

Commodore: ALECK TIDMARSH
e.mail : aleck@mq-sales.fsnet.co.uk
mob:+44 (0) 7905 105 596

Treasurer: SUSAN STACEY
e.mail: susanmstacey@sky.com
mob: 44 (0) 7985 022 540

Catamaran Cruising Association

Formerly Bobcat & Catalac Cruising Association



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

e-mail: Peter.Gimson@sky.com

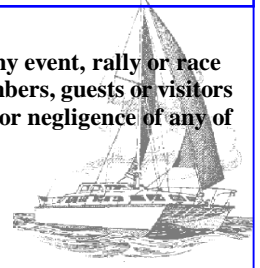
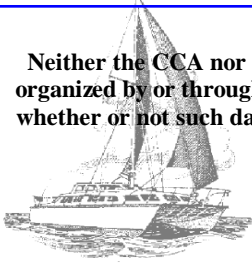
www.bobcatandcatalac.btinternet.co.uk

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 2012

Hi Members,

Despite the topsy-turvey weather until the later part of May, we will endeavour to make the most of this season's forthcoming events. Those wishing to attend please contact the hosts.

I hope many of you will be able to attend.

Windy Gap/Folly Rally – 21st – 24th June - Hosts P.Gimson/S. Stacey

Poole Harbour/Bmth Airshow–30th Aug – 2nd Sept – Hosts A.Tidmarsh/C. McCarthy.

Following our last newsletter we have been asked which is the best way to cure leaking windows, so this month we are going to look at how one member replaced his leaking windows.

Before we start thinking about doing more work on our boats - let us try to enjoy them, if the weather is bad just imagine we have sneaked aboard Allegro as she sails in warmer climes through the butterfly island.

Through the butterfly Island.

We were hoping to make Antigua – next island but one up – in comfortable time for the Classic races to be held in just over a week's time and so we decided to skip the delights of the leeward passage of Guadeloupe. The island has the shape of a butterfly – two wings with a narrow tiny central body with each wing having a very different terrain. In geological time two very different events pushed the lumps together, the western island is like Dominica, tall and cloud-capped, green forest in the south and fertile slopes. The eastern island is flat well populated and farmed. Between them is a swamp area dense with mangroves and (so we were assured) alive with mosquitoes. Deshais on the east coast was a delightful stopover, we were told repeatedly, and on the leeward coast. However, we had a discussion about routes that led us to choose the feverish mangrove passage. Were we mad? Well, there was as usual more than one way to plan a passage. The sailing factors were these. Antigua lies to the north of Guadeloupe but the butterfly is wide, so a passage from the very eastern corner, taking in delightful Deshais, would then put us far downwind of our destination and entail the possibility of a lumpy windward beat. The mangrove swamp had a redeeming feature, there was a canal cut through it, the Riviere Salee, which would hand us 20 deg of casting were we to go through the middle of the butterfly island. It was beginning to look good, but there were still one or two obstacles, in the form of two road bridges that had to open for us at – 5AM! And the bay to the north was reef infested for 5 miles beyond the Riviere....

It seemed a tough one but the bottom line of 40 miles beating to windward or 20 miles easy won the day.

In the end the mosquitoes were so baffled by our top-to-toe clothing and insect repellent neither of us even saw one, and the skipper's excellent pilotage, with all the bouys marked on to the GPS (Plus it has to be admitted that following a convey of other boats can iron out a few doubts, if done with care!) It turned out to be a good adventure and a very interesting and beautiful byway.

On Easter Monday we left the Saintes, still sunny and heat-soaked, the turquoise ripples of clear water giving way to a deeper blue as we sailed between Terre de Haut and Isles a Cabrit. We had a slightly windward course to the NE to wiggle past a headland on the SE coast of Guadeloupe before it fell away to the north towards the narrowing bottleneck formed by the swampy isthmus. It was a fine breezy day and we managed this leg ok. Heading north the high cloudy mountains of Basse-Terra (meaning low ground? ... What is it with these French?) dropped away to port and we sailed into a wide glassy turquoise sea bounded to the north by the thinnest of tiny horizons where the land is no more than a muddy mangrove forest height, as I imagine sailing the Amazon would appear.

All too soon that afternoon we were approaching our only marina stopover of the entire voyage, Bas de Fort, the prestigious French port de plaisance that is the finishing point of the Route de Rhum Race. Also the place we must sign into France, in order to sign out the very next night, so that the pernicky Antiguan customs officials would have their paperwork in good order. I am drawing a veil over berthing operation, only to say that Allegro does not turn on a sixpence, does not back into tight parking spaces and does not like picking up stern bouys between longer boats with trailing rope without a lot more practice – which she assuredly does not get! Enough said, we got in and had a night of 'free' showers and electricity – for which Allegro does not carry the required electrical plugs to access. Oh well. At least I had a laundry visit, and we berthed right by a maxi tri, a former Route competitor. Amazing – speed, power and aeroplane good looks – the French really took to radical yacht design in a way the British never really did. What a contrast to the traditional boats in store for us in Antigua.

A Bridge Too Far for Some

We had a quick morning to run into Pointe a Pitre before tackling the bridges at dawn. This seemed to me to be the only town we had seen so far that looked like any ordinary town in the south coast of England, streets full of ordinary busy shops, department stores – chain stores and of course traffic – the stuff we take for granted as being just “a town.” There seemed money to spend and people to spend it as well as the usual poor local market folks and tourists, in other words evidencing something nearer a European economy. We also visited the museum of the public-spirited philanthropist and anti slavery campaigner Victor Schoelcher. In Guadeloupe he gave his entire collection of sculptural artefacts to the newly emancipated but (culturally as well as materially) impoverished island and his large library to public access in Martinique. Both are still open to all to enjoy today.

Lunch in a café on the endless turquoise waterfront was a relaxation before motoring out of the marina and up to the entrance to the Riviere. There are four large bouys on which to await the predawn hour at which the bridge opens and we took one and saw only one other boat – a cat we had talked to back in Bas du Fort. The shallow draught precludes most boats other than multihulls. By dark dawn the next day we were four in total, milling around, waiting for our first bridge to open. The lock keeper first opens the north bridge at 04.30 lets through south going boats, jumps into a car/bike/ helicopter and races to open the south bridge at 05.00 to let out the south going traffic and let in those going north. Then he jumps into a car/bike/ helicopter and races to open the north bridge for the second time at 05.30 and that is it for the day. Miss one and you do not get through. Go to slow and you are trapped inside the Riviere. It is a slick operation and the waiting traffic on the two roads involved don't care about boats, so get it right.

Crunch Time

Well we did ok and I managed to steer *Allegro* thro the dog leg narrow gap that was the first bridge. Not so however the shiny charter cat behind. There was a truly distressing sound of crunching fibreglass as the starboard quarter smacked against the solid wall of the bridge. I jumped into the air only to be reassured by the skipper saying it wasn't you! He hit the side.” Huge relief. The mile or so to the next bridge wound between low green mangroves in the lightening dawn and was pure magic. We were in a small caravan of travellers winding through a still and special place. After clearing the second bridge the channel between mangrove islands, with the horizon far away ahead and flocks of ibis flapping there way past us was as if in another silent, fresh and unexplored world as the sun rose and woke the day. Even the trip across the reef infested bay was an adventure, emerging into somewhere new and wonderful, following a path whose password was known only to us and which took us back to the sumit sea beyond breakers on either side as a reward for daring and skill. Well dared skipper!

Reaching Falmouth

The sail to Antigua had the island in sight all the time as it was only around 20 miles away. The day was hot and sunny, the sea a brave sparkling blue and we had little to do but point the boat. That was until the U-bolt on the port side holding the main boom preventer suddenly went ping and went for a swim, leaving only the base attached. Luckily this fitting had been “held in stock” by the skipper since he refitted a sturdier one than the original. This was originally a rigging point for a capshroud but now only used as an attachment point for the preventers. In half an hour, the skipper found a replacement and we were underway again as before.

The other main point of interest was the faint misty outline of Montsarrat to port with a good head of cloud on its highest peaks. This partly consisted of cloud, partly smoke as the volcano there is continuing to be active after it blew over ten years ago. I feel an almost personal affront when I read that the former capitol, covered in ash and abandoned then, was called Plymouth. Those interested

in following the story can go to a website that gives weekly updates on the level of activity there, as observed from the monitoring centre.

Antigua too is a low, dry, rounded island, and has a strongly English feel to it, not least because of the names of English Harbour, Falmouth and others. A little similarity in appearance too, big bay and green rolling hills. Huge anchorages and filling up fast with boats of a pleasantly traditional look when we arrived. The entrance is open and easy the depths nicely shallow for catamarans who want to escape big deep draft boats of which also that week there were many.

I See No Ships – Only Hardships

Clearing Customs in Antigua was done in an office in the oldest working Georgian harbour in the world in English harbour. The two harbours are back to back and on the narrow neck of land between is what's now called Nelson's Dockyard. In their bid to rule the waves in the Caribbean the English maintained a large base here with many ships of the line and the services to keep them in commission. Today you will see an immaculate set of Georgian workshops coopers sheds, sail lofts and buildings in mellow rosy-red brick that now serve as pubs and restaurants. It would be a credit to the National Trust with it's close cropped lawns and gardens. The Museum is a wealth of information about Nelson – who was here as a young naval officer for a year and about life below decks for both white and black sailors. It is English Heritage exemplified.

The administration of clearing in and out is a model of fussy bureaucracy, as we go back and forth between 3 desks. Thankfully all in the same room at least. It's just important to complete as required.

The rest of the week quietly in the bay, meeting and talking to other people on boats. The local exploration consisted of a fruitless run in the local bus to the P.O. in St Johns for letters from the Poste Restante (although I knew I had lost that battle before it began when the young girl at the desk asked me to explain the Post Restante system as it existed elsewhere...) We visited the lovely local Anglican Cathedral which had a totally wooden interior structure designed to hold the building together in an earthquake and whose fine collection of memorial plaques told a dozen stories of life on a small English colony. The museum too was well presented and informative. There is a map of every land holding on the island in the 18th. Century, looking for the entire world like a map of any shire in England. It also told the story how after emancipation when slaves were turned free, but were penniless, landless and jobless, it was the small churches giving them plots of land that enabled the first villages to develop, and these have names such as Liberta and are found to this day with their benefactor church or chapel at the heart of the settlement.

Regatta for Classic Boats

Really though, at the heart of our time in Antigua, was the event that drew in boats, ships and sailors of every degree – the Regatta for Classic Boats. As the worlds most elegant, and well-maintained and expensive boats assembled we realised that we were seeing in one place the very best there was. There was a fleet of mega yachts, who like us had just come to have a look, their floodlit masts at night looking like central Manhattan. Then there was the assembly of classics. These were genuinely old boats whose gleaming varnish and scrubbed decks belied their age, there were GRP builds to classic lines (essentially, with long keels and heavy displacement) and modern builds in traditional materials (i.e. wood, whether planks or double diagonal strips – and using modern epoxy too, (but there is another story, for the ultimate purist..) and even better the resurgence of Caribbean – built wooden traders from Bequei (the latest is on order – a new 100' build for developer de Savary). They were all here and it was fantastic. We were here too with equal right along with the likes of *Maltese Falcon*, the worlds largest privately owned sail ship with it's radical 21st. century hi-tech interpretation of square-rig, and *Le Grand Bleu* which had a full size sailing yacht on deck as one of its tenders. With more right than most to be there we also saw *Gli Gli* the Caribbean sailing canoe from Dominica built 10 years ago by native craftsmen and sailed by them back to the R

Orinoco from where the Caribs originated. It was painted in traditional geometric designs with an eagle design on the sail and was a wonderful addition to the event.

Skipper and I were lucky enough to have talked our way onto boats entered to race (he on *Blackthorn*, friends from England) and myself on *Mi Querida* an Australian home – build Cherubini 42', which turned out to be the party boat with barbeque always on the go, even while doing the course.

The racing was reverting though here there is a special set of rules for owners more interested in not scratching the paintwork than winning at all costs. This did not preclude exiting skirmishes at the start line – although some of us had problems finding the start line at first. The racing deserves a newsletter of it's own which I may write later, but the highlights were definitely just seeing all the other boat in glorious, elegant action and knowing too that we were part of that spectacle for others, plus the camaraderie of a team effort with new friends, all doing something we loved, together.

The final race of the day was for tenders both racing and sailing, and we watched by the company from the immaculate lawned gardens of Admiral Inn while eating cream tea. Proper job!!

All Good Things

As the race week drew to a close so did our time in Antigua.

Mike and I decided to sail our separate ways also, and as I write this *Allegro* is in St Maarten preparing to return as ever, single-handedly, back to England. The story continues but I can't write *Allegro's* passage back home.

My heartfelt thanks have gone to the skipper for the opportunity for the very wonderful experiences a trip like this can give. I continue to have huge respect for his seamanship, conscientiousness and safety record in crossing oceans in a small boat *Allegro* continues to be the sturdy and ocean crossing vessel she was never designed to be but is, as well as the amazingly capacious home and horizon-expander she has been for us over the last months.

Fair winds. Safe arrivals.

CL 8.07 “Sea Spirits”

sporting new windows and here is how by Nigel & Shelia Jones.

Window Replacement, 8m Catalac.

When we purchased Sea Spirits her windows were certainly showing their age. Time and UV light had reduced the once clear material to a crazed and almost opaque finish. Being able to look at the great outdoors from within the accommodation had become a thing of the past. Clearly (no pun intended) we had to replace the sad and sorry window material so a cunning plan was needed. It all started in the middle of the summer in 2003.....

“I have scrounged some pallets from work, and the guys there say what you do is lay the pallets down on the ground and then lay the decking on top. They have all done it so it must be easy” announced the crew on returning home from work one Friday afternoon. The ensuing discussion about the merits of time and money spent on something that we would not be home to enjoy, that I was not prepared to contemplate during the ‘Season’, and that required rather more thought than said crew had applied was quite long and protracted. The clincher, for me, came the following morning when I enquired locally about the price of the decking materials. “**How much?**” “Echoed the crew, now convinced at last that this project was a non-

starter. So we now had half a dozen pallets stacked round the back, (“oops, forgot they were being delivered this morning”) and no obvious use for them. Or maybe there was.....

During the early planning stage of the Great Window Replacement Scheme it had become obvious that if you remove all the screws from the outer window frame of a Catalac 8m there is nothing much holding the inner frame in place. And since the inner frame is actually in four pieces the chances of these dropping to the floor is greatly increased. And since the headlining is held in place by said inner frame, I could foresee a very saggy headlining being an easy thing to achieve and not so easy to rectify. So the inner frame must be held in place before the outer frame is removed. But how?

We spent the Sunday after Pallet Delivery Day on the boat, and like all great ideas this one arrived with the speed and clarity one has become used to over the years. “*Pallets!*” I exclaimed. “*Please don't go on, I have said I know I should have consulted with the Great One before ordering them*” replied the penitent crew.

“*No, I mean we can dismantle the pallets and use the wood to brace the inner window frames.*”

“*It is so clear I don't know why we haven't thought of it before!*” I responded.

“*Clearer than the windows then,*” giggled the crew, and then “*What do you mean, we?!*”

I deduced that if I made all necessary preparations for the replacement of the windows well before lift-out time I would be in a good position to complete the job before the onset of winter, or as the crew calls it, Christmas shopping time. Ok so what do I need to do/order? (Notice one has dropped the ‘we’)

The outer frames, once they are removed from the boat, need to be taken apart. This can be easy or not, depending on the state of the corner fixings. These are aluminium mitre blocks, drilled and tapped, and fitted internally to the mitred corners of the outer frames with aluminium machine screws. Or as in the case of three of our screws, they had become white powder! It's ok, we can overcome this. And there is non-setting sealant used at each corner also. And some of the black plastic strip hiding the screw points in the internal frames was missing. Also some of the internal glazing bead, the round section rubber stuff between the windows and internal frames, was missing. So, shopping list:

Frame screws. Take one out, measure and identify it and order from

Screwfix. Easy. £10.00 for twice the quantity I need. Next?

Sealant. Clear silicone and grey non-setting mastic. To seal the outer frames to the coachroof and for use in the rebuilding of the outer frames. Again,

Screwfix at a cost of £8.00 for 3 tubes of silicone and 1 of non-setting frame sealant. (Grey would be least visible after reassembly).

Black plastic strip. We found some identical to the original at a caravan shop,

Charles and Son in Parkstone, Poole at 60p/metre.

Glazing bead. Bought from

Cherry's chandlery in Moordown, Bournemouth. Cost, 30p/metre. They advertise in PBO/YM.

Next!

The Windows. I had been given the name of a sign making company in Ringwood who apparently were not averse to cutting plastics and acrylics to order, and it was even suggested that for the correct number of ‘pieces of eight’ they would ‘sort out your boat windows’. As they were located little more than spitting distance from ‘chez nous’ it was logical to give them a try, so armed with one of the galley hopper type windows as a sample I sought their advice and, more importantly, their estimate of price. The premises were busy (**a good sign - sorry, another pun**) and the inmates very friendly and the ‘boss’ who we shall call Kev, as that is his name, seemed amenable to the task being requested. He advised that an acrylic would be the hardest wearing and that UV resistant materials were now available which would suit the job well. The thickness would remain the same. However he would ‘probably have to order it in specially and it might take 24 hours’. As the price quoted was less than I had expected I agreed that I would deliver the windows to him minus the frames and he would use these as patterns for the new ones.

I took a week's leave in early November so that I could complete the window replacement in one hit.

All nine windows in one go. Saying it fast made it sound easy. We had been lifted out at Ridge Wharf as usual and the forecast for the week was unbelievably good. The plan was to make a cruciform from the pallet wood, one for each window, and hold it in place with a strut made from pallet wood braced against something structural for rigidity. The horizontal piece would be 70-80mm wider than the window; the vertical piece would be 40-50mm longer than the window's height. This extra length would help with making sure that there was a good overlap of the wood when braced against the frames. I carried out a trial fit on one window and found it best to have the horizontal against the window first and the vertical across the horizontal to hold it in place, each being placed centrally on the window. The ability of the horizontal wood to flex when I applied enough pressure to the vertical wood to hold it against the frame ensured that the inner frame and subsequently the headlining would be held securely, but the wood was thin enough (about 20mm) not to come into contact with the window material. So all that was required to complete the bracing was to measure and cut a piece of wood to wedge between the cruciform and a suitable part of the boats anatomy, to hold it all in place. In the galley area I used the molding forming the saloon seating/galley lockers for this. In the fore cabin I found that the best place to jam the brace to hold the crosspiece on the forward windows was the junction of the main bulkhead and bed base, as it gave approximately the 90 degrees required between the cruciform and brace. For the starboard side window I used the edge of the bunk base. Moving to the heads I used the inner molding at the point between the vertical and horizontal faces under the water heater/beside the hand basin for the forward facing window, and the adjacent wall that separates the fore cabin/heads for the window in the port side. Finally for the windows over the quarter berth/navigation area I again used the molding forming the saloon seating/lockers. After all the wood was in place the interior of the boat resembled a bad day at an MFI owners meet, when the assembly instructions had been lost. I went round and double-checked that nothing had moved all was still secure, and then I had lunch. Well, I had been working hard, after all!

And so, Dear Reader, we start to remove the windows. Aren't cordless tools just marvelous? What did we do pre-cordless. With all the screws removed from the window furthest from the prevailing weather (well we might get some) I gingerly eased the frame out of the coach roof and checked that nothing had moved down below. All wood in place, all headlining likewise. Excellent. The confidence was growing. As soon as the window was placed into the cockpit for safety I cleaned the surrounding area of the coach roof ready for the re-fitting ceremony and then using gaffer/duct tape I stuck polythene sheet over the gaping hole where once was window. This is easier than I thought, says I. But am I heading for a fall, is it all going too well? Read on....

Inspired by the ease with which Catalac's can be parted from their windows, or is it windows from their Catalac's, I rapidly progressed to the point where a Catalac without windows was arrived at. The days goal. Result. After checking that all polythene was secure and all wood likewise I headed home with all the windows. As the day had progressed far better than I imagined I had time to dismantle the window frames and take the old windows round to Kev for his assessment. On arrival at **Multi-Signs of Ringwood**, as the name over the door proclaims, Kev assisted in the movement of the windows from car to workshop and announced that it would be 'no problem' and they would be ready tomorrow afternoon if he ordered the material now. As today was Monday, I had visions of completing the job on Thursday. Vis. Timetable: Tuesday, collect windows. Wednesday/Thursday, re-fit windows. Fantastic. Kev, sharp eyed as always, noticed that two of the windows were defaced with some kind of stick-on stuff. I explained about such

niceties as 'the heads' and 'privacy' and he, God bless him, suggested that certain female crew members might prefer these windows to be made using material with a 'special non-see-through' finish which he could do at no extra cost as he had an off-cut lying around somewhere. I had to agree that that did seem an excellent idea. The right price too.

Leaving the old windows in Kev's trusty hands I returned home and set about cleaning up the old frames. As I said earlier three of the corner fixing screws were just powder, but to overcome this I worked out I could drill the old screws out and re-tap the holes and fit new screws although I had to use Stainless screws as I had none in aluminium. The cleaning of the frames and the trial re-assembly took until 15:00 on Tuesday. As I cleaned each frame in turn, I taped the pieces up to make sure I kept the right parts together. After I was happy that all the frames were clean and would go back together I called to see how

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

the window cutting was progressing I was amazed to be told that they were ready for collection. I went to collect them immediately and was delighted with the finish. All the edges had been chamfered to remove any sharpness and the heads windows have such opacity that we do not need curtains. And the bill? An unbelievable £110.00 for all the windows. This was far less than the original estimate but Kev insisted that was all I owed him. I thanked him, paid him, loaded the car and sped on my way lest he change his mind!

Re-assembly was a reverse of the dismantling procedure, using the non-setting mastic at all the corners. By leaving the protective film on all the windows it prevented any mastic sticking to the acrylic surface. In fact I did not remove the film until the windows were re-fitted into the coach roof. So by late evening on Tuesday I had rebuilt the frames and windows ready to re-fit them on Wednesday. And still no rain!

I felt I had to start early Wednesday in the vain hope I could complete the job in one day.

After removing the tape and polythene sheet from each window opening in turn and cleaning the surrounding area with white spirit, then drying it, I bedded the window in on a bead of clear silicone. When re-fitting the screws I left them just slightly loose, and tightened them fully when the silicone had gone off, to make a better joint. Once all the windows were in which took about two hours to complete I removed all the 'Home Assembly' joinery from the inside, the film from the acrylic and fitted the internal glazing bead. I then ran a bead of clear silicone round the joint between acrylic and the frame on the outside. I also opened up the drain holes in the corners of each frame on the outside as these were blocked. It was then just a matter of fitting the cover strip over the screw points on the inside of the frames and the job was complete. Except that as it had not rained yet, I could not be sure how leak-proof they were (no confidence some people!). And the windows had not been cleaned. Both these were soon remedied. It rained big time on the Friday. Skip took his crew for a drive down on the Saturday to show her the new windows. We could see in from outside for the first time. And Friday's rain had stayed outside the boat. What a fantastic job! We agreed on that. And we could see out, amazing. We agreed it was the biggest improvement we had made to Sea Spirits since our purchase of her. It was pointed out that the windows had yet to be cleaned. We agreed that was the case.

So, what were the snags?

Three or four of the screws holding the frames in had sheared off when I tried to undo them ***** When the job was complete I took all the screws out of the section of outer frame which secured the inner frame section with a sheared screw in it, removed the corresponding section of inner frame and undid the screw using pipe grips. There was plenty of screw to grip and they undid quite easily, then reassembly was the reverse. As I only removed one section of inner frame at a time the headlining stayed where it should.

I completed the job on my own. Another pair of hands may have been useful, but certainly was not essential.

If anyone else is contemplating this job, I would say go for it! I did not lose any sleep over it.

So which would I rather have, decking in the garden or new windows for the boat? No contest. The cost involved was small; the improvement to the appearance of our boat was tremendous.

If of a nervous disposition then just do one side at a time, or one window.

If your windows, like ours, are letting your boat down, have a go.

Go on, you know you want to.

Nigel and Sheila Jones