

Cockpit Tents

Barry Mellor, Shrimper 849 (August 2007)

The Shrimper Tent



As you all know, we have had a wet summer, and we have spent a good deal of time under our cockpit tents. As you can see from the photo on the left, most of the tents used were of the traditional type, made from pvc-coated cloth. Regrettably this design has some disadvantages, mainly because the 'ridge' principle provides only limited space under the tent, and because of condensation, they can be as wet inside as outside. One simple suggestion is to take some bendy sail battens or glass-

fibre tent poles and make hoops under the tent. This gives a space under the tent reminiscent of "Three Men in a Boat". At least one of our boats in France used tent poles in this way, to great success.

Some owners prefer a simple tarpaulin (eg from B & Q) over the boom, which is quick to erect, keeps the rain out, provides good access all around, and allows plenty of air circulation. If you want to avoid drilling holes in the hull, why not put the hooks on the underside of the rubbing strake – or run some shockcord along there, and put the hooks onto the tarpaulin?

Alternatively, design your own – something like the cockpit tent in the photograph on the right. In this case, an acrylic fabric is used (the same material as for sprayhoods), and sail battens in the 'roof' give it the rectilinear shape, giving much more space underneath. The tent fits tightly under the boom, and goes over the sprayhood, so it is closed at one end and open at the other - minimising the problem of condensation.

The sides can be rolled up (like a marquee) for easy access. The only downside is the difficulty of getting onto the foredeck when rafted up or at anchor.

