



David Hawkins Fit-Out:

Upgrading the Quinnie - With A Fly Casting Platform

Over the last few years, particularly around Sydney, salt-water fly-casting has become increasingly popular.

I've written a few articles on improvements to our old Quintrex Fishabout MK II and here is another one dealing with fitting out the boat with a removable fly-casting platform. I first had the idea when my wife Katrina had let me go off by myself up to the family holiday house at Lake

Macquarie for a week's fishing a few years back.

I found that I was bottom fishing from the boat by standing on and walking around the cross thwarts. The boat was surprisingly stable, however the problem was that I had to keep looking where I was walking so as not to fall off the cross thwarts.

At that stage we had no false floor in the boat at all and the slippery ribbed bottom of the boat was treacherous to walk about

with bare feet. The kids had constantly kicked their toes on the stringers and slipped around on the angled boat floor. It was then, fishing up at the lake by myself, that I decided on how I was going to lay a carpeted floor into the boat.

If any readers are interested, the article I wrote on how I went about laying the floor featured in F&B #68. As I explained in that article, I initially wanted to put a platform right across the cross thwarts, but decided against it at that stage because I was worried that the floor would be too high and that the kids could fall over board too easily. I opted therefore to lay the floor at the bottom level of the cross thwarts instead, but noted that a platform sitting on the cross thwarts would be ideal for a couple of serious adult fishermen

and better still, for fly-casting by a single adult – ideal in fact, for a shortish, balding man of my stature and appearance! Well, after a few years and a new saltwater fly rod as a Father's Day present, I've finally got around to installing the platform and the following article details how to go about achieving what has become a valuable asset to this boat.

Multi-Function

Most things these days are modular and/or multi purpose. I wanted to keep what has been an ideal boating format (in terms of safety and useability for our kids), but also wanted the capability to change it over quickly and easily into a fly-casting boat. So I approached the project with this in mind. I wanted an easy lift-off platform that could be stored in the garage when not required.





I had installed a few plastic seats at the same time that the original floor was installed and these have been fantastic (despite the orange colour) so I wanted to retain these. The newly painted seats now sit attached to a carpeted piece of marine ply that slides in against the rear vertical bulkhead and drops in behind a 20mm x 20mm length of aluminium that runs the width of the boat (to stop the seats sliding forward).



Plastic rocket tubes stop the seats at the rear from lifting and the seat backs sitting against the rear bulkhead stop them from falling backward when sitting in the seats. The whole thing lifts out to make way for the fly-casting platform.

Four lengths of the same 20mm x 20mm square aluminium lengths run from the rear cross thwart to the front cross thwart (butting up against the aluminium strip that retains the seat assembly and laying on top of the forward

cross thwart). The platform is attached to these four supports. A rubber (door) stopper is attached to the two outside aluminium supports underneath to stop the platform sliding forward. Each support has little rubber self-adhesive pads underneath to protect the paintwork on the cross thwarts.

Cardboard Template

Using a serrated kitchen knife, some masking tape and large sheets of cardboard, make a template to trace onto the marine ply. It's much easier and cheaper to make mistakes (and correct them) on old cardboard, than it is on expensive marine ply. When you're happy that it fits correctly and can lift off un-hindered, trace it onto the 9mm marine ply. I ordered two sheets of 1.2m x 1.8m

marine ply and the total cost was about \$205.

- Using your jigsaw, cut out the shape and holes for hatches and rocket tubes and try it out on the boat. Don't forget to make a generous allowance for the thickness of the outdoor marine carpet, which will wrap around the sides of the platform!

- Drill all holes to attach the aluminium supports.
- Mark the bottom of the platform with chalk and lay it down... upside down onto the upside down carpet (\$90-00 incl glue).

- Draw a margin of about 3" around the outside of the platform with chalk and carefully cut the carpet out with one of those horrible box cutters.

- Glue the carpet onto the ply with contact cement and leave for about 30 minutes.

- Trim the overhanging flaps and glue and wrap around onto the bottom of the ply. Use small brass nails to help keep the flaps from lifting.

- Re-drill the holes through the carpet and mark the holes where they exit with a black marker pen. This helps locate the holes when installing and will be covered by the stainless screws and washers.

- Bolt the aluminium supports to the platform.

- Drop the platform into place and fit the hatches (cat # 42134 & 66043) and rocket tubes (cat # 71928).

- Finally, attach two of those canopy loops (cat #14324) to stop the platform from lifting in the slipstream when driving on the highway.

I also carpeted another piece of ply to fit into the same position as the seats. The platform overlaps this piece by about 3". It has two nylon



crab pots up at the lake (F&B #79) A carry-tube holding the saltwater fly rod also fits in the recess that has been created (see photo).

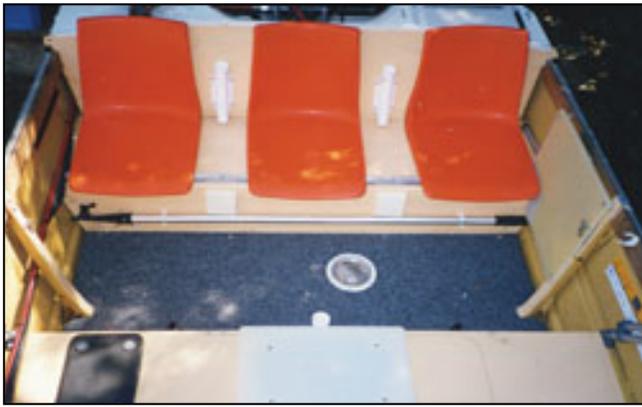
Finally, to complete the ensemble, I purchased a



clips to hold the gaff with a cleat attached. We use this gaff with the cleat for untangling blue swimmer crabs from the witches hat

fly-rod holder to store that fragile rod out of harm's way when not in use and when underway.

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Extra Features . .

Now, just a couple of features that I'd like to explain . . .

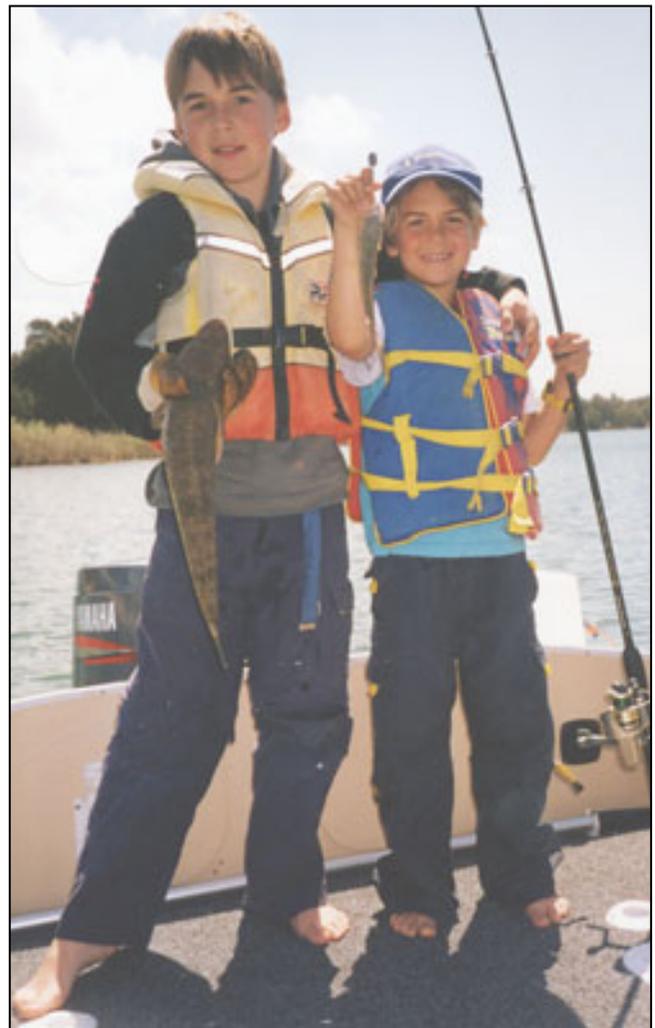
The large hatch was fitted to cover a plastic bin (yet to be fitted) to be used as a live bait tank or storage for the catch of the day. To date though, due to the original carpeted floor underneath the platform, there is now a huge storage space for just about anything that will fit between the cross thwarts, including jumpers, towels, bags and fishing gear. Perhaps if you were to go camping with the boat, this would be the ideal space for storing tents, sleeping bags, etc. Secondly, the round hatch sits over the plumbed sink in the forward cross thwart. Ideal, as it stands for keeping the catch of the day in, or for lures and other things. We quite often tip in some ice and a little water to act as a small ice slurry. You may

also note the nylon cutting board mounted vertically on the port side of the boat. Rather than have the net lying around all over the place and getting tangled up with hooks and tripping kids in moments of excitement, it is now slotted in behind this board out of the way, yet still within easy reach. The photo shows the net pulled halfway out.

The photographs hereabout show before and after shots and also both configurations available.

Well, how does it work? We tried the new platform out up at Narrabeen Lake in Sydney with the kids for some normal bottom fishing. I've got to say that it was highly successful and better than I thought it would be.

All of my fears about them falling over board were dashed . . . possibly because they've grown up a little more since I first thought of the idea and now have some boat



sense about them. I still wouldn't take them out in rougher conditions though with the platform fitted...I'll leave that for when I go out by myself or with a mate. For calm conditions though, it's ideal with the kids and all the stuff you tend to carry around with you for the day.

Footnote: You may be wondering about the boat's stability now that the floor is higher. Well, even with my two boys and another adult all standing on the platform, the Quintrex was amazingly stable. As well, you can even lie down on it for a relaxing sleep after lunch under the canopy. There's even potential here for camping on the boat with some sleeping bags over night up at the Basin or other such places.

The Hawkins Theory

So, once again, with some simple tools such as a jigsaw, electric drill, a long extension cord, some basic tools and some nice weather, you can knock this platform up in the best part of a day. Once again, I did all this in the front yard (only because I don't have a garage) and all for a relatively small price.

If this all seems a little daunting for you to try out for yourself, I offer the following for your consideration. I haven't had any formal training in any sort of wood or sheet metal working and I certainly don't have any sophisticated tools or workshops etc, but the whole trick lies in thinking about an idea over a few weeks or months.

Try imagining the whole thing in your head before you commence work. Work through every detail. Knowing what is available out there for you to use in completing your project is also the key. I often browse



through the "Whitworths" catalogue when I'm thinking about a new idea. I sometimes even walk around the store (even though I'm not out to purchase anything) purely to see what's available, and if I can use it for my idea. If you see a good idea on another boat or in a magazine, store it away in your mind for later.

It's all then a matter of piecing it all together. Using a template out of cardboard for finalizing shapes is also a way of not cutting into expensive plywood or aluminium and also gives you the confidence to experiment freely without the fear of wasting money. Aluminium is easy to work with and won't rust. Don't use steel or galvanized self-tapping screws and avoid brass unless it's going into wood. Instead, use Stainless Steel, or better still, use

aluminium rivets if you can, to reduce the risk of corrosion.

Lastly, think about where you're going to position things such as rocket tubes, hatches etc under all configurations. That is, will the rocket tubes still work when the canopy is up as well as down? Can you position the canopy so that it folds forward, or would it be better folding backward? Another trick is employing the dual usage theory. For instance, can you use the ice chest as a seat as well? Can you make the ice chest removable? If so, just cut out the seat with an angle grinder and get into it! These sort of modifications save a lot of space. Having an old boat to start off with also makes it a lot easier to experiment on. Our boat was probably only worth a thousand dollars or so (motor not included) to

start off with, so there wasn't too much to lose. However, at the end of the day, it all goes to making for a very useable and uncluttered boat that is easy to move around in and also has features that you would normally only find in a bigger boat.

Flexibility Pays Off

The best thing so far about this modular concept, is that I could feasibly go out by myself (or with my eldest son) and use the platform for an early fish, then come back to the lake house, undo the canopy loops, lift the platform off by myself and then drop in the seat module and the boat is now ready for the kids and their water activities...and all in a matter of minutes! Makes for a very versatile family and fishing boat.

Footnote: Since having written this article, the family have used the boat on a number of occasions up at the Lake and the consensus is that the fly-casting platform has proved so handy and effective that it is now in position permanently and will be removed only as required, should the other configuration be desired.

It has given the boat a large platform on which the kids can get into their water-skis without hassle and has proved to be an ideal area for the odd bit of sun baking (protected of course) and snoozing whilst the kids go off to collect shells and whatever it is that they collect along the shoreline.

And of course, the fishing and crabbing useability is just fantastic.

- Dave Hawkins

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