MOORING AIDS TRIED & TESTED

Chris Beeson gets to grips with two new stress-free ways of securing your boat

If you've ever found yourself leaning through a pulpit, fighting to get a line onto a buoy while screaming manoeuvres over your shoulder at the helmsman, you'll appreciate a decent mooring aid. In our August 2011 test of mooring aids we failed to include the Swi-Tec range, and Julian Buesnel of Blue Water Supplies in Jersey, Swi-Tec's UK dealer, left us in no doubt that this was a shocking omission and sent a range of devices for us to test. We've tested two: a buoy mooring and retrieving hook, and a safety lock for mooring to pilings.

The Swi-Tec system relies on a slide fitting on the head of a boathook, to which the various aids fix. You can buy a Swi-Tec telescopic boathook (£28.14) or fit an adapter to your existing boathook for under £10.

MOORING AND RETRIEVAL HOOK

This neat kit uses a 10mm (0.4in) or 14mm (0.55in) stainless steel hook with a spring clip operated by a red line and a 10m (32ft) mooring line spliced to the hook. Secure the ends of the mooring and release lines, and hold the mooring line against the boathook to keep the hook in the fitting. When you're ready, hook the buoy's loop, pull upwards to open the spring clip and voila! You're moored with a hook whose tensile strength is 1,200kg (2,645lb). The spring clip stops the hook falling off the mooring buoy's loop and, when you want to go, pull the red line to open the spring clip and capsize the hook simultaneously. Mooring and releasing needs a couple of swift tugs but it's simple, strong, effective and stows small. If you're mooring to pilings or bollards, fasten one end of a short rope to the hook's eye, tie a loop in the other end and slip it through the spring clip into the hook, and you can lasso the piling to moor, then pull the red string to release.



Clip on the steel hook which has a spring clip operated by a red 10m line



LEFT & BELOW: Hook the buoy's loop, pull upwards to open the spring clip and – voila! – you're moored







ABOVE & RIGHT: To release, pull the red line to open the spring clip and capsize the hook

Safety Lock

Built for bollards, box moorings or pilings, the safety lock is a plastic-covered wire loop fixed to the lock at one end while the other end can be unlocked. Once again, after securing red and blue bitter ends, fit the safety lock to the boathook, drop it over a piling and you're moored with a tensile strength of 1,000kg. Similarly, when you want to go, pull the red release line. We had to hunt the Hamble for a piling slender enough for the loop but again, it's an ingeniously simple system that works well.



LEFT: Slide the lock into the boathook fitting with the loop locked BELOW: Drop it over a piling, slide the boat hook away and you're moored





To release, pull the [illegible] to release one end of the loop, and you're off

Prices Buoy mooring and retrieving hook: £68.66. Safety lock: £152.34
Contact Blue Water Supplies
Tel 01534 739594
Web www.bluewatersupplies.com

THANKS *We're grateful to Bavaria Yacht Charter in Swanwick, a new division of Clipper Marine that specialises in chartering Bavaria yachts, for lending us the Bavaria 40S for these tests. Tel: 01489 550583 Web: www.clippermarine.co.uk/charter*