SILHOUETTE **MAKE & MEND** Sheets No.8 **KEEPING THE BOAT DRY** Editor: Ian Rodger

DECKS THAT DRAIN

A number of years ago I spent 2 full years building from bare mouldings a 25' sailing cruiser. I put literally thousands of hours into the building of the boat and if there was a reason why after a couple of seasons I sold it, it was because the side decks didn't drain.

It is particularly annoying when the side decks are always dirty after water has evaporated and particularly exaperating when on a lovely sunny day following a showery one you are tramping over the boat with wet feet because you have a couple of pints of water on each side deck. Considering the reverse shear of the Silhouette the side decks drain quite well, but isn't it annoying to have to keep sponging up the water which collects on the aft deck by the coamings, and also on the SIII out of the outboard well. Why did they put the drain on the high side of the outboard well and why did they make it so small.?

Why don't you do something about it particularly if you can get at the boat during the winter? You need some copper tube about 3/8" or 5/16" The sort you use as fuel pipes on the central heating boilers etc. Cut lengths about 2' after first annealing by heating red and quenching in cold water. This makes the copper soft and cleans it anyway. Bell mouth one end of each piece as much as you can with a drill shank or similar and then saw three cuts down the bell mouthed end for a distance of the 3/16" and splay out flat. You need four pieces in all.

Drill 1/4 diam holes in the corners where water collects about 1/2 from the actual coaming /mast track corner and similarly in the lower outboard end of the outboard well if you have one. Drill another 1/4" hole 2" below the existing drain through the transom. If you haven't got an existing drain then measure 7 up from the bottom in the centre of the transom and drill. You now need 4 off 1/4" bolts about 2 1/2" long with nuts, or you can use one four times.

Mix a little body filler, smear on splayed end of tube, put bolt through tube and enter into hole from inside rear locker putting nut on outside. Hand tighten and

remove bolts when body filler is hard. This holds the tubes firmly in place for the next operation. Cut squares of glass mat about 1 1/2" square and cut or punch holes in the centre about 3/8" diam (outside diameter of copper pipe.) Make about 50 of these, mix resin, wet out on newspaper and glass about 12 over each tube from inside the locker. Roughen up the surface and clean with cellulose thinners beforehand. When this has set you will have the strongest skin fitting you can imagine. Clean out the holes and countersink the surface and paint the inside with a little gelcoat. All you have to do now is join the pipes together with a little fall between each pair, ending up at the transom and the whole drains beautifully.

You can buy little tees and elbows in plastic for a few pence to help with the pipework and you finally need to drill out and seal with glass mat and gelcoat the original drains if fitted in the outboard well. These modifications were made to an Slll but I'm sure an Sll could be done in a similar manner. Denis Heald

SELF DRAINING COCKPITS?

Another area where accumulated water becomes a nuisance is the cockpit floor. Bigger yachts tend to have self-draining cockpits, so why not the Silhouette?

The grp MkII and the MkIII do have this feature, though the drain holes in the MkII version are often ludicrously small.

The main drawback is that the cockpit floor level is only a couple of inches above the waterline when the boat floats level. Put a couple of hefty crew in the cockpit, and they soon have water round their ankles!

A solution to this might be to turn off the drain seacocks when sailing, but then if you take a green one over the stern, you can't get rid of it. Furthermore, the drains fitted to the MkIII don't have sea cocks a point that your surveyor may well pick up on, and ask you to remedy.

Possibly the only real advantage

to having a self-draining cockpit in a Silhouette is if it is kept on a mooring, with the likelihood of rainwater accumulating over a period of weeks. A better solution to this is to fit a cockpit cover though.

Hurleys originally fitted red indiarubber hoses to the MKIII cockpit drains and over the years they harden and craze, resulting first in a seepage of water, and then a total breakdown. One owner, having bought a 25 year old SIII couldn't understand why, after a couple of weeks on the mooring, there was 3 inches of water in the cabin sole. but no traces of any leaks in the hull. Eventually, it turned out that the cockpit drain hoses were slightly cracked, and were gently oozing water into the boat. If you have an SIII, check that the hoses are sound and replace them with braided plastic hose if necessary. Crossing them

over reduces the tendency for seawater to enter up the leeward side tube when the boat is heeled over, but it is still likely that some water will find its way in. At the same time, fit seacocks for safety.

If you want to keep your feet dry, make a cockpit grating. The fore and aft pieces are 17 lengths of in 2x 2 in deal, varnished with clear polyurethane and laid, slightly off parallel so as to follow the shape on four cross-pieces, each 2in x 4in and of suitable length. Half-joint the pices and screw & glue them together. These cross-pieces cannot be quite the full width of the cockpit because of the round inside corners, soyou can fix little pads of rubber on the ends to prevent lateral movement. It is important to chisel out several 4in grooves in the under sides of the cross-pieces to allow the water to run to the outlets.

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