

## *Painting the Hull*

*Ed: The basic decision to be made is whether to go for a one pot or a two-pot paint. Two pot is much more durable - and expensive - and demands fine and dry weather conditions. Single pot paint is softer, but cheaper, than two-pot and is more tolerant of weather conditions.*

### **1. Single pot 'Toplac'**

After 20 years, the red hull of my Sea Wych had faded badly and no amount of cutting and polishing would restore the colour, so I decided to paint the hull. Having heard, from the likes of John Taylor, of the difficulties of successfully applying two-pot paint in the open air, I opted for International's new product, Toplac.

The first step was to remove the stern light, rudder mounting and the rubbing strake. Although removal of the strake was not essential, it did ensure that no hidden spiders or water would spoil the fresh paint; it also allowed inspection of the deck/hull joint.

Since it was necessary to rub down below the boottop or waterline, masking tape was run round the hull 75mm lower than the top of this area so that, once painting had been completed, the line could be re-established - 75mm higher than the masking tape.

As with all painting jobs, good preparation is the key to success. The leaflets available from International cover the various steps but, for convenience, the process I used is detailed below.

The hull was thoroughly rubbed down using wet 240-grade paper and a GRP cleaning solution and then well rinsed. Next, the painstaking job of filling all the scratches, chips and dents with Interfill 200. These were then flatted hack and the hull washed again. Because red undercoat was not readily available, I used grey - big mistake! Toplac "Rochelle Red 011" is very close in colour to the original Sea Wych red, but it is not a dense colour and It took three coats completely to cover the grey.

I bought the best 75mm brush I could get and thoroughly worked it out on some rough brickwork to remove any loose bristles etc. With a few days of fine and still weather forecast, the undercoat was rubbed down and the hull again washed and rinsed.. The paint was thinned about 10% with white spirit and work began, just as soon as the dew and condensation had evaporated. Starting at one 'corner' of the transom, it took just over the hour to get the first coat on. The paint was applied thickly, so that it was almost curtaining, and working quickly I managed to keep a good wet edge going. I worked in 10-12" strips, laying the paint on vertically, then cross brushing to even it and then laying it off with long vertical strokes.

After three coats (a total of one and a half 750ml tins at about £12-50 each) I had a beautiful mirror-like finish with hardly a brush mark visible. The boottop and antifouling were then completed and the rubbing strake re-fixed. This was easier said than done - it had to be stretched to fit and it was very difficult to re-use the original screw holes for the cover plates.

Three hard seasons later, the colour was still good but the surface had collected many scratches and scrapes from mooring buoy and dinghy chafe - as well as a few more significant dents and chips. The latter were filled with Interfill 200 and individually painted, and then the whole hull was rubbed down, masked off and given one coat of Toplac. The result was nearly as good as new again.

Toplac is undoubtedly less durable than two-pot finishes but, because good results can be achieved readily and because damage can be repaired easily, it gets my vote.

*Barri Hopkins (1998)*

## **2. Perfection 709**

Further to the article of Barri Hopkins in the March issue of the SWOA newsletter, I painted my boat last March with Perfection 709. The following notes may be of interest -

Rochelle Red is close to the original colour, and it is not necessary to use primer or undercoat This is because, adhesion (the purpose of primer) of the polyurethane finish is excellent. Also, the opacity of red pigments is notoriously poor, so that an undercoat would need to be very close to the original colour to be effective. The self-colour of the original is best

Perfection 709 is a two can material, which means that each of the two components remains liquid indefinitely; but when mixed, they harden within about two hours - this may be more or less, depending upon temperature. Since it is not possible to stop this hardening process, it is necessary to estimate just how much is to be used. There is enough in a 750ml pack to do about one and a half Sea Wyches, so that about two thirds of each component needs to be measured out, and mixed immediately (say ten minutes) before painting.

The most difficult problem is to find the right weather - windless, above 10 degrees C, and low relative humidity. This is not easy, because, in winter when our boats are laid up, the dry days tend to be frosty. Beware painting in high humidity: the evaporation taking place in the finish causes cooling of the wet film, with possible moisture condensation.

I prepared my topsides almost exactly as did Barri, pressure washing first, and then going over the hull with strong detergent Then, rubbing down with fine wet emery paper three times, washing again, drying, and then taking off residual dust with tack rags.

International recommend that painting is best done by two people, one applying paint and the other brushing to even out the paint film. I applied one coat, and intend to add a second coat next winter. Wake is left on a half-tide mooring off Gravesend, and is battered somewhat by the mooring buoy, but so far the paint has resisted all mechanical and chemical attacks.

My suggestion is that, if you can find the right weather conditions, it is worthwhile using the polyurethane two can product. Otherwise, use Toplac. I bet Barri's boat looks better than mine.

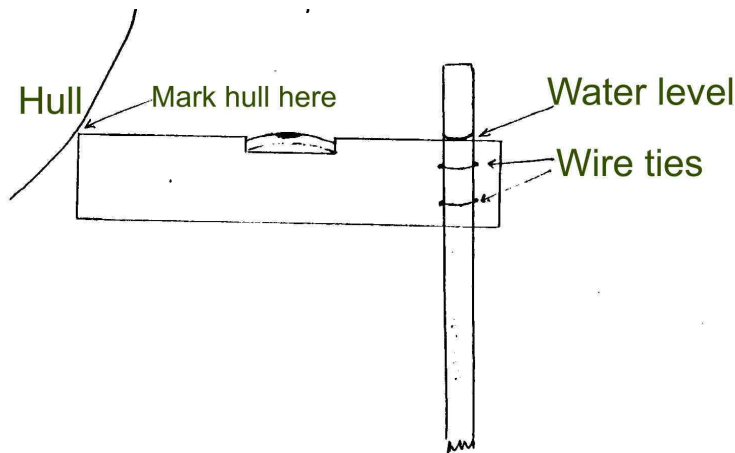
*Keith Bradshaw (1998)*

### 3. Marking the Waterline

Many well-painted and antifouled boats are often spoiled by an erratic waterline. There are several ways in which to establish a straight line around a curved hull; below is the simple method I used for my Sea Wych, when parked on her trailer

This will only work if the boat is level both fore and aft as well as across the beam. This I checked with a long spirit level on the trailer

The basic principle is that water levels in each end of a tube will be level, no matter how far apart the two ends of the tube are. I used about 5 metres of 5mm id clear polythene tube and a cheap plastic spirit level about 250mm long. The tube was wired at 90° to the level, about 25mm below the top of the tube.



Then, with fine felt tipped pen, I marked the required height at one spot on the hull - 28 inches in my case being a Mark II boat - close to one of the docking arms. The tube was then filled with water - not easy - and the free end was secured lightly to the docking arm of the trailer. The secured tube was then adjusted so that both water levels were horizontal with the mark, and the tube wired to the spirit level was adjusted so that the water levels were also level with the top of the spirit level. It was then simply (!) a matter of moving slowly round the boat, ensuring that the water was at the top of the spirit level and that the latter was also horizontal, and marking the hull where the top edge of the spirit level touched it. Painstaking, but a very accurate method. The more marks made, the more confidently the masking tape can be applied.

*Barri Hopkins (1995)*

### 4. A Wych for a Wych

I first saw this on John Taylor's boat, so it's his idea that is described below. The object is to make and

to affix the silhouette of the Wych on her broomstick onto either side of the hull at the bows.

Take a copy of Wychcraft to your local photocopy shop and get them to photocopy, with magnification, the Wych on the front cover. Repeat this until you have a Wych of about 250mm top to bottom. Before going farther, trim roughly to the silhouette and place against the hull to check for size. If it's OK, get a copy made. In addition, get a *mirror image* copy. Scrounge or buy from your local sign-making firm, a piece of white self-adhesive vinyl sufficient to make two Wyches. Cut into two pieces and stick or tape one to a piece of corrugated cardboard (this makes it easier to cut right through the vinyl rather than resting it on a hard surface). Stick or tape your photocopied Wych onto the vinyl and, with a very sharp knife or scalpel, cut round the outline of the Wych. You will have to approximate the detail of her fingers etc. Repeat for the other (mirror) image piece and carefully separate the vinyl with it's backing from the 'sandwich'

Place the Wych against the hull and find the right position - make sure she's facing forward!. Stick some small arrow-shaped pieces of masking tape on the hull accurately marking the top of her hat, end of broomstick etc. Peel the backing off the vinyl and then, with more than one pair of hands, stick the thing on the hull. Try to eliminate all air bubbles. Then do the other side.

This makes a very impressive finishing point to a 'go-faster' stripe.

*(Ed: there is a photo at p 92)*

*Barri Hopkins (1998)*