

Helsall II Reborn

The Squadron's former notable racing yacht, *Helsall II* is now owned by RSAYS Member Chris Riggs. If you have met Chris, you know he is a BIG man, standing nearly 2 m tall. Well, now they say that the reborn *Helsall* is to have a bath to accommodate him. *Helsall* the lean, mean racer is no more! She will be a high performance cruiser of the first order. SQ went to the Port Adelaide shed where her transformation is slowly taking place for a milestone event – new deck meets the hull.



This picture shows the interior, facing forward from the stern with new bulkheads in place.

First *Helsall* was gutted and the mast and boom put aside. The transom has been reshaped, enlarging the cockpit and adding large storage areas (forefront of the picture), an engine room to house a 150HP Yanmar (centre of picture), and a step in cruising stern and swim platform. There will be two wheels. The mast will be set about 5 feet aft of its original position and just forward of the casing which will house her lift keel. (The white area in the picture)

The old deck was cut off and used to make a mould for the new deck and coach house. The original H2 had large timber cross beams to support the deck, with little headroom for tall blokes like Chris. When we arrived at the shed, the new deck, gleaming with nary a scratch above or below, was suspended next to the hull. Today was fitting day. The deck, complete from stem to stern, has a resin impregnated balsa wood core with a glass finish (picture below).



The deck was lifted via three points. When the centre and aft lifting points got a bit ahead of the forward one, the long foredeck continued up, unsupported. Plenty of strength and stiffness there.





Once the deck was elevated enough, the hull was wheeled under it and aligned by eye. The deck was lowered into position, ready to trim to fit. Fibreglass on the deck and hull had been ground back 4mm to allow for fibreglass joining of deck and hull at a later date. The hull is of airex foam core construction and the new bulheads are a balsa composite material – strong and light.



One of the common limitations of large performance cruising yachts is their deep draft, which creates problems mooring and anchoring close to interesting places and in protected coves. Think of Mediterranean Ports and Pacific islands.

Helsall II's keel will be raised and lowered via a worm drive and allow for close in anchoring.

The winches will be driven by hydraulics



Tom Crabb (left), was the man in charge and noted boatbuilders Richard Fidock and Peter Strangways have been steadily on the job for months.