

# Boat-owner's diary

The PBO 'family' share their boat-owning treats, trials and tribulations



## The antifouling whisperer



With a job lot of discontinued antifouling, the cheapskate side of Ben Meakins' character emerges

**I really should learn that making rash, optimistic statements only sets me up for a fall. Take last month's Boat-owner's diary, when I confidently stated that Polly's engine troubles were solved.**

The following Sunday, we were motoring home when the engine slowed after 30 minutes of faultless full revs.

To cut a long story short, a new set of copper and nylon washers for

the bleed screws seems to have cured the problem – for now. I've become obsessed, however, butting into nearby conversations with an anxious: 'Did anyone else hear that?' at the slightest change in engine note.

Engine aside, the boat has been sailing beautifully, and the

recent spate of light-winded weekends have provided some unseasonably pleasant sails. As the water cools, the amount of slime which needs wiping from the hull each weekend has reduced to almost nothing. That's just as well: for the past few years we've been working our way through a job lot of cheap,

**The yearly rub-down with wet/dry paper is a piece of cake**

discontinued hard racing Teflon antifouling. This starts the season a brilliant white, with a

super-smooth finish: but as the year goes on, it gets thinner and thinner, with the result that large patches are now back to the grey primer. That makes the yearly rub-down with wet/dry paper a piece of cake, but limits the effectiveness of the antifouling in doing its job.



By the end of the year, there's not much antifouling left on Polly's hull...

As an aside, I was told that white antifouling is less effective than coloured as the biocides available in white aren't as good. Or is it just that you can't see fouling when it's on black paint?

Either way, we really should change to a better paint, but the cheapskate part of me looks at

the remaining three litres sitting in the garage and then at the price of more effective but far more expensive paints in the chandlery. 'Maybe next year', it whispers.

■ PBO's features editor, Ben Meakins, and his wife Steph co-own Polly, an Impala 28, with friends. They keep her on the Hamble on a river mooring

## Up to his elbows in it



Stu Davies resolves to fabricate his own exhaust elbow to replace Sacha's 13-year-old example

**With all this cold and wet weather we have been reluctant to go boating, but we know from experience that paying Sacha a visit over the weekend airs the boat and keeps mould at bay.**

Accordingly, we went to Holyhead last weekend to check the lines, fire up the heater and try to work up the enthusiasm to do some jobs. One that has been nagging at the back of my mind is replacing the exhaust elbow, which is now 13 years old. My good friend Carl Targett has a Bénéteau 381 on the East Coast: his is a bit older than mine, and when we were chatting a few weeks ago he mentioned that he had to change his exhaust elbow because it had

rotted through on the bottom side. It cost the best part of £500 for a new one! I asked him if I could have it to use as a template to try fabricating one from stainless steel. He said yes, and it duly arrived in the post.

I took it with us to make sure it was the same as the one on our engine, and it was. A few Googles later, I found some stainless steel suppliers who sell small lengths of 2in schedule 40 stainless steel pipe, which is thick enough to give good resistance to the corrosive effects of hot salt water and exhaust gases. I also found some 45° elbows which I can weld to stubs of the pipe to get the necessary angles. The flange will be made out of 1/4in stainless

**It costs the best part of £500 for a new one!**



This Bénéteau/Volvo Penta exhaust elbow has seen better days

steel plate which I can machine and drill to suit. This will be a nice little project which I can pursue through the winter.

I have a friend with a machine shop, and if I can get the bits, welding and machining done at a reasonable price it may be possible to make similar exhaust elbows for other Volvo MD22 owners: we shall see.

Apart from the projects, Sacha is sitting snugly in Holyhead. We have had a couple of good north-easterly blows already, and we are happier now that we don't have to drive for four hours to get to her.

■ Stu Davies has written many practical articles for PBO. He and his wife Laura keep their Bénéteau Océanis 381, Sacha, moored in Holyhead