the depth sounder, which had not worked since we bought the boat, but we had managed to get the distance and speed log working, if somewhat erratically.

The boatyard had done a good job repairing the split in the bridgedeck and replacing the rudder, so it was all systems go – **what else could possibly go wrong?**

We set sail Saturday afternoon, with a fair easterly wind and the tide going south, towards our first port of call, Southwold, in the river Blyth about 15 miles away.

After about 45 minutes we noticed huge thunderclouds piling up over the land but we were not too worried, as we were upwind of them. Soon we were being treated to an exceptional display of lightning as the storm raged overland and, to our dismay, was re-realised that it was heading our way despite the wind direction.

We rapidly turned tail and with full sail and engine struggled back towards Lowestoft against the tide. Half an hour from the harbour entrance it hit us. Deluges of rain, squally wind, thunder and lightning, the lot. Lowestoft disappeared off the face of the earth!

The previous owner had rigged the VHF inside the saloon so it was protected and the mike could be accessed through the bulkhead window by the steering wheel – handy. I called up harbour control for permission to enter. This was refused as a freighter was about to leave, so we cruised around for 15 mins. in the torrential rain, when we finally got in we had missed our bridge opening and had to tie up to a fishing boat until the 9 pm opening. In the meantime, I discovered that water had trickled down the microphone lead and into the radio, changing the set into a *receiver only model!*

We got up early Sunday morning to beat the low tide on our mooring and spent a couple of hours on a deep water mooring before cruising down to catch the 0730 bridge opening. Several other yachts were circulating also waiting for the bridge.

The warning klaxons sounded on the bridge and the traffic barriers came down. We all surged forward. One bridge span partly lifted, the other stayed closed, and then the first one closed and partly lifted again. The VHF crackled into life “*Sorry chaps, the bridge has broken. Try again later*”. We finally got away just before lunch.

The approach to Southwold proved interesting for first-timers like ourselves with a strong cross tide at the river entrance and a strong flood tide up the river, reducing what little manoeuvrability Catmandu has to an alarming level. On top of that, the moorings were pretty full on a fairly narrow river, with a strong flood tide pushing us towards a bridge we could not fit under! Somehow we managed to do a six-point turn without hitting anything and now we were stemming the flood, much better. A very helpful harbour master helped us to raft up on the outside of two other yachts and we were safe!

The next morning we visited a chandler to buy a copy of the latest survey of the entrance to the river Ore, our next river system to the south. Apparently the entrance moves each year due to the changing sand and shingle banks, so an up to date survey is essential. On the way back to the boat we called in the harbour master’s office to pay our mooring fee.

“How long is your boat?” he asked. 8 metres I replied. “Then that will be just £10” When asked if that was for the mooring he replied in the affirmative. “Well” I said, “there were four of us rafted together, so it will be £2.50 each, right?” “Wrong” he said, “nice try”.

We set off with a fair tide, westerly wind f.5. Had a good run down. When we arrived the entrance to the river was not at all clear and several apparent entrances presented themselves, but I know only one was OK. Try as I could, the position of the marker buoys did not make sense with the latest survey. I think the buoys have moved, so Judith had a look. “Let’s see, yes, no wonder you are having trouble. This is a survey for the entrance to the river Deben!”

We somehow blundered our way into the right entrance and picked up a mooring for the night, above the village of Orford. In the morning, we decided to land at Orford Quay to pick up petrol, water & provisions. The quay is a high stone construction with metal ladders to reach the top. Waiting limit is 2 hours.

After fetching the petrol, I made the boat ready to slip whilst Judith went off for some groceries. I knew it was not going to be easy to get off – no steerage from the engine of course, strong ebb tide running with us facing upstream and a strong wind blowing us on to the quay. I came up with the textbook system to impress the many locals and bystanders on top of the quay.

Bow and stern line were rigged for slip, as was a spring from the stern to a bollard forwards on the quay. The plan was then to slip bow and stern lines and motor astern with the tide assisting against the wind, then slip the spring as we motored ahead – easy, peasy.

Judith still had not returned from the shopping so I put the kettle on. When she returned I explained the system for getting off over a coffee. Engine on, bow line slipped, stern line slipped, engine in reverse, bow swings out as the spring tightens, engine in forward, the spring goes slack as we start to motor out, “*Slip the spring*” I shout to Judith” *It won’t come*” she yells back. Looking up at the bollard I see that a young girl has tied a large dog to it, locking my slip in the process. Wind and tide took over. “**Ouch!**” said Catmandu as she hit the quay. *Well we really impressed the locals.*

About a mile upstream of Orford the river changes its name to the Alde and about 9 miles from the sea makes a sharp left-hand turn. At this point it is only some 100 metres from the sea. One day I suppose it will save itself some mileage! Our destination for the day was Snape Maltings, an old brewery turned into a tourist attraction and, as far upriver as we could go without resorting to the dinghy, due to the low bridge there. The flood tide was just starting as we reached a large, shallow area called Long Reach. Ahead of us was a motor launch. The channel winds about through this reach and I noticed the motor launch had stopped.

I bet he has gone aground, I said.

Moments later – so had we!

After 15 mins, we floated off again and were the first boat to arrive at Snape. It was at least an hour before the next yacht arrived.

The next day saw us going back downriver to anchor overnight below Orford. In the morning, the wind forecast was not good, f.6 on the nose, but as our next river system, the Deben, was only another 5 miles down the coast, we decided to go. We soon realised that we had a slight problem. In order to go with the south flowing tide to the entrance to the Deben, we were having to suffer a 5-mile battle with the strong flood tide coming up the river Ore. We made it, of course, but we lost a lot of time. When we cleared the entrance to the river Ore, the wind was definitely f.6 and we were making very slow progress tacking down the coast with lots of bridgedeck slamming in the wind over tide conditions. The wind was f.7. We were not making any forward progress and things were looking a bit iffy, so it was down with the sails and on with the engine, head straight into wind. After a half-hour or so we realised that we still were making no forward progress, so it was up with the sails again and, finally, with reefed sails and full engine, we slowly tacked upwind toward the entrance to the Deben. The approach is not good at the best of times but nothing was going to stop us getting into calm waters! We motored about 3 miles upstream and picked up a mooring at Longshott, where there was a pub!

Just prior to our holiday, I had bought a small second-hand Honda outboard engine for our inflatable but only had it running in a dustbin of water to check that it worked. I had found it difficult to start but, once running, seemed OK. I had been impressed with that outboard safety feature - the lanyard, showed Judith how you put it round your wrist and, if you fell overboard, it released the stop button. We were moored about 50 metres out from the shore and about 200-m downstream from the pub, so for our evening trip ashore to the pub, to walk the dog, we launched the inflatable – the engine would not start. This coincided with a visit by the harbour master to collect his £1, yes, £1 mooring fee. He lent me a plug spanner and we got started. 2 pints and a dog walk later, we were ready to go back. Now it was dark, there was an onshore wind and 3 knots of ebb tide. Do you think the engine would start – not a chance. I pulled the starting cord until I was red in the face, then some. We’ll have to row. Now, I have not rowed anything for ages but there seemed little choice if we were going to get back to the boat. We were going in the right direction but I was getting out of breath fast. Judith grabbed hold of another boat’s mooring line while I rested. Catmandu was about 50m downstream and another 20m out. I know that we had only one chance to get to the boat, if we missed it, we should be set downstream. I rowed like a madman and we hit Catmandu amidships. Judith grabbed a cleat and we were home, exhausted, I climbed on board and secured the dinghy. As I turned to enter the cabin, I put my hand in my pocket and froze; a low groan escaped my lips. “*What is the matter*”, Judith asked. I slowly brought my hand from my pocket to reveal the engine-kill lanyard, which I had put there when we went to the pub! The B... engine starts every time now when it is connected.

The next day saw us motorsailing up to Woodbridge, where we managed to pick up a free mooring buoy close to a landing jetty and a pleasant few hours were spent ashore exploring the town, which has a tide mill, the pool of which has been converted into a marina.

The following day we set off back downriver, finally anchoring up near Felixstowe Ferry, just inside the entrance to the Deben.

Over the next few days we went up the river Orwell, past Felixstowe, picked up a mooring at Pin Mill, went ashore in the dingy for fuel and found out they did not do any so went upstream as far as the Orwell bridge then decided not to go to Ipswich, back down to Harwich and up the river Stour, where we took the tide to Mistley Quay and walked along the river to Manningtree. In the morning we had to walk over 2 miles to find petrol but we were lucky to get a lift back in the car of a local sailing club secretary, as we had brought our main 5 gal. Tank – we were that short of fuel!

After the Stour we spent a night at anchor in Walton Backwaters – a very sheltered location, and then around to the river Colne, past Brightlingsea and up Alresford Creek, where we moored and walked to Alresford village where we bought some groceries and a spare can of petrol. When we got back to the boat we were nearly aground and just got away with inches to spare. A night was spent at anchor in the Pyefleet channel opposite Brightlingsea.

Next it was the turn of the river Blackwater. We motorsailed round and up it until we were about a half mile from Osea Island and picked up a mooring, as the light was fading. I say picked up, what I mean was picked up, dropped and lost the boathook and re-picked it up with the second boathook. It was now time to make our way back towards Lowestoft. We planned to make an early start and anchor for the night in Walton Backwaters. When we got up it was quite foggy and no wind, but we set off optimistically under engine. However, as the river Blackwater widened towards its junction with the sea, the fog increased, blotting out the land. *Not to worry*, I said, as I switched on the GPS.

Now some of you may remember there was a problem with certain Garmin GPS towards the end of August 1999. Well, we are one of the lucky ones, ours was one of them and would not acquire satellites. *So, we can't see the land, our GPS doesn't work, neither does the depth log. The distance and speed log is unreliable, the radio only receives and I am beginning to suspect the compass! That leaves the mobile phone and the wind direction indicator for navigation – and, of course, we would be near the shipping lanes for Harwich and Felixstowe – no worries!*

We needed to locate the Pye End fairway buoy for the approach to Walton Backwaters. Not easy coming from the south, even in good visibility. In the end we located the next buoy in and cruised in and moored up safely.

In the morning we had bright blue sky, a 5-6 tailwind and fair tide, which took us for a cracking sail all the way back to Lowestoft. A fitting end to our two-week adventure.

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