

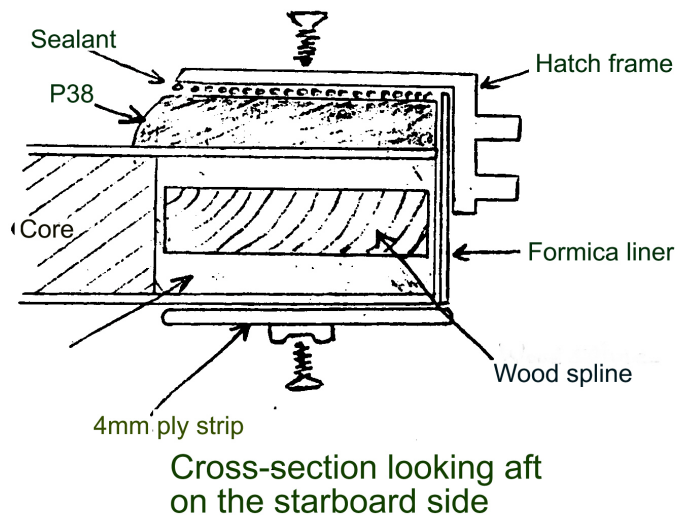
## Deck and Fittings

### 1. Forehatch for a Sea Wych

One of the best mods I made to 'Wychway' was the fitting of a forehatch. This provides ventilation on hot days and an emergency exit from the boat - though not for large people. The Houdini Mini-hatch (£78 from Cruisermart June 95) is a perfect fit within the non-slip area between the forward grabrails.

#### *The Hole*

Using a drill and jigsaw cut the hole as shown in the (minimal) instructions that come with the hatch - but about 1mm oversize all round. Dig out the core to a depth of about 1 inch and fill the void with epoxy thickened with a high-density filler; this strengthens the coach roof. Ramming a 1 x 1/4 inch wood spline into the epoxied void on each side reduces the amount of epoxy needed and also helps to compact it. The hatch must sit on a flat surface but the coach roof is slightly curved across the boat. Using car body filler, eg Isopon P38, build up the coach roof around the hole. Flatten it using the hatch as a former - having first greased it to prevent the filler from sticking. Clean off the grease and tidy up the hardened filler with wet & dry paper.



#### *Fitting*

My hatch is fitted so that when fully open, it rests against the mast - the other way round, though recommended by safety experts, would place too much strain on the hinges. Bed the hatch on a layer of sealant and centralise it with a few fingers of formica pushed up between the hatch flange and the sides of the hole. Screw to the coach roof using No 8 stainless c/s screws of appropriate lengths, having first injected sealant into the pilot holes. Remove the fingers (of formica that is...) and clean the filler out of the small gap.

#### *Trimming*

Cut one or two long narrow strips of formica and shape so that when wedged up between the hatch flange and the sides of the hole, they neatly cover the raw edges. Cut two 'U'-shaped pieces of 4mm ply about 1 1/2" wide to the shape of the hole. Either cover with lining material, or stain and vamish, and

screw to the cabin roof with brass c/s screws and cup washers. (On reflection, it might be possible to trim the hole in one step using plastic hockey-stick edging.) Paint exposed surfaces of body filler.  
(Ed: there is a photo at p 90)

*Barri Hopkins (1997)*

## **2. Mast Beam/Step Problem Prevention**

More than a few Sea Wyches suffer from sagging mast beams, usually because the laminated beam has failed. Mine is currently OK, so I took preventative action. Simply, I drilled some ¼" holes through the GRP and pumped in thickened epoxy (micro-balloons were used as a thickener, but high-density filler would have been better). I used a plastic syringe that is sold as a pack of two for measuring epoxy. Some water was ejected in the process but, hopefully, I now have a solid mast beam. It took about £25 worth of epoxy and was a messy job! (This method might also work for a beam that already had developed a sag if a was first restored to its proper curvature by use of an Acrowprop, suitably packed out to spread load on cabin sole and roof)

The mast-step was also removed. The GRP surface was concave, compressed by a thick layer of corrosion that had developed underneath the alloy mast step. Epoxy was pumped into this box structure and was also used to level the concave surface - and to seal the underneath of the mast-step once the corrosion had been cleaned off. The hardened epoxy was flattened off, given a coat of gelcoat and the mast-step was re-fixed on a bed of sealant, using longer and heavier brass screws (sealant first being injected into the screw holes). The various injection holes were then counter-sunk and made good with gelcoat

*Barri Hopkins (1996)*

## **3. Reinforcing The Mast Support**

Magazine Editor's note: This article is from Jane Garner, in Ambleside, and is an innovative way of reinforcing the mast support tabernacle without the mess of cutting out the decayed wooden mast support beam from inside the cabin, and re-fibreglassing in a new hardwood beam. It goes to prove there are always nine plus x ways to carry out a repair on a Sea Wych!

We had a problem with Rosie's sinking mast. We considered the possibilities of removing the wooden tabernacle support beam and replacing it. We decided against this method for two reasons:

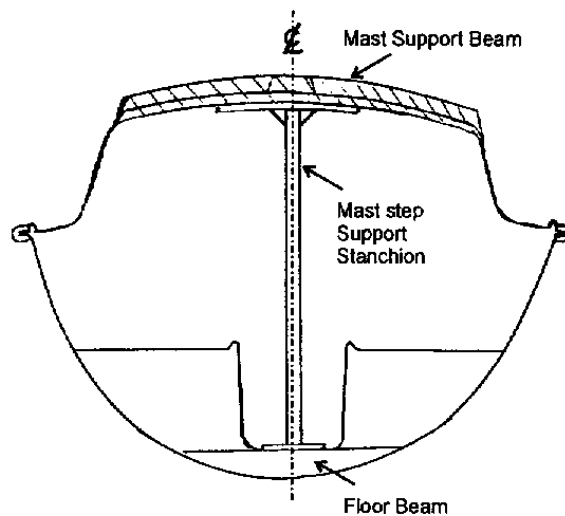
- a) reducing the strength of the fibreglass roof and
- b) because, after drilling to find the wood very dry, it would make too much mess!

We decided a stainless steel stanchion would be a better bet and contacted a friend who makes stretchers for the army and mountain rescue teams all over the world. One sunny day in April the support was delivered - in exchange for a variety of Subaru car parts!.The tubing is 1 1/2 inch diameter very lightweight stainless steel. The base is 3" wide x 3" x 1/8" thick, and fits the forward part of the cabin floor. The top support is 3" wide x 18" x 11 /16" thick.

Roy (my better half when it comes to technical things such as this) took a 4 ton porta-power into the

cabin and raised the roof- literally - popped the new stanchion in place, then secured it with loads of 1” inch SS screws top and bottom (see diagram).

I'm impressed! I thought it would get in the way but it's OK. We've been sailing with the new stanchion since the end of April and all is well. We sailed in Force 5 to 6 this morning with reefed main and jib and one keel out of the water! The stanchion is well under compression and rings when flicked. However it hasn't moved and everything else is in place, and the shrouds are still tensioned as they should be.



#### ***4. Mast Support Beam Replacement***

Well at long last Dutch Courage has been repaired. Fortunately the problem was not as bad as first might have been imagined, but at the same time is of concern for Mark II Sea Wych owners.

Assuming that the beam supporting the mast had broken or rotted, the deck head was cut out from inside the cabin. The inner lay-up came down complete with the foam sandwich material. A large chisel was then inserted at the end of the beam and the beam simply popped out.

Points of concern. The beam was healthy, but contrary to popular belief was made of softwood. Neither the beam or GRP matting had been wetted with resin, hence the inner lay-up dropped away complete with the foam sandwich and the beam itself basically fell out with very little help. In other words the lay-up was very poorly done and the weight of the mast was being taken by two separate skins with, I suspect, the beam free to move inside. This over the years combined with continual flexing of the cabin roof resulted in the signs of a broken or rotted beam - wrinkled gel coat at the base of the mast and sagging deck head internally.

Whilst effecting the repair, the opportunity was also taken to strengthen the cabin roof around the hatch fitted just forward of the mast step.

This might be an isolated case and therefore would only serve as a warning to other owners to be wary

of the potential problem. However I would not like to think that publishing it would deter other people from owning a Sea Wych. I have kept the section of deck head that was cut out and the mast support beam if they may be of any use as an illustration of the problem.

*Les Harrison (1998)*

## **5. Mast Beam**

I have heard of some boats where water has got into the mast beam due to the mast tabernacle and its fixing screws not being properly bedded in sealant. The result is that the encapsulated timber rots. It's a good idea to check this from time to time, and re-bed the tabernacle (and any other fittings that have been added) in sealant. One owner told me he had a little fountain appear when he drilled the top of the mast beam to fix a new fitting!

Being timber, the mast beam will eventually deflect a bit permanently. If you do replace the beam, it's not a bad idea to use a deeper section of timber and let it project a bit below the cabin roof line (and blend it in with chamfered pieces to soften the bang on the head!). Still fibreglass it to the inside of the cabin roof, though.

Alternatively, just fix an extra beam below the cabin roof (well padded), which can be much wider than the original, if you don't want to go to the trouble of digging the old one out. It should be through fixed to the existing mast beam. (The Sea Wych has more headroom than most boats of its size). You can always do a full replacement later if you find you bang your head too often.

*Tony Bromley(????)*

## **6. Mast Beam Replacement**

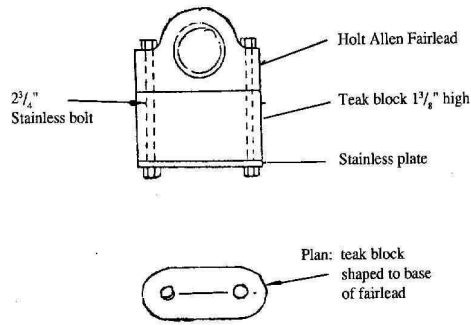
I was speaking to a new Seawych owner about this recently, and he rang to tell me that he had the problem of profiling a replacement beam to fit the internal arch of the coachroof, as well as filling the mast step area. He had just solved the problem by laminating a curved beam from hardwood strips, and epoxy bonding that and a block to fit inside the mast step moulding back into place. As I advised him, he had used an Acrow prop to push it all up till the epoxy had hardened. He reported that the outer curve of the mast beam was fully restored.

*Roy Sallabank (2005)*

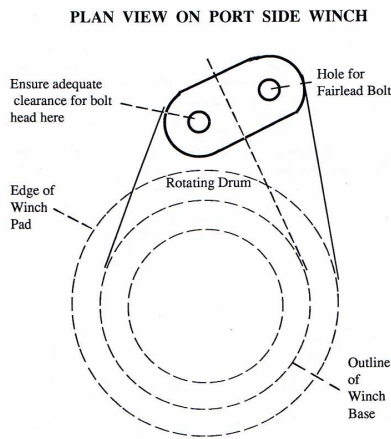
## **7. Jib Sheet Guides (Mods Man)**

The sheets on my boat tended to ride down onto the base of the Barton winches, causing all sorts of problems. The cause was simply that the sheets did not lead at right angles to the barrel of the winches. This was relatively easily cured by making a sheet guide using a fairlead mounted on a block to ensure that each one fed in horizontally.

First, make up the mounting block from hardwood, and put a Holt Allen fairlead on top as shown in the sketch below – just put the long screws through without the nuts.

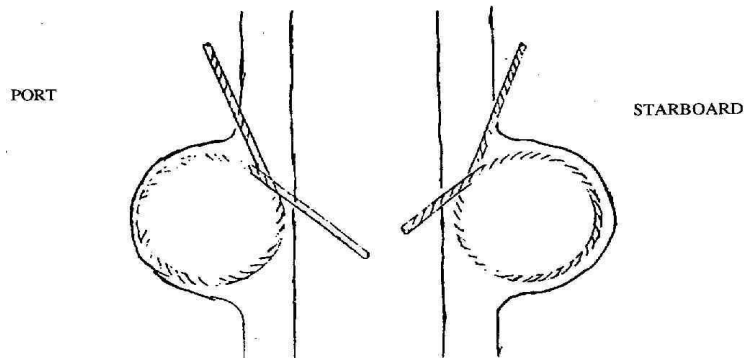


Next, cut a cardboard template to the shape shown below and with the winch roughly in place and the block placed on top of the template, jiggle both block and template around to get a good lead onto the



inboard edge of the drum. Make sure there is room for the nuts of the through bolts. Mark on the template the positions of the mounting block bolts and of the winch securing bolts. Cut from 2mm stainless steel a plate as per the template and bolt all in place.

The starboard winch needs reversing to avoid riding turns. Before replacing the winch barrel, turn all the spring cams the other way up so that the ratchet works the other way round.



*(Ed: there is a photo of a typical installation at p 93)*

*Peter Fellows*

## **8. Slack Dodgers, Roger?**

Rather than use cord to attach your dodgers why not use plastic cable ties? They are easier and simpler to use than having to lace cord.

I use the smallest feasible, so they will be less obtrusive; 100mm onto the life lines and 140mm onto the pushpit. The knobbls are tucked into the eyelet to avoid catching. I prefer to use white although black are available. Index Marine produce 100 x 100mm for around £2-50 and "Do it All" have 25 x 140mm for around £1.50

I must admit this is not my idea as it was seen originally on Jon Vander-Molen's boat. Hopefully he won't mind me passing this on.

*David Hobson (1997)*

## **9. Backing Pads**

### *Side Decks*

Phil Paul (Wychcraft) wrote briefly in the September 2002 magazine of the problems he had had with water leaking into the boat via the stanchion bolt holes. The sealant had disappeared, and the ply backing pads had rotted, resulting in the leaks and in wobbly stanchions. The following expands upon his statement "They required cutting out and replacing".

These backing pads appeared to run the whole length of the side decks and were completely glassed onto the underside of the side decks. The messy job of cutting out the fibreglass was made doubly difficult because a previous owner (Rick Bowen?) had made a very good job of fitting pigeonhole lockers.

The stanchions were removed and the holes sealed off with tape. Working through the aperture of the lockers and using a Dremel mini-drill fitted with a cutting disc, a Stanley knife, and with a good measure of swear words, the fibreglass was removed for about 6" along the base of each stanchion. Lack of both time and determination militated against removal of the whole length. The rotten ply was dug out of each end of each fibreglass 'tunnel', the exposed area was dried with a hot air gun and heavily scored with a piece of a hacksaw blade. Replacement pieces of marine ply were cut to fit and were generously buttered with a thickened (with micro-balloons) epoxy mix. One end of each piece was wedged inside the fibreglass 'tunnel'; the other end was rammed up with a prop wedged on the floor of the locker. When the epoxy had cured, the stanchion holes were re-drilled and the stanchions were re-fixed, using plenty of sealant above deck and large penny washers below the backing pads. The deck now appears to be watertight and the stanchions are much stiffer, though they still flex more than is desirable; they have not got the benefit of the stiffness which would be given by a continuous full length pad. One possible improvement would be to add some layers of fibreglass to the back of the pads and glass these to the side of the hull, thus forming a sort of right-angle bracket.

### *Horse*

The horse, which runs across the transom coaming, was also loose. One end was easily tightened with a socket spanner but the other end would not tighten. The reason was that the backing strip running across below the fibreglass had either been cut too short, or had been skewed to the port side when

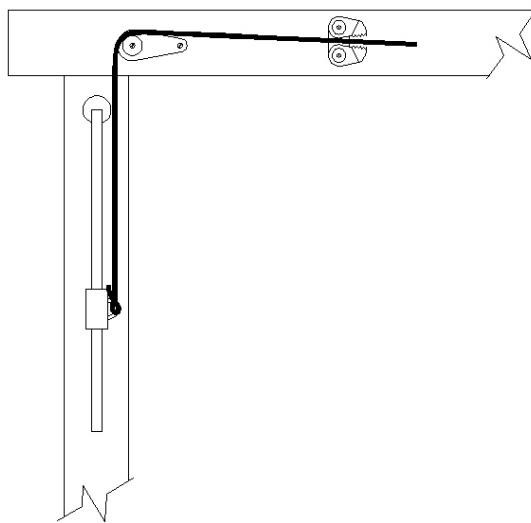
being fitted. Either way, the strip ended about halfway across the hole for the starboard horse fixing. Over time, this end of the strip had become crushed. The solution was to cut and shape a piece of hardwood, which would act as an extension of the in situ strip. A piece of 2mm stainless steel was cut and drilled to bridge the join between the two bits of wood. These were held in place whilst the horse was re-fixed. A simple repair, but needing the dexterity of a contortionist.....

*Barri Hopkins (2002)*

## ***10. Traveller Control***

The design of traveller and horse on the Wych means that it is difficult to lock the boom in any desired position e.g. slightly to windward, unless the main sheet is hauled in tight. One of the previous owners of Wychcraft had added a modification, which enables the boom to be precisely positioned, irrespective of the tension of the mainsheet.

Simply, a line is knotted to the eye on the traveller (to which the main sheet is shackled) and is led forward, via a turning block, to a cam cleat, both mounted on top of the coaming. The same arrangement is fitted on the other side of the cockpit. The sketch below is largely self-explanatory.



The blocks and cleats are all fixed with self-tappers and are bedded on sealant. None of the dimensions is critical; the turning blocks should be positioned so that the line from the traveller runs as near parallel to the horse as possible. The location of the cam cleat is largely determined by where is most convenient for the skipper/crew. Ours is about 300mm forward of the traveller.

*Ed: there is a photo at p 90)*

*Phil Paul (2005)*

## *11. Cockpit Tent (Mods Man)*

One of the most useful accessories that I have made for Sortilege is an all-over cockpit tent, which is carried over the boom and is tied down to various deck fittings. The tent is made from 16 oz. PVC-coated nylon, which when bought from T. Faulkes last May cost £2 + VAT per yard for the 60" wide material. (*Ed: Point North is one supplier of such materials, and their Pu coated Nylon, 150g/sqm, 150cm wide costs about £5.70 per metre.*) I bought 9 yards which has allowed me ample spare to make a pair of spray dodgers, which have proved very effective and is still sufficient for me to make a sail cover if I can find the time. The design of the cover was in an article by Ron Cook, which was published in *Small Boat* a while ago, this article being for a *Lysander*.

The material is very strong, (probably heavier than is really necessary), and does not fray when cut. This simplifies the construction as there is no need to turn over any hems. Before sewing the seams I first glued the overlap with Dunlop Thixofix, but due to the nature of the surface I found that this did not hold very well. Care must be taken when sewing the seams that the edges do not slip out of alignment - an assistant is a great help here for feeding the long lengths of material involved through the sewing machine. Terylene cotton was used for the sewing.

I persuaded Jan to allow me to use her sewing machine, on condition that it was given a full service afterwards. I had previously used it to make a heavy duty flysheet for our tent, at one stage sewing together eight thicknesses of canvas, so by the time that we had finished the cover it was ready for its service. The machine is able to cope with the material easily enough, though the weight of material involved makes feeding through difficult, hence the need for the helper.

The two sides of the tent were cut first (see Fig 1) making sure that the pieces were mirror images. This sounds obvious, but I nearly cut them the same, which would have given me different sides outward, and the two sides of the material are very different. A one-inch overlap was then glued along the ridge join and this was then stitched. Three lines of stitching were used for strength. The triangular end pieces were then cut out, glued and stitched, this time making normal seams. The cut-outs for the boom were done by trial and error on the boat, with the sail secured to the boom, as this makes quite a difference. The cut-outs in the sides to clear the windows were also left until the cover was on the boat. Eyelets (from any chandler) were punched into the material at appropriate places, and lengths of rope were spliced on.

To use the tent, the gooseneck is raised and the boom is held level by the mainsheet and topping lift. The tent is laid across the boom, and is first attached at the end of the boom, then pulled taut and attached at the forward end. The sides are then tied down to the bases of the stanchions, to the chainplates and to the jibsheet fairlead, working from front to rear. Finally the ends are laced up, if required.

While there is plenty of room in the cabin for two people, four make it a bit crowded, especially when it rains, and the extra space gained by use of the cover is then invaluable. Early or late season also show the worth of it, as you can maintain air circulation by leaving the hatch open, even though the dew may be forming. I can foresee that when we have children, we will bless the extra playing space available.

We have used the cover several times in very strong winds and it has come to no harm, even in that bad September gale when our mooring at Wootton Creek was exposed to the brunt of the northerly winds, and conditions were so bad that we had to leave the boat there and return home by ferry.

*Mick Ralph*



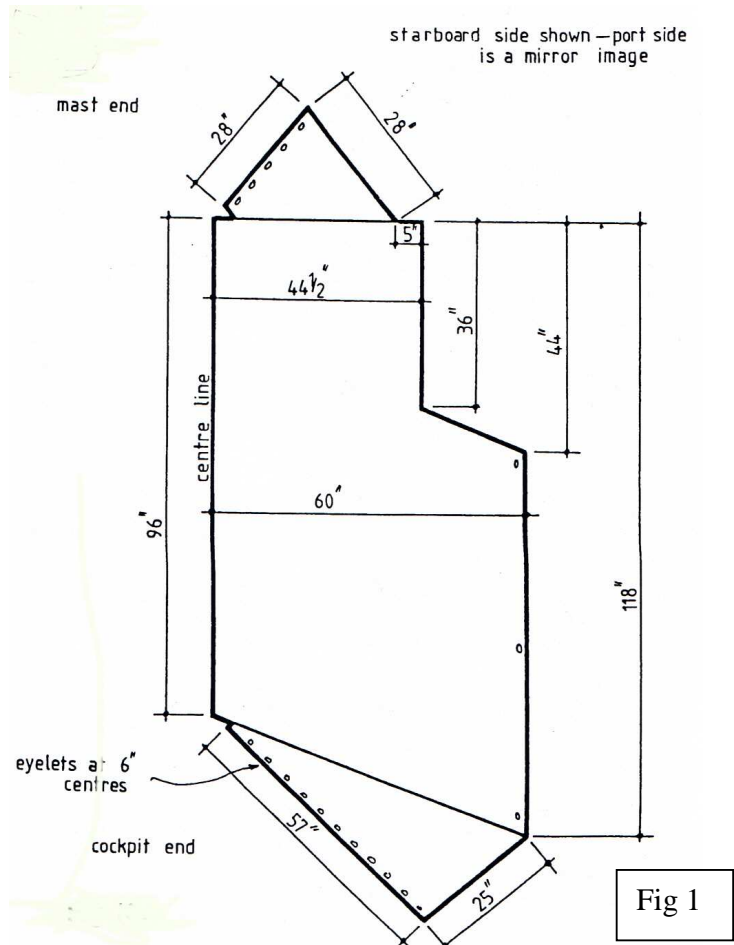


Fig 1