

Commodore: JEREMY BRETHERTON  
e.mail : Jeremy.bretherton@leygreen.co.uk .  
mob:+44 (0) 7876 581 287

Treasurer: RICK HARVEY  
e-mail iune.rick@btopenworld.com

# Bobcat & Catalac Cruising Association

Secretary: PETER GIMSON  
Tel: +44 (0) 1 202 773 749.  
Mob:+44 (0) 7 971 808 777

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 everywhere**

**February 2007**

The next "Meet and Eat" **3<sup>rd</sup>. March midday**

To be held in

**'The Gun' at Keyhaven, near Lymington.**

At this time of year the car park opposite "The Gun" is free. The atmosphere inside the pub is excellent for both walkers and sailors with log fires in most of the bars, a good selection of food from £5.95 with the choice of real ales, country wines and for the more adventurous 150 malt whiskeys. For those wishing or needing to take the air a brisk walk to Hurst Castle or across the mud flats to Lymington should help the figure and clear any cobwebs.

Keyhaven lies behind Hurst Castle and for those of you who have not anchored there, or taken a buoy, now is the idea time to visit and to try 'The Gun'.

However, we do need to know the numbers in your party to ensure seating, so please, if you are available either send me an email or text to my mobile 07 971 808 777  
Do it now, not on Saturday morning.

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**Last chance for those forgetful members who still have not paid their B.C.C.A. subs. £25.00 by Post...£20.00 by email, plus £7.00 for those wishing to have an up-to-date register.**

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Jeremy has been fighting again on our behalf.  
Well done Jeremy, keep up the good work. (see letter)

## Yachting Publication

When I was at The London Boat Show I took the opportunity of going round to and chatting with the staff of the various Yachting publications.  
I did not tackle the Motor Boating ones confining myself to the sailing ones.

I spoke to the Editor of *Sailing Today* magazine who told me that he relied on his own staff to produce the material for the magazine. He refuted the proposition that multihulls were neglected saying that it was a policy of the magazine to include an article involving multihulls in one third of the publications as that was the proportion to single hull sailing.

He accepted the criticism that the content was aimed at new and at the expensive end of the market.

Editorial staff were missing from *Yachting World* and *Yachting Monthly* the stands being manned by leggy girls trying to sell subscriptions so I had to rely on what I was told by the Editor of *Practical Boat Owner*.

Sarah Norbury the Editor of *Practical Boat Owner* was most interesting and helpful. She took in outside contributions but could not vouch for how soon they would be published.

For example, she did not think the lack of response from *Yachting Monthly* to my letter of 2.11.06 unusual saying that her in tray could have letters in it at least 6 months old though she did have a policy of acknowledging them initially.

She reckoned on 500 words to the page and an average article was 1500 words.

She liked photographs. Something such as Peter Gimson's mooring against a wall could be as little as 300 words with diagrams and photos. She would only have an article on the history of Catalacs if it celebrates an occasion such as was produced for Westerlys.

If we wanted to publicise multihulls then we should produce articles of interest to the sailing public either on modifications made or points such as Peters dissertation on gas or particular anchorages or experiences.

Jeremy Bretherton.

I understand Jeremy is also in discussion with the small ships register re: information on new owners.

Well done Jeremy.

\*\*\*\* News Update from "RUSH" \*\*\*\*

HI Peter and Sue just a quick note . Still in Margarita Venuzuala, WE really enjoyed your company and I would love to share a beer with you here its 30 degrees and beer is about 15p a can, petrol about 2p a litre !!! but thats about all this place has to offer.

Anyway what are your plans for the summer assuming you haven't been blown away with all the winds. We hope to leave Margaritta Venizuala tomorrow with no regrets. In the more than two weeks since we arrived we have repaired and reinforced the rudders and Jetti, Richards partner had her bag snatched at Knifepoint while we were walking together in broad daylight!

We are finally looking forward to some nice cruising and snorkling on the Venizualian offshore island before sailing on to Cartehana Columbia.

Hope you are all well keep in touch.

All the best Alan

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Hi Blue,

With beer at 15p a can sounds like you could have a good night out for a pound or two. Hope the repairs have gone ok. The 30 degrees and the thought of snorkelling in clear warm water makes us envious. We went to Cherbourg for a 24 hr. booze cruise and to check the boat after the strong winds we have been having in the UK, it even snowed whilst we were there, how dare it. Pleased to say boat all ok. We thought of our time together last summer and being in France bought it all back as we took our morning stroll for the baguette.

Plans for the summer undecided at the moment. Keep us posted on your trip, it won't be long before you have another crew member on board, how the time flies.

Good Luck and Bon Voyage for your next leg.

Peter & Sue.

More from "RUSH"

Hi Everyone, 2<sup>nd</sup>. February.

Well were sitting at anchor in Curacao the Dutch antillies and I have to say it seems to be one of the better off caribbean islands. Having said that they are pushing for indipendance from Holland it seems they want their cake and want to eat it. Dutch aid is still wanted, they should look at some of their neighbours and think themselves lucky. We have had a nice week sailing through the Venuzualan islands of Tortuga Los roques and the Aves the wind has been moderate and favourable. Hooked several large fish but they got of the hook just as were about to land them. The rudder was successfully repaired in Margaritta after many many anas though I may get a new top bearing on the port rudder. The furler is working properly having bypassed the top swivel bearing and holding the sail up with jubilee clips, not a permanent solution but still waiting on the replacement bearings from hood. We are waiting for the weather to moderate before doing the 450 miles to Cartehena in Columbia a notoriously rough area it's blowing about 30knts there at the moment so maybe early next week.

That's all for now will write again from Columbia.

Alan

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Maybe Alan would find this next information from Bob Freeman helpful.

### Receiving Weather Data Via Satellite on a VHF Receiver !

We are always looking at ways to get as much weather information as possible when sailing or cruising and a system I have just come across is using satellite data through a VHF receiver.

This is not necessarily easy or straight forward but it is probably worth considering for those of you that sail long distance's.

The receiver that is used is not your basic VHF, although it uses 137MHz on FM.

Normal FM bandwidths are around 150 kHz for normal FM broadcasts and 5 kHz for Amateur Bands but the weather satellite signals require a bandwidth around 40kHz – 50kHz.

There are a number of Receivers on the market that do the job of receiving the right data but I would advise you to look around, try to see the system tested and do a lot of reading on the subject.

The information picked up by the receiver is from Polar orbiting weather satellites so called as they travel North / South orbit over the Poles and they are probably the easiest to receive. The satellites tend to pass over a particular region at approx the same time each day and as the earth rotates we get the satellite path ascending from the South and later in the 24 hour period descending from the North.

There are an assortment of Antenna / Aerials that can be used, starting with a basic home made Dipole to a sophisticated professional dish, but I suppose in the end it depends on the good old bank balance.

We now have to connect the system to our computer which needs to have a good sound card attached so as to be able to process the data and convert it to a good image.

You also need a software system that will sort out your data for you, the one I have been looking at is **WxtoImg** this can be downloaded free as a trial package and you only need to pay for it, if you feel its what you want.

There is quite a lot of data available on the internet so have a look around you may find something that you like.

Bob Freeman 'Think Again'.

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See also: owner Nigel Jones comments on the subject of weather forecasting websites we favour the metcheck site, [www.metcheck.com](http://www.metcheck.com). We have found it to be accurate up to 14 days ahead, which is a free service. We have used it for the month ahead and two months ahead to plan our summer cruise. Again it was accurate and a free service. Or try [www.theyr.net](http://www.theyr.net). A good site, and very popular amongst the sailing fraternity, but complicated in our opinion.

### Email from potential new member

Hi there. Came across your site by accident and am most interested in what you are doing. If you will email me a land address I will gladly support you with a cheque for £25. Alternatively will trans to your account if you let us have sort code, acc no. name etc. Unfortunately we have had some bad experiences with giving bank and credit card details on the internet over a wireless connection so are mega cautious at the moment, at our banks request.

### ABOUT US

In 1997 my wife and I found ourselves in the fortunate position of being able to sail off into the sunset if we were realistic and made a few economies. At this time we purchased Kilovar 11 the prototype Oceanic 30 and have managed to spend the past eight years exploring the Med with her living aboard most of the time. Even managed to get down to Syria, Lebanon Egypt and Israel (with the East Med Rally) in 2000 when things were a bit calmer there politicly.

We have cruised Spain ,France and Italy but now tend now to favour Croatia, The Ionian Islands, the Aegean Islands and the Turkish coast. We are currently wintering in Turgetreis marina, Turkey . Although .we have 12 months in commission our insurers require Kilovar to be marina based during the winter.

We have met very few other Bill O Brien designs in our travels although we have met a few former Bobcat owners who had progressed to more modern designs. Nearly all had a similar scary tale to tell of being off a lee shore in big seas with a defective outboard which prompted them to "move up" to an Iroquois or Prout .We are sure their experiences made them better sailors.

We met only one "Tenbob" in Ostia marina , Rome. Sadly it appeared to be used primarily as a houseboat by the French owners and their 2 large dogs. They needed to buy a new outboard and seemed to have no intention of buying one in the foreseeable future.

On the advice of James Wharram ,whom we met and befriended on our travels, we wrote to Bill O Brien in 2003 and have since been in regular contact with him. I am not sure of his age but think he is in his late eighties or early nineties. He has provided us with some of the history of Bill O Brien Ltd which built the original Bobcat (although, as you probably know he subsequently sold the business) and The South Coast Catamaran Co which built the Oceanics. I am not sure if Bill knows of your Group but I shall definitely forward on to anything I receive from you which I think will interest him. Sadly he is now missing very much his French wife who passed away in late 2005 . They married in on 11<sup>th</sup> Sept 1943 and were very close.

Kilovar 11 was built in 1964 for the chairman (Bill O Brien was the M D) of the South Coast Catamarran Co -Bill Irens -- father of Nigel who subsequently found fame as a yacht and multihull designer. Fortunately for us and her other owners Kilovar was built by real shipwrights using seasoned hardwoods

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and top quality Thames Marine plywood with bronze fastenings As a result she is in quite remarkable condition for a plywood catamaran over 40 years old. The excellent condition of her hulls and cabin top was no doubt contributed to by the cascover sheathing. Side decks, aft deck and cockpit floor are teak laid and we believe these may be the original decking although the sheathed foredeck is not. Extensive areas of the cockpit and the coamings are still varnished and still look good. She has proved a very comfortable floating home for my wife and myself and we try to maintain her in good condition. James Wharram wrote some complimentary things about her on his website. Sadly like most liveaboards Kilovar has become a little overloaded which has not aided her already limited light weather performance. We do try to sail as much as possible and often have the time to amble along at between 2 and 3 Knots. Of course when the wind gets above 12 Knots things are very much improved provided its not less than 50deg apparent.

The first six Oceanics had a clear cockpit area and resembled the lines of the "Tenbob" but owner No.7 wanted standing headroom which resulted in the familiar doghouse and split level cockpit to give visibility over the top. For some reason all subsequent boats were built like this and some Bobcats fitted a similar modification.

In 26 months 14 wooden boats were built. In 1967 No.15 was built in fibreglass and this continued until the early 1970s when, partly due to the increased costs of resin and partly due to redesigning costs, boats were built with GRP hulls and sheathed plywood decks.

Over the years we have obviously met up with many Catalacs 8, 9, 10 and one 11. This was Tom Lacks attempt to build a popular cost effective catamaran (the Oceanic was too costly to build by the late 1970s) and he obviously got in right for a while and attracted quite a following. No doubt he honed up his skills whilst employed as sales and production manager in both Bill O'Brien companies. I met Mary Lack at many events and was sad when I learnt of her death.

This Email is getting too long. Will send you photos if you wish and may be able to write something for your Newsletter.

#### OTHER INFO

NAME....David and Ellen Wilkins

UK ADDRESS ....Canvey Island ,Essex

MAILING ADDRESS.. Mr and Mrs Wilkins, Yacht Kilovar 11, c/o The Cruising Association, C A House , 1 , Northey Street, London E14 8BT

BOAT Kilovar 11

DESIGN Oceanic catamaran (prototype)

SAIL NO ....1

YEAR 1964

CONSTRUCTION.. Plywood, sheathed with cascover

LENGTH 30ft (9.1 mtrs) BEAM 14ft 6ins (4.48mtrs)

TYPE Ketch rigged Motor Sailer

Email [thekilovars@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:thekilovars@yahoo.co.uk)

Regards and hope to hear from you

David and Ellie

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Sadly, despite sending two emails, I have, to date, had no reply. ED.

## TALES FROM THE RIVER BANK

Sitting here in our winter berth in St.Jean de Losne, we think back to the beginning of our adventure when everything seemed very daunting and the learning curve very steep.

Prior to leaving when it was all still in the planning stage, we searched every where and talked to everyone to gain some knowledge of what we were about to face. But information we found was a bit thin on the ground, and hints and advice we were given by people who had 'done the canals' proved at best inaccurate and at worst totally incorrect. It was as well that we did not heed some of the advice and tips we were given, if we had we would have wasted a lot of time but more importantly a lot of money. Something we can't afford to do.

For instance, we were told that we had to have a blue board, we wouldn't be allowed onto the canals without a blue board and that a blue board was essential as it was required to indicate to oncoming vessels that we had crossed lanes and were now proceeding on the left. No, totally untrue.

The blue board is required by 'normal' vessels only. A normal vessel, the definition of which is given in the CEVNI book and by the lady in the VNF office to whom we addressed our concern, is a vessel measuring 20 metres or more in length. The only time 'blue anything' is shown to oncoming vessels to indicate that you have crossed over lanes, is when in Paris, even then it is a blue flag, or in our case, a blue towel. But it wasn't actually flown or needed but we had it to hand just in case.

Most people were very supportive of our intentions to travel through France, but some had that look of complete disbelief that not only were we were doing it in a cat but that we intended to carry our mast!

Yes we did have a couple of problems, but then again so did other boats.

The first hurdle was which charts do you use, the most popular are the Navicarte series but there are quite a few others which we discovered once we were in the canals and started to meet other 'plaisance'.

But beware they all have one thing in common; they are about as up to date as drain-pipe trousers and winkle-picker shoes! Haltes, telephone numbers, VHF channels and fuel pontoons are the most affected, they are either incorrect or they just simply don't exist anymore. The times and days of openings on the locks and bridges are also to be taken with a bag, not a pinch, of salt. This is quite an issue when planning your next stop, as Pipers Dream does not do river bank mooring too well. She seems to have an aversion to rocks and cement 'steps', both of which line the majority of the rivers and canals making it difficult to go alongside. So a Reste or Halte are usually the only alternative. Mind you there have been a couple of times when waiting for a lock to open we have had to plop the anchor down as our only method of mooring.

Before bidding Adieu to Good 'ole Blighty, we ensured that we had all the necessary paperwork with us that we could carry.

There is quite a list; insurance documents, passports, proof of VAT, CEVNI to name but a few.

The only one we have been asked for is our SSR number. But others have been asked to produce the lot, one chap who hadn't bothered with the CEVNI, in fact he didn't even have a copy of the book onboard, had a hefty fine imposed, his boat impounded then in order to get it back he had to sit the exam ----- in French!!! Not funny.

The one big thing about us Brits is that we tend to expect everyone else to speak English. Be prepared, most lock keepers do not, or at least give the appearance of not understanding a word you say. Toni, bless him, couldn't speak one word of French, couldn't even give a comical imitation of a French accent (he haw he haw).

But armed with his phonetic French phrase book he's well on the way to becoming a Franglais expert! And the locals appreciate the fact that you're having a go; it doesn't matter to them if you don't use the correct tense or pronunciation, at least you're trying.

It was a shame that we were unable to find out more information about the locks, and the procedure for going through them, prior to arriving in them, but unfortunately a lot of the people that we spoke to who had 'done the canals', had in fact only been through the Midi. The advice they imparted although adequate for this canal did not prepare us for the locks which we encountered on our travels through France. The sizes of some of the locks that we negotiated appear to be in direct proportion to the time travelled; that is, the further into France you go, the smaller the locks! There were many times that we sucked in our breaths, closed our eyes and hoped for the best.

There were also quite a few items that had we known about we would have ensured we'd had with us. For instance, thick, flat fenders and plenty of them; book on venomous snakes, and if they've been invented, self cleaning mooring lines!!!!!!!

Some of the items that we found invaluable were sailing gloves, electric fan and inverter, radio headphones, solar shower bags and a bank account that doesn't charge you when used abroad.

All in all we have had a great time and will be sorry when it comes to an end next year when we leave the canals and enter the Med. But we'll be back!?

Happy Sailing  
izzi & Toni McRae on Pipers Dream.

Tis all part of the adventure Toni, the blue board (towel) reminds me of the time we tied a yellow duster to our shrouds being unable to find the yellow flag, that one was required to be flown 12 miles off foreign soil until one had cleared customs. I do agree the charges UK. based banks make when withdrawing cash or purchasing supplies abroad is outrageous. We are opening an account at the Nationwide who do not make these charges.

On checking your email I see you ask how to repair the anti skid surface on Pipers Dream well I have seen a repair on the mould that the boat comes from ie. the reverse of the boat hope you understand what I mean repaired by mixing up the fibre glass resin and putting it in the damaged part they then placed on top of it a piece of leather with a weight on top of it to. The result being that the grain of the leather looked the same as the anti skid of the boat. It worked fine for them but if I did it, I expect the leather would be stuck to the deck.

They must have coated the leather with a silicone or something to allow it to release, Perhaps one of our members can help you with this problem.

hi yer!!

went onto PBO forums to ask about gel coat patten. Suggestion is, use plastacine, press onto area to get the patten then spray with hair spray to avoid it sticking, I have yet to try it will let you know how we get on. If it works will write it up for the newsletter.

Is the bit of leather available or are you wearing it?

We've had snow about 1ft on pontoons temp down to -9 but now warming up again to -3. How dare it!

love Toni n Elma

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Can any member or 9meter owner help this owner who has owned many boats over the years and has recently become the proud owner of CI 9.189 LIMULUS with his problems.

Hi Peter

Thank you for the mails sent regarding Catalacs, and particularly the detail and drawings you sent me.

I now understand the principles involved, however Limulus is fitted with the original style chain plates in which the fixings are at deck level. If I remember the Lacks fitted an extended form of chain plate like a tubular sort of 'A' frame to take the cap shroud bottle screws, the fixings to a point that was horizontally in line with the mast lowering bolt.

I wonder if there are any details available of these extended shroud plates, or whether you know of any owner that can give me a sketch and dimensions of them – it would be of great help to have this information.

Also, the boat is fitted with the original hopper style windows in aluminium frames with rounded corners. Have you any knowledge of who built these windows and are they still in business? The windows do not appear to be leaking, but the external rubber sealing strip has become unfixed in a lot of places. Is this available, or is it practical to remove it and replace by filling with mastic?

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Hope you don't mind me inundating you with questions, but any answers would be extremely helpful in getting the boat back sailing again. She has been on the Broads for last 3 or 4 years, used as a motor boat only.

I am just now putting the rig together. I have found out that she is fitted with a Selden mast and has had the boom replaced with a new slab reefing boom. I also found that the masthead sheeves had seized, and on inspection found that these were built for wire halyards and therefore only take like 8mm rope. Selden now sell a plastic replacement that will take up to 12mm rope and I have changed the sheeves accordingly.

Trust you can help me, and I will pass on any other information I find out which may be of general assistance to other owners.

With best regards.

David Burlinson ([davidb@saxonnetworks.com](mailto:davidb@saxonnetworks.com))

Hi David,

I am quite happy to answer fully paid up members Questions.

I will happily answer yours even though your subs appear to be delayed or lost in the post!!!

I am sure some member will be able to give you the details you require for the extended shroud plates on the 9meter Catalac.

John Lack can supply bits and pieces for windows from his stock of Catalac parts.

Catalac used several different suppliers for windows one of those that are still in business is Sea Glaze who are based nearest to you on the broads. They do all sorts of windows for the boats on the Broads and ocean going vessels as well. Although Houdini never made windows for the Catalac they are very good and helpful. I used them for the windows on my boat and was pleased with their quote and the quality of the product.

Another member: Peter Denning overhauled his windows four years ago, he wrote an article on overhauled the windows on his 9 meter Catalac. The article was printed in BCCA newsletter July 2004. He removed the windows. Then after carefully dismantling them he cleaned the alloy frames with the aid of a tooling block and resealed them using:

Arbosil 1096 - non-setting mastic for sealing the frame against the cabin top.

And Arbomast black - 'bonds' the glass into the frame.

These products were at around £6.00 per tube plus P&P plus VAT. The tooling block costs around £10.00 these products were all bought from Houdini.

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Hinges: John Lack has a small supply of the (T) type hinge used on the aft locker and cabin hatches. He no longer has any straight hinges as used on the door, forward and cockpit lockers and can no longer get a supply of them.

The financial cost and aggravation to replace all 31 of the hinges on a boat can be avoided now by buying a couple of spare (T) type hinges before they are all sold there by ensuring uniformity in this regard. Contact J. Lack +44(0) 1202 483191



