

## THE UPSHOT

The boat is now looking good and the budget remains at £400 for the boat, £174 for the trailer parts and £40 for the equipment required to renovate the hull. Just two elements of the project look like costing any real money. The first is the electronics and the second is the engine.

The VHF is of course vital, but it needn't be expensive. You can pick up a new handheld quite easily for under £100.

As for the chartplotter, well if money's really tight, you can certainly spurn it in favour of paper charts. After all, these gizmos, indispensable though they now seem, have only been available to us for a couple of decades.

Plus of course, using paper charts would allow you to scoff disdainfully at all the blunt-headed techno-addicts, like a leather-faced navigator of yore.

“The old Chrysler engine would mean a future of big fuel bills”

And yet somehow, it seems backward not to invest, particularly if, in the long run, you plan to venture into waters outside your usual stomping grounds.

Add in the increasing practicality of equipment interfacing and the usefulness of accurate speed data, plus the fact that you can always remove your electronics if the time ever comes to sell the boat, and a few hundred quid doesn't seem so bad after all.



For effective display allied to compact dimensions the Raymarine A65 is the perfect small boat choice

This boat is screaming out for a modern two-stroke but if it gets a new one it will have to be of the kind that keeps the tree-huggers content

As for the engine, the Chrysler would certainly work fine with a bit of an overhaul. But while that would put us on the water for the price of a weekend's beer, it's not something we want to pursue, because to keep the old motor would be to commit to a future of serious fuel consumption. This thing was built when fuel prices were low and the planet quite fancied the idea of being warm. Fuel economy didn't much matter. These days, if you want to use your boat on a regular basis, this kind of unit makes very little sense. It's by no means cheap to buy a good engine, either new or used, but if you really want to enjoy the end result, the upgrade is a wise investment.

The engine will therefore be going on E-Bay. And if it only fetches £100, it's still some extra cash to put towards a more modern and well looked after two-stroke outboard.

If we can find a good used example, the target is a Yamaha 75C. It's a 75hp, three-cylinder, 1140cc motor, and being a two-stroke, it weighs in at just 120kg, which is ideal. It's also bombproof and easily up-rated to 90hp in the future, should circumstances require it.

If that proves impossible and we are forced into a new engine purchase in order to get it ready for the new season, the light, medium-range, injected two-strokes like the E-Tecs or the Tohatsus would be a preferable choice to the flabbier four-strokes. With an LDPI 80hp Selva she would really fly, but being a highly-strung Italian motor, she would need lots of love and attention, with regular tuning to keep her sweet. Either way, you can read how our quest for an engine turns out next month.

## THE FUTURE

Every single job done on this boat, and every job yet to do, can be undertaken quite easily by a bloke with a good-sized garage and a set of basic tools. We haven't done it that way because we're using industry specialists to illustrate the best methods – plus of course I'm about as much use with a spanner as my mum is with a mobile phone and my childish and excitable nature is leading me to push the budgets with better electronics and top notch propulsion. But I won't apologise for



that, because as it stands, my pretty little walnut-trimmed boat sits proudly on its overhauled trailer, and I know I could sell it tomorrow for three times what I paid. I won't of course, because as it starts to look good, I start to feel the excitement building, and that's what a boat project is all about – feeling the thrill as the boat you rescued from oblivion begins to take on new life.

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If that excitement, plus my lack of discipline, leads me to smash the budget and turn my little Dateline into a fire-breathing super boat, so be it. I won't apologise for that either. But what I will do is make sure we acquaint you with the pitfalls and provide you with the tips you need to set about pursuing a project yourself on whatever budget suits you. Now where's that surface piercing prop shop? ■