

Ch. 12 Gunwales

Once you have turned the boat upright and set her at a suitable height for working, the inside fit-out starts. The gunwales stiffen the structure so they are a good thing to do next.

The plans show a solid laminated gunwale of three laminations each 15mm by 45mm section, tapered towards each end. These are laminated together clamped inside the top plank, although it is more sensible to use the outside of the boat to laminate them against so they can be left longer than needed and trimmed to fit inside the planking after they have set and been cleaned up.

Use parcel tape on the outside of the plank to spot the gunwale sticking, and then when finally fitting, glue to the inside of the planking. The top sections of the frame are best left not glued till after the gunwales are in if you use solid gunwales.

Then plain or fancy breasthooks (knees) join the port and starboard gunwales together at bow and stern.

On our boat Ulla we decided to use hollow or slotted gunwales because they are stronger and stiffer for the same amount of wood, and make excellent carrying handles. The following pictures show how we did it.

This is the finished gunwale, with one of the three layers specified in the plan glued on the outside of the planking as an outwale, a thin capping strip hiding the ply edge grain, a lot of blocks inside the planking and then an inwale laminated from the two other layers.

The frames are cut off below the gunwale. The gunwale is glued and dowelled into the top of the frame.

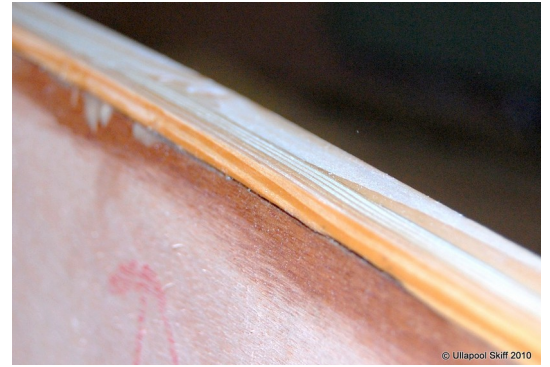
Dowels also run through the blocks to connect inwale to outwale.

The blocks are spaced so as to provide a solid base for the thole pins or kabes.

The outwale was glued on first, then the capping strip:



This



picture is looking at the inside of the plank.

Then the blocks were glued in place. At the same time we laminated the inwales together on the outside of the boat to get the curve without having to trim the ends short.

The inwale will eventually go inside the blocks but we wanted to trim the ends when the glue had set and the inwales were cleaned up.

We went for fancy steamed and laminated breasthooks which went inside blocks, so they had to go in before the inwales.

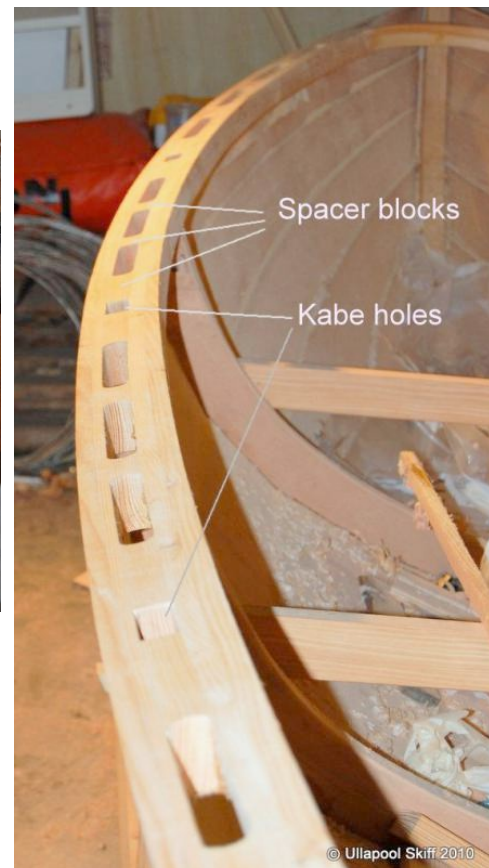
Then the inwale was glued inside the blocks and cleaned up:



We made a lot of dowel from larch offcuts.



Later the corners were rounded off, but rounding the inner lower corners has to be done before glueing the inwales in. It makes the inwales much kinder to the hands when lifting the boat.



Holes were drilled through the gunwale at each block, and dowels glued and wedged at each end:

When they were cleaned up they looked like this:

