

## FITTING a NEW RUBBING STRAKE

The Rubbing strake on our 8m 'Think Again' was getting very tired, it was probably getting on for 20 years old, and before we brought her she had been on charter in Sardinia, so it had done quite well over the years. We had been thinking about changing it for a number of years now and every time we went to the boat show we would take a look and see what was on offer and pick up the brochures but never got around to placing an order.

Any way this year was going to be different so one of the items on our list when going to the Southampton Boat show was to order a new Rubbing Strake, we new exactly where the stand was because we had been there quite a few times before, the stand was **Wilks** who manufacture Plastic and rubber mouldings etc, they were very helpful in explaining the different types available.

The options being to fit the same as we had on now, try one of the new plastic mouldings or the nice shiny aluminium one, we went for the new plastic moulding, white with a black insert, part number : PVC 1613R ( plastics have improved quite a lot over the past 20 years )

The next thing was to arrange to have Think Again lifted out of the water to allow us the freedom to work all around the boat while removing the old and fitting the new rubbing strake.

We did this at Geoff Elkins Boatyard at Christchurch and having explained to Geoff what I wanted to do he positioned Think Again on the concrete hard standing at the end of the dock, giving us plenty of room to carry out this work .

I had explained to Wilks the date that I was working to and my time scale for doing the job and they even went into production for my requirements as they happened to be out of stock at the time, but it was duly delivered to my home and we fitted it on to the roof rack to transport it to Christchurch..

The removal of the old rubbing strake was quite easy, the insert was just pulled out, and the main rubbing strake being screwed in place by self tapping screws, these were removed using a battery drill with a screw driver attachment, the fibre glass then required quite a lot of cleaning and scrubbing before I was able to prepare to offer up my first Plastic Section.

The old rubbing strake had a galvanised metal insert so I used this as a template to enable me to mark and drill the clearance holes for the self tapping screws, if you are lucky you will find that the screws taken out of the old rubbing strake will be ok for the new one, I used about 50% old and 50% new.

The new rubbing strake was slightly wider then the old one, which meant that as the top edge position would be the same as the old one the screw holes needed to be drilled slightly above centre, I found that by cutting off a short piece of the new rubbing strake, I was able to carry out the necessary positioning and measurement and marking the off centre line allowing me to position the template in place and then drill the clearance holes ready to fit to the side of the boat, I did countersink the holes as I was using countersunk screws but I don't think these were really necessary.

The next step was to offer up the first section, this was a bit awkward because of the length of each section so I positioned a step ladder at one end to support it and the other end I used a longer screw then was necessary to just hold the end in place while I worked along inserting the other screws, of course if there were two of you then so much the better.

Each side took two and a bit lengths, each being 12ft (3.6m) long. They butted up to each other ok and I fitted extra pieces across the bow and the stern for mainly cosmetic reasons (it made it look nice) the occasional extra hole had to be drilled to make sure of support strength across the whole length.

The Rubber insert was next and this went a lot easier then expected, the top edge being slid into place and using a chisel with a blunt edge and a rubber mallet, I was able to work along each side and then the bow and stern pieces, feeding the bottom edge into place and locating the insert into position. **NOTE:** As an after thought I realised that I could have fitted the insert in one piece, all the way around the boat.

Finally I filled the bottom gap with mastic to seal it off and give it a more professional finish.

