

## **From Davy Jones' locker: Steve Fuger**

Despite their condition last night when they tumbled on board to find the companionway bolted and their bedding out on deck, Ron and Eddie were buoyantly raring to set sail. Along either side, the shiny-boat-brigade skippers, dressed in their nautical finest, were fashioning decorative knots in white cotton cord or polishing mirror-finished brass, whilst feigning obliviousness to Eddie's enthusiastic greetings, bounding along the side deck to the bow, as Ron overzealously fired up the engine, blasting a black cloud into the perfect morning.

"All clear, let's go!", shouted Eddie, hanging one-handed from the forestay and waving farewells to all and anyone with the other. "Slipped the mooring rope Ron?" he shouted.

"Yes", yelled Ron.

"Let's go then!"

Ron inched the boat from its berth. It seemed sluggish.

"Give it some welly!" shouted Eddie. So Ron did.

Now, had Eddie leaned further over the bow he would have found their bowline attached by a heavy line to a chain, that lay below years of undisturbed pumped-out toilet excrement, to which all the bows of all the stern-to boats were tied. But Eddie didn't. And as their boat motored over the chain, the bowline tightened.

"More!" shouted Eddie.

Clear now of the other boats but nigh-on stationary a puzzled Ron throttled right up rousing the slumbering chain below freeing it from its unsavoury depths the leeway allowing the boat to suddenly gain traction but the faster it motored the faster the chain with its cargo of grime rose through the water speeding upwards up exploding through the surface whipping into the air shuddering at its zenith jettisoning black stinking silt in high graceful arcs showering everything within range.

The engine still roaring the bow still tethered to the now descending chain conspired to skew the boat and set it on return to its narrow berth though now broadside to it as anguished be-splattered skippers frantically dispatched a barrage of fenders in defence of their lamentably defiled prides-of-joy.

The two women, they of the barred companionway, sighed and rose from their assigned place in the deck-well; one went fore where a screaming Eddie was wrapped around the forestay; she freed the heavy line, then signalled the all-clear to her mate who had wrested the tiller and throttle from the white knuckled Ron, soothed the fraught engine, comforted the boat, and now gently motored away from the mayhem towards the marina exit.