

An Alternative Cockpit Tent

by Barbara Harris, Shrimper *Demelza* (723), March 2011



This tent was made in collaboration with a Plymouth cover maker. I wanted to avoid the closed-in feeling and condensation problems of a conventional tent with its exposed hook fittings on the topsides.

The tent is supported by 2 stainless steel hoops that pivot together from two attachment points, one starboard, one port, on the outside of the cockpit coaming roughly midway along the cockpit. The hoops split in the centre for easier storage, but on *Demelza*, a Mk 2 boat, they can be left attached but split, folded aft and held together with a bungee whilst sailing as they do not interfere with the mainsheet track. I'm not sure if this would be the case on a Mk1 boat with its different transom arrangement. It might also be necessary to adjust the design slightly to fit the different cockpit layout on the Mk 1. The tent is higher than the standard model, so the boom must be lifted higher above horizontal to clear the hoops.

The cover is made of acrylic canvas and zips to the sprayhood at its forward end. It is attached to the deck port, starboard & aft by small individual bungees hooked over small lacing studs attached just above the rubbing strake. The cover extends over the mainsheet track, so that the cockpit is kept dry, but splits in the centre below the aft window to accommodate the mainsheet. The lower block remains inside and the ropes exit through a zip-up tubular sock. Since the cover does not extend below the rubbing strake the lower edge is profiled to fit around jib fairlead plinths etc. on the side decks. An external attachment is provided so that the tent can be held up on the boom to prevent sag between the hoops.

All the windows, including the aft one, are zipped in and roll up for ventilation. The forward side panels can be unzipped and rolled up to allow access to and from the cockpit with the tent erected. Access to the foredeck on any Shrimper is always tricky with the sprayhood up and although the tent doesn't make this any worse, it is possibly slightly more time-consuming, especially if you suddenly discovered the anchor dragging with the tent fully zipped in!

The cost in 2010 was £780, but well worth it to me as I usually sail single-hand but would like to sail further afield with crew and would thus need the additional privacy. Others might like something smaller with fewer windows and zips, which would obviously make it a lot cheaper.

If anyone would like further information please get in touch: brh48@hotmail.co.uk



Stdb side looking fwd.
Hoop attachment and
pivot point is behind the
zip pulls.

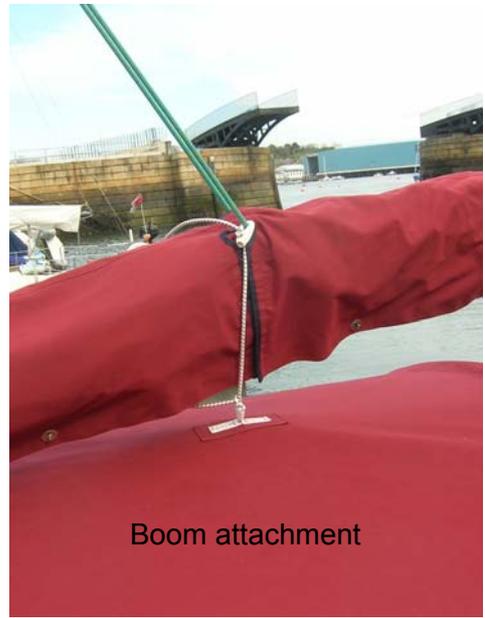
Stdb side centre zip
open to show
sprayhood
attachment & hoop
attachment.



Typical cover
attachment bungee
& lacing stud on
cockpit coaming



Port side panel rolled up



Boom attachment



External views of mainsheet sock.

Sock unzips along centre to allow ropes to pass through



Inside view of mainsheet sock