

Commodore: JEREMY BRETHERTON  
e.mail : [Jeremy.bretherton@lc24.net](mailto:Jeremy.bretherton@lc24.net)

Treasurer: RICK HARVEY  
e-mail [june.rick@btopenworld.com](mailto:june.rick@btopenworld.com)

# Bobcat & Catalac Cruising Association

Secretary: PETER GIMSON  
Tel: +44 (0) 1 202 773 749

e-mail: [PeterGimson@bccafsworld.co.uk](mailto:PeterGimson@bccafsworld.co.uk)

[www.bobcatandcatalac.btinternet.co.uk](http://www.bobcatandcatalac.btinternet.co.uk)

## 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.

**Hello fellow Bobcat and Catalac sailors every where.**

**March 2006**

Many thanks to Maggie and Roger for coming up with a venue for our next

**MEET AND EAT  
Saturday 11 March 2006  
Oyster Quay  
Mercury Yacht Haven  
Bursledon, Nr Southampton  
Time: 1200**

The details of how to get there are as follows: Leave M27 at exit 8, take 2<sup>nd</sup> exit at next roundabout. Next roundabout straight on past Tesco towards Woolston, Hamble Rice and Netley Abbey (B3397) and 2<sup>nd</sup> exit at the next roundabout through 2 sets of traffic lights, 1<sup>st</sup> exit at the next roundabout. (There are signs for the **Oyster Quay** and Mercury Yacht Haven).

**Oyster Quay require names three/four days in advance, as usual, so please send me an email/text or phone as soon as possible to enable me to reserve places.  
Thank you.**

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**I have received this information via my local sailing club regarding "GRIB"**

**'GRIB' FILES – WHAT ARE THEY?**

With the vast amount of information now available from weather satellites, the World Meteorological Organisation set a standard to allow such information to be gridded and referenced to latitude and longitude. Until recently analysis of this information was a very expensive business and the compiled information was only available to heavily sponsored ocean racers with huge budgets. But almost without noticing, this information is now accessible through the Internet at minimal or even no cost.

GRIB files (GRIdded Binary files) provide a standard format in which weather data can be archived and exchanged. A range of meteorological information, including wind, pressure, temperature – even wave heights – can be downloaded from satellites and buoys. By extrapolating a series of readings taken over a period of time, the data can be used to produce forecasts for up to seven days ahead. Although earlier suppliers of GRIB data used professional forecasters to interpret the data manually, systems have now reached a stage where, once established, the software is entirely automatic ‘Other companies used to use forecasters, ‘But this involved an enormous cost which made it uneconomic for the end user. At Moving Weather we use our own software and a very high level of skill to sift the data and get it down to a manageable size’

Although the GRIB information itself has achieved a high degree of standardization, the format in which the resultant information is displayed varies widely from a very simple superimposition over geographical outlines, to integration into complete charting systems. Euronav, one of the earliest entrants into computerized charting, introduced a facility for weather information into their SeaPro programme in 2001.

Their system, in common with others, takes the information a stage further and can then calculate routing suggestions. The user first enters what is effectively the boat’s polar speed diagram – a record of boat speed at different points of sailing in different strength winds. From the forecast calculated from the GRIB files, the software can work out the likely wind strength and direction to be encountered, calculate the theoretical boat velocity which results, and then propose the route that is likely to offer the fastest passage.

Although Euronav doesn’t produce their own GRIB files, both they and Moving Weather claim a high level of accuracy from the forecasts. But the two are fundamentally different. The Company explains that their own system is a stand-alone, dedicated weather provider. It does not offer route planning and is not reliant on expensive charting systems. For just £59 they will provide unlimited downloads for 12 months (15 months if purchased at the Boat Show). A product that they’re also launching at London is a GPRS connection for an on-board laptop. Instead of using a standard mobile phone, they’re offering a PCMCIA card (that’s the one that goes into the slot in the side) using its own pre-paid SIM card which will allow up to 1 megabyte of downloads per month, with a typical GRIB download of 7 kilobyte. Moving Weather also offers an amplifier which will double the range of a mobile, making few places in the Mediterranean out of reach.

Euronav’s standard charting software starts at £450.00 which includes a simple route planning system, although a performance sailing module is available for a further £200.00.

[www.movingweather.com](http://www.movingweather.com); Tel: 0870 8610032

[www.euronav.co.uk](http://www.euronav.co.uk); Tel: 02392 373855

*WOW. Gone are the days of the cookoo clock and the man in raincoat with the girl in summer clothes.*

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**A question** I am often asked by members is ‘**how do I lower the mast**’.

In truth, I am of the opinion that the mast is an expensive and heavy item, and if dropped is likely to be damaged and also do damage to the dog house, tabernacle and possibly the coach roof. If you have radar or inmast reefing this also adds to the weight and I would not attempt it. I strongly advise lowering and raising by crane, it is easier and safer, though obviously more expensive. If you have to undertake the job without a crane, the instructions for doing this I have copied from the mast lowering kit that used to be supplied to anyone wishing to engage in DIY.

**Lowering the mast** is a reasonable operation if you approach it sensibly. The mast is quite heavy, so it should be handled with care and kept under control at all times. If you do not have the proper equipment or at least two capable men to assist you, then do not attempt to lower it.

The Lacks used to supply a boom for lowering the mast, which was made of 2 inch diameter steel tube with a three quarter inch steel rod mounted centrally in one end. (This steel rod fits into the fore and aft hole at the base of the mast) The other end has two eyes, mounted and welded through the tube. When the boom is fitted at the base of the mast it sticks out forward, almost to the pulpit.

1. Remove all sails and stow out of the way. If you are able to climb the mast, remove wind speed anometer and masthead light lenses. Next remove the boom, and main sheet from the boom and cockpit rail. Tie all halyards in to the mast, with the exception of the main halyard, and the strongest jib halyard (usually the one that passes through the mast, rather than the one on a separate block).
2. Place a wooden block the width of the dog house over the trailing edge of the dog house and pad with carpet or cushions.
3. Slot the mast lowering boom into the fore and aft hole at the base of the mast. Now fit the mainsheet to the lower eye at the other end of the mast lowering boom as if it were being used as a mainsheet.
4. Tie the forward end of the main halyard (not the shackle end) through the upper eye of the mast lowering boom and wrap round the boom and tie again. (belt & bracers). Now shackle jib halyard to upper eye as well. Tie the other end of these two halyards to mast cleats keeping them both equally tight, tighten down the mainsheet hard.
5. Loosen the mast tabernacle pivot bolt enough to allow free movement of the mast in the tabernacle. Remove both forestays. The mast should then be ready to fall backwards, supported by mast lowering boom connected to the mainsheet and the shrouds and backstays that remain connected. Check the mast to insure no additional ropes, other lines or electrical wires are still connected to the boat and mast.
6. When lowering, have two men stand behind the mast, (not on the dog house) ready to catch the mast and guide it down. Put another strong man in charge of the mast-lowering boom (he must remain in charge of the boom and not loosen his grip on it or the mainsheet until the mast is down) his job is to guide the mast as it is lowered, he must keep the mast in line with the centre of the boat as it drops. If the mast lowering boom tries to move to one side or the other, the mast will be pulled in the same direction, and probable fall overboard, taking the tabernacle and part of the cabin top with it. #

#### SO BE VERY CAREFUL!

7. The mast normally needs a little persuasion to start falling, but do not push it too hard. The only people who should push the mast are spare crew members. Now get someone to uncleat the mainsheet and pay it out steadily and slowly as the mast lowers.
8. As the mast starts to fall pay out the mainsheet slowly and smoothly. The two men standing behind the mast should brace themselves against it, and guide it centrally along the fore and aft line of the vessel. This is a little difficult with the heavy Catalac mast, and it is best to have them, or others if available, holding the shrouds at the side, both pulling outwards and guiding the mast that way. The degree of pull at each shroud, being judged by the man in charge of the mast-lowering boom.
9. Lower the mast on to the padded block. Remove the now vertical mast-lowering boom. Get two men to support the mast then remove the mast tabernacle pivot bolt and move the mast forward. The mast foot usually gets forgotten and must be kept for later use. If the mast is being stored on board it will need to be supported at the centre usually in the tabernacle, and also at the top and bottom to prevent it bending. Lifting the mast is the same procedure, only in reverse. (9 – 1)

#### OBVIOUS BUT IMPORTANT POINTS

Watch out for: Wakes of passing vessles; Side to side movement of mast and/or mast lowering boom; Strong cross winds;

When raising mast, watch out for rigging catching under bollards, winch handles, cleats, etc. Don't forget: to reset mast vertically without bends; to tighten tabernacle bolt and nuts; and to relock and rewire all bottle screws.

E.mail from another Cat ME-AND-ER met on our, by comparison, little travels early last season.

Date: Sat, 17 Dec 2005 08:40:53 EST

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>>18th December 2005

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>>We are just about to leave Aruba for Cartagena (Columbia) for Christmas.

>>Toni's dad spent 2 weeks with us here so we have done all the touristy things like going on the submarine and deep sea fishing with the locals. Aruba is a bit like Las Vegas it's populated by cruise ship passengers who arrive at dawn and leave at sunset. There are more watch shops here than wrists. You cannot buy fresh veggies anywhere but the resuarants are many and varied.

We have used Aruba to collect various packages from all over the world. We both come out in a sweat if you mention UPS or Fedex but everything arrived safely.

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>>We enjoyed the season in the Caribbean then moved down to Isla de Margarita (Venezuela) for the hurricane season. We got hauled here and also flew back to the UK for a month. We also spent some time in Medrida which is in the Andes Mountains. Some where not to be missed if you get the opportunity. We jeeped, hiked and muled to 4200m where Peter got altitude sick. We stayed at 3700m in Pedro's mud hut. This luxurious (NOT) accomodation was buillt in 1936 and Perdo has not made any home improvements since then. You sleep fully clothed under 4 woolly blankets on very hard short bunks.

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>>We also enjoyed Los Roques a beautiful archepeligo where we traded coke a cola for fish and made war with the mosquitoes. We dived in Bonaire and spent too little time in Curacao. We caught our first Wahoo (1m) but Peter let him go while Toni was getting the camera, our fishing has not been a complete failure as we caught a 28 inch dolphin fish (Mahi mahi) on the way to Aruba.

To see some pics click here >>\_thetoninice's Album:tigger\_

>>(<http://pictures.aol.co.uk/NASApp/ygp/Start?event=DirectView&shareInfo=qehO4z9cYll1WbZWwMj3JlllEXzcjzo3oSLmy1TPQhRWGd+BXiXp6w> =>=&pageName=AlbumViewFromEmails)

>>We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year

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>>Love from Toni & Peter.....On-board Tigger

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## GREEK ODYSSEY

I was going to write an account last year of our travels under the title 'Meditations in the Med' but time ran out . Anyway, as you may know, Joyce and I sailed last year from Poole to the Med via the Brittany and Midi Canals and then along the French coast to St Tropez. From there, we made a 120 mile hop to Calvi on the NW coast of Corsica and then spent a fabulous month exploring the west coast of Corsica. Passing through the Straits of Bonifacio we spent a further month cruising down the east coast of Sardinia before another 120 mile hop to Tunisia. 'Matamata' had sailed to Africa! After a fortnight, waiting for a favourable wind in Bizerta we sailed to Pantelleria, a small volcanic island halfway to Malta and finally a 140 mile sail to Malta in under 24 hours, with a run under spinnaker for 13 hours, averaging 6 knots.

So it was from Malta that our cruise was to start this year. Malta is ideal for a winter lay-up in the Med, providing you intend having the boat lifted out. Charges at the Manoel Island yard are probably half those of anywhere else in the Med. This included, the cost of lifting out, storage rent ashore from November to the end of May and putting back in the water. Malta is also the only place in the Med. where most British foods are available at reasonable prices.

But back to this year. Ron and I arrived in Malta at the end of May (Mon) and by the following Wednesday, Matamata had been anti-fouled and launched. Provisioning, doubling our tanks for greater water capacity, meeting old friends and making new ones, kept us fully occupied for a further week or so, including a short trip to the islands of Comino and Gozo to make a final check that everything on board was in good working order.

Thursday, mid June, started warm and sunny, as did every other morning at this time of the year in Malta, with a light wind from the NW and so after a leisurely breakfast with no tides to consider, we set sail NE to Corfu in company with Dave and Carol on board another Catalac 'Deejay'. Our crew consisted on Ron, myself and Robert, a 20 year old New Zealander who wanted a lift to Corfu and whom, we felt, should be able to make our watches easier as third person.

From Malta to Corfu one can sail direct on a NE course or, alternatively, go north to Syracuse in Sicily and then work round the Italian coast. Apart from Syracuse, the ports are very poor and exposed, whilst the weather tends to be very squally nearer the coast, being affected by the high mountains of Calabria, the Bay of Squalls and the Gulf of Otranto being particularly infamous.

We, therefore, decided to sail direct, a distance of some 370 miles.

The winds were light and, wanting to conserve our precious fuel, we only made good 84 miles on the first day but the winds picked up on day 2, and we made good time, with a shoal of large fish up to 2 ft in length keeping station with us from dawn till midday. These were the only fish of any size that we saw during the whole of the summer. Greek waters have been almost completely fished out and dolphins, in which the area used to abound ten years ago, are now a rarity. One of the highlights of our cruise last year was provided by a group of 3 dolphins who played with 'Matamata's' hulls as we approached the island of Pantelleria. They swam just inches ahead of the hulls, turning over and over, emitting high-pitched squeaks, and then diving down into the deep to surface again between the hulls and to continue their little game.

On the third evening, we were making about 5 knots under main and spinnaker when, within minutes, a sudden squall blew up to Force 6-7 and as we attempted to get the spinnaker down in a hurry, it ripped and only later did we discover that 2/3rds of the sail had vanished. Whilst sorting out the spinnaker, we unfortunately, were making sternboard which in those conditions, proved too much for our early Mk I type rudder fastenings and both rudders came away but were not lost, being held by the lifting lines. 'Deejay', seeing we had problems, came up and offered to radio for assistance but, declining, we decided to sleep on our problem and so, lying a-hull, but with plenty of sea room, we turned in for the night. Not having seen a ship since leaving Malta, we felt this to be a safe bet.

Five o'clock next morning saw wind and sea rapidly abating and Ron and I over the stern salvaging our rudders. Here the advantage of the Catalac's design is apparent since by removing the rear locker lids and standing alongside the fuel tanks, all the rudder fixings are readily accessible. Thanks to forethought in making our spares list we had an extra rudder stock and fixings on board and so by 0630 we had fixed our starboard rudder, complete with the emergency tiller and were once again under way. We had been a-hull for about nine hours and in a wind averaging about force 5 from the NW so estimated that we had drifted 10 miles east in that time and this was proved correct when the lights on Corfu came up dead ahead and on time 24 hours later. We arrived in Corfu Town at 1400 on the fifth day without any further problems.

Joyce and Ron's wife, Maggie, joined us a week later with further spares for the rudders including the new improved and much stronger Mk II fastenings now fitted as standard.

The temperature in the saloon was normally 20C when we awoke in the morning and by about 1000 had quickly climbed to 30-35C most days, beneath a cloudless sky. In fact, we had no rain, apart from ten minutes one morning during the whole of June, July and August. Being a dry heat, it is not oppressive as is the case when the sun shines in England, and we soon became acclimatized, providing we had plenty of dips over the side. Bikinis or swimming trunks were about the only clothing needed and certainly the only ones likely to wear out!!! However, in certain bays and harbours, long sleeves and slacks were essential in the evening as protection against mosquitoes, particularly if eating out or barbecuing on the beach. On 'Matamata' we have made anti-mosquito screens which fit all our opening lights, so we can have plenty of air and still keep the mosquitoes at bay. We also found the burning of 'MoonTiger' anti-mosquito rings were effective.

Ron and Maggie spent three weeks with us during which time we cruised to the mainland and the island of Paxos in company with 'Deejay'. Our first anchorage on leaving Corfu was a completely deserted, land-locked bay on the mainland. Ashore, delicate blue thistles grew in profusion and care had to be taken not to bump into

spiders' webs which were as tough as nylon. We visited the delightful old town of Parga then sailed over to Paxos the jewel of the Ionian Isles, with its picturesque harbour where boats tie up in the main square of Port Gayo, whose only 'bank' is a desk set in the corner of the ironmonger's shop, its lovely coastline, olive groves and friendly people. In fact, it was the friendliness of its people that endeared Greece to us. Wherever we went, officials and ordinary people alike were always most helpful and a few words of Greek learnt before we set off were always greeted enthusiastically.

Returning to Corfu, we stopped in the little fishing hamlet of Petreti for the night and marveled at the quiet and peace of our surroundings. That was until 0600 next morning when we were rudely awakened by donkeys braying, cocks crowing, dogs barking and, to crown it all, two light aircraft started repeated runs at mast height, spraying the olive groves!

And so back to Gouvia where Ron and Maggie left us and a week later Sheila, our younger daughter and her boyfriend, Jeremy, arrived; after a couple of days recovering from their train ride across Europe and extensive sight-seeking in Paris, Pisa, Rome etc., we once again headed south to make our next rendezvous in Athens three weeks later. After Paxos we went south, first to Preveza, where our Log records: 'Gee-gees with potties!' Which indeed was true as it seemed they were not allowed to foul the highway, and then to Levkas, going through the Canal between the island and the mainland – first dug out in Roman times. Levkas, devastated in the 1953 earthquake, still has a charm of its own and will be remembered for its wine, at pence per bottle.

The Levkas Canal leads into the inland sea between the mainland, Levkas, and the other islands of Meganisi, Ithaca and Cephalonia to the South. This area is dotted with beautiful anchorages and between the time spent swimming and sunbathing we normally averaged about 10 miles sailing per day. On the way South we usually waited until after lunch for the breeze from the North to arrive and this could often increase to force 5/6 for a few hours by late afternoon.

On Friday 4 August, we left Kioni, on Ithaca, and arrived at Petala on the mainland, our last anchorage before turning east into the Gulfs of Patras and Corinth. In this deserted, land-locked bay there were marvelous echoes from the steep cliffs, up one of which we climbed, about 400', to a cave which seemed to have been inhabited at least by goats, since the days of early Greek civilization. Further inside hundreds of bats were hanging from the roof and an owl came flying out at our approach. Next morning, we awoke to thick fog, which we had also encountered, though briefly, one morning in Corfu, and which, according to all the books, never occurs in the Med.

Thirty miles the next day to Messolongion which our chart showed to be a minute harbour at the end of a 3 mile long dredged channel. Imagine our surprise when we found at the end of the channel a harbour about one mile square with several large ships!

The next day took us through 'The Narrows' about one mile wide, out of the Gulf of Patras and into the Gulf of Corinth and so to the ancient Venetian harbour of Navpaktos, maybe better known as Lepanto, where Don John of Austria defeated the Turkish Fleet in 1571. The tiny harbour is still entered between the original fortifications and there is just room for maybe half a dozen yachts. Hoorah! Unlimited fresh water available here, our first since Levkas. Doubling the capacity of our water tanks has certainly proved a blessing where, particularly on the islands, water is very scarce and sometimes expensive.

Our next stop was another land-locked little bay on the island of Trizonia, from where we made for Galaxhidion, a picturesque little harbour and the place from which to catch the bus in order to visit Delphi. Checking for the next day, we learnt that the bus left at 0800 for Itea, about 12 miles by road. Next morning we arrived at the bus stop at 0750 only to find the bus had left five minutes early! I am sure the bus driver must get a commission from the taxis who were waiting to offer their services and took us to Itea to catch the bus connection there. This we did and then had a hair raising bus ride up the mountainside to Delphi.

Delphi is a 'must' with its vast ruins in a truly impressive setting. Back into the town for some lunch with its more-than-welcome opportunity to sit down at last as we stood in the crowded bus and climbed the steep-sided mountain amongst the ruins under the relentless sun! I wonder where the athletes found the energy to run their races after climbing up to the Stadium, which is perched highest of all. The timetable informed us that our bus would leave at 1515, so we caught the bus in good time at about 1450. Just as well as it left at 1500.

Next day the wind was blowing from the west as usual, force 8 according to an Italian boat which had left early in the morning and later returned. But they were trying to go west and as the morning progressed, the wind seemed to die down so we left our mooring about midday and made ever-increasing speed with the wind on our tail and a following sea. We reckoned it was blowing force 6. Expecting some shelter as we rounded a high headland and turned north into a deep bay, we were disappointed to be confronted by white water, with the wind increase to force 8-9, as it gusted down through the mountains. And yet, with spray constantly coming right over the boat, we still got sunburnt in the brilliant sunshine. We finally reached right up into the head of the bay and let go the anchor in five fathoms close to the shore. On first arriving in Greece, I noticed many people had painted their anchors white and thought this was carrying 'spit and polish' too far, but later found how useful it was as an anchor so painted can be clearly seen in the crystal-clear waters, even at a depth of 30 – 40 feet.

We stayed in this bay, with mountain peaks over 5000' less than a mile inland, for two days waiting for the wind to abate, and then made the final 35 miles to the Corinth canal with a force 6 behind us, which again turned into a force 8 as we came within the protection of the small harbour wall at the entrance to the canal. The red flag was flying so we had to wait for two hours before we could proceed through this monument to the pick and shovel. Three miles long, 75 feet wide, with sides rising sheer to a height of 250 feet, the canal really is impressive and a highlight in our trip; but also an expensive highlight. It is expensive to go each way. Stopping in Kalamaki Bay at the eastern end of the Canal we witnessed a spectacular thunderstorm over Athens, about 30 miles to the east. We had no rain ourselves but as darkness fell the wind increased to force 9 and a nearby powerboat dragged its anchor and hit the shore before being finally towed to safety.

Next morning we awoke as usual to a bright sunny morning and with a freshening beam wind we made good progress until about midday when the wind started heading us, so lunch and a swim in a beautiful sheltered bay on Salamis was the order of the day. Three hours later the wind had again shifted and we proceeded on our way, close hauled to the N Easterly breeze. By late afternoon Athens and the Acropolis were clearly visible as we made our way across the bay to a second Kalamaki where yet another unfinished Marina offered complete safety at no cost. On our first night in Athens the noise of a Disco rent the air until about three in the morning, and then, just as we were dozing off, the thunderous noise of aircraft burst upon us. The marina was close to the end of the runway and right under the flight path and due to some Air Traffic Controllers' strike, planes were allowed in and out of Athens Airport from 0330.

Tuesday, 15 August, saw the departure of Sheila and Jeremy to continue their travels in Europe and the arrival of our elder daughter, Pam and her husband, Bob. Last year Bob's assistance had been invaluable with all the lock work coming through the Canal du Midi and here was he, back for more, so life on 'Matamata' couldn't be too bad! After another 'must', a trip up to the Acropolis, we had had enough of the noise and heat of Athens and after lunch we set sail for the island of Aegina, about 15 miles to the South.

Being mid-August and the height of the 'Meltemi' season, when the wind blows from the north up to force 10, even in summer, we had regretfully decided not to venture out into the Cyclades, but to sail south to the islands of Poros, Hydra and Spetsai, all charming in their own way; Poros, for the magnificent area of enclosed water with its many bays and crystal-clear waters; Hydra for its stark grandeur and Venetian harbour accessible through a cleft in the rocks; Spetsai for its attractive town, restaurants and horse-drawn taxis, there are no cars on the island. And so, from one beautiful bay to the next, swimming at all times of the day, lazing on deck, eating out under the trees in local tavernas at night, once with a dead, skinned goat hanging alongside on the next tree, time passed with little effort until suddenly another fortnight had gone, and it was the turn of Pam and Bob to catch the 0600 hydrofoil in Spetsai for Athens and home.

Sunday 27 August, and the boat seemed strangely quiet. This was the first time since June that Joyce and I had had 'Matamata' to ourselves. Our option now was to go east from Spetsai through the islands to winter in Rhodes, or retrace our steps and return to Corfu for the winter.

We plumped for Corfu, and September saw us steadily making our way back along a familiar route although we usually stopped for the night in new bays and anchorages. The weather in September was less settled, with rain showers and quite a few thunderstorms, fortunately, always after we had anchored. Our big advantage is

that time is our own, and we could afford to wait for favourable winds and fine weather. We never used our 'oilies' at sea the whole summer.

It is now mid-October and here we are, back in Gouvia, on Corfu, greeting old friends, exchanging our paperback library with other boat-owners, and settling down for the winter; when our main preoccupation will no doubt be planning for next year – maybe Turkey and Istanbul, or Slovenia and Venice – who knows? I think perhaps we shall just wait and see which way the wind is blowing and go there.

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**From Barry Gisborne**

**Sent:** Sunday, February 19, 2006 8:04 PM

**Subject:** Catalac 8 m rudder plates

Hi Peter,

Could you advise me on the best place to source / have fabricated new rudder plates for my cat. My current plates were bent some 10 degrees to starboard during some bad weather at the end of last season !!!.

Many Thanks ,

Barry Gisborne

Hi Barry,

You could update to Skegs, but the old lifting rudders do have advantages when one is creek crawling, or waiting for the tide or releasing that unseen lobster pot.

I suffered bent rudders with my previous boat, while sailing in company with another Catalac from Poole to Alderney C.I. You are lucky not to have been on passage, mine splayed out. Every time a wave lifted one hull, the boat turned to port then as it dropped it turned to starboard. I had to drop the sails and motor even then the steering was stiff and extremely hard work, The other cat thought I was nissed as a pewt, (I wish it had been the case) duly arriving in Alderney shattered but relieved that the previous season I had changed the steering wires. The rudders can be straightened, but they may well be corroded or weak at the point just bellow the stocks. I add this as another owner may well have the same problem while sailing away from home. The rudder can be shortened at the weak point, making them 4-5 inches shorter than original, then drill suitable hole for the securing bolt, using sawn off section as pattern.

If you want to make the rudders yourself.

The best place to source new rudders get the metal from your local scrap yard. You can cut the metal with a disc cutter.

Having played with rudders, there are a few points you may find useful.

- 1) the rudder must have the same depth, shortening by 4-5 inches makes the steering lighter under canvas, but the boat is far less manouverable at slower speeds than one could imagine.
- 2) try and use the same thickness of metal.

If you want to make the steering lighter and more positive, now is the best time for you to do a mod. all you need to do is extend the rudder forward under the hull. Tis simple mathamatics take a line through the pintals, (this is the turning point of the rudder) the old rudder sits behind this point and, as such, gets no help from the water it is pushing sideways. Keep the same width as your original rudders behind this turning point, but extend the leading edge in front by one third. This will give you better turning by having wider rudders, but it will also cut the force on all the steering cables and pulleys by two thirds.

Peter G,,,,,,