

Ch.13 Seat bearers and Seats

The plan shows beams or as the Fair Isle people call them, "faastibands" half jointed to the forward face of the frames, for the seats (thwarts) to rest on. The beams are permanently glued into the boat but the seats do not have to be, and ours, which are varnished, can be removed for re-varnishing by taking out small wedges.

Certain oar lengths can cause oar handles to collide with the backs of the rowers aft of them (see the oar making chapter) and spacing the seats further apart can help to reduce this.

The frames are fixed and cannot be altered, but the beams and seats can be spaced further apart. If seat 3 (counting from the front seat) is centred on the frame, then seat 4 (stroke) can be set 2 inches aft of central, seat 2 can be 2 inches forward, and seat 1 (bow) can be 4 inches forward, which puts it nearly on the front face of the bow frame.

The jig shown ensures that the seat beam is installed at the correct level.



It makes sense to put the beam on the aft side of the aft frame, and on the forward face of the other frames, so as to more nearly match the seats. We reinforced the beam/frame joint with glued dowels.



Seats rest at their ends on pads of plywood glued to the inside of the planking. If you are permanently fixing the seats, then glue the ends so no water can get between them and the planking. This is a prime rot spot, where rainwater can lie against the end grain of the seats, so either glue it or leave a big enough gap so it dries out between rain showers.

In this picture of our first boat the seats are centred on the frames, but on our second boat we put them further apart.



Most clubs put some sort of padding on the seats. Our club has now bought "Gigass" cushions made for Cornish gigs, and very comfortable they are too.

The cox's seat can be a fabric sling to save weight but most are a triangle of plywood glued into the stern. A bow seat can be useful for a bow passenger, but heavy people right in the bow make

the boat bow heavy and hard to steer.

This is the wedge which holds the ends of the seats down, avoiding screws which can allow water into the structure and then rot.



© 2010 Ullapool Skiff