

HAULING OFF WITH A KEDGE ANCHOR



Sailing Masterclass

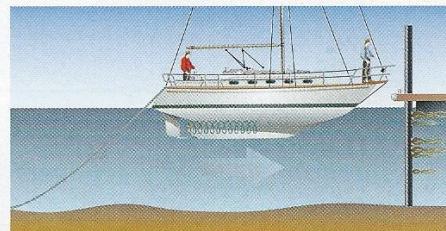


Continuing to illustrate the (occasional) benefits of close quarter anchoring, **James Murrison** shows how a pre-laid 'kedge' can be used to haul our tightly pinned-on boat off a cross-stream berth

As the last few Masterclasses have (hopefully) illustrated, provided we've the confidence to be seen dropping one in the confines of a marina, an anchor really can help us overcome most of the risks associated with going alongside a down-tide berth – especially if we're short handed and the stream is ebbing strongly at its maximum rate.

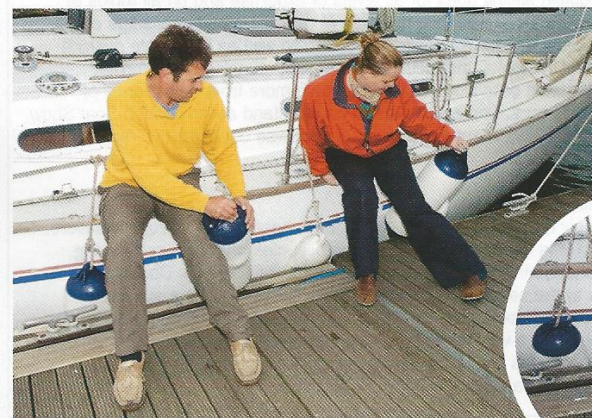
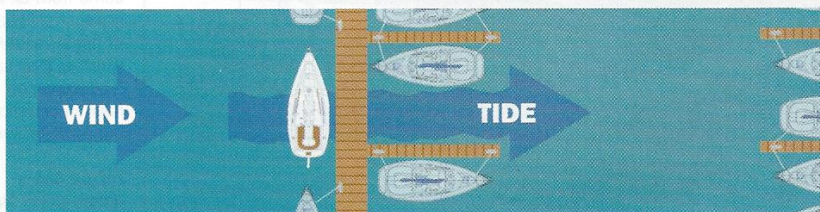
And if, as shown last month, we've already dropped a kedge anchor to ease our boat safely

down-tide on to a cross-stream pontoon (above and right), we'll be nicely set up to use this more easily managed anchor for its traditional purpose – that of 'kedging-off' – if there's a contrary stream running when it's time to leave. Not only will the pre-laid kedge anchor offer a very seamanlike means of escape in such a situation, it can also be used to take all of the pressure off our fenders and topsides while we remain lying alongside.



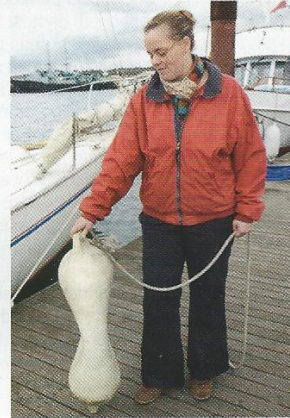
1. Beware of being pinned on to a cross-stream berth

DROPPING A KEDGE anchor as shown last month will enable us to make a perfectly controlled landing if we have to berth alongside a cross-stream pontoon with a strong tide behind us. But even if there's little or no tide running when we arrive, it might still be worth considering laying one as a countermeasure – either against being pinned tightly against the dock during our stay or, perhaps, to be used as a means of getting off again when we plan to leave several tides later.



Risks burst or popped-out fenders

Occasionally, when lying alongside the upstream side of a pontoon that runs out from the shore at right angles, we run the risk of our boat being pinned onto the pontoon with such force that fenders can be squashed or, in extreme conditions, popped-out completely and topside damage sustained. This is most likely to occur when the ever-present outgoing flow of a river combines with a strong on-berth wind and a spring tide that's ebbing at its maximum rate.

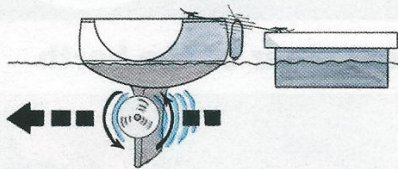


ALL PHOTOS RICK BUETTNER & JOHN GOODE. ADDITIONAL TEXT JOHN GOODE.

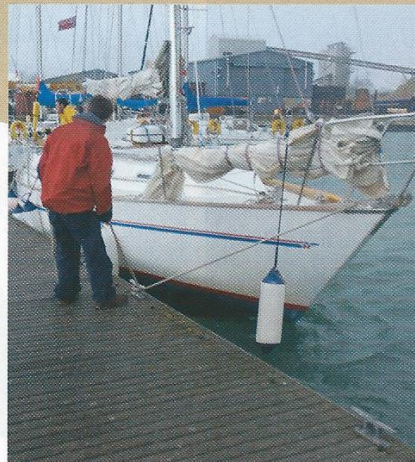
3. Kedge off a cross-stream berth under total control

WHETHER WE DROP our kedge anchor to ease down-tide onto a cross-stream pontoon when we arrive, or pre-lay it in anticipation of using it to escape against a contrary stream later, we'll be nicely set up to 'kedge off' in the traditional manner – without having to put any time and effort into rowing the anchor out in a dinghy to lay it. And if we think about what side-to we should berth *before* we commit to dropping the kedge – we'll also benefit from being able to use the winding effect of our engine's astern prop-kick (below and opposite page) to make hauling ourselves off the dock even easier.

Port prop-kick astern – berth starboard side-to

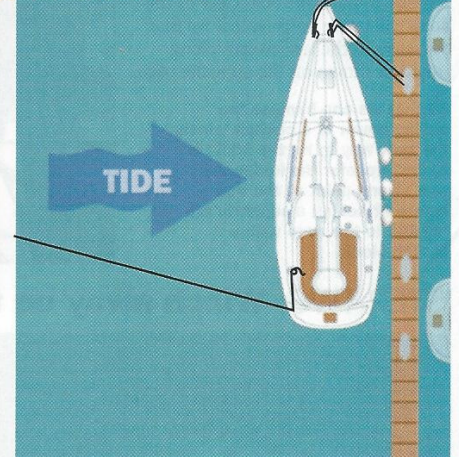


STEP ONE: Rig the bow line and spring as slips



After removing all shorelines (our boat won't be going anywhere without them!) re-rig the for'd spring and the bow line as slips – and place a fixed and/or roving fender below the pulpit – as shown right. Note that for better leverage later on in the manoeuvre (see top of opposite page) the slipped bow line is best led around the stem head to an outboard foredeck cleat.

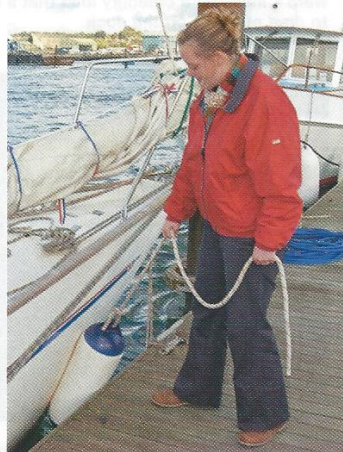
Lead the bow line around the stem to an outboard cleat



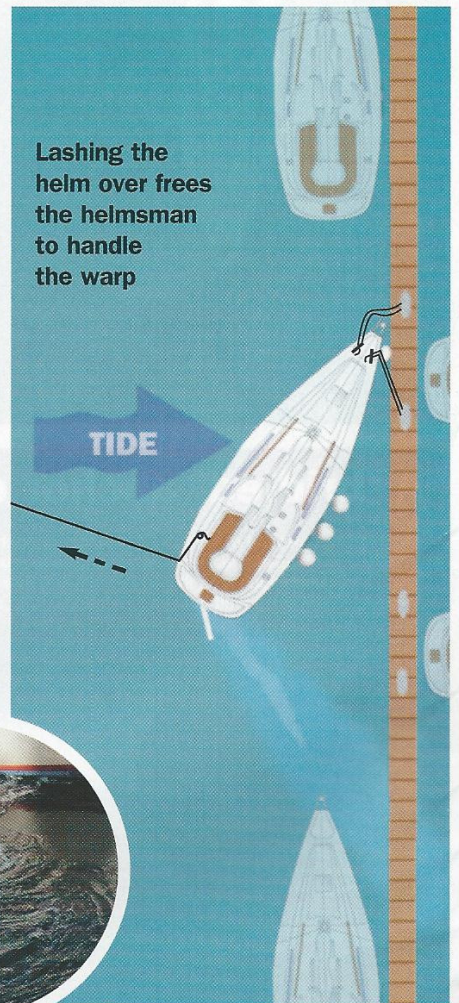
STEP TWO: Harness forward prop-wash off the rudder to PUSH the stern out

With the helm hard over (if there's only two crew aboard it can be lashed in the hard-over position so that the helmsman is freed up to handle the kedge warp) and someone on the pontoon to keep the bow fender in position, motor slowly forward until the load is taken up on the spring. Then, with forward engine power increased to maximum – and the bow fender *constantly* held in place and the slack continually taken up on the kedge warp – we can harness the full thrusting effect of prop-wash off the rudder to begin *pushing* our stern through an arc away from the dock.

At this stage, with the broadside-on tidal stream at its most difficult to overcome, a boat with a propeller and rudder configuration that allows most prop-wash to escape (e.g. a sail-drive or long keeled boat with a cut-away rudder) will almost certainly have to use winch power as well.



Lashing the helm over frees the helmsman to handle the warp



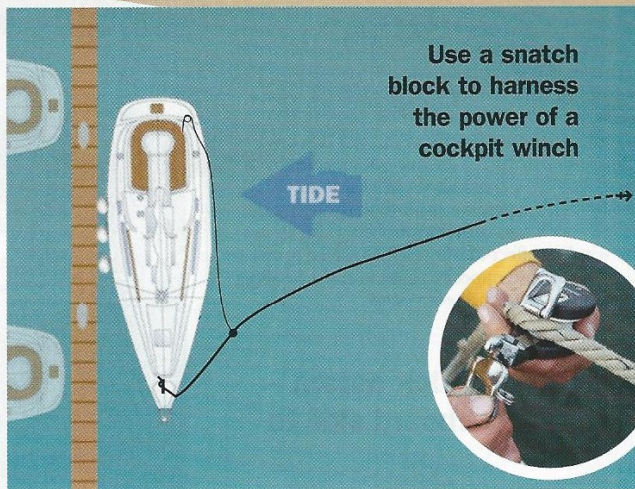
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2. Take all of the strain on a pre-laid kedge anchor

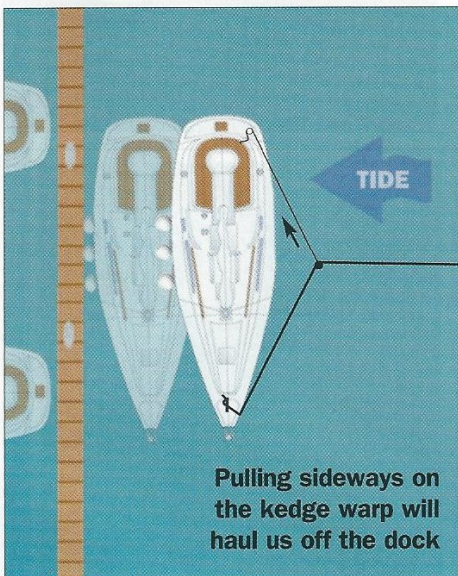
STEP ONE: Set up a simple bridle

WHILE THE ROPE cable of an unattended kedge anchor should always be weighted down to the bottom when not in use (to keep its bight clear of other boats on the move), having a pre-laid warp on standby to haul our boat clear of the dock will prove invaluable if we find ourselves in the fender-crunching situation shown on the opposite page.

So that we can harness the pulling power of a cockpit winch, the best way to rig the bridle is to first transfer the kedge warp to a strong point at the bow – before attaching a separate aft-led line to the warp with a snatch block.



STEP TWO: Winch away on the kedge warp until we're just clear of the berth



With shorelines loosened and any slack taken up on the bow-secured kedge warp (hand-tight will suffice), winching in the aft led line will apply a very efficient pulling force to the side of our anchor cable. As the line to the winch continues to be wound in, the free-running block will allow an ever-increasing bight to be pulled into the warp – inducing a catenary load that's sufficient to drag our boat off the dock.



A 'bridled' anchor can hold us off an exposed quay wall

Although the method of laying and bridling an anchor is somewhat different when there's a fore-and-aft tidal stream running (see next month's Masterclass) the same basic technique – as illustrated above – can be adapted to keep us safely off an exposed quay wall in lively conditions.

