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Catamaran Cruising Association

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Disclaimer

Neither the CCA nor Committee will accept any liability for personal injury arising out of participating in any event, rally or race organized by or through the CCA 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 CCA.

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.

May - June 2008

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Greetings to all members.

Thank you for entrusting me with the position of Commodore. Jeremy Bretherton is going to be a very hard act to follow. He has guided the association through a difficult transition, encouraging us to make improvements leading to an exciting future.

My hope is that I will be able, with the support of the committee, to continue to develop the association's interests in the same way.

I hope to meet many of you at this year's rallies and meet and eats.

May I take this opportunity to thank Peter Gimson for his continuing and unstinted work on our behalf as secretary, co-ordinator, producer of newsletters and many more supportive aspects of the running of the association.

Maggie Smith.

Commodore C.C.A.

Dear Maggie, let us all hope for fair winds and fine weather this coming season. I am sure our twin wakes will meet and cross many times in the future both, with you and our fellow members. We are looking forward to our first rally of the season later this month at Bembridge.

(1) Hon. Sec. Office 196 Harewood Ave. Queens Pk. Bournemouth, Dorset BH7 7BQ

Bembridge Rally 22 May (HW 13.55 hrs) to 25 May.

Those who wished could stay on over the Bank Holiday. I am sure many will.

We have booked the Haven Room at Brading Haven Yacht Club on Thursday evening 7.30pm for 8.00pm. The cost of a 2 course meal £9.95 the menus are being sent to Bob Freeman at bobatlongleaze@aol.com and also to Maggie Smith Please let them know if you will require a meal.

I will hopefully be away in France collecting ME-AND-ER for the rally.

I look forward to seeing you all again in July for the Festival of Sea at Brest as many of you will be sailing from different ports, Brest would be a good place to meet up.

July-- The Festival of Sea at Brest on 11 July - 17 July MOCRA will also be there, and after The Festival of Sea they will be joining a local French Club to continue with a cruise to La Rochelle. All C.C.A. members are invited to join with them.

I hope you can make either the Festival or cruise to La Rochelle. I would be grateful if members could contact Mike Millerchip of Mocra to confirm a meeting place and for those wishing to sail in company from the UK. To discuss their departure with him.

Many thanks Peter Gimson.

If any member is short handed and would like experienced crew see e.mail from Jeremy Bretherton—Crew wanting a sail...

Peter, I would be grateful if you could insert the following in a Newsletter before July. "Lukas Uhrig is a 31 year old bachelor with the German equivalent of a Yachtmaster's Certificate and is a qualified chef, non smoker, fluent in German, English and Spanish at present working in Spain but wanting to come to England to do some serious sailing between 19th July and 9th August as is his custom each year. I first came across him when looking for crew in the Mayflower Marina in Plymouth he having sailed there from Spain and wanting to go to the Bournemouth English Language School. He navigated me into Weymouth in the dark and I ate well on the way back to Bembridge.

For domestic reasons I can't help him this year. If any owner is going cross channel or South Brittainy I would recommend him.

Contact him on lukas.uhrig@web.de or in the last resort me at jeremy.bretherton@leygreen.co.uk"

thanks. Jeremy

DRIFTIN & DREAMIN

The greatest pleasure in life is doing what other people say you cannot do!

Toni & Elma bid you Welcome!

TO THE (MIS)ADVENTURES OF

The BOAT and her CREW.

We spent a lot of time looking for the boat, trawling through many mediums, books, magazines and the internet in our search for a suitable vessel. We had talked to streams of people, asking and then sometimes dismissing their advice and opinions. The result of all this brain numbing hunting was a 30ft Catalac catamaran.

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The first thing we had to do was re-name her, cos there was no way I was going to sail the seven seas in a boat calledDORIS!!!! So after invoking Neptune/Poseidon and offering them, and ourselves, liberal amounts of champagne she was called 'PIPERS DREAM' Now all we had to do was the refitting! We'd already decided to leave The River Dart and go round to Essex to do this as it was an area we knew and family and friends would also be near and readily available to assist. See, method in our madness.

We had thought, rather stupidly as it turned out, that the work we'd planned to do on PD (PIPERS DREAM) would be completed in just a couple of months and we would be on our way. But we'd underestimated the amount of work and our abilities. Some of the work was pretty straight forward; some required very careful planning. A lot of time being spent in undoing previous owners handiwork, before carrying out the refit to our own specs. Some items that we needed were also difficult or impossible to find; this meant that plans had to be altered to accommodate this frustrating pattern. But we did come up with some pretty ingenious alternatives! Bodge-it & Scarper had nuffin on us! We must also thank B & Q as we managed to find quite a few bits and pieces in their stores; I reckon that PD is more B & Q than Ellen Macarthur's boat that she used in her round the world stint.

I won't bore you with the details but the list was as follows:

Headlining, carpet/wood/battens.....seats/cushions/table.....helm seat and area.....galley/pantry.....heads/shower.....electrics/wind generator/inverter/batteries/rewiring/solar panel.....heating/ducting to both hulls/exhaust outlet.....water system/calorifier.....insulation.....stbd stowage.....sails/boom/mast/rigging/cruising chute/lazyjack/lines aft.....anchor/electric windlass/chain/warp.....windows.....lockers/catches/cockpit flooring.....cockpit tent and finally two new Nanni engines to be fitted whilst still afloat. Even now 4 years later we are still doing bits, it's never ending.

THE CREW

Toni and I met on a blind date in 1997; set up by a mutual friend and my daughter, Christina. Two years later we ran away to the original Blacksmiths at Gretna Green and were married over the anvil.

Before I met Toni the nearest I got to a boat was watching Howards Way on the telly! Sailing was not a hobby or past-time I had ever considered. To me, yachts were big, expensive and only for the rich and idle. Then I met Toni, he was neither rich nor (too) idle. But he did own a yacht, a Leisure 23. I remember the first time I went onboard; inside was compact and bijou, but the outside was a different thing altogether. Looking from the blunt end to the pointy end seemed an awful long way away. We spent a lot of time onboard, sailing around the Essex coastline. But Toni couldn't persuade me to take the helm. My contribution at that time was more mealtime than maritime.

Toni has Yachtmaster qualification and as we intended to sell up and sail he suggested I took Day Skipper. So on a cold day in Falmouth, Cornwall I set sail on a training course; at the end of which I'm pleased to say I passed. The rest of the crew is made up of our pets;

Jake the dog who is in charge of security and playing on beaches; Harvey and Bruce our two cats who are supposedly in charge of pest control. All three of them provide great entertainment.



THE BIG PLAN

Seems that we have constantly been changing this. Initially we had wanted to sail round the UK. But with cold weather and snow decided to abandon this in preference for somewhere warm so settled on the Med. Next how do we get there? Neither of us fancying the Bay of Biscay as we don't do heavy seas, early mornings, late evenings, night sailings or anything else that might spill the whisky! So the French Canals were the answer. Once through, we would decide whether we turned right or left and be cruising South of France, Italy, Greece and Turkey.

THE START

August 6 2003 we moved onboard. The first thing to do rename the boat from DORIS to 'PIPERS DREAM'. Some friends arrived to assist in the renaming, Jean and Douglas. We had already prepared everything, the anchor was in the dinghy with a floating line attached as it had to be pulled through from stem to stern, the champagne was on ice, we just had to get the glasses and we were away. Toni though could only find three champers glasses and so being the captain volunteered to use another one, he arrived back on deck with a pint glass!

The ceremony went well without too many hitches; the floating line on the dinghy sank and the dinghy got stuck between the hulls, but it was all ok and our pride and joy is now known as 'PIPERS DREAM' PD for short.

A little while later we were all sitting chatting, nicely relaxed (sozzled with the champagne actually) when Toni decided he wanted to try the dinghy's outboard. He had been given this engine for services rendered to a damsel in distress many years previously and had been nurturing and coaxing it along ever since. We were now at the stage when we were unsure whether to take it along on our forthcoming journey of adventure. Fate took a hand in our decision.

Douglas jumped down in the dinghy; Toni held the engine out to Douglas ignoring my comments of lanyard, the inevitable happened and Douglas and engine disappear over the side of the dinghy into the Dart. The champagne kicked in and those of us on the water and not in it, fell about laughing. We soon regained our composure and recovered Douglas his two half twists and back flip before he hit the water was mighty impressive. Our engine now gone but due to Douglas's acrobatics will never be forgotten.

Our journey into the unknown started the next day. The river was peaceful and tranquil, in fact the only thing that scared the pants off us was the wailing of the port engine alarm. Twenty minutes later we were once more tied up alongside with Danny, the engineer hanging upside down in the engine compartment trying to fathom out what the problem was.

Didn't take him long to find the problem. A pipe that assisted with the cooling had cracked and as a result the engine had overheated. Seems ironic that the dinghy engine had died due to an excess of water and this one due to the lack of the stuff.

A couple of days later we tried again, this time we made it all the way to Dartmouth but only on one engine having turned the other one off after twenty minutes, when the alarm sounded, it was quite deafening. We are now on Town Quay and Toni checked the engine and is surprised to find no oil on the dipstick. He soon found it though it is swilling around in the bottom of the bilge. The reason being that just behind the dipstick there is a banjo fitting

that connects the dipstick tube to the sump, or in our case, didn't. An engineer informed us, that the engine would have to be removed to fix it but as luck would have it, he managed to tighten it a bit more and this should suffice for a while.

Our next port of call, Brixham was just as eventful. A large orange trimaran rafted up to us; no lines ashore and a huge black footprint from the lout who landed with a thud on our foredeck in order to tie alongside us in the wee small hours. We had been Tango'ed!!!

Another drama evolved in Lyme Regis, we discovered after a following sea that the outlet for the shower (fitted by the previous owner) was too near the waterline; with the result we now had an indoor paddling pool in one hull. The engines were also misbehaving.

We had a smooth journey round Portland Bill choosing the weather and tides carefully. In Weymouth we met another Catalac, an 8m. Jazz Cat of Beaulieu, owned by a friendly fellow named Barry. We rafted up to him for the night and followed him to Studland Bay where we anchored for the night. The day was clear and we could see ahead, what looked like three islands a little to starboard. There were no islands showing on our chart, so what were they? The nearer we got the bigger they got and eventually they merged into one. We had been looking at The Isle of Wight.

The water at Studland is crystal clear with a sandy bottom making anchoring easy. So how come within a short time of dropping the anchor, we had drifted so far south that we could have p...p...p...picked up a penguin? The answer my friends is hanging off the anchor a great chunk of slimy seaweed. We dumped it back from whence it came and picked up a buoy. Now feeling secure we threw the dog and ourselves into the dinghy, went ashore and enjoyed a meal with the odd drink or three at the Banks Arms Public House in the village.

Bembridge, Isle of Wight, where I left a bit of me behind. I'd had a terrific toothache for a couple of days but managed to find a dentist in Ryde who did the deed for only £40!

We were a little too big for the marina at Bembridge but were told to go to channel marker 11, turn left and run her up the beach. So we did. Had a lovely meal in the Youth Sailing School and a hot shower.

We would like to go back to IOW to really explore it but we didn't have the time then.

Our voyage continued round the coast, stopping at Southampton, Brighton, Southsea, Eastbourne, Dover, Ramsgate and into the Swale where we'd arranged to meet some friends in the Inn for dinner. Continuing on to Essex we stopped at Queenborough, Burnham, arriving in Tollesbury in November.

2004 was busy and very frustrating trying to get all the work done. But it wasn't all work and no play; we managed to get out a few times either on our own or in company with PERIQUITA (son Ian) or NABRUKA (friends Matt & Andrea). We poodled around the River Colne, Brightlingsea, Pye Fleet, Ipswich and Walton. We also had a fabulous time back in Gretna Green when my daughter, Christina married Richard.

Slowly the year slipped away from us and before we knew it, it was 2005.

We didn't do too much this year or for the beginning of 2006, as I was working, but Toni poodled around and I caught up with him on days off. Then, late April '06, I handed in my notice. A month later we were on our way.

3 cats and a dog through the French canals

Day 1 Brightlingsea – Harty Ferry: 1015 we left Brightlingsea & headed down the coast to the Medway & Harty Ferry, for our first nights stopover. We had a great run down, the weather was hot & sunny; we even managed to sail for a while. At the Kings Ferry Bridge we had a wee wait until the next opening, so dropped the hook & had a cuppa. Near the pub at Harty Ferry there were no available buoys, but a chappie shouted out to us that as he was about to leave we could have his. Very decent I thought.

Day 2 Harty Ferry-Ramsgate: terrific run today, saw some seals basking in the sun & managed to catch some of the Margate Air Show. Approaching Ramsgate we had a fishing vessel come tearing up behind us, he changed course to pass us on our port side not allowing us room to turn into the enormous wake he created or

reducing his speed. As a result we hit the waves beam on which created havoc for us, we were thrown every which way.

Day 3 Ramsgate-Calais: the CH16 weather had given sunny with F3-F4. Great we thought, perfect for our first channel crossing. We had decided to try the course, which would take us round the top end of the sands, plenty of others that we had spoken to had done it many, many times. Not far out & we changed our minds; we hit winds of F8 & very rough seas with waves about 4 metres; they were so high at times I swear (even though I don't usually) that I could see the curvature of the earth! The weather we were experiencing had not been forecast. We really took a battering, so decided for safety's sake to abort the trip & return to Ramsgate.

Day 4 Ramsgate-Dover: due to the bad experience of attempting to go to the north of the sands, we decided to move down to Dover & cross to Calais from there.

Day 5 Dover-Calais: we left Dover at 0830 minus one blue fender (as Toni didn't tie it on correctly) arrived Calais 1400 local. We spent a lot of time working out our route & way points, then re-working out our route & way points; on the trip itself we took lat/long readings every half hour & plotted them on the chart.

I brought us out of Dover & up to the first way point. Toni then took over & we entered the TSS zone. We kept a good watch for container ships & other traffic as we assumed that every hour is rush hour in the channel. But including the ferries & the one Speedcat, we only saw six ships in total. Toni also spotted a dolphin. Before leaving the TSS, I took over the helm for a while & steered PIPERS DREAM into French waters. We were so elated to see the French coast, even more so when we entered the port of Calais. We'd timed our arrival for the opening of the marina lock & only had to wait a few minutes, so had a cuppa & tried to contain our excitement. As we entered the marina we couldn't believe our ears, somewhere in the distance we could hear bagpipes being played, & the tune they were playing was Scotland the Brave. How apt.

We reckoned on staying a couple of days in Calais; we had to sort out the license, getting the mast down & prepare PIPERS DREAM for life on the canals. We made our way up to the marina office, or should I say Capitainiere, & came down to earth rather rapidly. Some fool of a lorry driver had hit one of the lifting bridges & put it out of action; we were unable to enter the canals via Calais. We had so looked forward to this & it had been snatched away by a hit & run.

There were three other Brit boats there, (one of whom MERLOT with Pat & Eileen aboard would accompany us through to Armentières), waiting, like us to go into the canals, & we discussed with them what our options were. We all decided to go up the coast to Gravelines & get into the canals from there. There seemed some doubt though that we would get through the lock due to our beam; Toni & I therefore decided to go to Gravelines by bus to have a gander.

Calais-Gravelines by bus: the weather was fantastic looking back, we should have just taken the chance & moved PIPERS DREAM round to Gravelines anyway as the sea condition was as perfect as perfect could be. Hey! Ho!

The bus ride was good, bus clean & comfy, cost us 6 € each way. Town is quite pretty with some amazing flower sculptures, the best of which was the horse & carriage. We spoke to the Capitainiere who assured us we would

fit through the lock with no problem. When we got back to Calais, we found that the other boats had departed for Gravelines.

Day 6 Calais-Gravelines *bit of a bumpy ride to Gravelines but at least the sun was shining. We moored next to what looked like a Spanish galleon undergoing a major refit. Something I'm sure you won't miss even if you wanted to is the guy at Gravelines with the most amazing moustache. It's wider than the width of his shoulders, but best viewed when he has his back to you, very comical.*

Mast came down & sat perfectly on the A frame constructed by Toni & Pat. Cost 60 € .Afterward we moved to the end of the pontoon ready to go through the lock tomorrow. Not long after we'd tied up we saw a powerboat hurtling into the marina, closely followed by a smallish yacht. They called out for us to catch him, but he was going too fast for us to assist without putting ourselves at risk. Somehow or other though, Toni managed to grab him & help the chap get his yacht into his berth. The powerboat had towed him in after a large chunk of wood kicked up by the dredger took his rudder off. He'd built the boat himself, took him 22 years & now he had to redo bits of it.

Day 7 Gravelines – Watten: *As we wouldn't be going through the lock until the afternoon, we had a stroll up to the town with Jake & discovered that it was market day. Jake wasn't too happy with the crowds, so whilst Toni took him back to the boat I did a bit of window shopping. After a while I wandered back, only to find that Toni had obviously gone back to the market & yes we had missed each other. It was a beautiful day so I plonked my posterior on the seat at the top of the quay to wait. A little while later an elderly chap came cycling up & we got chatting. He was nearly 70 & had lived onboard his old Gaffer for about 14 years, the last 4 in Gravelines. He was a member of the old Gaffers Association & one year he went to the meeting in Ostend; got chatting to a girl & invited her to accompany him on his return trip to Gravelines, which she accepted with the proviso that she could bring a girlfriend. Not a problem he thought. So off they set, it was another hot sunny day & they asked if they could sunbathe on the coachroof. Not a problem he thought. They stripped off & lay down. Not a problem he thought. With their 'business ends' about two inches from his nose! Not a problem he thought. But each time they moved, so did his compass. This is a problem he thought. But it did prove his theory that pubic hair is magnetic!*

Toni arrived back; we had lunch & prepared to go through into the canals. The lock at Gravelines is in fact just a gate, which is opened to allow vessels through when the water level on both sides is more or less the same. With MERLOT leading the way, we entered our first canal. I was amazed to see lilies growing at the side of the canal & we got a good photo of a heron, at least I think it was real it was standing so still it was hard to tell! It was very quiet, peaceful just a pity we had to have the engines on. Mind you we did get held up a number of times by the sheer weight of traffic on the canal – the amount of ducks that use the canal is unbelievable, & rather than have shredded tweet we waited for them to move.

We spent the first night moored up next to the bank just outside Watten. It was very strange to hear, not the wind & the seas, but the wind in the trees. I did wonder if we'd taken a wrong turn somewhere as on the opposite bank we spotted a Llama & an emu! Whilst I did dinner Toni tried to catch some fish; but I think the fish are in more danger of being overfed than being caught.

Day 8 Watten - Arques: *We didn't leave Watten for a few days as one of the locks further down was shut for routine maintenance & wasn't due to open till then. We knew when the lock was open as the peniche started to move. When the first one came past the suction it created was amazing; the water just disappeared & came back with a rush. It was so violent that it pulled MERLOT away from the bank along with the sign post Pat & Eileen had tied up to – including the concrete that had been holding it!*

We had a lovely journey down to Arques marina; the weather was very hot, it would have been unbearable but luckily we had a fan which we ran off the inverter.

Arques Marina: *Weather very hot, temperature well into the 90's with not much breeze. The marina here in Arques is quite different from those we're used to in the UK; it's basically just a side cut off the main drag with only 2 pontoons, one of which is dedicated to small powerboats. We took PIPERS DREAM over to the slipway to check there was nothing caught on the props, & I'm happy to say there wasn't.*

Day 9 Arques - Fort Gassion Lock. *Left Arques at 1005 & headed out for the first lock which is literally just round the corner. We finally made it through both the Arques locks at 1400; we were held up as the peniche have priority. It had been our intention today to go through into Belgium to get some red diesel but we got stopped at Fort Gassion lock, the entrance to the river Lys. We were politely informed that the lock closed at 1700hrs but we were welcome to moor outside for the night & go through the following morning. Not much of a hardship as it was a pretty place. Had a lovely shower with the solar bag but the shower pump didn't work.*



Day 10 Fort Gassion Lock - Armentières.

Set off at 0835 through the first lock. It was a really pleasant journey, but each subsequent lock appeared to get smaller & smaller in width. We stopped at Estaires for lunch, after which Toni & I went for a mosey round the town.

We were wandering around discussing how to ring the hospital about my appointment when Lo! & Behold! They rang me! They had a cancellation & did I want it? Oh let me have a few minutes to think? Of course my answer was yes. But Toni was also due to go back to the UK as he'd been called as a witness in a court case. We decided to wait till we got to Armentières to see what we could do.

Armentières: *Toni spoke to the solicitor involved in the case & he informed us that Toni would definitely be needed. So we both had to go back but what to do with the 3 boys?*

There were a number of options open to us for getting back to the UK;

OPTION 1---by train...this would have involved a change at Dunkerque & the cost was also high, 188 € p..p

OPTION 2---by air.....not viable nearest airport quite some distance away.

*OPTION 3---by sea.....ferry from Calais seemed better idea. **We will continue with PD. and her crew in July-August newsletter ED.***