

Osmosis!

By Martin Morris, Shrimper 17 (*Chamelion*) (Winter 2003)

Sue and I bought our much loved Shrimper (17) *Chamelion* from Michael Lyon in December '93. She is the oldest Shrimper at Rock. I like "old things!"

At the time, I made enquiries of Ken Robertson before negotiating. He told me that her main claim to fame was, "getting away from her owner on the steep drive of his holiday home, going backwards into the house, knocking down a wall, and Mrs Lyon off the loo". "Look for our repair of the near side transom". I duly did so and it looked professionally done, so I avoided saying anything about it to Mike and the deal was struck. We've had enormous fun with her ever since.

Last Jan-Feb I went to New Zealand and Australia on holiday. One morning I had an urgent call from my son David who said "Dad you have a big problem with your Shrimper, Jonathan Hewitt (son of big Mike of Rock Marine Services) says it has OSMOSIS. You had better ring him".

I did so and Jonathan said, "We've stripped off the anti-fouling as instructed and it is running water!" "What's to be done", I replied. "Firstly, dry the hull out and then either remove and replace the gel coat or, alternatively, have the underwater part of the hull Copper-Botted. The latter will be cheaper". I said, "Do it properly". I also asked, "Why do you think it has happened"? He said, "Probably because the foredeck drains have blocked and leaked into the buoyancy, trapping sea water on both sides of the hull".

When I got back in Mid-March I went to see Jonathan and *Chamelion*. To my surprise and relief they had dried the hull out over a month with heaters underneath, replaced the drains and used Copper-Bot, costing about £800. I was delighted and after a ham-fisted start to our season, she has gone as well as ever.

Whilst inspecting *Chamelion* at RMS I was shown another well known local Shrimper suffering the same problem. No doubt this one was given similar treatment and she too has sailed as well as ever, but her owner has steadfastly denied my allegations!

I hope this experience will be taken on board by other owners and the deck drains replaced every few years.

Editorial Note:

Before you all start to panic, it should be pointed out that the cause of this problem appears to have been blocked foredeck drains, which allowed fresh water to enter the inside of the hull. The inside of the laminate is not protected by a gel coat, as is the exterior of the hull, which makes it easier for the water to penetrate the laminate. Under some circumstances, fresh water can be worse than salt at causing osmosis and boats used on inland waters have been known to suffer similar problems. To my knowledge there have not been any instances of osmosis on Shrimper hulls caused by sea water penetrating the external surface of the laminate, but I am willing to be proved wrong. If anyone has information to the contrary it would be appreciated if they would let me know so that we can make it available to the wider ownership.

*Keith Thatcher
SOA Tech Sec
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