

Cockpit Fender Attachment Rings

Keith Thatcher, (Shrimper 810 *Constance*), May 2022

In almost twenty years of Shrimpering we have often needed to place fenders alongside the cockpit area. With no convenient cleats, the generally accepted attachment method is to remove the jib sheet from its jamming cleat and use the cleat to hold the fender line whilst taking a half hitch with sheet for added security. Fellow Shrimper sailor Steve Kane (ex *Percy 264*) and I wanted something better, so came up with the idea of fitting an eye-plate inside each cockpit coaming to use as a fender line attachment point. At the time we both owned Mk 1 boats, so the illustrations show the rings fitted to a Mk 1 cockpit, but I have since fitted them to our current Mk 2 boat and they work equally well.

To minimise cockpit intrusion we decided on the folding eye type and, ever one for a bargain, Steve tracked some down in cast 316 stainless steel on EBay. The size we chose has a backing plate about 40 mm high whilst the folding D ring is about 30 mm wide, but any suitably sized item would do.

One disadvantage of Internet buying is having to rely on the seller's description, not always 100% accurate, so we were a little dismayed to find the



pivot bar of the D ring to be more square than round, which caused it to jam when lifted and rattle when folded down. A morning's work with a fine file produced cylindrical pivot bars, but the rings then rattled more than ever. The cure was a couple of turns of self-amalgamating rubber tape wound onto the bar, which had the additional benefit of holding the rings horizontal when lifted, making it easier to reeve the fender line.

We positioned the eye-plates low down on the cockpit coaming (about 80 mm above the cockpit bench) and just aft of the jib fairleads. On a Mk 1 boat this places them just aft of the cockpit moulding knuckle, which has the added benefit of minimising the chance of the rings digging into your back. They are similarly placed on Mk 2 boats, but slightly more exposed as there is no knuckle in the

moulding. Despite this, experience has shown that we never sit so close to the jib fairleads for the rings to get in the way.

Each eye-plate is attached with three 1¼ inch x 10 (30 x 5 mm) countersunk stainless steel screws into a substantial plywood pad bonded to the inside of the cockpit coaming moulding – I recall using Gorilla Glue but silicone sealant is just as good. Also, the screw length isn't critical provide they pass through the GRP and well into the plywood pad (ours went right through!) as any bare ends are concealed inside the coaming. The eye-plates are actually positioned just aft of the internal bulkhead at the foot of the berth but there is just enough space to get a hand over this and up inside the coaming to hold the pad in place whilst the screws are driven in. On a Mk 2 the starboard berth extends further aft making the interior of the cockpit moulding more accessible.

We have now been using these rings for nine seasons (three on our Mk 1 plus six on our Mk 2) and they have fully lived up to expectations, providing a simple, readily available and positive attachment point for our midship fender lines.