

# DIY Boat Building & Fitting Out

## Ice Chests, Anchors & Other Stuff

More innovative ideas from Quinnie owner,  
Dave Hawkins



Do It Yourself  
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### Ice Chest Solutions . .

**F**urther to the articles about improving our 1985 4.5m Quintrex Fishabout MkII boat (as featured F&B #64 and October #68), readers may ask the question “Why not just get a new boat with all these features already installed?”

It’s a good question.

As in most cases, this boat was bought from a friend of mine for only two thousand dollars and was intended as a cheap way into family boating.

Well, if only my wife Katrina knew that it was going to unleash a creative storm in me she might have had second thoughts! Although honestly, the boat has turned out to be a fantastic fishing and light boating platform and I think just now, it has neared its full development potential. Well, maybe. Most of the improvements have been reasonably inexpensive at the end of the day compared to the cost of a new boat (except for the Yamaha 40 hp motor which replaced the dead Evinrude 25), but more importantly the last few years have been a good exercise in problem solving and experience in general handy work.

My first article (April) dealt with the problem of storage space in old/little “tinnies” such as the 1985 Quintrex Fishabout MkII. This article touches on a few more ideas that other small boat owners may be able to incorporate into their boats.

Firstly, every good boat that is used for either family outings or for a long day’s fishing needs a good ice chest to store cold drinks and food and perhaps, if lucky, to keep your catch in an ice



slurry on the way home at the end of the day. But it’s not that simple is it? As I saw it,

- Big ice chest, small boats - *doesn’t work.*
- Medium ice chest, small boats - *might just work.*
- Small ice chest, small boats - *useless.*

The problem with any sort of extra stuff that you take onto any boat is one of the effective use of space. Nothing like tripping over bags, tackle boxes and ice chest when trying to move about a boat already filled with two adults and three kids.

Our boat, built in 1985 was fitted with two swivelling seats at the front. Once again, Jeff Webster’s book *Second Hand Boat Workshop* has a good description of this boat. Over the years of boating in the Quinnie, I have found that I generally prefer to drive the boat whilst standing (probably a wind in the hair, man type thing) with the original driver’s seat quite often getting in the way. Also, with the recent addition of the new carpeted floor (F&B #68) we found that the extra 5 inches or so that the floor was elevated, meant that our knees were

almost up near our chins and was a most uncomfortable way to sit when underway or even whilst fishing i.e. seats were too close to the ground.

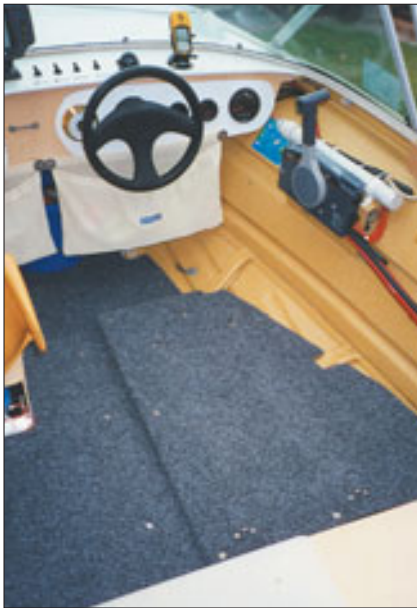
My birthday came and went, but with it came a beautiful new Coleman ice chest, (the one with no wheels) proving that hinting in a painfully obvious way to the family can still work.

It is just perfect as a replacement to the driver’s seat in the Quinnie. Now this 50 litre ice chest is no small ice chest. My plan was to cut the seat post out of the boat and lay an extra piece of floor to which the chest could be attached. I wanted to be able to remove the ice chest if required when using the boat for towing sea biscuits and water skiing with the kids, when it’s easier to be standing and not have the seat in the way.

The enclosed photographs show the ice chest in position and held firmly by octopus straps. Also note the photo with the ice chest removed.

*(Hint: Attach the tie downs carefully so that they face in the correct direction so that when your toe comes into contact with it, your toe doesn’t break, but slides over the top!)*

The ice chest makes a fantastic “long” seat so that one of the kids can sit in front and help me drive and goes without saying that it performs fantastically at keeping things cool. It’s also great for storing other things such as bags, towels and all the other stuff you could think of to bring onto a boat, when the ice chest is not in use.

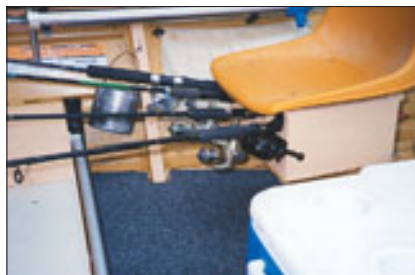


Importantly, for all that extra storage space, it has encroached very little into the original floor space of the boat.

Secondly, where does everyone store their rods when transporting their boat to and from ramps and holiday locations? Most of the time the rods end up on the floor of the boat, unless of course you have rocket tubes attached to your car’s bull-bar. At the end of the trip these reasonably

expensive rods (and might I say braided line) are generally tangled up and the line is invariably snapped during the “rod separation procedure” with sinkers and hooks flying all over the place and eventually finding their way into the most inaccessible place on the boat.

Lead and aluminium - doesn’t work. Just getting back briefly to the ice chest scenario, I needed to improve that squatting type stance that my wife Katrina had to adopt whilst seated in the passenger seat above the recently raised floor.



A wooden box of about 4 inches in height would do the trick. Why not incorporate some more storage space under the seat instead of just having a box there? Why not also make some holes in the front to store the rods in safely when driving the boat to and from the ramp or to Lake Macquarie? I had some left over marine ply from the floor project, so went about making the box. The back end of the box has been left open with an aluminium “L” shape length preventing anything falling out. The front of the box has four holes cut in at the top for the rods. In the middle of the box is another vertical wall with four holes cut in it for the rod ends to rest in so that the rods are supported. A photo tells a thousand words.

So, there you have it. Katrina has a more comfortable seated stance whilst fishing and due to the ice chest and the under seat box, we have more storage space on the little boat and have lost very little in terms on floor space - whilst at the same time, vastly improving the useability of the boat.

## Anchoring Action . . .

**Stepping back to when we first obtained this, our first boat almost four years ago, like every one who is new to boating, there were things to learn. We predominantly fished up at our family’s holiday house up at Lake Macquarie.**

There we were, anchored at our favourite spot with the anchor tied onto the back of the boat, transom into wind. Well, I didn’t know any better, did I? There was no way I was going to climb over that hand rail above the windscreen to tie the anchor on from the front again. It had hurt me too much the first time.

This rail shall from here on in be unaffectionately referred to as the “Goolyana bar”. I had tried climbing around the side of the boat but had almost jettisoned the entire family over the side, myself included. So, for self preservation and to avoid the screams of fear every time I climbed onto the gunwale, I had taken to tying off at the back of the boat.

It always takes the law to make you learn quickly. A large Water Authorities Cat went ploughing past, with a nervous wave from an obvious novice (me) in a small, old Quinnie with his entire family in it, hoping he wasn’t going to be inspected for safety gear (I was fairly confident I had all the right gear, but you never know, do you?).

Then the Cat stopped and came back! *Uh-oh . . .*

And to his eternal credit, I might say now, thank heavens he did.

**He gently pointed out that tying the boat off at the stern wasn’t a good idea, especially with such a low clearance that you find in these old boats.**

He kindly explained that all you needed was another boat going past too close and the wake would slop into the boat like that, and before you knew it, would fill up very quickly with the lowered transom taking in more water.

Good point. Well, I didn’t want to be the first one responsible for finding out if all those expensive swimming lessons for the kids had paid off.

So now I had to start clambering over that bloody windscreen again. So that creative storm started whipping up, and hence the anchor system that you now see on this boat.

I mentioned in the April edition that there are still a lot of these types of



boats around and anchoring safely and properly can present a real problem, especially in strong wind conditions. Fortunately Quintrex and many other Australian boat manufacturers have the split windscreens now, and the problem has all but gone away.

F&B published a great article on anchors that they subsequently incorporated into their Curran 485 Runabout. Mine is yet another system that has worked faultlessly over the last four years or so and for those of you who still have these older boats, is reasonably easy to make.

**How It Works** Once again a picture tells a thousand words. Interestingly we use a sailing cam cleat (Whitworths Cat # 16360) as well as a normal cleat (#15913) mounted up on the Goolyana bar.

In this way, when fishing, we can let out all of the anchor rope and if need be change our position by a few feet by simply pulling on the rope. Also good for pulling in rope in windy conditions when the one way cleat takes up most of the strain. The rope is then stored in the sheet bag, also mounted onto the Goolyana bar.

All of this stuff can be purchased at Whitworths (still my favourite shop).

### Assembling The Goolyana System

Put simply, the length of aluminium (82cm) which has the 9cm PVC plumbing pipe clamped on and which holds the anchor and chain (half metre) in place pivots out and around the bow of the boat (the arm being attached via a bolt through the original grab handle on the bow) and the anchor drops vertically out of the tube.

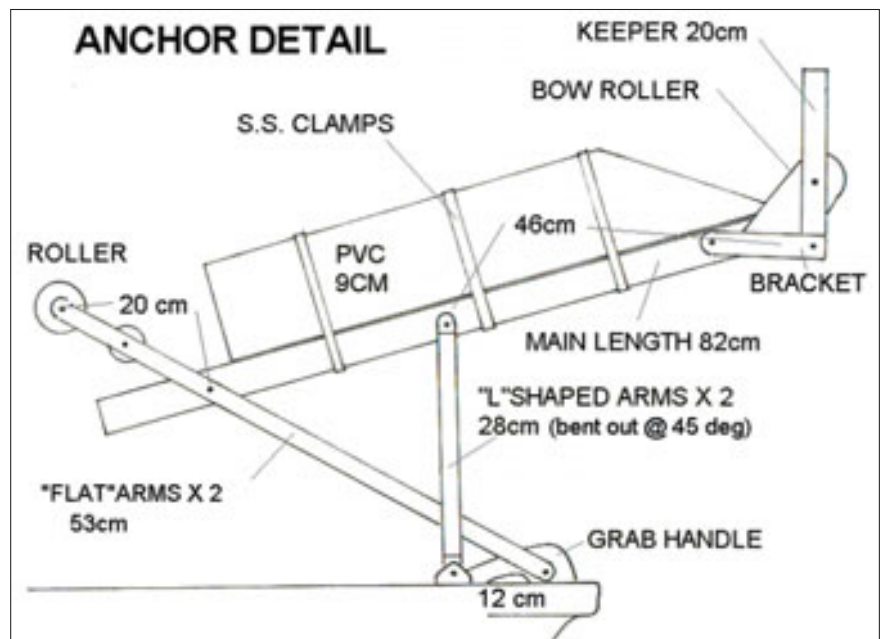
The way in which the tube pivots keeps the anchor away from the bow when dropping and retrieving thus preventing damage to the boat.

Hardware and General in Brookvale, Sydney has all the required lengths and shapes of aluminium forms that you may require. I would imagine that



other larger hardware stores around Australia would also stock aluminium. The anchor is stored over centre so that the weight of the anchor lets the whole assembly pivot when released. I've

included some basic dimensions for those of you who are interested. Pulling on the anchor rope raises the anchor vertically into the tube and then pivots up and away from the bow of



the boat. A bow roller (# 13337) is attached to the front of the main length of aluminium, as is the keeper, which keeps the anchor rope where it should be when retrieving the anchor. This

keeper was also manufactured quite easily as well and is probably the key to the whole thing working so smoothly.

I added the plywood fairings either

side later to hide the aluminium arms but they are of no functional value, just more aesthetic.

Finally a rope (which is operated from within the cockpit) pulls the assembly via a couple of blocks, down at the rear to in effect lift the anchor all the way up for storage. The anchor then slides back securely into the tube, but this is normally only used when on the way home and when completely finished with the anchor. Aluminium is so easy to work with and you only require a couple of basic tools including a hacksaw and drill.

The anchor (#356N) we have used is available from Whitworths and has held the boat securely in all wind conditions even with the shorter than normal length of chain (half metre ). A reef anchor does work equally as well in rocky/reefy locations, but hasn't really suited the type of boating we tend to do up at the Lake.

Well, there you have it. Modification number 562. That's it, I promise. Or at least that's what I've told Katrina. In my mind, at least, all of these modifications have produced an extremely user friendly boat. There is always a rocket tube to put your rod into whilst you untangle one of your kids (and their rods). The anchor works well and is now not quite so painful. The new floor has made the biggest and the best difference so far. The canopy keeps the kids safe from the sun and provides adequate protection from the rain. The ice chest/seat combo works very well and the sink with the cutting board over it in the cross thwart has held countless whiting and squid in it over the last few years. It's now one of those old boats that just works very well.

There is now heaps of storage for rods and everything else. No more tripping all over the place and every one has a seat from which to fish or a place for the little ones to lie and sleep when the fish aren't biting. It's light enough to launch from a soft sand beach and which can handle a bit of Lake Macquarie chop. It's a "no hassles" boat, which is the way boating with a family of three young ones should be. Thanks Quintrex. And finally, thanks Katrina.

All this for two thousand dollars . . . well, *maybe just a little bit more!*  
- Dave Hawkins.



**F&B**