

MASB27.

Report on progress - end of January 2019.

General:

The holiday well behind us now, I took an extra day for a medical appointment, so started back on Thursday 3rd. I had left some battens under tension over the holiday in readiness for works on the superstructure above the engine room. All was in order. There is a busy schedule of three months ahead to achieve practical completion by the end of March.

Deck.

No significant change.

The after deck area has been completed, with a hardwood surround to the raised panel above the steering compartment. All deck planking has now been delivered, planed and rebated ready for installation (2,000 lineal feet). This should be an over-order by about 15%, making sure this is an adequate allowance for cutting waste.

Superstructure.

This is where I have concentrated this month. The schedule requires completion of this area by first week of February to be fully prepared for outer coating. Last year's long delayed delivery of the third engine had the knock-on effect of not allowing progress on upper structure. With the engine in place, this could now be finished.



Sides have been clad in 12mm marine plywood. The rounded 'shoulders' were formed using larch battens - 14 lengths on each side, bent from the wheelhouse down to the after deck. The

central structure complies with the original 1940s design, important for increased interior headroom for access through the passageway into the turret.



The shape is challenging as it rounds from sides to the top, and forward to aft, at the same time diminishing in width as the structure narrows towards the after deck.



No part of this area is straight or flat, with plywood roof panelling scribe-cut to fit neatly around the turret which is just over one metre in diameter. The turret shown is a template made of hardboard, fitted to precisely match the Vickers Mark V design. The new turret is fabricated in aluminium and will be lifted into place next week.





The main hardwood frame and cover board to the after steering compartment has been completed, including installation of the aluminium access hatch.

**Hull.**

No change since last report issued before Christmas.

Engine Room.

Lukasz has been working on engine mountings and electrical connections. The 3 main Cummins distribution/control panels are fitted. Having separated the V drive transmission from the mid-engine, special parts have been ordered to make the new drive link, along with the new increased length propeller shaft. Simon has fabricated the P brackets in stainless steel, as well as new engine brackets.

Using an old photograph from 1946, it is interesting to see the original V drive transmission unit being removed. A keen eye will see this is stamped "Thornycroft". Lifted out with sheer legs, we can readily see the considerable size and weight! Although Napier petrol (aircraft) engines offered an impressive power to weight ratio, each was W12 in cylinder configuration and 24 litres in swept volume.

Using modern turbodiesels of 6.7 litres, we can exactly match horsepower with engines being slightly heavier than the Napiers. However, modern transmissions are tiny and lightweight compared with this monstrous Thornycroft unit.



Both photographs are from the collection donated by Felicity Jaffe to whom we are very grateful. These records from 1945/46 have helped immensely to fill in gaps where War Department drawings have not been available.



Interiors.

As I have concentrated on external works, Mark has been able to spend some time on interior finishing. This includes interior wall cladding throughout the wheelhouse.

Foam mattresses/couch/bunk covers have been made and sent to the upholsterer for fabric covering. This provides for 6 full size bunks.

Electrical & Controls.

Some attention has been given to gathering materials into stock, ready for installation. Lukasz and I have been working on the throttle signal conversion unit: mechanical to digital.

Cummins has helpfully supplied some kit, but I decided to use an original 1940s gunboat throttle control with 3 levers. This has a sprocket & chain system which certainly poses a challenge for conversion to operate a modern digital engine. I am confident we can get the better of this! It's nice to have another original component on the dashboard, and we weren't able to source a modern, suitable 3-way control.

Steering.

Equipment is in stock ready, including the new helm/wheel.

Next stage.

Although the shortest month, much is planned for February. All external works should be completed for GLS coating to be finished around mid-month.

Electrical installation will be carried out, with plumbing checked & tested.

The stainless steel mast mounting is ready for installation; (mast has been ordered).

Raymarine electronics will be delivered and installed.

Forward heads to be completed, along with forward access hatch.

All ladders (x3) to be installed.

Third party specialist marine survey will be carried out.

MCA registration is in progress.

Engine mountings, electrics and connections will be completed.

Interior doors have been ordered for fabrication, so will be installed during February.

Radio & ASDIC desks will be fitted out.

Powered windlass has been quoted and is receiving attention.

All decorations to be progressed.

March will see all finishings, ending with installation of mahogany deck covering.

In April we are due to lift into the water for trials.

Finally, another photo from Felicity, here is the complete vessel moored off Itchenor in late 1945.