

LETTERS

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PHOTO: JOHN EPTON

LETTER OF THE MONTH

Our lucky escape from seacock failure



This seacock component, from John Epton's 11-year-old Bavaria 42, displays pink dezincification all round the connector

Congratulations to *Yachting Monthly* and Paul Stevens on your brilliant and timely article on the dangers of brass seacocks (June issue). You have probably saved our bacon! Having read the article, we were concerned about our 11-year-old Bavaria 42 so we had her hauled out specially.

As to be expected, and probably because of European Union regulations, all the seacocks turned out to be brass. [Editor's note: the EU RCD standard is for seacocks to have a service life of just five years]. All were very badly dezincified indeed, as shown in the photo.

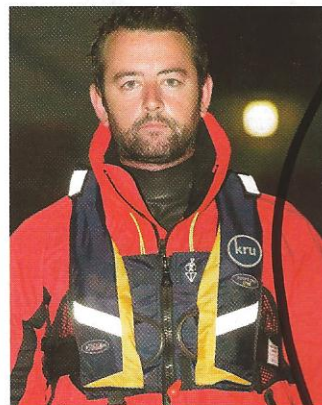
We have probably had a lucky escape from a complete seacock failure. All seacocks on my yacht have now been replaced with Forespar Marelon plastic fittings, supplied at sensible prices and with excellent service by Mack Engineering. John Epto



Choose the right lifejacket

Mr Wilson's observation about lifejackets (Letters, May issue) is an interesting one, but I'd like to point out that the RNLI promotes the wearing of lifejackets – we don't claim that a standard 150N lifejacket will turn an unconscious wearer face-up. Claims as to what a lifejacket can and can't do are based on what standards it meets, as determined by the International Standards Organisation (ISO).

In the real world, people tend to fall into water that is not completely calm. From our



A 175N lifejacket, like this Kru Sports Pro, will turn an unconscious wearer face-up. A standard 150N lifejacket won't

PHOTO: SHAM SNOOK



PHOTO: KIERAN FLATT

Every hole below the waterline – sea toilets, stern glands, seacocks and so on – is an 'unnecessary sinking opportunity'

observations, and as Mr Wilson suggests, this normally provides enough instability to help a lifejacket turn a person onto their back. Even in calm conditions, someone making an unplanned entry into the water is likely to create enough instability to help the lifejacket turn them face-up.

However, it is also important to choose the right lifejacket for your individual needs – perhaps opting for one with greater buoyancy. Our volunteer sea safety officers are happy to provide advice on which lifejacket is best for you.

Peter Howell, RNLI sea safety manager

Electric winch handle

We are currently cruising the Clyde and Inner Hebrides from Port Dinorwic in our yacht *Sunbeat II*. Having read your article on the electric winch handle, we bought one from Winchrite.

We charged it up before we left Wales on 4 May. We're at Sanda Island now and still haven't recharged it. We're very impressed so far. It saved us a lot of money – we could buy five of these for the price of one electric winch.

Ian Park and Linda Melton

Designed to sink?

In his article about seacocks (June issue), Paul Stevens asks: 'what on earth are we doing using an inferior material for such vital fittings below the waterline?' Good question, but we should also ask: 'why on earth are we still cutting holes in boats below the waterline?'

Every hole below the waterline is a potential catastrophic failure. I guess safety doesn't sell boats, or we'd have integrated man overboard recovery systems designed into new yachts. Instead, we buy and bolt on piecemeal after-market safety solutions, and accept as inevitable designed-in dangers, such as through-hull fittings, while innovative yacht designers (who could fix all this) focus their attention on performance and accommodation.

We must now have the technology to design out all integral hull flooding dangers, whether from hull ports, prop shafts, sea toilets, rudders, sensors, or engine cooling systems – so why isn't it happening? It's bad enough being sold boats that can sink, but building them with unnecessary sinking opportunities pre-installed is unacceptable.

Max Rankin

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