

Resurrecting a **BUSHRANGER** PT 1304

Having been a dedicated monohull sailor for many years, I was pleasantly surprised when my son, Mark, told me he had found a pair of Paper Tiger hulls in fairly good condition at a home front yard in Port Noarlunga, South Australia, which were offered to him at a “make an offer” price. We made a silly offer and were shocked to have the owner agree. The hulls were transported to my home and thus began a project of almost two years to bring the boat back to life. This work began during 2011 and the first test sail was made at Christies Beach in April 2012.

The hulls turned out to be from a fibreglass boat called BUSHRANGER that apparently had been sailed at the Glenelg Sailing Club in its early days, probably the 1980's, as there were the remnants of a GSC transfer on the bow of one hull. The fibreglass was in reasonably good condition, except for some wear scratching on the red decks and on further inspection it was found that the bottom of both hulls looked rather thin from beach abrasion. Testing of the centreboard cases revealed a small leak around that area in the port hull. With just these minor problems we thought that we could bring it back to life, although at this stage it was just two hulls and nothing else. We needed some help and information from Paper Tiger sailors to steer us in the correct direction with this challenge.

I was happy to find the National Paper Tiger website that directed me to South Australian clubs where this boat class was sailed. I made contact with members of the SAPT association at the Somerton Yacht Club and their assistance and expertise helped make the job easier.

After advice from the PT members of the SYC we purchased the aluminium tubing for cross beams, centre beam, dolphin striker and sections for mounting brackets which, after cutting, shaping and drilling, were anodised ready for assembly.



The aluminium beams after anodising and ready for assembly

While the aluminium was being treated, the hulls were brought into my small garage and were lightly sanded with 1200 grit wet and dry paper, then machine cut and polished. The result was good on the white hulls but this process didn't remove the deck scratches that, until now, we had chosen to ignore. The decks may be re-painted for the coming season to cheer them up a little more. The centreboard leak and the bottom thinning were reinforced with resin putty and glass cloth to ensure they did not become a problem in the future.

The next issue was to have a new trampoline made, and it was manufactured by Ken O'Brian Sails in Adelaide (unfortunately now out of business). We opted to have an over-deck wire stretched trampoline rather than try to fit up boltrope track all round as this method looked much simpler to install and remove if necessary. We are happy with the end result and think it enhances the boats looks.



The trampoline arrangement showing tensioning wires

The next part of the project was to build a trailer before the hull platform was assembled, and this work was also carried out in my small garage where welding, grinding and assembly took about a week to complete. We opted to have the hull sit in cradles, rather than hang the boat off the cross beams, and have so far found it to be a satisfactory arrangement. We also wanted the trailer to be as wide as legally possible for stability when towing. It is fitted with 4 stud hubs, alloy wheels and low profile tyres and tows nicely.



The trailer layout following hull assembly

At this stage I was assisted by International Secretary, David Stumbles, in identifying the boat and finding its sail number. He also provided a CD with lots of information to give more help with the job. This also gave the opportunity to have it registered again on the National and South Australian registers. David found

the number from earlier information to be 1604 and, after receiving that number, the boat seemed to have a "new life" and personality.

We needed new centreboards and rudders, together with rudder boxes. The boxes were fabricated from aluminium to suit rudder design we found on the PT information disc. Rudders and centreboards were built from the ultra-lightweight timber, Jelutong, had aluminium pivot tubes inserted, then were coated with fibreglass. The result seems to work OK and we are pleased with these units.



Jelutong rudders and centreboards after glassing

We now needed new rigging, mast, boom and sail, and the challenge here was whether to dive in with all new gear, but in the end we opted to make new standing rigging and fittings.

After talking again to members of the Somerton PT group we were able to buy a second hand mast in good condition and then made a new boom, again to

information provided on the PT disc. Mast and boom fittings, where possible, were made in-house from stainless steel after checking the setups on other boats.

Again the end result was pleasing and seems to work quite well. We obtained a second hand sail in fair condition and decided to utilise it for the first season while learning to handle this type of craft. After the 2012/13 season it is obvious that the sail needs to be replaced with a newer and, hopefully, more powerful sail to make the boat competitive.

The whole unit has made the restorers very happy and we think the project has given new life to what must have been a nice boat in its early days.

The end result of this work is rather pleasing, although BUSHRANGER is currently far from being competitive, and from sailing the last season at Somerton Yacht Club, the boat and the skipper have a lot of work ahead tuning and learning. The boat was weighed at the start of the year and the platform was found to be 60kg, so it will always be heavier than the more modern hulls but it is still a joy to sail.

I would like to thank all the members of the SAPT association for their input and on-going help in getting BUSHRANGER on the water.

I would also like to express my thanks to our International Secretary, David Stumbles, for his assistance in identifying the boat and in providing excellent technical information via CD and email.

Dave Behrens
PT1604 Bushranger 

First test sail at Christies Beach, SA.
A pretty cool day!!



The boat ready for trial sailing

