

SOME SIMPLE SAFETY RULES

When both side lights you see ahead,
Port your helm, show your red.
Green to green, or red to red,
Perfect safety - Go ahead!
If to your starboard, red appear,
It is your duty to keep clear:
To act as judgement says, it's proper,
To port or starboard - back, or stop her.

But when upon your port is seen
A steamer's starboard light is green,
There's not so much for you to do,
For green to port keeps clear of you.
Both in safety and in doubt
Always keep a sharp lookout;
In danger, with no room to turn,
Ease her! Stop her! Go astern.

Anonymous

Thanks to Past Commodore Keith Flint for bringing
this poem to our attention.

BOAT MAINTENANCE - AN OWNER'S TALE

OBERON's 2 flexible water tanks have been in use for over 12 years and for a variety of reasons, I decided that it was time for a new set.

The technology employed for the tanks is identical to that used in the manufacture of water beds, so some 2 years ago I approached a water bed manufacturer with a request that he supply new tanks for me. As it happened, by sheer coincidence, this manufacturer had the patterns of the existing tanks having made them for OBERON's previous owner, and since the originals had given such good service, I was confident that I had the right man. Mistake number 1.

I installed one of the tanks only to find out that it had a hole in it, so out it came again. On examination I found that the other tank also had a hole in it. Owing to other commitments on my time, both tanks were put in a cupboard until I had time to return them to the manufacturer. Unfortunately that's as far as it went until the other day when necessity demanded new tanks. Out they came, I repaired the holes and took them down to the boat expecting a simple installation job.

Now the real comedy of errors started! I put OBERON onto the pontoon and decided that this would be an ideal time to charge the batteries. I connected the charger and replaced the floor boards so that I could work over the top of them.

Whilst working bottom up and head in the bilges trying to put a thread in a hole required to secure the new plumbing, I skilfully broke the engineer's tap. After a lengthy time struggling to remove the broken part and failing, I was forced to admit defeat and rethink that part of the installation.

The rethink required different tools and equipment to those which I had on board. The broken tap had put me

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into a bad mood and on my way ashore, I stamped rather hard on a bracket supporting the anchor and it broke off propelling me onto the pontoon with the result that my ankle was sprained rather badly. Returning to the job in hand and still with my head in the bilges, I became aware of a rather acrid smell, and then smoke.

Unknown to me, my weight on the floor boards had been sufficient to earth the positive charger clip, thus putting a dead short on the battery. I quickly pulled up the floor boards (and in so doing tore the cabin carpet into 2 parts) and put out the fire in the battery compartment. I then realised that this was not the only fire. The battery charger behind me had a flame 30cm high issuing from its bowels. I switched it off and the flame miraculously disappeared leaving the boat totally untenable due to the thick smoke. Fortunately only superficial damage was done to the boat but the flexible water tanks had been placed on top of the supply lead to the battery charger, and since the earth lead of this cable had carried all the fault current it had become red hot and had melted a neat row of holes in the several layers of my new water tanks.

About this time I threw the whole lot in a heap on the cabin sole, locked the hatch and hobbled off home.

JOHN SMITH



AN EVENTFUL NIGHT IN COFFIN BAY

An extract from the log of BE MI on the summer cruise to Coffin Bay.

"PM Jan 3

Forecast-Adelaide Radio: West Coast; SE wind 15-20 knots, outlook fresh. Gulf Waters and South Central Coast; SE wind 17-22 knots, outlook SE etc."

A series of problems developed as the sun went down. We noticed a trailer sailer trying to tack into the township against the current in a near flat calm. I went over and towed them with the dinghy till they lay alongside us. Unfortunately at that time, I couldn't tow them in as we were waiting for ENKI 2 (Phil & Sylvia Dansie). However the Dansie's were having trouble finding us as it was now well after sunset. Finally we got together to transfer children. Phil told a funny story about how he was being abused by a cray fisherman near Reef Point for stealing crayfish which of course Phil wasn't. Phil leant forward as the boat rolled assuming the fence was in place. It wasn't and he fell face first into the dinghy tied alongside.

Anyway back to the trailer sailer, we up-anchored and started toward the town with them securely tied alongside. A pleasant night for a chat until we ran aground. The trailer sailer, drawing much less, continued moving at 5 knots tearing out a stern cleat and ending up wedged under BE MI's bow, as some of the ropes and cleats held. We cast the trailer sailer adrift and surprisingly got off the sandbank easily. Beth kept BE MI in the channel whilst I got in the dinghy and relocated the trailer sailer. Having got the bow rope of the trailer sailer secure I promptly wrapped the bow painter of the dinghy round the propeller of the outboard motor on the dinghy. I should mention at this point that the trailer sailer was incapacitated because its second outboard of the cruise had lost its propeller in Yangie Bay.