



coat is a real disappointment, looking thin and patchy, but we pressed on as instructed. The next three coats are applied when the previous one has set hard enough to take another layer without it lifting, in our case about 90 minutes. As each coat is applied, the depth of build-up becomes apparent, though it has a relatively smooth finish for antifouling. This slight sheen gave us the first visual confirmation that we had indeed produced a nicely faired hull with no unnecessary lumps and bumps. We like it – especially if you only need to re-Coppercoat after 10-12 years!

Preparing to turn her over

I opened these dispatches extolling the virtues of building boats upside down but with most things in life, there are usually disadvantages and boatbuilding is no exception. We now have to turn the hull over safely – which the boatbuilder of yore, of course, did not need to do.

As far as I am aware there is no equation or sliding scale which tells you which boats can be turned over manually and which require greater mechanical assistance. A fellow boatbuilder Connie Mense has built a very pretty 20' (6.1m) Chebacco boat in epoxy/ply – which you may read about in these pages some day soon – and when she came to turn-over time, we gathered a number of colleagues from the surrounding workshop and with a combination of levers, bits of rope and a few grunts, we turned her over safely. Roxane presents a different proposition: simply adding the weight of materials included so far tells us she weighs close to one ton (tonne), so a far more considered approach is required.

To maintain the shape of the hull and provide general support, we decided to keep all the building moulds in place during turn over. We inserted a screw through the sheer into either end of each of them to ensure that none of them escaped. Next we built a hull cradle to prevent her from coming

into contact with the ground during rotation. This was made from a double thickness of sheets of ¾" (18mm) shuttering ply fitted to the hull at stations 3 and 8.5. With a layer of polythene and best Axminster carpet providing padding for the Coppercoat. These spacings were chosen to allow us to use the cradle to support the hull during fitting out and especially to allow us clear access for fitting the ballast keel. The joints in the ply were staggered and softwood framing fitted all around to stiffen it all up. Finally four lengths of 6" x 2" (150mm x 50mm) softwood were bolted fore and aft to fix the two ends of the cradle together.

As she was to be rotated starboard side down, we made the cradle to fit up to the sheer and hooked over the top on this side. Thus when we lowered the starboard side down, the cradle would be supported to prevent the hull from touching the workshop floor. We also cut the outer corners of the cradles to a 45° angle which would ease their rotation once the hull passed beyond the 90° angle – or the point of no return as we boatbuilders call it. With the cradle fitted in place, we then supported the hull on two sets of blocks either side so that we could remove the ladder frame and braces which have supported the moulds all through the building process. As we had not found it necessary to glue the building jig together, these were dismantled quite quickly leaving the hull sitting on the blocks ready for turning.

Turning the hull over – at last!

The first step in the turning process was to lower the starboard side until the cradle extensions at the sheerline were as low as possible. To do this, we used a farm jack – a.k.a a hi-lift jack or a jack-all – capable of lifting a maximum of 2 tonnes. As it lifts on a toe which is fairly narrow, we thought it wise to spread the weight along the sheer by fitting a piece of waste wood in place. Whenever you use jacks to raise or lower loads,

