

# Practical projects

Great ideas and tips from PBO readers

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## Fiddle for a foot well

Don Smith adapts the unused space beneath the chart table

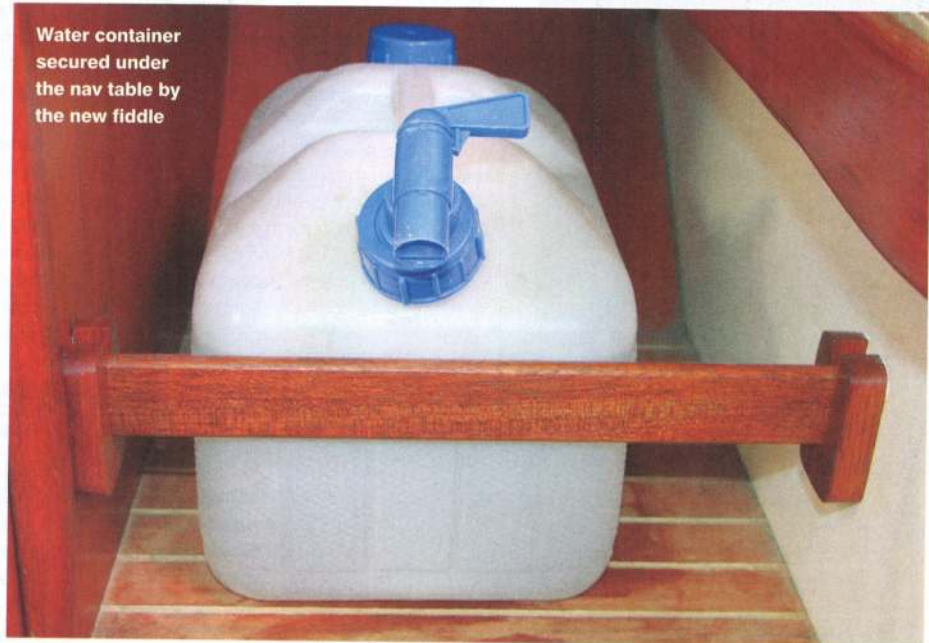
While we carry plenty of fresh water in our tanks for most domestic use, tea making is not one of them. For that we carry a freshwater canister. But where to stow it?

The surprising answer: beneath the chart table. The navigator's foot well is handy for the galley, and as I do most of my passage navigation standing up I could live without the ability to sit at the chart table comfortably, as long as I could move the container if required.

The only issue was to make the canister secure at sea. A robust fiddle would suit the purpose nicely.

I had some teak salvaged

Water container secured under the nav table by the new fiddle



from a garden chair that was the right size. It was weathered but nicely rounded and only needed cutting to length and sanding to remove the weathering.

To make the mounts I settled on a general size of 50mm x 75mm for the blanks. I marked out the long axis centre line and identified the lower limit of the slot by offering up the bar.

With a  $\frac{1}{2}$ in spade drill bit (mixed units I know: approx 12.5mm), I bored a neat hole centred on the midline,  $\frac{1}{4}$ in back from the limit, until it was nearly through and then bored



ABOVE Support bracket marked up for drilling

ABOVE CENTRE Drilled and marked

ABOVE RIGHT Slot cut, ready for rounding off and fairing

RIGHT All the components, coated with Danish oil and ready to fit







**MDF fitting guide for position and perpendicularity**



**ABOVE and BELOW** The pair of brackets glued to the bulkheads with Sikaflex



from the other side to prevent chipping.

Then I marked two parallel lines that would kiss the new hole nearly at a tangent and cut both on a bandsaw, leaving no lip.

I marked out a suitable radius on each corner and rounded them off with my belt sander that I inverted on the bench. After some fairing I dusted and degreased before applying three coats of Danish oil.

I made some guides from MDF to aid symmetrical placement; secured the mounts with Sikaflex and left them to set. The bar had its final measurement, was cut to size and finished at home.

## Velcro-secured blackout blinds

Dave Matthews recycles some roller blinds

My 1990 Hunter Horizon 27TK had no curtains when I bought her so, for the smaller windows, I recycled some old blackout roller blinds and fixed them to the cabin interior with Velcro. These proved to be a great success as they are not only waterproof but don't fray.



**Components and pattern blind**



**Batten, pocket and Velcro**



**LEFT** The finished blind in situ  
**BELOW** Velcro loop was used to secure the blind when closed



They are unobtrusive, black out the cabin sufficiently for a good night's sleep and are easily opened when required.



**I sewed on the securing straps before sewing the batten pocket**



**The back of the finished blind with loops of Velcro to hold it when rolled up**

The blind shown here I made for a 300mm Lewmar window in the heads. I cut the fabric to 400mm x 350mm which allows 30mm for the batten pockets top and bottom, meaning the finished size was 400mm wide x 290mm deep.

But before sewing the batten pockets, I sewed on five rectangles of Velcro (three at the top and two at the bottom), which affix the blind to the cabin interior, plus two 40mm x 130mm straps for retaining the furled blind.

IKEA sells blinds in grey, blue or white, from as little as £15 for 1m x 1.95m, or a quick internet search came up with black ones 0.6m x 1.6m for as little as £8.

## Bespoke bunting

Malcolm Silburn scares the birds with bunting

On our Jaguar 25, *Capella*, we've been using bunting to persuade birds to go elsewhere with some success. The problem is that off-the-shelf bunting twists in the wind and eventually breaks (even with swivels on the ends).

We've come up with a design that solves the problem: each individual pennant can rotate freely around the cord. Our bunting has done three seasons in the middle of the River Orwell and still looks OK except for the lettering.

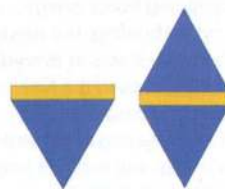
We used a piece of flexible tubing and a couple of nylon penny washers for each



**Swivelling bird scarer bunting has lasted three seasons for Malcolm Silburn so far**

pennant – don't bother with the coloured washers they fade back to white in a season. The pennants are held in place on the cord with an overhand knot outside either washer.

For car number plate-sized 80mm letters make the single-thickness triangle 180mm high and 180mm wide



**Single (left) and double thickness bunting**

at the top, plus measure the circumference of the tubing and add that as well (the yellow strip in the diagram). We used the double thickness pattern. Which pattern you choose will depend on your choice of fabric.

### Lettering

We stitched on self-adhesive vinyl white letters (available from hardware stores) on our original version, but it only lasted a couple of seasons intact due to the UV and continuous flexing.

This winter we'll retain the patterns but experiment with iron-on lettering instead.