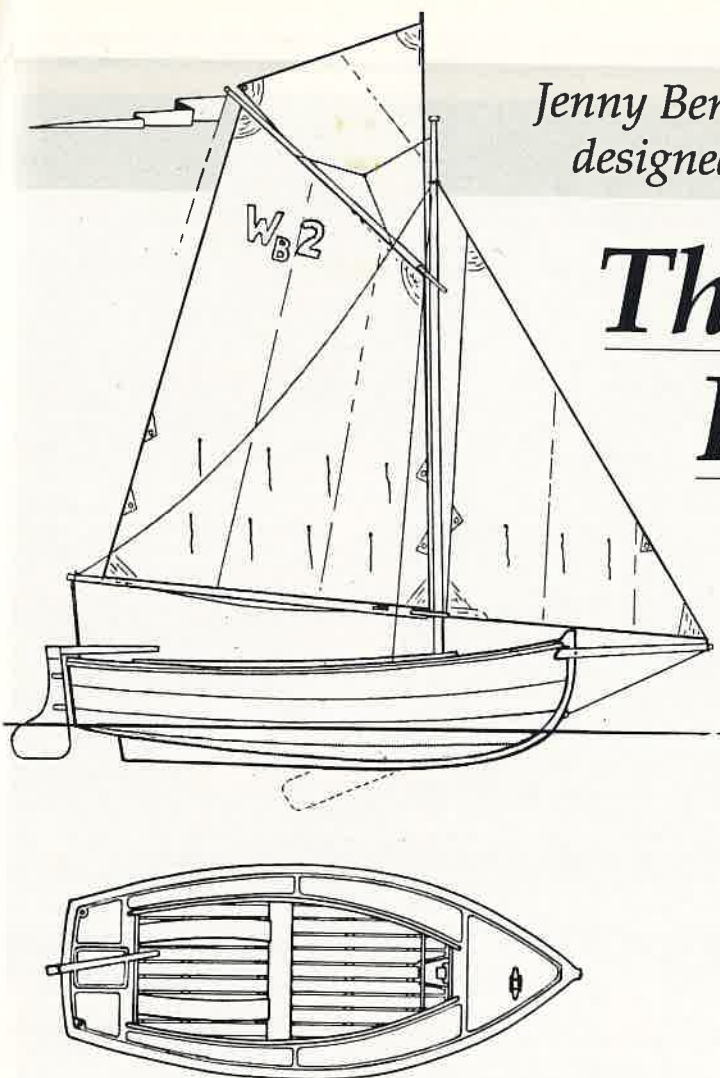


Jenny Bennett introduces a trailer-sailer designed for shoal waters.

The Winkle Brig Dayboat



centre thwart. The board's lack of weight allows it to be raised and lowered with one hand. It is a neat solution with, as far as I could see, only one disadvantage: the arrangement is so unobtrusive that you are inclined to forget you have a centreboard at all!

Continuing the theme of working boat appeal, Eric has chosen to finish the Winkle Brig in purposeful but pleasing materials. The hull, constructed in two skins of hand laid chopped strand mat to a lay up of 7oz/sq.ft(2100gm/sq.m) – doubled at the keel, has an exterior high gloss finished gelcoat in one of three possible colours and an interior rough gel finish that is coated in red International Industrial Floor Paint. "I don't really like high gloss interior finishes: they look great for a while but are not so easy to maintain. With a rougher finish it all looks more workmanlike and, if it starts to look a bit tatty, you can just touch it up with a drop of paint. I like the red – it reminds me of old fashioned bilge paint."

Despite his eye for easy maintenance and his obvious liking for GRP – "I think all boatbuilders should be open minded enough to use any material in its right environment" – Eric also recognises that wood trim looks nice and that it is "fun to have the odd bit to look after in the winter, like spars and seats." Thus the seats, two aft side benches and one centre thwart, are in solid teak and can be easily removed by simply unscrewing them from

Eric Bergqvist wanted to build a dayboat. There was no great economic thinking behind his decision, no ideas of a "get-rich-quick" nature, just a desire to produce a boat that could be launched easily into shallow water, have space on board for four adults with a picnic and could sail well in most conditions. For many years he had built the *Memory*, a sturdy GRP centreplate dayboat of 19' (5.8m) LOD and generous sail area. During this period approximately sixty boats were built. However, most owners eventually made the addition of a small cabin. "They reckoned that with accommodation they would use the boat more. But that isn't always true. With a good, roomy dayboat you can go anywhere, do anything. You can launch and recover it on your own, sleep on board with a boom tent and, because you can go sailing for half an hour or a weekend, you'll use it." Knowing that such a craft would not, in all probability, sell more than half a dozen a year, Eric considered the financial outlay of the new project with care and came up with the logical answer: he would develop his already successful Winkle Brig cruiser and produce the Winkle Brig Dayboat.

Those familiar with the original Winkle Brig (see CB12) will recall the Tardis-like accommodation that in just 16' (4.9m) of hull length includes cockpit, three berthed cabin and galley. With the modification from cabin boat to dayboat, the interior space created should therefore come as no surprise, nevertheless it is the uncluttered cockpit, 9'6" (2.9m) in length, that first attracts attention. "I've always liked the big old working boats with huge amounts of space but most of them have long deep keels no good for shoal waters. I decided to fit a centreplate but I didn't want it getting in the way of everything. I also wanted to take the weight out of it and have the ballast in the hull. A heavy centreplate has two disadvantages: you need a lot of associated gear to raise and lower it and it represents shifting ballast fore and aft."

After months of thought and experimenting, Eric came up with the answer: a long thin GRP board given negative buoyancy by a thin steel strip glassed into the blade. Its shape is such that, when raised, it is out of sight beneath the bottom boards and all that is visible is a narrow vertical case which houses the control gear and also acts as the support for the



PHOTOGRAPHS BY PETER CHESWORTH

the glassed-in knees. Also in teak are the cockpit coamings, rubbing strake, tiller, large foredeck cleat and mast step all of which can also be removed for maintenance if necessary. The floorboards and spars are in Columbian Pine. The choice of wood finish is left to the customer but Eric recommends oil for all but the spars which are varnished and, having seen *Moss Rose* after a season's use and no maintenance, the advice would seem to be very sound.

As with her sister-ship, the Winkle Brig Dayboat has an "inboard-outboard". Mounted in the purpose-built well in the aft deck, the controls of the recommended Mariner 4hp can be reached beneath the deck and the hatch need only be lifted to remove the engine or fill the integral petrol tank. A brass sliding air vent in the aft side of the hatch allows ventilation for the exhaust fumes, although Eric says that it is seldom required and future boats will be supplied with the new Turbo Mariner 4hp which self-ventilates through the propeller. Although the engine does not tilt, its propeller is above the keel depth and cannot be run aground. For steering, because of the engine's position, it is easier to use the rudder but the outboard itself can be used: "It helps the steerage when you're reversing but for the most part you don't need it."

Reversing out of the marina berth with Eric in *Moss Rose*, I confirmed the boat's manoeuvrability under power but agreed that if a tighter turn had been required, I would have angled the engine simultaneously with the helm. Once out of the marina confines, we hoisted the gaff mainsail and jib, lowered the centreplate, cut the engine and set sail.

For me there are few things in life more promising than a stretch of clear open water, with the sun sparkling on the ripples, a steady Force 3 blowing and a small open boat waiting to take you sailing. *Moss Rose* did not disappoint. Whilst Eric rigged the topsail, I found that I could easily sail the boat singlehanded by securing the jib sheet on the deck mounted cleat. If much single-handed sailing is envisaged, however, I would recommend a tiller extension to allow the helmsman to sit further forward. Once the topsail was set, Eric settled down to crew. For the most part he sat on the centre thwart but for a while opted for the comfort and shelter of the bottom boards up forward: with no forward benches to dig into your back, this is a good place for the crew, especially with four adults on board as we discovered later when joined by Eric's wife, Alison and our photographer, Peter Chesworth.



For the helmsman, the aft side benches are ideal for sitting with feet braced opposite, while for the crew the centre thwart and angled coaming allow for a relaxed, comfortable position with legs outstretched.





Top: Three-up: Eric moved to his favourite position out of the wind on the floorboards. Above: To house the offset bowsprit Eric cut through the bulwark and protected the hole with a specially fabricated inner moulding. The visible edges were then tidied up with a bronze trim and the removable bowsprit was installed.

The Winkle Brig's helm is firm with a touch of weather helm but with the correct adjustment of sheets, centreplate and crew position, she will sail herself untended for short periods. There is no cleat for the mainsheet but with three blocks, one either side of the aft deck and one on the boom end, it is comparatively easy to handle and, should laziness ensue, the mooring cleats mounted on the side decks could be used. As with all well-balanced small boats, the Winkle Brig heeled to the gusts but, thanks to slack bilges and 352lb(160kg) of ballast beneath the floorboards, there was no sudden movement and any excessive heeling – should the mainsail be oversheeted – is mostly counteracted by the gaff sail spilling its own wind. Nervous sailors will be further reassured by the provision of foam filled buoyancy beneath the floors and in fore and aft tanks.

Our morning's sail at an end, we headed back to the marina and, despite a cross wind and a turn that necessitated a gybe in confined water, we sailed back into the berth in reassuringly controlled fashion – why is there never an audience when you get it right? While Alison and I derigged the sails and motored the boat to the slip, Eric drove the car and Hallmark Roller Coaster trailer around to meet us. Within twenty minutes, the boat was on the trailer, the mast lowered, the strops on and we were all drinking coffee in the waterside cafe. Eric looked back at the Winkle Brig thoughtfully: "You know, with marina charges going up all the time and moorings increasingly difficult to find, you need to be able to launch the boat quickly and know that at the end of the sail when you may be cold and wet, you're going to be able to recover it just as easily. Besides, with a boat like that, a trailer and a boom tent, there's really only one problem to address: where I shall I go tomorrow?" ♦

The Winkle Brig Dayboat and Cruiser can be seen at the Southampton Boat Show on Stand E61.

USEFUL ADDRESS

Eric Bergqvist,
Ferry Boatyard,
Fiddlers Ferry Yacht
Haven, Penketh,
Cheshire
WA5 2UJ;
tel: 092 572 7519.

SPECIFICATION

Winkle Brig Dayboat

LOA	20'(6.1m)
LOD	16'(4.9m)
LWL	15'(4.6m)
Beam	6'8"(2.0m)
Draught plate up	1'2"(0.4m)
plate down	2'6"(0.8m)
Displacement	1433lb(650kg)
Sail Area inc topsail	172sq.ft(16sq.m)
Price:	£5129.56 ex-VAT