

# Flat Floors For A Quinnie FishAbout

**W**ell, it was holidays and I had run out of things to do around the house.

My wife Katrina, had sent me off fishing to Lake Macquarie just to the north of Sydney, when I first thought of the idea. I had our old 1985 Quintrex Fishabout Mk11 (featured in the April edition of F&B) to myself for a couple of days and had taken to casting whilst standing on and stepping between the crossswarts. The boat was stable enough by a long shot, but I had to be very careful not to fall down in between the crossswarts as I moved from one end of the boat to the other.

Nothing like tripping over all those cross braces and stringers that you find on the bottom of alloy boats either.

If you haven't yet heard about the Quintrex Fishabout Mk11, there is a good description of it in Jeff Webster's Secondhand Boat Workshop . . . *"basically a big open tinnie with a windscreen tacked onto the bow and the engine controls moved forward" . . . "Still the addition of a windscreen, steering wheel, a couple of plastic swiveling seats was enough to convert a dinghy into a felly fledged runabout. For the novice boater or fisherman it was pretty much the perfect boat."*

I was going to make it



better.

What I like about it is it's perfect to handle in and out of the water single handedly and also light enough to launch from a sandy beach without getting bogged, providing of course that you have a 4WD and you let some of the air out of your rear tyres first.

We regularly launch ours from the "designated" sand boat ramp/beach at Clontarf Reserve near Middle Harbour in Sydney.

The fishing was pretty lousy, thanks to professional fishermen that had netted the lakes again just before I arrived and whose licences I thought I had helped to buy out (by purchasing my \$70 Fishing Licence, although it is early days yet), so in my mind began thinking on how I was going to install a new plywood floor in the boat.

I initially thought of a complete platform to cover both crossswarts but decided that it wasn't suitable for our three kids

in terms of safety, although the idea would be fine for a couple of serious adult fishermen wanting a pure casting platform.

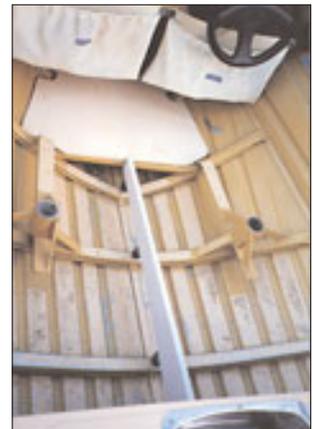
The next best option was to place the floor at the bottom of the crossswarts. This would be safe for the kids and also let us get around more easily and better still, improve the usability and appearance of the inside of the boat. My kids also suggested/pleaded for carpet so they could sleep on the floor on the way home from a long day's fishing.

The photographs show how I went about doing the renovation. I might say too, that it doesn't have to be an old boat either to do this. Any tinnie, new or old, with crossswarts would be an ideal platform. They are cheaper to buy and if you'd like the extra comfort of the floor and have some general building ability and common sense, it really is quite easy.

You don't need a great big workshop and lots of

tools either. Our boat lives in the front yard and with some good weather, a long extension cord, a drill and most importantly, a jigsaw and some basic tools, you can do just about anything (oh, you also need an understanding wife as well and a couple of ice cold beers at the end of each day to admire your hard day's work and ponder over the next day's plan of attack.)

After the first of several visits to the hardware shop and Whitworths (my now favourite shop) it was time



to start work.

First, I attached the aluminium "L" shaped strips along the bottom length of both sides of the middle crosswart and the front side of the rear crosswart.

These were to form a ledge for the floor to sit on, but not to take all the weight. Next measure and cut the lengths of 25mm x 75mm pine supports so that they are supported by rubber stoppers (door



forward plywood shelf that had rotted out but still gave a good shape to trace around. If in doubt you can always cut some areas too small, just to get it to fit into the boat and then fill in up against the edge or shape by masking on some off-cut cardboard onto the main template (refer to photo).

I had ordered some marine ply that was duly delivered and despite its

cost, is of very high quality and longevity compared to the non-marine type of ply you can buy. I ordered two sheets of 9mm x 1.2mm x 1.8mm and it cost around \$164. Using the templates and fitting them economically onto the ply, carefully cut the shapes, try out the fit and trim as required with the jigsaw.

*(Hint . . . allow plenty of room on the edges for the extra space that the carpet takes up when wrapped around the edge of the board).*

Pre-drill the holes required and seat the screws and then remove (always makes it easier when installing the finished floor).

I now undercoated all the ply and pine supports and waited patiently.

Seven cups of coffee later, lie on the floor upside down onto the upside down carpet and mark out with chalk leaving about 3" (or 75mm) either side of the shape where you want to fold it over and then carefully cut the carpet out. Have a real good think about upside down/right side up here because you only get one chance. The carpet cost about \$99 (including glue) for 2m x 2.5m from my favourite shop. Glue it to the top of the floor, re-drill the holes through the carpet

stops in the real world) which sit squarely on the cross braces of the boat.

I wanted to avoid any load going onto the alloy sheet floor of the boat here, but rather onto the structural parts such as the cross braces. This avoids the obvious structural implications but also keeps trapped seawater or moisture from congregating between the sheet floor and supports, which could lead to corrosion. The stoppers provide a nice solid support and can still help absorb the shock of kids jumping up and down or the pounding that tinnies are famous for when underway in a chop. (See photo). Incidentally, get the black stoppers . . . the white ones perish for some reason very quickly, whilst the black ones last very well.

The floor then sits on these cross supports and if you install them as shown they are incredibly strong. (You could use any type of timber here as long as it's reasonably strong).

Next, use strong left over cardboard (the packing boxes of new appliances etc) and with a sharp knife and some masking tape; start making some templates for the floor shapes.

I had to make three separate floor shapes, the last being from the original





carefully and then mark the holes with a black marker pen to help locate them later on when installing (these marks will be covered by the screws later). (See photo).

Fold and glue the edges around and onto the bottom of the board, re-drill the holes again through this flap and then trim any unwanted carpet away with a sharp knife (best not to have any kids hanging around at this stage).

The next thing I did is a bit questionable (in my mind at least) in terms of corrosion and its prevention and would appreciate any sort of feedback from readers if they have had any problems. With all the recent articles

on the lack of floatation on most of the old (and new) boats around at the moment in Australia and bearing in mind that I have four of my most treasured possessions with me when I take my family out fishing, I decided to lay some extra floatation into the Quintrex before fitting the new floor. One very interesting article had a gentleman using old 2 litre milk cartons as floatation which seemed very light, durable and effective so I used a combination of polystyrene (foam) and these milk cartons in our boat. (See photo).

My concern though is that the cartons and foam are sitting directly onto the sheet alloy floor of the boat

under the plywood floor where there is the potential for trapped moisture . . . and possible corrosion. So, if there is any information out there one way or the other I would appreciate hearing from you and if need be, remove the floatation.

Fit the floors and screw them into place. Then, it's just a matter of re-installing all of the other fittings you

accumulate over the years that have broken legs, and are unusable. It pays to approach the Principal or school handyman, make yourself known and ask if you can have any. I don't necessarily like the colour and could probably re-spray them, but they'll do for now.

The finished product is a vast improvement over the old alloy ribbed floor in



has such as oars, rocket tubes, drink holders, clip hooks and yabbie pumps.

I also fitted three plastic seats on the rear crossthwart. To buy new they are quite expensive, but most of the local state schools have a few of these old chairs that

terms of looks and ease of moving about and now the kids even have a place to rest on the way home from our yet to be replenished fishing spots up at Lake Macquarie.

It was a rewarding exercise, reasonably easy to do and relatively inexpensive, although it did take some careful planning, some good weather and a couple of solid days. (See photos). Using stainless steel screws into aluminium (rather than brass or steel) and undercoating all the timber means that the floor will probably last longer than our poor old boat does now and provide many more years of fun and happy fishing for our family. The kids love it. So does that understanding wife of mine, although I don't think she'd ever admit it.

Dave Hawkins



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