

Boat-owner's diary

PBO writers share their boat-owning treats, trials and tribulations



Fair means with antifouling



Warm water, convivial company and a nearby pub bring cheer to a winter chore, reckons Ben Meakins

This is our fourth winter of co-owning *Polly*, and we've finally found the key to making that most depressing of winter jobs bearable. I refer, of course, to the annual rub-down of the antifouling.

The chosen day this year dawned with cold, wet stuff falling from an overcast sky that couldn't make up its mind whether it was supposed to rain, sleet or snow. All we knew was that it was freezing cold.

A bad choice of day, you might think, to spend with cold, painty water trickling up our sleeves while holding sandpaper over our heads.

However, this year we enticed a sizeable crowd of crew and good friends along, and provided

Marigolds, old oilskins and – best of all – warm water filched from the boatyard's shower block. In good company and with warm hands the time flew by, and the antifouling was soon rubbed smooth. As long as you were working hard, it wasn't too cold.

What really clinched the deal was a nearby warm pub to repair to once the job was done,

The relatively painless sanding session was a relief

complete with hot drinks and cake. The other patrons, rather more smartly-dressed after a day spent looking over the gin palaces on sale in the vicinity, gave us some funny looks. That might have had something to do with the antifouling on our faces and in our hair, but we were too tired to care.



Ben and his sanding cohorts rub along nicely despite the cold

The relatively painless sanding session was a relief, especially as we'd spent a day earlier in the week trying to extract the boat's trailer from the hedge in which it had spent the past nine months. A friendly local landowner lets us keep the trailer on his land for a small fee, and parking it in what was then a patch of bare ground simply involved easing it down a slope between two trees. We returned to find a colony of triflids growing through the trailer, and its tyres embedded firmly in the clay.

Extracting the trailer, working against stubborn plant life and gravity, was a serious undertaking. In the end, it took two hours to drag it out onto the road and involved an old Dyneema spinnaker halyard run through a block we'd lashed to a tree stump, and tied to the car's tow-hitch.

I reckon we were due a pleasant day's work after that!

■ 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

An exhaustive process



Stu Davies instigates the necessary measures to realise his pipe dream of fabricating a new stainless steel exhaust elbow

The days are starting to lengthen, the snow has disappeared and *Sacha* is nagging at the back of my mind.

A few years ago I stripped the exhaust bend on the engine, cleaned it up and replaced the rubber exhaust hose, making a mental note that I would have to replace the exhaust elbow itself in the not-too-distant future. As I wrote in Boat-owner's diary in PBO January, my plan was to make one: and that time has come.

I recently discovered that stainless steel 316-grade 2in schedule 40 pipe had the right outside diameter to suit the exhaust hose, so I have now bought some appropriate bits and pieces. A good friend of mine who has a superb machine shop is making a

flange to suit the manifold. He is also cutting the pipe to suit, and the 45° elbow is the right angle to make it all work. Another TIG-welding acquaintance will weld it all up, so instead of giving Volvo Penta nearly 500 beer tokens we can get it done for a couple of hundred quid. I'll let PBO readers know how we get on!

Going off topic slightly, the motorbike I mentioned in Boat-owner's diary in PBO December 2012 has been sold. The chap who bought it, Nigel from Surrey, came to pick it up, and it turned out he was also a yachting! He has a Morecambe Bay Prawner, based down south. I couldn't believe what a small world we live in – we spent more time talking boats than we did completing the bike transaction.

RIGHT Bits of stainless steel pipe to fabricate a new exhaust elbow
BELOW The old exhaust: not looking terribly good



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