



*F&B's Workshop & Fitting Out section is designed to assist readers with technical or fitting out problems. Typical matters include dialogue on re-powers, upgrading electronics, prop selection and use, matters of trim & performance, maintenance etc. If we can't help, we'll find the best person on the subject for you, and relay their views.*

## Home Work Shop & Fitting Out

# Retro-installation Of Trim Tabs On A 580 Whittley Voyager

It seemed like a good idea at the time. Earlier this year, F&B's publisher Ruth Cunningham and her partner Gordon Richmond purchased a 2002 Whittley Voyager 580 cruiser fitted with a Yamaha 4-stroke 115hp that had been very nicely appointed and maintained. It was a classic "Why would you buy new when you could buy such a good boat secondhand?" purchase, and everybody was thrilled about the acquisition.

For their needs, it is almost the perfect boat – as they adore cruising, fishing and exploring through the middle areas of the lower part of Moreton Bay in the stretch of water opposite the sprawling Horizon Shores Marina, about half way between Brisbane and the Gold Coast. This waterway has myriad shoal channels, sand banks, hidden creeks, riverlets and drains, and large parts of it do not require much imagination to think you were 'lost' somewhere in Far North Qld. It's a beautiful cruising ground and the Whittley is perfect for the job they had in mind i.e., becoming competent bream, whiting and flatie fishermen, and taking Gordon's sons (both big lads) out for the day's boating and/or various rellos that come and go from interstate to enjoy the beautiful SEQ waterways.

All was good, but when asked for the writer's opinion, I



Ruth Cunningham with Dug the pup (!) who thinks this whole boating, swimming, chasing seagulls caper is huge fun!



Gordon and Ruth's Whittley 580 Voyager is an ideal mini cruiser for a family of mixed pursuits (fishing, exploring, swimming, climbing sandhills, crabbing, etc) and the 115 Yamaha 4-stroke a terrific blend of power and economy. The tabs have made a good boat, even better.

had to confess that I thought the Whittley was travelling (as so many of these craft do) a bit bum down for my liking, and further, when their guests sat in the moulded rear seats around the outboard well, the 115 Yammy was actually struggling to get the boat onto plane as easily as it should.

This, plus the all-over camper-canopy structure on the Whittley is fairly easily pushed around by the wind. Adding to the problem, Gordon is about twice Ruth's size - so if he's driving, the rig has a definite bias to starboard.

These are all really common problems with boats that are left in standard form from the day they're launched, and clearly the previous owner hadn't worried about it and/or had only ever taken out very light loads.

Here, the load was not only diverse, it was growing. In more recent months, this Whittley team have added to the crew with an irrepressibly happy Golden Retriever pup. In what has seemed like a few hours, let alone weeks or months, the 'pup' has grown from two hands to about six hands high already, and rumour has it they will have to sell the Whittley to buy a 25 footer shortly, just to keep Dug the dawg happy in his newfound home – remember, Retrievers do love their watersports!

Seriously, this was your classic family situation where a standard boat is struggling to cope with the diversity of crew, sea conditions, wind and normal family picnic loadings. Plus Dug!

The writer's suggestion that trim tabs would provide a significant boost to the Whittley's waterline planing area and that the down force of tabs would be a huge assistance in getting the boat up and out of the water, let alone provide the lateral force needed to keep the boat on an even keel and plumbed vertically for choppy conditions, was well received and appreciated.

The decision was made. Let's just do it!

They went ahead and researched the market, noting the QL tabs from Volvo, Lenco from several sources and of course the writer's favourite, the Bennett trim tabs that are available in an excellent range of sizes – with the Bennett M120 Sports Tab kit being most appropriate here for the Whittley.

Now at this stage, it was all good – buy tabs, size them for the boat, and because Gordon is (amongst other things) a highly trained fitter and turner, he was more than capable of installing them himself – apart from which he really enjoys mucking round on boats like the rest of us.

So it was all good, until we slipped the boat and had a long, depressing look at what was left of the transom to put something like trim tabs onto.



### Where To Put Them

This particular model Whittley has had several rebirths in different guises, and the model that Gordon and Ruth purchased has these mini pods on each side of the