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Hull Trim Pieces, Deck Furniture

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Sundowner – 12

The trim pieces I made earlier were from a mixture of light coloured 'hardwood' from a DIY outlet that I bent using steam to fit the forward part of the hull/deck joint, plus some pieces of old mahogany for the curved pieces at the deck 'steps'. All were sanded and shaped to suit, then dyed using a water-based dye based on 'Van Dyke' crystals that I inherited from my father. He bought a huge tub of them, enough to last a chair making factory for a decade really. These are a cheap and effective dye for wood, as long as it is not yet sealed (or filled) and the colour can be varied according to concentration and even by adding some powdered pigments if required (my wife had some for her art experiments that work OK). In this case, I am mimicking teak and the brown basic colour was suitable. I then sealed the dyed wood when dry with French polish (shellac) as it is quick drying prior to varnishing with oil-based varnish rubbed down. Shades of furniture making. They are applied to the hull using epoxy glue and small brass screws at appropriate intervals, with the screw heads coloured afterwards using a spot of brown paint.

This is a very satisfying moment as the hull now starts to look finished and 'pretty' (beauty is in the eye of the beholder etc!). The result is shown in the photo:

I managed to not discolour the surrounding paint too much when applying these, however it is important, I think, that the epoxy seals any gaps and so a little surplus is unavoidable. I will touch up the appropriate places with a little deck paint and white if required when it has all set.



And so, to the next stages. After the trims, these are pieces of furniture making really as all of the removeable hatches and wheelhouse are teak coloured and prominent, so the design and build of these is interesting with some visible dark wood joints that will not stand much filling (so my joints need to be well made really!).

There are six pieces of varying sizes to make: the wheelhouse is the largest and most obvious that will fill the large hole in the



deck, followed by two nominally identical glazed hatches to fill the other two holes, plus an unglazed hatch at the bow end (as an escape hatch from the forward cabin), an exit



door/'companion way' from the rear cabin to the rear deck and a set of steps between the decks at the rear. I intend to start small with the forward hatch as the easiest to get my eye in and proceed upwards in size (and complexity). The photos show the real thing that I have to copy: I intend to make them all with closed hatches and doors for simplicity (and they will not be 'openable either!'). The curved front of the wheelhouse promises to be the most challenging (note that, like the real thing, the curved portion stops at deck height so the wheelhouse itself is larger than the hole in the deck I have made).



The front hatch was quite easy and I made that as a box from some light-coloured hardwood that I had (it was some old trim from a house redecoration that seemed too good to discard) and an appropriate size and thickness, once I had sanded off the paint and varnish on it. The advantages of keeping odd bits as a modeller on the basis 'it will come useful one day'! On this subject, you would be amazed at what is thrown in skips when people renovate things when all you want is little bits and pieces (but always ask if you can 'raid the skip') – not modern chipboard stuff unless that's what you want, but decent pine and hardwood, usually ripped out and useless for house sized bits, but good for models! The corners were mitred and glued to preserve grain direction and the insides strengthened with more strips that I used to for screw holes. The joint between the top hinged bit in real life and the deck mounted bit was simulated with a heavily scribed line: when I dyed the wood using the Van Dyke solution (see earlier), the dye gathers in the line and darkens it making a very convincing joint. There was a minor question here about how to fasten it down onto a deck without a hole to drop it into, so I left the top off until I had screwed it down, then made a top and finished it completely and superglued in place after fixing it to the deck. That Soudal 'fast-tack' white sealant/glue came in useful here: the photos of the real thing showed a white stripe around the joint with the deck that is clearly sealant and I mimicked this with the aid of masking tape for a clean edge: like fitting a bath surround but much smaller. The 'hinges' you can see are short bits of brass wire cut and superglued to the joint line after dyeing and prior to varnishing. On the subject of varnishing, large tins of yacht varnish are fine for large areas (like the hull) but a little too coarse for small bits, and it can take a long time to dry: I used Humbrol 'Gloss cote' (in 28mL bottles) for these bits of 'furniture', it dries very quickly, flats easily for a couple of coats and does not obliterate fine detail.



The next item was the couple of steps down from the main deck to the rear deck. I was able to cut down some old mahogany to a thin section (around 3mm) and make the steps as the originals were made. These were glued, dyed a little and varnished as for the other bits and held in place by drilling four small (1/16") holes in steps and deck and fastened down with bits of brass wire and a little epoxy glue.

The last bit of 'static' furniture was the companion way and hatch into the rear cabin. This is made in two bits: a door with glazed windows (and a black backing as there is no hole to look through), and a hatch similar to the front hatch above and held in place like the steps: bits of brass wire and epoxy.

Having finished the 'static' furniture (ie that which is glued in place), I now need to start the removeable bits, starting with the deck hatches. These are *nominally* identical, but this is a hand made model (!) and they need to be made to suit. In fact, to match the deck holes, one is slightly longer than the other, and one is slightly 'parallelogram'. The wooden bits and pieces were made up as a kit of parts to keep checking they fitted as they were made. The 'aprons' that line the hatch opening are 2mm plywood let into and glued into the hardwood: there are of course other ways to do this, I chose one that used up my stock of materials! They are 'glazed' (with some 2mm Perspex I had around) and so slots needed cutting for this, and also since the wood is a light hardwood, it will need dyeing and I did not fancy doing this with the Perspex in situ, so I had to make them in stages with one 'glazing bar' left off on each side to allow the perspex to be slid in later and secured with one of the glazing bars superglued in place. Since I chose to make the hatches 'see through' the interior view of the construction had really to match the real thing at least at first glance. You make bits using the tools you have (unless you want to invest in something new of course) and in my case, I was lucky to have a vertical mill and a 2mm rotary cutter for it that made slitting the wood for the Perspex fiddley but easy. If I hadn't had this machine, then I guess I would have built the slots up from strip wood: more time



consuming but just as good. The photo shows a kit of bits (apart from the Perspex and the central 'glazing bars' that were added with superglue last of all). They were glued up 'in situ' in the hole for them (taking care not to glue them in permanently!) to make sure they fitted OK. Although the structures seem quite strong, the joints are simple butt joints glued up. The Perspex will stop them collapsing

under normal use (I hope) but, if not, I will have to add some other stiffening in the corners... With apologies for the blurring in the distance, here is the deck thus far with furniture in place:

And that accounts for all of the deck furniture apart from the big one...

