Deck frames, internal sealing

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Sundowner – 6

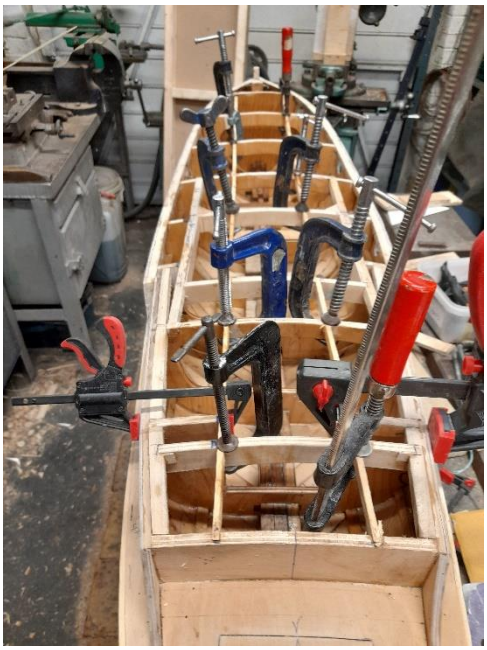
I have had my sleep time to think things over and decided to cross the Rubicon and saw the frame extensions off. My reasoning is that there is a lot of work to sort out the decking, including where the hatches and cabin are located and this cannot be done with the extensions in place.

Bearing in mind I used as a basis a set of line drawings for a Steam Pinnace of the age that Sundowner was based on (around 1910), I did not feel competent to alter the location longitudinally of these frames and still have a realistic hull, so I gambled that the hatches etc would all line up OK with the frames….mmm, yes, they *nearly* did….

I thought first though that I would deck the aft section now that I had completed the rudder control work. I had to seal this bit up sooner or later! I cut out the rear deck with a hatch (that needed to be 'invisible' as it is a feature that was not represented on the prototype) and this is secured with a single screw working in an epoxied piece of brass after matching its curve to the deck (two layers of ply glued whilst holding a curve). The photo shows the aft deck fitted and the frame extensions removed. You can see the slot in the deck that the rudder lever works in. I hope that this slot is small enough to restrict any water overflow. Thank goodness I cut out 80% of each cut required for frame removal when I made them, a coping saw managed the last bit in spite of all sorts of things getting in the way. I had already (with the frame extensions in place) located some stringers the right width for the cabin to fit in between. I intend to make the two hatches (each about 100mm x 150mm long) and the cabin/wheelhouse removeable for access, but since there is a large deck, especially at the front end, there is still the potential for awkward access.

As a break, I decided to make the prominent dark hardwood trim pieces visible on the prototype, mainly to see what the best way to do this was. That old mahogany came useful here and I found I could saw out and shape these quite acceptably. They are not glued on yet though (or

trimmed to length), just waiting in the stock of bits to be added later.



The frame extension removal allowed me to check out the positioning of the hatches and cabin in relation to the frames. It necessitated some adjustments to the frames forming the deck beams though and I had to remove and reposition deck beams a little to accommodate the hatches and cabin. This was not difficult as it is all wood working with the deck as a strength member later, but now was the time to do it! The long stringers match the hatch widths and provide an edging for the deck which obviously will need holes where the hatches (and the cabin) will be. You can see some new beams as a result of the changes required.

After the glue had dried, and some thought to make sure I had not missed anything (I will find out what I did not realise later I expect), I decided to 'finish' the inside of the hull as applying paint etc was not going to be possible after the deck was on. I somewhat cursorily sanded the inside of the hull, decided that it was only visible with the hatches etc removed or through the portholes, so a functional finish rather than a beautiful one was the order of the day. I painted the hull inside all over with epoxy resin first to seal it, and then applied grey primer. I then added another layer of epoxy resin over this to seal that, so the inside will be a dark grey. Not the colour of the interior of the prototype, but I decided that it was better that you could not see much through the portholes as the furniture in the real one will be replaced with RC systems, electric motor and battery!

When this paint and resin all dried, it was then time to make up the deck and glue it on. I decided, after looking at photos of the real one, that the decorative edging around the top of the hull overlapped the deck and sealed the edge, so it is deck first then edging. I am glad about this as it makes painting it easier: the dilemma includes the choice between applying the trim while wood is there for the glue to grab, masking off the place where it will go and painting the rest, or varnishing the trim first then gluing it and painting up to the edge OR painting the whole lot without the trim and then using small countersunk screws and maybe epoxy glue to secure it later. The last sounds easiest if I can disguise the (small) screw heads!