



Neil Dunstan: Trojan Progress & Other Bits

Since my last bit of writing about the rebuild of my Dehavilland Trojan, I have progressed reasonably well considering that we have had a run of rotten weather which included pouring rain followed by seriously hot days (where the humidity was close to 100%) and also two cyclones arrived in one week!

During the first one we did not have too much damage as we had prepared well, except for a few trees down and bucketing rain, however the power was out for quite some time and my Chinese two stroke genset was flogging its little heart out keeping the fridges and freezers going: after all, I didn't want my bait supply to thaw out!

The second cyclone (Yasi) was not too bad, as we were just far enough away to miss the severe conditions. We left all the preparations from the first one in place, and waited - and only got winds of 140 kays, plus a tidal surge of



Ebb & Flow... The Trojan Resurrection

a metre or so, which didn't do much damage.

Trojan Repairs

A full inspection of the corrosion under the boat floor revealed about seven areas where items had found their way into the bilge and had been left to start the damage. They had been filled with aluminium putty which we ground out, to reveal some holes ranging from pin hole size to one nearly 20 mm in diameter.

I then trailed the rig into Mackay to BBB Engineering in Archibald Street, one of the best boat builder/repairers around, so that owner/operator Darren Brand could work his magic on the repairs.

He welded up the holes and inspected the rest of the hull and found a couple more pin holes which he fixed. He also welded a couple of small cracks in the cabin top roof and some minor cracks in the floor support structure. I then spoke to him about bringing the boat back to have a windscreen and

hard top fitted, and we decided that he would manufacture a screen out of 3 mm alloy plate with a flange across the top to bolt the front of the hardtop onto as this special screen was cheaper and more convenient to get made than having one made in Brisbane and shipped in.

It was quite coincidental that Darren had just finished work on another Trojan for a local guy who had a seven metre Trojan with a stern drive. This boat was an open centre console of about the same vintage as mine, He had spent quite a few thousand dollars getting a cabin and bunks etc, installed as he reckoned that it was as good as any current boat on the market.

Darren said that the hull was in quite good condition except for a number of places where additions had been bolted on without attention to corrosion and as Darren described there was a bit of a 'swiss cheese' effect. When he first looked at my hull his attention was towards the rivets which

hold most of the load bearing structure together and his opinion, stated there was not a loose rivet in the hull.

He also remarked that Dehavilland knew how to use rivets, as they used them on the aeroplanes that they built in the 1960s-1970s, and I agreed there was a lot of truth in that.

I then took the boat home with the arrangement for me to bring it back in two weeks time, and in the meantime, I would get on with more of my work. One interesting point that I discovered was when I dropped in at a public weighbridge, the hull and trailer only weighed 800 kg, but this was with the boat completely stripped out and with no motor, so I reckon that it should come in at around thirteen hundred kilos complete and with full tanks; well in the safe towing range for my Commodore.

I have now installed all the under floor floatation (which was quite a puzzle as all the pieces were specially moulded to fit

around the under floor structure) and I've also installed the new floor and the new bulkheads in the forward section for the anchor storage and for the general storage area.

One thing that I have decided on is that I don't want any built in fuel tanks because of the problems with stale fuel and the difficulty in removing any fuel that has gone off. Because the old Trojan has a whopping great outboard well to enable the boat to accommodate a pair of the old inline six cylinder Mercury motors of that era (known universally as the "Tower of Power") the area under the well has enough room to stow at least four fuel caddies and then some. That should be heaps, as the 25 hp Parsun 4-stroke I'm going to use initially, can only use about five or six litres an hour flat out.

I have also installed the biggest underfloor bilge pump I could afford, which is rated at 2000 gallons per hour, so I feel confident that if I do take a big one over the top it will have a fair chance of getting rid of it before we sink.

I am pretty wary of that situation since the time when I was fishing one day out from Gove in my Quintrex five metre half cab. We had to get going quickly because a wild looking storm front we had been watching for some time had caught up with us. When we were about a mile out from the ramp, the wind waves against the run out tide made conditions very dangerous and I made a mistake with the throttle control which put the bow of the boat straight through the next wave. A wall of blue water came straight over the foredeck, rolled up and



The single Parsun 25hp 4-stroke will look a little lost on such a big transom, and the rig will probably benefit from some additional weight to settle it properly on its chines - could be a candidate for a decent, supplementary water tank . . . in the lower pic, you could see where he's going with the cabin.



over the cabin and carried away the windscreen and canopy then filled the boat up halfway up to gunwales. I turned the bilge pump on which was the normal useless type that are often fitted by dealers, and discovered I could have pee'd faster.

Some frantic bailing with a bucket got the water down far enough to attempt to get going as by some miracle the motor never missed a beat and we were able to struggle over to a nearby sandbar and beach her while we bailed the rest of the water

out so we could get back to the ramp, which was only half a mile away. The irony of it was that even though the bilge couldn't pump enough water to be of any help, it burnt out after only fifteen minutes of running anyway.

Other Things.

I was very interested in what had happened to all the boats that were destroyed in the Port Hinchinbrook Marina as we have all been faced with what to do with the boat in a cyclone.

It seems to me that the

problem they had was that all the moorings are connected to floating pontoons that rise and fall with the tide and they do this by having piles through the middle of the pontoon which allows them to slide up and down with the change in water level.

If the cyclonic surge was seven metres as claimed then they would most probably rise up so high that they would get higher than the top of the pylon and float away. This can be seen in the pictures of the boats piled up in the marina as most of them

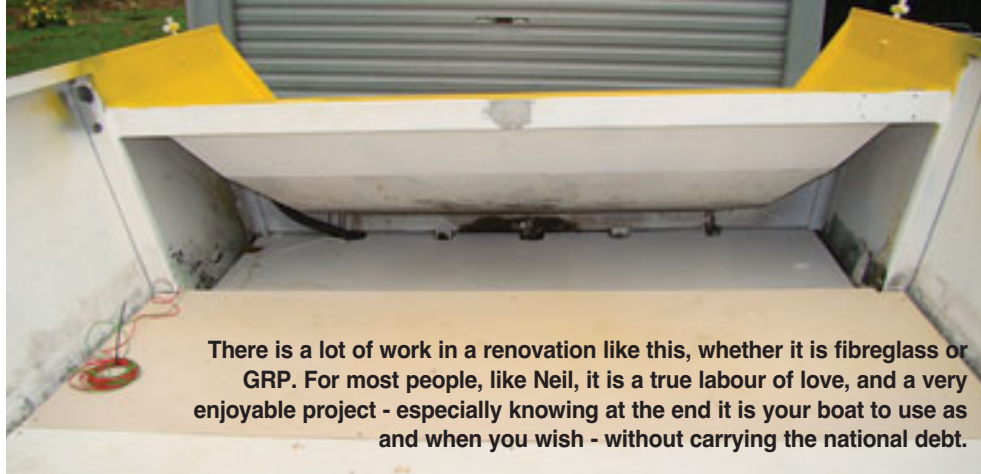
were still connected to their pontoons.

I have discussed with a number of the old timers the problem of what to do if you are in a boat and are in the path of a cyclone, and they all say get away from other boats, and head for the nearest mangrove creek. Travel up the creek as far as possible with enough water under you to float in all tides then run a rope out from all four corners of the vessel to a solid mangrove tree and tie off with enough slack to allow for extra high tides . . . and wait.

One consideration is whether there will be a lot of flood water coming down the creek or whether the tidal surge is predicted to be high and which ever is the greater danger, put the bow of the boat to face that way. Usually the wind goes over the top of the mangroves and the boat is quite safe, which I bet is what the "missing" yachting did. This was the bloke who sailed out of Port Hinchinbrook Marina the day before the cyclone hit, and was presumed dead, only to sail back into the marina after it was all over, quite undead.

My Trojan History

I was interested in the history of the Trojan and the lady at the Transport Department who helped us



There is a lot of work in a renovation like this, whether it is fibreglass or GRP. For most people, like Neil, it is a true labour of love, and a very enjoyable project - especially knowing at the end it is your boat to use as and when you wish - without carrying the national debt.



The Trojan was always blessed with a very wide, stable hull and a nicely formed shape around the shoulders to the bow.

through the maze of government red tape to get the trailer registered, was able to track it through its previous regos. You would not believe how hard it is for the Transport people, if the trailer does not have a Vehicle Identification Plate. Mine didn't, as it was built in 1973, and the boat does not appear until just prior to 1980. The rig was first registered in NSW, which is where the boat was

built. It appeared again in Bribie Island, Qld, where it stayed for a number of years until the owner passed away and then was unregistered until the chap I bought it off, found it in a farmer's shed where it had apparently been stored for over ten years.

He only bought it for the almost new outboard motor, and I bought the rest when he listed it on eBay after he'd removed

the motor.

So after thirty eight years for the trailer, and thirty one years for the boat, it will all be in as new condition when I have completed the renovation in about two more months.

*Neil Dunstan
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