

lips onto the hook, making up the cleat. This is extremely useful when coming into a marina berth: we prepare by sliding the opened hook onto the boathook positioned just forward of amidships. The rope from the hook must run 'outside all' and back aboard through the midship fairlead or round a cleat – but not made fast. Clip onto the first available pontoon cleat, then detach the pole. Let the boat move slowly ahead and surge the rope until the bow is nearly in the desired position. Cleat the rope onboard, but leave the engine in slow ahead: the boat will ease alongside. Adjust the helm to straighten the boat in the berth, then with the boat held firmly in position by rope and engine, step ashore and make fast as normal. This method ensures the boat is firmly alongside and removes the need for a crew member to leap onto the pontoon from a moving deck – most effective when wind and/or tide are carrying you off the pontoon. Knowing that we would be

spending a lot of time in marinas, we bought a Hull Hugger. This superb bit of kit acts as a topside protection sheet but also incorporates vertical fender strips which prevent the traditional fenders from swinging or squeezing up and out. It folds and stows well, and is usefully buoyant if needed.

Pumped and primed

Fitting an electric anchor winch involved running heavy cables into the forepeak, so we figured we could also use this supply for a deck-wash pump. Wonderful! You stand at the bow, press the button and wash the chain as it comes aboard. To avoid an extra hole in the hull to feed it, we plumbed the pump feed into the heads flush pipe with a T-junction.

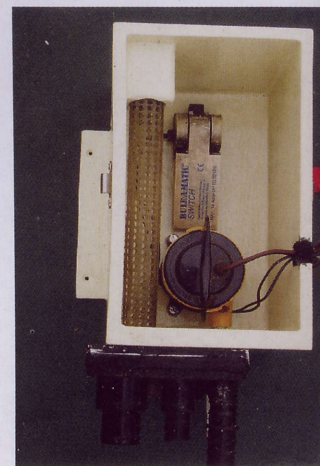
Also with regard to the anchor, we built a watertight liner for the chain locker. This looks like a bricklayer's hod, and is drained by a pipe running through the bilge to the grey water pump sump: this keeps the bilges clear of

dirty water and any ingress through the hawse pipe.

The Mayfair grey water/shower sump and pump unit we originally fitted coped well with the sink, shower and anchor locker, but at acute angles of heel it often ran continuously as the pump and float switch were not aligned exactly fore-and-aft. The cure was to make our own sump box using – now correctly aligned – the original Mayfair pump, float switch, filter and pipe fittings.

Both the grey water and automatic bilge pumps require non-return valves to prevent water running back, causing the pumps to 'cycle'. The original non-return valves we fitted were of the spring-loaded valve type, but these frequently became blocked with debris.

Changing to flexible Whale non-return valves – effectively a cone-shaped rubber one-way nozzle as used in their heads pumps – eliminates the risk of blockage and appears to reduce the back pressure caused by the sprung valve, making the pumps more efficient.



The sump box with original pump, float switch, filter and pipe fittings

A new engine

Installing a larger 40hp engine meant making wider engine beds. In order to strengthen the structure, we incorporated athwartship bulkheads at front and back, thereby boxing in the area under the engine. This contains any nasties shed by the engine, and keeps the main bilge unsullied. A pipe, glassed-in through the base, allows any water from aft to reach the pump well.

The new engine is a Lancing/Ford diesel which has proved reliable, powerful and economical (2lt of fuel an hour at 6 knots). Spares are cheap and easily available, and servicing is also reasonably priced.

Electrics

We should perhaps have fitted a keel-cooled fridge: when cruising cooler waters, this would have made our 12V compressor-powered fridge more efficient. To provide a cooler environment for the compressor, we fitted an additional fan in parallel with the compressor fan to draw cool air through the compartment.

LED lighting would have saved many amp hours, but at the time we renewed the electrics these were still 'over the horizon' in price. Experiments are in hand, but so far LED lights have provided a rather cold light when compared with halogen.

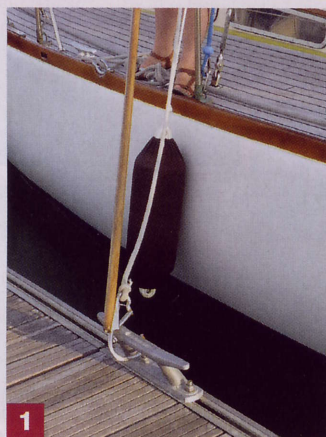
The ring main has proved adequate and effective, but the recent fitment of more and better-placed sockets has certainly made for an improvement.

With hindsight, installing a microwave cooker when we

THE MOORING CLIP: 'BEST BIT OF KIT ON THE BOAT'



Pole, rope and spring-loaded hook: ideal for picking up buoys



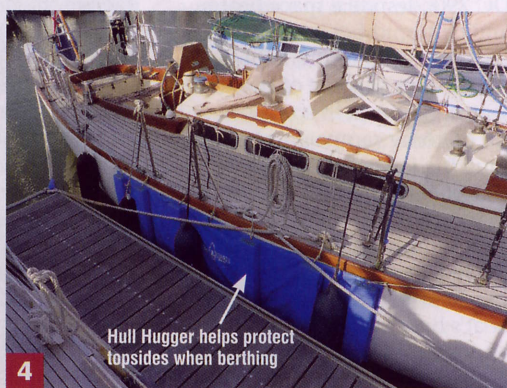
1 When coming into a marina berth, clip onto the first available cleat...



2 ...then detach the clip from the boathook



3 In slow ahead, surge the rope until the bow is in position



4 Adjust the helm to straighten the boat in the berth

Hull Hugger helps protect topsides when berthing