

Restoration of Blue Peter an International 14 no. 483

Designed by Jack Holt and built by Buss and Elston of Watford 1946.

Before the war Holt and his then partner P L Chandler built six clinker 14s. These were probably based on a current Uffa Fox design. Holt is recorded as owning, as a second hand boat, no 134 (designed and built by Fox). Interestingly the next no. 135 is Avenger, Fox's famous revolutionary boat in which he won 52 first out of 57 starts in 1928.

Holt's involvement with fourteens after the war was brief. Just three boats were built by Buss and Elston to his design. No other involvement is recorded. But it is interesting to note that a boat number had been allocated to Beecher Moore (Holt's associate) towards the end of the war but the boat was not built. It also seems that the firm of Buss and Elston ceased trading at that time too.

There are a few features which distinguished the design from those of such as Uffa Fox. The centreboard is ballasted but is not pivoted. It is hauled up and then forward over a roller thus requiring a much shorter slot cut in the keel and the weight is kept central. Holt used this system on the early Merlins too, which are contemporary. This system requires twin king posts supporting a thwart stepped mast. The hull's skin is planked in narrow strips of mahogany both laid diagonally. Fox used oiled cloth between his skin planking but here there is no cloth. However the inner skin is all tongue and grooved which would seal well as it swells. This may be a unique feature patented by Buss. (I believe there survives a canoe they built with this technique)

The hull was in a serious state of disrepair but with little or no rot to the timbers. The boat had been dismantled into its components when I collected it. My aim for the restoration was to repair and preserve all surviving parts rather than renew. It has a history that should be preserved.





BOW Damage



TRANSOM

