

Mast Coating & Forestay Mod

by Mike Broad, Shrimper 500 (*Damzelfly*) (Spring 2002)

Although these suggestions relate especially to Cornish Shrimpers and similar small craft, they may also be applicable to other vessels.

1. A very superior replacement for varnish on masts, spars and other exposed timber has been strongly recommended by the Cornish Crabbers factory. They use "Sikkens" Cetol coating, a Scandinavian style wood treatment (not really an oil) on their masts and spars. This is available from large B & Q depots (at last enquiry) and now comes in a single pack including a U.V. inhibitor. The lightest colour available at time of purchase was "pine", and this darkens to a pleasant light teak colour with a satin finish. Unlike varnish, "Sikkens" is not fussy over temperature of application, dries quickly and most important, does not go black underneath if dented. It seems to have some "give". I tried it out on my well weathered bowsprit and Roy Chadwick (*Gabriel May*) on his Shrimper mast with excellent results and lasting properties. The wood must be taken down to a bare, clean, surface which is hard work, but well worth it! For more information refer to the Sikkens website <http://www.sikkens.co.uk/en/Products/Product+Selector/>.
2. On Shrimpers, the small gap between the outer wire forestay and the roller reefing foresail can cause jam-ups, especially downwind. At the top of the mast is an M.8 "eye bolt" (on boats before Sail No. 500 this may be a galvanised 5/16" UNC or Whitworth thread item - replace). Fit an M.8 "eye nut" in place of the standard hexagon shakeproof nut. Both items are stainless steel now. Fit the outer, wire, forestay to this eye nut instead of the mast band and use a longer lanyard to lash the free end of the wire forestay to the end of the bowsprit.

This modification enables the wire forestay to form an angle to the roller foresail (instead of lying parallel as at present). The greater clearance thus formed helps to reduce those infuriating "wrap rounds".