

# PBO's lazy guide to laying up

## WASH THE BOAT DOWN –

Rinsing off the salt with fresh water will keep your boat cleaner over the winter and stop dirt accumulating. It'll also keep her drier – salt attracts moisture – saving you time in the spring.

**NOT ESSENTIAL** – at least the rain will help!

## DODGERS AND CANOPIES –

Removing canvas dodgers and sprayhoods will keep them from damage and reduce windage – important in exposed boatyards. Also, sails should be removed if the mast is left up – they can quickly flog loose and will last much longer if they spend the winter somewhere indoors.

**ESSENTIAL** – they'll last twice as long.

**VENTILATION** – You either need a dehumidifier or good ventilation to keep the boat dry inside and stop mildew and mould growing. Locking hatches on the 'vent' setting, if under a cover, is good, and you can make a special 'winter' washboard with large louvred vents to keep her secure yet also well ventilated. Dorade deck vents encourage good air flow. If using a dehumidifier, you can seal the hatches – but make sure it can drain down a sink or skin fitting. There have been a number of incidents where they have caught fire – keep the filters clean and make sure the electrical installation is up to scratch to keep your boat safe.

**ESSENTIAL** to keep the inside dry and spare some elbow grease come the spring.

**GAS** – If you can't take the gas bottle home, disconnect it just to be sure that it can't leak when you're away. If it's in the locker, it doesn't take long to reconnect it if you want a mid-refit brew.

**ESSENTIAL** – just to be sure.

## ENGINE AND FUEL SYSTEM

■ If you have a closed-circuit cooling system, check and top up the antifreeze level. Boats with raw water-cooled engines should have the engine flushed through with a mixture of fresh water and antifreeze. I remove the inlet hose from my inlet seacock and stick it in a bucket of fresh water, before adding antifreeze and letting it run through the engine.

■ With the engine warm, change the oil to protect the engine as it sits through the winter.

■ Stuff a rag into the air intake and exhaust pipe.

■ If you're planning maintenance jobs that will generate dust, cover the engine with plastic or a blanket to stop it getting too dusty.

■ Top up the fuel tank so it's as full as possible. This will leave no room for condensation and, help keep diesel bug at bay. An additive should stop the dreaded bug's growth.

■ Finally, a bucket over the propeller keeps it out of sight, and protects heads and hands from rope cutters and the sharp edges of blades.

**ESSENTIAL** – save yourself from potentially crippling repair bills with this half-hour task.

## BATTERIES AND BILGE PUMPS –

Batteries don't like the cold. So if you can, take them home with you. If not, keep them trickle-charged periodically over the winter – a small, inexpensive solar panel is ideal for this. Make sure lead-acid batteries are topped up to the correct level with de-ionised water.

■ Disconnect automatic bilge pumps. They can cycle endlessly and run your batteries down – or, worse, burn out in no time at all.

**NOT ESSENTIAL** but will make your batteries last longer.

**REMOVE VALUABLES** – Some people like to remove chart plotters and other expensive equipment. This is an especially good idea if yours is mounted outside at the helm. If you leave them onboard ensure the boat is well secured and they're hidden from sight. It is, however, important to remove outboards and other items that are an obvious target for criminals.

**NOT ESSENTIAL** but depends on where your boat is. Your call!

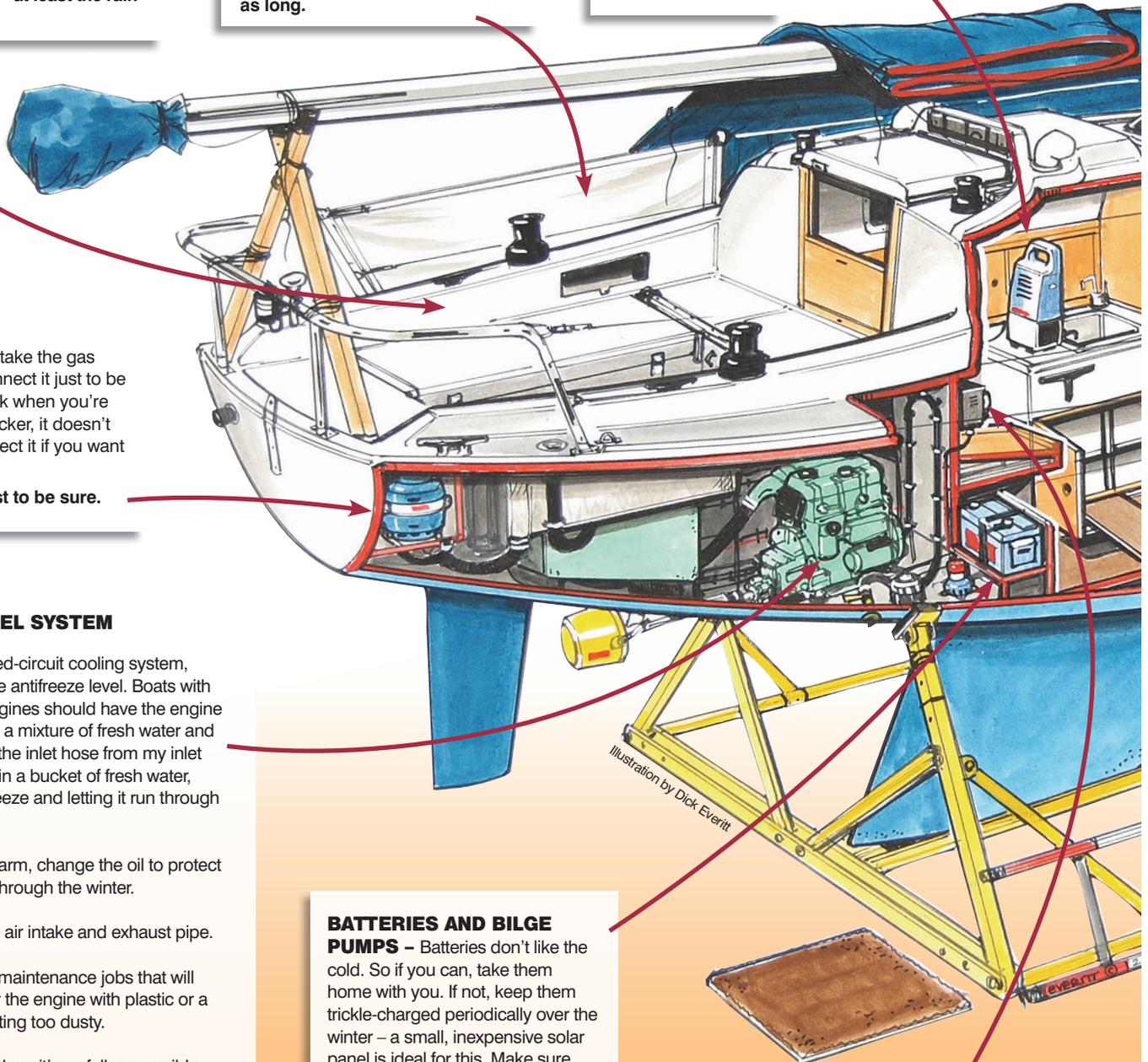


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