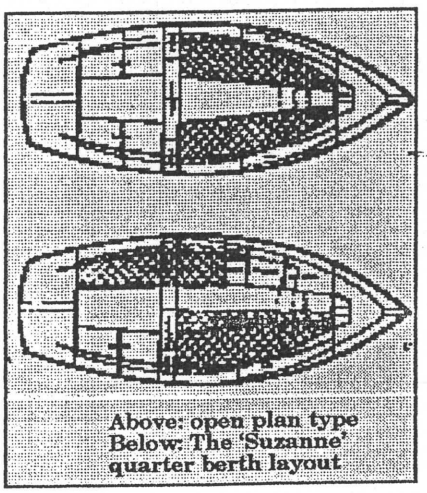
SILHOUETTE **MAKE & MEND** Sheets
No.7 **QUARTER BERTHS**

Editor: Ian Rodger

Until the four berth MkIV design came out, Silhouette cabin layouts were usually of one of two types. Both the plywood and grp MkII's had either an 'open plan' layout, with a full length settee berth on either side and lockers running back from the bridgedeck to the aft of the cockpit, or a quarter berth design - sometimes known as the 'Suzanne' layout (named after the first example) - with a quarter berth to port, running aft from half way along the cabin, and under the port hand cockpit seat, and one full length settee berth to starboard. This bunk sometimes also had an extending section about 12" wide with a false side on it, which pulled out and made a 'double' berth. Presumably, in case you had on occasions to save the crew from the foggy foggy dew....

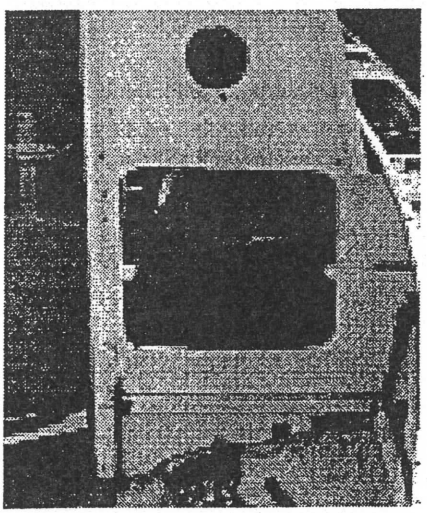
Forward of the quarter berth is a space for a two burner cooker, with food and pans storage space behind and below it, and a formica covered 'galley flat' running up to the forward bulkhead. Hurleys used to sell the MkII kits and finished boats with either layout, and also supplied a quarter berth conversion kit for people who wanted to change over. Comments from owners suggest that the quarter berth layout is the more popular. The quarter berth is snug and secure, and provides good dry stowage space for bedding etc. while on passage. The space freed up for the galley and storage is more convenient than the alternative of having a cooker fitted under the bridgedeck. Some people have successfully installed quarter berths on both sides, doing away with cockpit lockers altogether, as Denis Heald describes in the second part of this article.



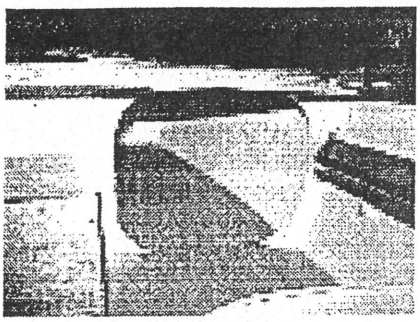
Above: open plan type
Below: The 'Suzanne' quarter berth layout

It is more common to convert to a quarter berth layout than to an open plan design. The method of carrying out this conversion in either the grp or the plywood SII is virtually the same, as both boats have more or less identical wooden internal framings for the berths and lockers. In the grp model the aft bulkhead and locker fronts may be of fibreglass, but the cockpit lockers will very likely have wooden framing at their bases, on which the new berth base can rest.

The essentials of the job are enlarging the opening in the bridgedeck locker front(s) and making a similar opening through the back of the locker(s) into the existing cockpit locker. A plywood base is then inserted to run aft from the original aft end of the settee berth to the back of the cockpit. A half bulkhead then needs to be made about 2 ft forward of the new opening to form a 'bed head', and to separate the berth from the cooking area / chart table that can then be built.



The original locker aperture (above) is too small for anyone but a child to slide into, so you need to enlarge it. The next photo shows how close to the edges of the bulkhead you can go. To make the edges of the new hole more comfortable to lie against and slither through, you



could first of all back up the bulkhead with an extra 'frame' of half inch ply pieces glued into place. Then, when you cut through, a more substantial edge is presented, and you can put a soft radius on the inner and outer corners. Start by drilling the largest holes you can at each corner using a hole saw. This will look better and give the remaining bulkheads a little more rigidity. Then connect up the holes with a jig saw where accessible, or by drilling small adjacent holes and filing through.

Take out the bottom boards of the cockpit locker and check whether the framing lines up with the base of the original settee berth. There may be some discrepancy, because the original berths slope downwards 1 inch to the outer edge.

Measure forward from the aft end of the locker to give a length of 6' 6", unless you have a special reason to make the new berth shorter or longer.

The existing bunk base needs to be cut at this position, and a half bulkhead made which will form the end of the storage / cooker unit immediately in front of it.

The after end of the new base of the quarter berth should be screwed and sealed onto the bearers so that no bilge water can get in. You can still (with difficulty) access the hull panels beneath it from the cockpit bilges if needed.

The cockpit seat now needs to be made weatherproof. you can bodge it by simply glassing in the existing seat, or better, remove all the ply from the locker top from the aft of the cockpit to the bridgedeck, and out to the hull, then let in a completely new piece of 12mm ply with a radiused nosing at the seat edge. It is worth inserting some

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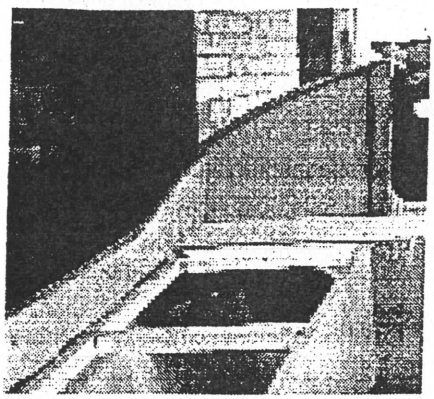


additional 1 x 1 1/2" timbers to strengthen the sea as shown above. Some people have put a small perspex portlight into the inboard side of the berth - in the cockpit side - making it easier to search for lost objects!

Inside the cabin the forward partof the bunk base can either be left as a lift-off lid for under-bunk storage, or you can seal that in too and make cave locker openings in the bunk side.

If you want to be thoroughly secure in your new bunk, you can fit a lee cloth or board in the space between the bridgedeck and the forrard end.

From the head of the bunk to the main forward bulkhead you now have a really useful space to accommodate a double burner cooker and then a food preparation surface. Some owners have made a hinge-down lid over the cooker which serves as a chart table. The curved side shelf below the window may need to be removed if you wish to build in extra lockers at the outer edge of the work surface. A bonus with this arrangement is that you can sit on the starboard bunk to work the cooker, peel the spuds etc.

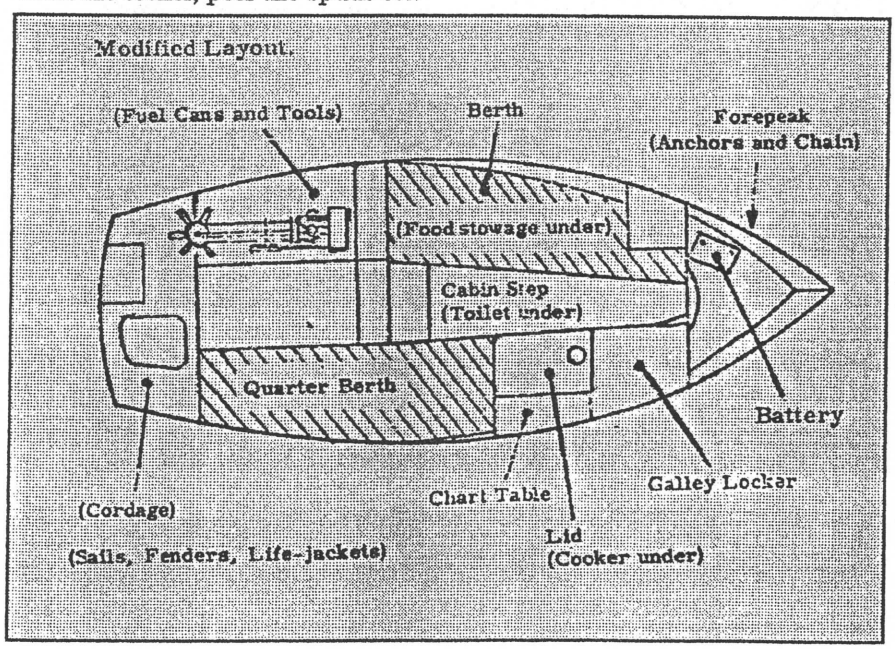
Fit a mushroom vent into the cabin roof over the cooker to take steam away. If yours is a gas cooker, the cylinder can be put in a sealed box in the stern locker, or better in the forepeak, if you can find a way of sealing it and venting it outboard. Has anyone any ideas on this? The reason for putting it at the bow is to get the weight where you need it. Heavy things like gas bottles should be kept as far forward as possible so as to improve sailing performance.

Ideas for the Galley

Chris Lane now describes here how he dealt with the galley / cooking area when he modified the interior of his SIII Chafay. The same ideas could equally be applied to an SII:

Between spells of vandalising the interior of my boat I bought a sheet of 9mm (8in) ply and made the side, top, and two bulkheads forming the main structure of the new unit which would be a locker, galley, and, when closed, chart table. The pieces were cut out at home using dimensions spiled off from the boat. Occasional visits to the boat with the parts allowed corrections to be made for final shaping. Original features were made part of the new structure; thus the chart table height was determined by the starboard shelf, on which its outboard edge is fixed, and the side-deck knee about halfway along the window. The parts assembled into a primary structure shown in the sketch above. The unit is narrower at the forward end than the bunk it replaces. This uncovers a small triangle of hull but gives the desired extra foot room under the forehatch. The cooker space was dimensioned to accept the popular gas and paraffin two-burner stoves on the market but, as I will not have gas on a boat, I dreamt up a simple gymbal for my two Primuses and made it from 2in copper pipe in half an hour (Practical Boat Owner No. 120).

I had considered a sink unit and Whale pump but decided against them. Small sinks are a nuisance and plumbed water leads to extravagant use. Dirty crockery and cutlery are stored in a deep plastic bowl kept in the forepeak and I boil-up and wash-up once a day. The primary structure was now glassed in place and its cupboard fitted with shelves having fiddles and chocks for each pan, kettle, and implement. These and the cooker well framing were glued and screwed but the top surface is screwed only so that all parts of the hull internal surface can be reached for repair if need be. Bunk framing was made up and a new 4in ply panel cut to complete the bunk boards. Original panels and cushion foam were recut where possible to suit the new arrangement.



SIII Quarter berth modification

by Denis. Heald

Some Silhouette Mk III's were made with one quarter berth and a cockpit locker and some were made with two cockpit lockers and no quarter berths. Quarter berths are a way of increasing accommodation at the expense of cockpit locker space, and to carry out this modification the following procedure is reccommended:

The bridge deck cupboard doors and shelves are removed and the shelf strips removed by levering with a screwdriver. They are only fastened with panel pins. Using a jig saw or jig saw drill attachment, cut out the two bulkheads between the saloon and cockpit locker. In places it is neccesary to drill holes and join up as access is difficult with a jig saw. A neater job will result if the cut out portions are carefully marked before starting this part of the job (Fig 1).

You will find that the floor framework in the cockpit locker is about 1 higher than the existing bunk framework in the cabin, and it is neccessary to lower the former by removing all the brass screws (dig out filler from the heads), and then

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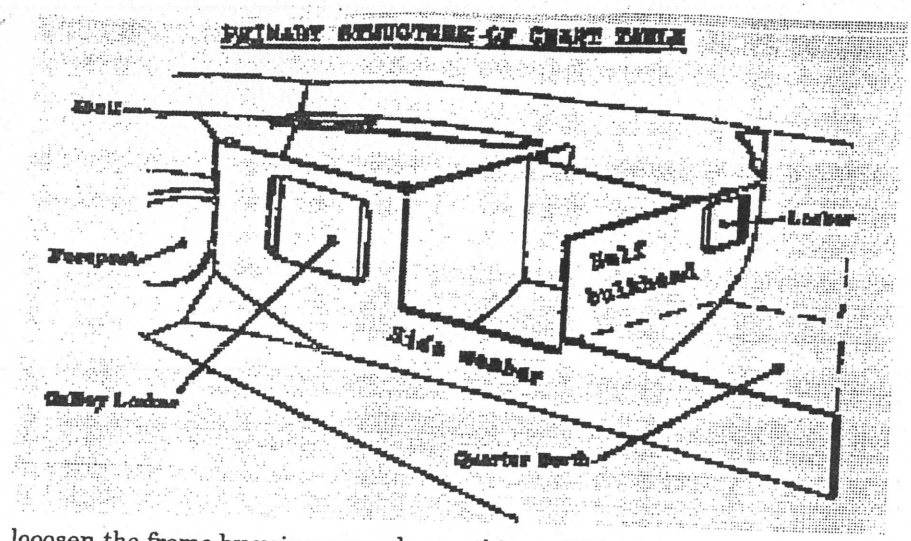
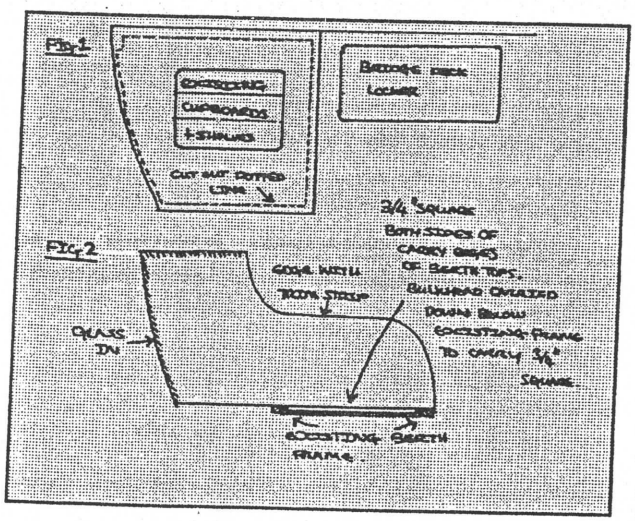


looosen the frame by using a wood chisel and mallet. Re-position and re-fix with glue and screws. the same locker bottom panels will do if about 1/2" is trimmed from the straight edges.

Next you need a bulkhead made from 1/2" ply or two pieces of 1/4" bonded together with aerolite glue. (Fig 2). You must make a pattern out of cardboard or hard board first to get a good fit. Screw and glue to existing wooden berth frame and glass to side and deck. Roughen ply with chisel corner, and clean hull side and deck with scraper and acetone or cellulose thinners. Glass in with 3" strips of mat, 2 layers each side of bulkhead. If the weather is cold apply local heat



until resin goes off.

The bulkhead position needs to be about 22" from the bridge deck to accommodate shoulders. The existing berth top can be cut to fit either side of this bulkhead, as can the existing cushion.

A small rectangular piece of 1/4 ply is neccessary to fit where the cupboard had been removed and a quarter berth cushion made to fit. Depending on the existing layout this modification can be done either port of starboard, or both. The cockpit locker access hole must now be weatherproofed.

Now, a suggestion of how to finish the quarter berth conversion by weatherproofing the cockpit locker opening. Plywood, screwed down with suitable sealant would do if carefully carried out, but the way I do it is as follows: The fibreglass fabrication shop where I buy my resin and mat always have pieces of fibreglass cut out of finished mouldings, so I purchase one large enough to cover the hole for a pound or so.

Even if you have to lay up a flat piece about 1/8' thick specially for the purpose, it would only cost a few pounds in material. Carefully cut the piece to shape so that it fits into the recess and on to the lip left where the original piece was cut out. Roughen the surface of this lip and mix enough Isopon or similar body filler to go right round thelip.

Press the prepared fibreglass piece down on to the filler and weight it down with something heavy. I used some car batteries, but piles of bricks will do. Leave for an hour or so to set and then mix some more body filler and fill in any gaps from the top to prevent any water collecting. You will now of course have a shallow tray about 3/8" deep which would tend to hold water, so with a large (1/2" or so) drill or side mill tool, cut grooves in the outer rim so that the shallow tray will drain off.

The dummy locker tops of edged marine ply are a constant maintenace worry, apart from being very hard to sit on, so I made mine upholstered and detatchable to overcome both problems. Now you can see why I wanted the fibreglass tops to drain properly. These locker tops are also fastened with through bolts which can leak into the quarter berth, sol remove these and fill the holes. The detatchable locker tops will require any beading to be removed, as well as any existing fittings such as hasps and staples.

Take four pieces of 3/8" plywood about 5" square and carefully cut a four inch circular piece out of the centre of each one and then pin and glue these frames to the underside of the plywood locker tops with centres about 6" from each end and roughly on the centre line. When these have dried, place the circular pieces into the recesses from which they came and wedge in with pieces of cardboard.

Mix some body filler and place a dollop (what a nice word) into into the centre of each circular piece and then press the locker tops into their normal positions. Wait a couple of hours and then pull the locker tops away, leaving the circular discs stuck in place on the fibreglass. Drill the centre of the disc, countersink it, and put a countersunk stainless bolt through with the nuts underneath. Make sure that the countersinks allow the bolts to lie below the surface of the ply, and fill with bodyfiller to make it weatherproof. Trim about 1/4" from the edges of the plywood locker tops and upholster with with I' thick foam and PVC material to match the interior trim by stretching and using a normal office stapler. If you have the Slll with cockpit lockers both sides it is quite easy to fit upholstered seats on top of the existing locker tops which you can remove and stow inside when not using the boat.

The upholstered locker tops are very comfortable when sailing and do not move about all over the place like cockpit cushions. They also look very smart, particularly if they match the interior upholstery. They are waterproof enough to leave out in the rain when the boat is in use but easily detatchable for stowage inside when the boat is left for any length of time.

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