

Practical Boat Owner®

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Waiting for the tide



with the editor

To receive the editor's monthly email newsletter, go to our website: www.pbo.co.uk

Flying the flag

Christmas has come and gone – time to reflect on 2017 and look forward to the coming year. I hope the cover shot of the Hunter Minstrel flying a burgee as well as a fine ensign has you looking forward to next season. The choice of image is of no relevance to any of the stories in the magazine, by the way – we just loved it!

Speaking of which, the image below is also a stunner. To find out why that one is here you will have to turn to page 78 – our dramatically titled story 'Race against time' that pits the ingenuity of skipper, photographer, PBO forum user and all-round adventurer Tim Good against his Perkins engine exhaust elbow. Tim's call for help (from Norway) was answered by the PBO forum regulars, one of whom suggested he send the story to the magazine – which he did. More to come from

Tim in the future we hope.

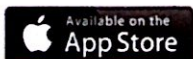
We welcome a new crew member aboard this month as Gear and Practicals editor. David Parker has been contributing regularly to PBO for a number of years and is a vastly experienced journalist who has built and restored several boats along the way. We are delighted to have him with us.

But we also bid a fond farewell to the Boat Owner's Sketchbook series by Dick Everitt. Dick officially retired as deputy editor back when I was working at the magazine the first time round, but has continued to put his imaginative, practical ideas on the page every month ever since. Rest assured, his artwork will continue to feature in the magazine in our regular 'Learning from experience' feature and we are running a selection of past popular Sketchbook favourites for the time being. Take a look on page 98, where Dick signs off in his own words.

Robert Melotti



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A race against time

With the help of the *PBO* forum, skipper Tim Good managed to fix a leak in his Perkins engine exhaust elbow in time to catch an easterly wind home from Norway



Spring in the Norwegian fjords is a pleasing sight for the skiers on board



A view of the repair from within the elbow. The area around the hole was badly corroded – I drilled it out to about the size of a 5p piece

We set off in March from Liverpool towards Norway, via Shetland aboard *Shadowfax*, my 1996 Seastream 43. All went smoothly, dropping the intrepid Bob Shepton in Ålesund first.

He had joined us in Scotland and was in training for an expedition to South Georgia. Given the choice of flying or sailing to Norway he clearly chose the latter! We simply wanted to get some end of season skiing and found plenty of snow. We then clocked up 3,000 miles through Norway, round the Lofoten Islands and back down again to Stavanger where we intended to cross the North Sea to Lowestoft in late August.

Our main automatic bilge pump stopped working a week before arriving in Stavanger so I made an effort to regularly check the bilge before and after each passage. When I lifted the floorboards in Stavanger I found 6in of water sloshing about. A quick taste test confirmed it was salty and it wasn't long before I traced it to the exhaust elbow.

There was a rare four-day weather window approaching for our North Sea crossing, which would enable us to complete the entire journey around to the South Coast of England and onwards towards Plymouth, where the boat was due to spend the winter. In short, it was really important the engine was 100 per cent operational within 72 hours to catch this weather window.

The Perkins 4.236 80hp was the original engine fitted to my Seastream 43. There was a stream of water running off the exhaust elbow and signs of a previous welded repair.

Removing the elbow required some delicate persistence, then I turned directly to my 'go-to' place for advice: the *PBO* forum. Within minutes the replies started coming in.

Engineering expert Vyv Cox quickly pointed out that a welded fix may not work

and a mechanical fix was likely to be better: "I would try for a mechanical solution," he said.

"A tapped hole and a bolt or something similar. Of course a replacement manifold would be best but sometimes circumstances dictate otherwise."


Indeed, the area around the hole was badly corroded and I had to drill it out to about the size of a 5p piece. After checking for additional corrosion elsewhere I used a bolt, nut, large homemade washer and some nitrile rubber to patch the hole tight. I added some heatproof sealant for good measure. A new homemade gasket was made and then it was put back on the engine. I left it overnight for the sealant to



A bolt, nut, homemade washer, aided by bit of oil resistant rubber and heatproof sealant gave a fully functioning elbow

set and then we started her up. No leaks!

We motor-sailed out to an island – a good staging post for the start of the crossing – and tested it out. Everything seemed fine, so we set off the following morning. The elbow held solid all the way to Plymouth where I took it off and changed it for a new one. Most of the photos of the fix were taken after the passage from Stavanger to Plymouth. Still leak-free. So good, in fact, that I've cleaned it up and stowed it as a spare.

This is one of many examples where the *PBO* forum members have provided fast and invaluable advice. I really don't know how I would have refitted the boat over the previous two years without advice gained from the forum. 

The repair job was so effective the elbow was kept as a spare after it had been replaced



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Tim Good has been sailing since he was six, beginning with laser dinghies and progressing to racing slightly larger boats with his father. Having delved into the world of entrepreneurship since graduating from university, his main goal in life has been to sail around the world. Keep up with his adventures at www.chasing-contours.com