

Slipways made simple

Gordon Walling extends the tow bar on his trailer

Virtually all my sailing is done single-handed, and having now got my 'bus pass' the days of dangling a boat down a slipway on the end of a piece of rope, or pushing her across pebbles thigh deep in water have been replaced with the irreplaceable piece of gear shown here.

The photos show how my drawbar extension is used. The tube is 50mm diameter and the ends are welded up from 75mm x 6mm plate.

The raised side cheeks prevent any lateral movement at the trailer tow hitch, while the strap under the cheeks accommodates the change in slope from ground level to the water and allows a maximum vertical pivoting of 15° to 50° – more than enough for the average slipway. Another plus is that it also prevents the bow rising more than 20° if the balance of the trailer is 'light' at the boat trailer hitch.

My boat is a Post Boat, made by Character Boats with a gross weight, including the trailer, of 700kg. I have launched her many times with this drawbar, from pebbly beaches and tidal slipways of various inclines.

It is simple to attach and use – in fact it makes reversing the trailer easier because you have, in effect, a 20ft trailer. This improves the vehicle wheelbase length to trailer length ratio and the jockey wheel gives the effect of a four-wheel trailer. On the road the drawbar simply stows securely on the trailer.



A standard ball-hitch is bolted to the bar and the sturdy side cheeks and strap are welded into position. These allow controlled vertical movement



For normal manoeuvring the trailer is used in the usual way



The draw bar extension allows the car to stay on firmer dry land



The raised side cheeks keep it straight as the trailer pivots down the slipway



On the road the whole thing can be simply stowed on the trailer

Cooling the exhaust

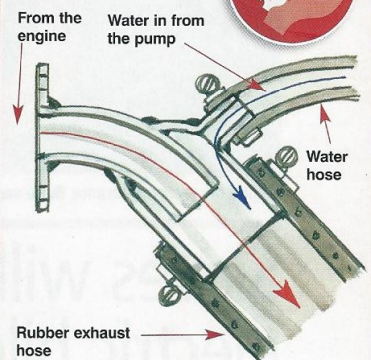
Eric Gledhill converts from dry to wet

Our 11hp air-cooled Ducati diesel suffered from excessive exhaust noise which we solved by converting to a wet exhaust system.

A water-cooled bend was made from stainless steel and I used a small Jabsco pump to supply the seawater for cooling.

When installing the pump it is essential to get the rpm right so that the exhaust gets the right amount of water. We also checked with the engine manufacturer to get the exhaust dimensions correct.

While we were at it we made up a spare water-cooled bend because



the diesel exhaust/water mix is likely to cause pin hole corrosion after a few years.

The pump was a small Jabsco, with a plain bearing, that ran at about 800rpm. To achieve this speed I attached a 2in 'V' pulley to the engine flywheel and used a 5in pulley on the pump (the size of the pulleys used would depend on the ratio between engine revs and the recommended pump speed).

I had no trouble with water syphoning, as the impeller in the Jabsco acts as a valve when the pump is stopped. However, a syphon break could be installed in the water hose between the pump and the exhaust, just to be on the safe side. 