Narrowboat underfloor heating
Can it be done, does it work and is it worth it?

The expansive internal layout and domestic look and feel of narrowboats and widebeams lend themselves well to the concept of underfloor heating. Some systems have succeeded where others have failed, so when Eberspächer UK’s inland waterways heating expert, Peter Collard, came across one system that worked particularly well, he was keen to find out more.

AS EBERSPÄCHER’S marine technical engineering project manager, I am responsible for, and have been involved with, a great many different narrowboat heating system designs. Among other things, I have been involved in a number of narrowboat and widebeam underfloor heating projects. Although all have worked, there have been varying degrees of success!

Until now, the boats I have been involved with would normally be fitted out using adapted household underfloor heating kits. Although these accomplished the job they did have several drawbacks, namely, household underfloor heating kits use relatively small internal diameter plastic pipe to heat under the floor.

This pipe requires a relatively large power-hungry water pump, sometimes requiring a household 240v pump. These small pipes are normally plumbed into a complex water manifold delivery system and thermostatic mixer valves to regulate the amount of heat being sent under the floor and to control zone temperatures.

Valuable head height can be lost to thick underfloor insulation, pipe mats and over floor covering. These all serve to raise the height of the finished floor.

So can it be done? Absolutely! But there are a few issues to get over. The first, or Namely, household underfloor heating kits use relatively small internal diameter plastic pipe to heat under the floor.

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