

Sharing your boating thoughts and opinions

Single-hander sign

On a recent trip I met several sailors from the Baltic. They told me that a single-handed sailor would fly the Number One Pennant to signify they are alone (or have non-sailors on board) and would welcome help mooring up. It might also be useful when putting out warps and fenders when single-handed. As someone who sails solo a fair bit it struck as a good idea. ebay was my next stop where I bought a new, ex Royal Navy pennant for £15. Unfortunately, I didn't pay due attention to the size, and while it may look right flying from a destroyer it's a bit big for my little boat – so it's out with the scissors and sewing machine.
Gilbert Park

Gilbert Park's ebay purchase certainly won't go unnoticed



Gilbert Park

Ali Wood responds:

The photo was taken in September 2021 when this boat was moored opposite our Project Boat *Maximus* in Chichester Marina. We were all very taken with her. Although covered in grime, the winches were kept under canvas pockets, and there were touches that made me think it had once been loved and looked after. She had a lot of character. My daughter especially loved the bee logo!

Fond memories

'How to choose the right project boat', by Rupert Holmes (*PBO*, June 2023) had a picture at the top credited to Ali Wood that caught my eye, as I was 99% sure it was of *Melissa* – a Westerly Konsort sailed by my grandfather 30-plus years ago. We had some very special weeks sailing on her when I was much younger.

I made enquiries and tracked down the new owner, who sent me some photos and she's looking much smarter! The boat's still in Chichester.
Matt Greenfield

Matt aboard *Melissa* in 1989 with his dad and grandfather



Matt Greenfield

Gone to Pot

I totally endorse the sentiments expressed by Graham Gibbs in *Ask the Experts* (*PBO*, September 2023). Having just completed a round Britain cruise; pot markers are a nightmare. The quality of the marking increases noticeably the further north you go but they still pose a significant hazard and a coastal night passage is a gamble with

disaster. The biggest problem is the apparent (and to me inexplicable) need to use two buoys with what is frequently a long floating line strung between them.

A single large buoy with a properly weighted line will most likely be pushed aside by a passing boat but two buoys linked with a floating line is the perfect way to snare a boat.

Paul Jepson

Lightning protection

I read with interest the Laying-up checklist (*PBO*, November 2023) looking for items that I may have missed from my own list. After suffering a lightning strike off the coast of Brittany in September, which damaged the AIS transponder and wind instrument, disconnecting the mast top VHF aerial during winter layup will now be on my list. Even with the electronics switched off there is still the risk the expensive AIS & VHF could be damaged requiring a call to the insurance company
Andrew Wilkinson

UHF not VHF

PBO would like to clarify that the ICOM IC-U20SR included in *New Gear* (*PBO*, December 2023) is a not handheld marine very high frequency (VHF) radio. Rather, they are low-range *ultra high frequency* (UHF) units intended for private communications over shorter distances.

Swamped Dabber

It was good to see so many Dabbers in *PBO* (November, 2023). Note that the one which capsized off Eyemouth was not sinking but was swamped. It was, after all, towed successfully back to harbour. In fact, John Watkinson designed them so that when swamped they would stay afloat. The picture shows the boat at right angles to the wind and it is not surprising that a wave is breaking over it. Tightening the mizzen sheet would bring the bows into the wind and probably keep the waves out in moderate seas. Bailing out from being swamped is said to

Swamped, not sinking



RNLI/Eyemouth

be difficult but not impossible. The age of the boat is unclear and improvements to buoyancy have been made over the years.
Graham Russell

Soldered joints

I read with professional interest on soldering techniques (*PBO*, October 2023) and agree fully with those methods outlined.

However, I was concerned at the method used of joining two wires together. Now retired from the electrical industry, I was taught from an early age that the method described was prone to failure due to the potential of a 'dry joint' if there was any movement while the joint cooled. The preferred method is to cross the wires over then twist them together

Kim Spencer's preferred soldering method is to first cross the wires over then twist them together



prior to soldering. This makes for a reliable joint as tension can be placed on both wires allowing them to cool without movement and for a smooth low profile joint when heat shrink is applied. As for soldering into a crimp lug, a better way is to use the correct crimping tool with a soldered joint prone to stress fracture with vibration. Thanks for a great magazine with always something of intense interest.
Kim Spencer

Oliver Ballam responds:

You are right in that an unsupported soldered joint has less vibration resistance than when the wires are twisted together before soldering. Soldered joints always have

less physical strength than crimped joints, partly because there is a stress point where the wire goes from being inflexible to solid. However, with experience of working 30-40 year old unsupported soldered joints on engines, I feel that adequate support to the joint is provided by adhesive heat shrink (applied after soldering) or by being clipped in a bundle.

If the joint needs to be unsoldered, this is always more difficult if the wires are twisted together. So, in my opinion, there is no huge advantage to twisting wires, although it can make assembly easier.

As regards battery cable lugs, I would crimp them because it is quicker and safer (no heat involved) but this requires a lot of force and the correct crimping tool which DIYers may not have. They have been known to use a blowtorch, hence my words of caution of melting wires. Basically a soldered joint is lower resistance and more corrosion resistant but a properly crimped connection will be stronger.



SEADOG OF THE MONTH

Amanda Taylor shared this image of her sea dog Lilah, a terrier aboard her Atlantic Clipper 36 at Debbage Marina in Ipswich. She said: "Before we took her on she lived on a boat further along our pontoon. After the death of her owner she was rescued by a lady on another liveaboard. Now Lilah is a boat dog three times over!"



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Channel hopping

Essential monthly highlights from the world of online sailing channels with Kass Schmitt



The St Francis of the Seas

Sheridan Lathe, Australian sailing veterinarian of *Vet Tails' Sailing Chuffed*, recently won the Young Cruisers Association's Global Impact accolade at the 2023 International Cruisers Awards, held during the Annapolis Boat Show. I've mentioned her channel in passing over the years, but the new recognition reminded me of her impressive project.

'Dr Shedly' has been travelling in South and Central America since 2017 when she bought her 1990 Gamelin Madeira 36ft aluminium lifting keel monohull in Panama. In between learning to sail and the endless boat fixing, she has been on a mission to 'improve the standards of animal health and welfare by providing free veterinary care, education and training to local communities, while documenting the journey to inspire a global audience'.

This involves working with local vets to establish free spay and neuter clinics in under-served and hard to reach locations, as well as visits to small charities such as wildlife sanctuaries, to

publicise their work.

After an extensive multi-year refit in Puerto Madero, Mexico (on the Pacific coast, just north of the Guatemalan border), which thanks to her supporters included fitting a replacement engine, Dr Shedly and her able assistant, Jim, are working their way north, and currently exploring the Sea of Cortez on a boat that's almost unrecognisable from the one she bought six years ago.

It's been a pleasure to watch her confidence in diagnosing and fixing boat problems grow, and fun to see how often she draws on medical training to do so – while looking for fuel system blockages, she sheathes her entire arm in a plastic bag before plunging it into a near full diesel tank to have a feel around, comparing the process to the bovine pregnancy checks she learned as a student.

In a recent episode they anchor off San Evaristo fishing village and, after conducting a free vaccination clinic, are taken on a tour of the village by 13-year-old resident Jacob and his friend, who introduce them to the remaining patients who were not at the clinic – helpful for Dr Shedly, and I can imagine this being a formative experience for the young man. I hope this project continues to get the support and recognition it deserves.

■ Watch at youtu.be/LPOjtttsk

