

Centre Plate Wires

By Christopher Sharland, Shrimper 60

I have owned my Shrimper (60) for 15 years and periodically changed the centreplate winch wire with no difficulty. However at the end of the season 2 years ago with the boat out of the water on it's trolley, I decided that after some 5 years the wire should be changed.

Having removed the cabin step, the inspection hatch on the starboard side of the centreplate case and released the tension on the wire, I was horrified to find that the wire would not pull down through the centreplate. A week was spent pouring easing oil onto the top of the centreplate where the wire entered the plate. I gripped the swaged end of the wire with a variety of pliers and endeavoured to hammer the wire down. All to no avail, except that the swaged end of the wire parted. I was left with wire coming from the top of the centreplate with which I made a loop with 2 small wire clamps. More easing oil and pulling on the loop and still the wire would not budge.

Eventually, with an experienced engineer's help, a block of wood was placed on the bridge deck aft of the cabin entrance. This was to act as a fulcrum to scaffolding passed through the loop in the wire. At the aft end of the cockpit I bore down on the pole with a series of jerks while my engineer expert (545) hammered the wire to keep the pull straight in line with the wire's hole in the centreplate. One more jerk and the wire came out and I collapsed in the bottom of the cockpit. Before I could replace the wire the narrow hole in the centreplate was cleaned out with a watchmakers file. This entailed drilling a small hole through the top of the centreplate case.

Why the wire jammed, I am not sure. The wire had been in place for some time, so it could have been electrolytic action between the wire and the plate. The wire should be well greased before threading it through the plate. In addition, I now take our Hon Secretary's advice and change my wire every second year.