



Ben Meakins gives *Polly* a brisk rub-down, Stu Davies' exhaust elbow plan is a complete fabrication, David Pugh has a guilt-edged excuse for ignoring *Red Dragon* and Tom Stevens expands upon his former lassitude regarding lifejackets



The tipping point



A guilty David Pugh vows to treat *Red Dragon* to the benefits of his accrued boat-painting wisdom: soon

I have a theory, and it runs thus. The primary motive for doing anything about which one lacks enthusiasm is guilt.

To carry out said unwanted task, the guilt level has to reach a critical mass, which varies between individuals – some are immune and do nothing at all, while others have no peace until all is completed.

This guilt level is achieved largely subconsciously and is, remarkably given the context of my postulation, why another month has passed without achieving anything on my boat *Red Dragon*.

In my defence, my guilt level has been misled and satiated by the considerable amount of work we have done on the PBO Project Boat *Hantu Biru* over the past weeks – to

my mind, one sort of boat painting is much the same as the next.

Painting the project boat has taught me some useful lessons. Prior to starting, I had a fear of two-pack paint – past experiences had taught me that it was easy to make an appalling mess, with runs and slumps which could require much sanding to get rid of. We've had our share of these in painting

Even a brush-coated surface benefits from tipping off

Hantu Biru, but I'm beginning to get a feel for it now.

The secret is in the thickness of paint applied, and try as we might to ease the learning curve via the pages of PBO, requires hard-won experience to judge correctly. Too little and you'll be painting forever, but the amount required is very little as the paint has such high



'Painting the project boat has taught me some useful lessons'

opacity. International recommend rolling it on with a gloss roller and tipping it off with a brush, which seems about right. Unfortunately, a roller is unwieldy in a confined space so you must learn to apply the same amount by brush.

The revelation, however, has been tipping off. The idea is that the tipping brush should never have a build-up of paint on it, so it can evenly distribute just the paint that is already applied. Therefore, even a brush-coated surface benefits from tipping off – the brushes are being used for completely different

jobs. Get the right amount of paint, evenly distributed, and you get a smooth paint surface which requires minimal sanding.

Painting *Hantu Biru* has taught me that two-pack is nothing to fear if you're careful, and *Red Dragon* should benefit. Four days' work could have her hull resplendent in a vibrant new coat of red paint – hopefully she'll forgive me for practising so much beforehand.

■ PBO's deputy editor David Pugh and his two siblings jointly own *Red Dragon*, a Contessa 26 that they keep moored in Poole Harbour

Goodbye disregard, hello Dolly



Tom Stevens pledges to look after his lifejacket – and tests the waters by running a bath for 'Dolly Parton'

Every winter, PBO provides a checklist of things to do when we pack our boats away, so that when the next season starts all the gear will have been thoroughly examined and ready to go.

I try to follow most of it, but somehow, one of the most important bits of kit always gets overlooked: my lifejacket.

I am not the most responsible wearer of this important safety aid: I kid myself that my sailing and racing is relatively risk-free as most of it is done within the confines of the River Alde. However, I've started thinking that I might get caught out one day, so I decided to check it over.

I discovered, to my amazement,

The lifejacket hissed dramatically and burst out of its covers

that I had invested in an automatic version all those years ago, not the manual one I thought I had purchased. Then, I was shocked to find that the bits and pieces that do the inflating were four years out of date. I have never actually seen what happens when an automatic lifejacket inflates so, as I was replacing the out-of-date bits

anyway, I threw it into the bath to find out. I half expected the date-expired

cylinder to cough and wheeze pathetically, even if the automatic bit still had the brains to detect that it was underwater and fired.

However, it hissed dramatically and burst out of its covers, doing a fine impression of Dolly Parton having a wardrobe malfunction. I'll be more responsible in future and

RIGHT Tom will be keeping his lifejacket in date from now on

invest in the few pounds it takes to keep my lifejacket in date, and enjoy the wonderful spectacle of it inflating in the bath every few years.

Now, in the 20-odd years we have owned *Oystercatcher* I have only treated her to one new mainsail and two new genoas – and despite holding their shape pretty well they look and feel a bit tired, so I have ordered a new suit. Apparently cross-cut genoas are coming back into fashion as modern sailcloth is more stable – and, swayed by the argument that they are cheaper to build, I have gone for one. No doubt I will either be extolling or



damning this decision in a future diary. For now, I can't wait to hear that wonderful crackling sound a new sail makes.

■ PBO ad executive Tom Stevens and his wife Caroline keep their Trapper 500, *Oystercatcher*, on a swinging mooring on the River Alde by summer and lay up over winter at nearby Aldeburgh