



Roxane in Wood

Amateurs would surely have succumbed to temptation by now... But our Mr Phillips is a professional and he's going to leave Roxane's hull upside down as long as he can.

With photographs by the author.

One of the many advantages of modern wooden boat building is that we build the hull upside down, making it so much easier to work on the outside of the hull. There is much less of that endless crouching, kneeling and lying under the boat than we did in the traditional boatyard where boats were built the 'right way up'. Probably the most awkward and tedious job for the shipwright 40 or so years ago was 'stufing off' the bottom of a carvel hull once the planking was finished. This required lying or crouching down to plane the flat faces of the planks to a fair curve before caulking and paying up the seams.

It was the equivalent of the fairing which I described in the last episode but while Luc and I found it fairly tedious, the work was not that arduous with gravity also lending a hand. So we try to do everything we possibly can on the outside of the hull before turning it over.

Making the waterline and applying antifouling
Coppercoat is a special antifouling system which consists of fine copper powder suspended in an epoxy emulsion. When immersed in seawater, it degrades at a very slow rate exposing the copper powder layer which is toxic to marine growths thus

keeps the bottom clear of fouling. The system is guaranteed for 10 years with many owners reporting the layer still effective for much longer.

The first stage of its application was to strike the waterline using a laser level set up far enough away to ensure that all of the starboard side was 'seen' by the beam. We had previously established the waterline position along the side of the hull at stem, stern and amidships which helped us to set up the laser level accurately. We have found that if only the stem and stern points are marked, it's difficult to know how accurate the height of the laser level is. Once set up, marks are recorded on the hull approximately 1' (300mm) apart and the line is scribed in along a batten, with a metal scriber or the corner of an old chisel. The line is then transferred to the other side by measurement and checked with a water-level before being scribed in itself.

Charles and Gillian Taylor, the owners of our Roxane, will keep her on their mooring in Restronguet Creek on the River Fal in Cornwall. The mooring dries out on spring tides so we are taking every precaution to protect it from abrasion, not least of which is fitting stainless steel keel and stem bands. Made to our templates by a local fabricator, we attached them to the