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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.

Hello fellow Bobcat and Catalac sailors everywhere

September 2006

Don't forget this month's 'meet and eat'.

Southampton Boat Show "Meet & Eat" will be held at "The Duke Of Wellington"

Bugle Street, Southampton, SO14 2AH at 7.30pm. on 16th.September, the first Saturday of the Southampton Boat Show. All members and guests are welcome. It will be good to meet up with old and new members, but please let us know the number in your party so we can ensure seats for all. Remember it is the first Saturday of the Southampton Boat Show and space will be of a premium. Contact P.Gimson by phone or text to 07971 808 777.

Hi Folks, What a fantastic year for boating this has been. ME-AND -ER have met some interesting people and visited many new places on our summer of adventure.

The unusually hot weather of June and July seems a long time ago. As September brings a more autumnal feel, the sailing season is nearing its close for all but the hardy. Thoughts from the captain turn to the latest boat show goodies, while some members of crew are, heaven forbid, already planning Christmas.

We would love to read of your summer cruise, so please remember to take your log book home as the nights draw in. It will, I am sure, bring back fond memories of the season's adventures.

We set off to Cherbourg where our boat is kept in mid April. This was our first visit of the year. The earlier part of the years weather having been cold and wet, like many others we had not felt inclined to start our seasons preparations. The first thing we saw was green weed where blue antifoul should be. We refitted the engines, hoisted the sails, and generally prepared the boat for the season to come. The tides were going off springs, not ideal for drying the boat for antifouling. After two days hard at it and in need of a rest we drove to the Morbihan, our planned destination

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later in the season. Crew and I wanted to view the Raz de Sein from shore before we sailed by this well known bouncy bit of headland on our journey south. I must say on this calm day it all looked quite harmless from the land. With crew happy we returned to Cherbourg, stocked the boat with 24 litres of wine, various cheeses from the market and all manner of stores, fuel and water.

Next day, back on the ferry to the UK. to leave the car at home and collected our bikes. On the ferry I visited the magazine shop and while browsing noticed a short mature lady trying to reach the mags on the top shelf. I enquired what she was looking for and was surprised to learn she was looking for a magazine with boats for sale in it. "What do you want to use the boat for" I enquired. "To cruise France, the med and the French canals." She replied. "For comfort and room you need a cat" said I. "I have owned a cat in the past" she replied. Low and behold, she and her late partner had owned Cl.8.165 CYGNET and sailed her for many years. The name Cygnet rang a bell as being now owned by a current B.C.C.A member and I promised to try and find out who the owners were.

E.mail from Mary Banks.

Hi Peter & Sue,

Thank you, very much for sending the BCCA newsletter, I was delighted to hear about Cygnet. I hesitate to bother you, but I don't know who to ask, because I have all Cygnets Bills of Sale previous to our ownership and I don't know what to do with them. I also have the builder's certificate. Have you any ideas? Look forward to hearing from you if you have time.

Mary.

*Mary is still looking for a Catalac.
I hope she finds one soon, to renew her adventures.*

Sue and I caught the next ferry back to Cherbourg. Our intention was now to do the bottom at the B.C.C.A Bembridge rally.

Our first trip of the season Thursday, 27/April 6.55am, Log 1531 Cherbourg to Keyhaven was against a northerly breeze F2-3 with just enough chop to slow us down and we motored all the way for 69.9 miles in 13 hrs. Boring - hope this is not a precedent for the rest of the season. Our only bonus being that we left next morning before the revenue collector came knocking.

Friday 6.50am Keyhaven to Bembridge . As predicted, the wind had increased blowing F3/4 straight on the nose again. This would normally be ideal for tacking up the Solent to Cowes, but today meant we would have to wait for the tide before entering Bembridge. We motored past Newtown Creek where ARD-NA-GREINE Cl.9.220 had spent the night. A quick call on the vhf as we passed bought no reply, we guessed they may still be snuggled up beneath the covers. As we turned by Cowes, bliss, we hoisted the sails and rested the engines. Our joy, however, short lived as the wind suddenly ceased so we motored the last bit, Ryde to Bembridge. We backed onto the beach, another 9m Catalac already there. This being their first trip of the season they had also come to Bembridge to scrub their bottom. They had just replaced the alternator on one engine. The cost of the Yanmar alternator bought tears to their eyes until a suitable rebuilt unit at about one third the price was found. The damaged alternator had cooked one battery, the other well past its useful life meant he was now left with 2 flat batteries. The cheapest batteries he had been able to

locate on the Island and mainland were £79.99 each. Not feeling at this time too flushed he decided against renewing his B.C.C.A. membership. I took pity on him and informed him that I bought two 110 amp hr leisure batteries for £49.99 each 3 years ago from Towsure, Southampton. With his portable genie he soon managed to charge one flat battery enough to start first one engine, then the other engine. He motored off to Southampton.

The 9m in question used to be called FASINATOR. A good name you may think, but changed by his wife to HERUREKA 11 after others that knew them repeatedly called them on the vhf as FORNICATOR-FORNICATOR.

We were later joined by Cl.8.184 ALLEZ CAT, and ARD-NA-GREINE. The weather forecast was not very encouraging for the next few days and many boats cancelled. With the three boats sat high on the beach I was pleased to see that most of the green weed we had seen on our hulls had abandoned ship and we now sported reasonably clean hulls. A good time was had by those able to attend the meal, but the following day at 3.00pm. after f'cast SW6/7 in the night Me-and-er in company with Ard-na-greine sailed in SW4/5 for the Medina River and anchored past the Folley in good shelter for the night at "windy gap". The following morning, weather not improved, we motored further up the river with the tide to the capital of the IOW, Newport, and moored on the pontoon. This was a first for Me-and-er and we were greeted by the sight of two other Catalacs, Cl.8.01 SINGING WIND and HERUREKA 11 sporting two new batteries "they was only £44.95 each" he gleefully shouted as we passed. SINGING WIND also sported two new batteries and later that week ARD-NA-GREINE replaced one of his that had one dead cell.

I should be on commission with Towsure, they also sell all manner of camping/caravan and boating bits. They even sell the interior lights that were fitted in the heads and cabins of Catalacs and they are good value at £2,99 each. Mail order hotline 0870 60 900 70 or www.towsure.com .

We enjoyed our stay at Newport and bus ride to Cowes. We left Newport at 2.00pm. with the tide next day, having paid £10.00 for our berth, this the first charge of the season. We motored into the chop caused by wind over tide SW5/6 to Newtown Creek and picked up a spare buoy and rafted together at 3.55pm for the night. The following day, Wednesday, we headed to Christchurch and sailed with S3 from Hurst and caught a B..... lobster pot enroute that stopped the boat. We had to cut it free - no freebie lobster tonight.

Our BCCA Cruise to the west country due to start on Saturday was fast approaching but the slow start to the summer and inclement weather saw boats gradually dropping out for varying and genuine reasons. The nasa weatherman 5 day forecast indicated that fresh to strong westerly winds were due Sunday. Forewarned is forearmed, so I called Aleck of Cl.12.27 DRAGON SLAYER to ask if they could start the cruise from Poole a day earlier giving us time to pass the Bill and cross Lyme Bay before the impending wind. They agreed and Me-and-er left Christchurch for Poole the next evening and after a good sail we anchored in Bramble Bush at 9.00pm, the comment in log book - good passage.

We both sailed out of Poole later than expected, on Friday. Aleck and Chris, accompanied by Aleck's father Pop 96 years young, were delayed saying "we've just had two major disasters before we left". One, the washing machine decided to empty its water all over the kitchen floor - now fixed. Two, while filling Dragon with water they noticed that one hull was getting lower in the water. On lifting the floor, they discovered the water was also filling the bilge. The bilge on an 8m takes some pumping out, I wouldn't want to pump it out of a 12m.

While sailing with the sun shining, I have to admit the 12m Dragon Slayer does look impressive. I had no trouble when sailing in slight seas last year leaving Dragon standing but she now sported a new genoa and has been fitted with kiwi props to prevent drag. The boats now after a couple of hours sailing are within a hundred metres, neither one being able to gain much advantage. Both Aleck and I are quite competitive and any change in sails or sheets always bought a similar change by the other boat within seconds. With the time passing we started engines and motored hard to Mupe. Dragon has a definite advantage using iron sails. Just as we were approaching Mupe I heard something land on the dog house followed by a tinkle in the cockpit. Further inspection showed that our plastic cylindrical radar reflector fixed from the crosstrees to cap shroud had fractured in the centre and now hung in two pieces, dropping the aluminium insides as the boat rocked. We both anchored in Mupe. After our evening meal we went aboard Dragon to discuss our time of departure and destination next morning. I wanted pass the Bill and then Start point and Prawl Point and spend the night at Salcombe. Have a rest day, then continue. Aleck preferred not to pay in Salcombe but anchor or back onto the beach at Slapton Sands before Start Point. We had been to Salcombe several times at this time of year and knew where to have a peaceful night with, to date, no knock from the dreaded revenue man. Aleck had been doing his homework and making use of the back eddy to the Bill wished to start at 3.00am. thereby gaining the full tide across Lyme Bay. With the tides now at neaps, I wanted to start later in daylight. We reluctantly agreed to start at 5.00am.

The saying 'don't put off till tomorrow what should be done today' comes to mind as we try to sleep with the plastic radar reflector swinging and playing its own tune on the shrouds bing-bong tinkle tinkle. It'll stop in a minute as all the bits will be out I kept thinking to myself, it didn't.

The next thing we remember was Dragon's air horn giving us just what we needed an early morning wakeup blast. I flicked the nav lights on and off to let him know we were almost awake and put the kettle on as neither me nor er are at our best first thing. With no wind and Dragon fast disappearing at 5.15am, we lifted the anchor. We aimed straight for the inner passage of the Bill, with the early morning mist hanging in the cliffs and hills behind us. I checked my plotter and tides by the Shambles Bank and motored steadily taking full advantage of the tide. Dragon heading further out for the outer passage, disappeared in the mist. We passed the Bill and Aleck called us up to ask our position, we were both surprised to find that he was now behind us, the west going tide having taken him further out.

The wind gradually became SE2-S3 allowing Me-and-er to sail slowly and later motorsail with one engine on. Dragon motored all the way and reached Salcome well before us. Log 67nm. Arriving at 17.05pm. We continued past the pretty beaches of Salcombe, visitors bouys and the Bag, to anchor further up river just round the corner (out of sight out of mind so to speak). While anchoring I hit the mud and waited till the tide returned. Later that evening it was decided that as the strong winds were still not with us we should head for Plymouth the following morning.

9.30am after a good nights sleep we motored down river and set off for Plymouth.

Just off Salcombe the sea is nearly always bouncy and confused for the first couple of miles.

The SSE-3/4 ideal to sail for Falmouth or Fowey, but as soon as we headed for Plymouth, the wind aft, robbed the genoas so we hoisted our spinnakers. By keeping most of my spinnaker on one side of the boat I was able to sail straight to Plymouth while Aleck was unable to get the same angle of sail. Me-and-er entered the harbour before Dragon and then we sailed together to the river Lynher and Dandys Hole a very peaceful and quiet anchorage. This another first for us. When we talked later that day, we both thought that perhaps we should have taken advantage of the wind and sailed from Salcombe straight to Falmouth. Having said that we enjoyed the rest at Dandys

Hole visiting the pretty village of St. German further up river for supplies one day by dinghy and then again for an excellent pub lunch the following day.

Wednesday 10th. May 7.00am took the tide down the river and arrived at Plymouth breakwater 8.10am sailed to Rame Head, then wind died. NW-W2/3 variable 1mile vis with mist. Started sailing with one engine to assist when we heard that a Dutch warship was firing later that morning in the area.

Anyone who has heard these messages will understand that most of us more mature part time sailors are not the best at being able to write the lat and long of the firing vessel, direction of fire, and area to be avoided, at the pace of well trained spotty faced young navel personnel.

The previous year when Me-and-er were at Fowey they were firing off Dodman Point. Today we have to pass Dodman Point to reach Falmouth. Half an hour later the super dsc vhf alarm sounded. This it does if there is any navigational warning or other emergency that the coastguard wants you to be aware of. It only stops sounding when you have selected the appropriate channel to receive the message. Dutch warship ***** will be firing lat.... Long... bearing range etc. At this point Aleck called me up and asked "did you get that I think we are in the firing line" This did not please my crew one little bit, as the previous year we passed the Bill heading for Poole just as the Lulworth ranges ceased firing. We headed into Warborough Bay and not one hundred yds. away on the cliff could be seen a square board with the number 4 on it. "What is that" Sue asked. I explained that it was not a target but a range marker used by the army and they fire over it out to sea not into the cliff. Not ten minutes had passed when warship HMS Cumberland announced that it would be firing missiles within the hour. We managed to get half the lat and long of the vessel. Ten minutes later another message but this time from HMS Cumberland not Cumberland regarding missile firing. A further ten minutes and Cumberland repeated the firing position but not on the working channel he stated. A quick look at the chart really surprised us as they were firing missiles just the other side of the cliff we were anchored by. Fortunately the firing was far more accurate than the radio operator.

Back to this year:

Aleck then spoke to the warship, the radio operator referred to him as sir and asked him to wait, we imagined him now consulting with his captain. The outcome was that the warship intended to stay on station and we would be in no danger as long as we passed to the north of it. Relieved, we set course, until later, through the mist, we could see a Dutch warship accompanied by a larger support vessel. We moved closer but as we did so support vessel and warship started moving at a speed greater than ours towards us. The warship to the North and support vessel to the South of Dragon, all three within 400meters. This made it impossible for Dragon to pass to the North. Aleck quickly called him up and said there is no way I can stay to the north of you. Please wait sir came the reply from the radio operator. Minutes pass and then the warship informs Dragon that he is not visible on radar. Needless to say the warship and support vessel passed us by. Then about an hour later, out of the mist, can be seen another Dutch warship and support vessel. These we have no difficulty passing to the north off and, yes, this was the vessel firing not the one that passed us earlier.

The fact that we saw a Dutch warship led us to believe that it was the one firing. Had we checked the chart properly we would have seen that it was still 5 nm away. Or if we had put our radar on we would have seen the other vessels through the mist. I would like to think we were not in any danger as there are usually range boats to ensure that the target area is clear and if firing missiles usually a helicopter keeping watch. The range boats usually tell you to alter course this can often add 10 miles to your journey. Apparently this they are not in law allowed to do, they should ask you

to alter course and if you do not wish to do so don't, inform them that you will clear the area as quickly as possible.

We continued to Falmouth without any additional excitement and stayed at Town Quay marina for fuel and showers. Later that evening we were joined by Roy and Carol owners of Cl.8.108 "CHATEAU CAT" who organised the west country "meet and eat". Pressure of work prevented them from sailing with us to St Michael's Mount the following day Thursday, but we agreed to meet in the Helford River on Friday evening.

10.00am. we sailed out of Falmouth together and with light SE wind near the Manacles we caught two mackerel. Dragon hoisted his spinnaker first and passed us and continued to pull away. We immediately hoisted our spinnaker, (never a quick job this) the distance between us remained the same until closing the Lizard and fearing a wind shift we set the genoa ready for our turn to the mount. Dragon pulled further away until we turned, the wind from the headland increased and we now had a good close reach towards the mount. We watched Dragon over our port quarter, trying to tame his spinnaker with crew, Aleck, Chris and Pop 96 years young on deck. Chris hanging on the spinnaker and lying on it, with Pop hanging on Chris. Anyone who uses a spinnaker will know the satisfaction when all goes well and the horror when it doesn't. This cruise we also had reason to curse while dropping ours it decided to fly over the pulpit and into the sea.

On arriving at The Mount we both backed onto the beach for a good nights rest with the mount as our backdrop.



We plan to visit this one below later in the season.



The next day with a mirror sea we motored back to the Helford River and anchored in Penarvon Cove where Roy and Carol owners of Chateau Cat Cl.8.108 joined us later that evening.

Sadly theirs was the only Catalac from the West able to attend that weekend.

During the week that followed I saw 5 Catalacs in the Fal. Had they been able to join us I am sure they all would have all made new friends as we did. Many thanks to Roy and Carol who made us feel most welcome in the West country.

We from the South look forward to returning your hospitality in the future.

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After a pleasant day exploring the Helford on foot the three Catalacs headed for St Just in Roseland.

We goosewinged out of the river taking photo's before turning for the Fal the wind F4/5 off the land giving a slight sea, ideal cat conditions.

I didn't hear a canon for the start or finish but the stage was set as the three cats passed August Rock buoy each intent on being first to St Just. Dragon and Chateau passed either side of a 32ft. half boat. Me-and-er being slightly behind and 100yds. further out, took the pictures.



Nothing separated the three boats, they were evenly matched in performance. With each gust of wind you could feel the boat heel as the speed increased but looking across at the others they were also moving faster. We had one advantage over the others, our plotter told me our course was too far East, the other two, although pointing at the entrance to the Fal, I think were also heading too far East. I needed to cross their path and head tighter to the wind. By easing the main to prevent extra lee-way and tightening the genoa we altered course. Overtook them, and just managed to cross in front of them. They were still locked in close quarters with each other. The Fal still 2-3nm away. We had to turn even more into wind on entered the Fal. The windy instrument now showing an apparent wind of 30 degrees, speed 26/30kn. The boat speed slowed to around 6kn. With other mono's entering now getting in the way, we stayed in the lead up to St Just.

The others very close behind. Aleck congratulated me and Pop smiling said "I think that's the best sail we have had all week." I had to agree with him and I am pleased he enjoyed it. (Aleck was able to turn the tables on me later in the season)

Roy who has done quite a bit of competitive mono sailing said "I never realised we cats could sail that close to the wind, but I saw how you did that." I can't help thinking we may not be so lucky next year.

In truth the plotter won this time until I altered course all three boats had the same speed.

St Just was well sheltered from the wind and we rafted alongside Dragon. Chateau Cat acted as water taxi to Mylor where we had an enjoyable evening meal.

The Nasa weatherman 5 day forecast did not look good. Dragon suffered an engine failure the previous day that meant she was down to 5.5kn. under power so Sunday morning we waved good bye to Aleck, Chris, & Pop. as they set off for Poole and what a good decision that turned out to be.

Sue and I went ashore in the dinghy in fine, warm, and sunny weather and enjoyed a walk along the coastal path to St. Mawes. We spotted two Catalacs out for their Sunday sail but they were too far distant for us to identify boat names. Temptation overtook us at St. Mawes by the smell of lunches being cooked at the nearby hostelrys. So after the fresh sea air and exercise we entered The Old Watch House where a very reasonably priced lunch was enjoyed by us and the many visitors of the day. We ambled back to the boat and with the wind freshening we upped anchor and sailed further up the Fal for more shelter, towards the King Harry Ferry.

Just before this point in the river are pontoons for visitors and local boats. Sailing past one pontoon we saw a gleaming 8m Catalac all white not the usual grey topsides. I know of three other 8's apart from Me-and-er that are all white. One I delivered to the Fal with Alan from Duplicat over ten years ago. Another one built by David Johnson called RAZZLER that changed hands last year, this was she.

The owners appeared waving from within so without further ado we stowed sails and they took our lines as we berthed in front of them.

Would you like a drink I enquired, to which he replied "I don't drink" he paused then added "well not until the sun rises anyway". They had been enjoying their evening meal of fresh mackerel when they saw us pass. After offering us some, it was decided that we would, with glass in hand, inspect each other's boats later that evening.

Unfortunately, this was postponed. When they received a phone call about a road accident involving three of their close friends, two of which had just been killed in the accident.

We moved further up river the following day. For the next week we explored and sheltered in most of the rivers off the Fal, from the gales that raged in the channel. With the coastguard describing weather sea conditions dropping from very rough to rather rough we moved nearer the sea to St.Mawes. During the night the wind eased and the following morning with a half sensible forecast we set off for Salcombe or Plymouth depending on sea conditions.

Extract from log: Tuesday 23rd.May-- unpleasant sea, occasional very heavy showers wind W f4 gusting 7. Entered Fowey at 10.5kn in heavy rain and more gusts. No Dutch warship today.

Log: Wed. stayed at Golant overcast, blustery showers, rain most of day Gale warning.

Log: Thur. Golant to Dart: Overcast, Heavy swell, mostly engine but good sail from Prawle Point. Chaos in Dart as Warship tries to moor on the buoys with lots of barked orders from loud speaker to crew and harbour personnel. We sneak past up to Dittisham for the night. Revenue collector visited us and remembered us from last year. He expanded on warship saga.

Friday am: after doing the tourist bit in Dartmouth, after lunch we decide to move on for Churston Cove nr. Brixham. On arrival finding it crowded we moved to the quieter and little known Elberry Cove. Wind W-SW 4/5 good sail but windy night.

Wind died by morning we set off for Poole forecast SW3/4 inc F6 later.

Motored for about an hour. Thought about spinnaker but goosewinged instead. Then as wind and sea increased we gradually reefed down to half a genoa. Wind still against the spring tide with steep breaking seas now. (maybe the forecast F6 later will be after the 7 now) We are now not interested in passing the Bill by the inshore passage or going ten or more miles out. Thoughts from the past of big waves at the Bill, While collecting a boat with Mary Lack. Not water but waves coming over the doghouse doing 9kn. with the bill abeam for two hours, while trying to keep the

boat from going broadside may have seemed fun twenty years ago. These days crew and I are get our fun in other ways.

We can't go back to the Exe so we head for Lyme Regis, another first for us.

There are buoys should the tide be out, it says so in all the almanacs, but this year Lyme is improving the beach and dredging, so now no buoys. We anchor behind the wall with some shelter from the breaking sea, as there is no water in the harbour.

Not a good night we need to be away by 03.00am. to carry the tide to Poole.

Next morning, we oversleep. 0.4.45am. motorsail flat out for Poole. The sea and conditions couldn't have been better today. The forecast was very similar to that of the previous day, except NW instead of SW. We just make P.Y.C. for the BCCA meet & eat where we are greeted by other members. As evening draws near we leave P.Y.C. (they don't like cats in there) and anchor in Poole, at Bramble Bush for an early night, to catch up on some much needed sleep.