LLWYNGWAIR.

FOUND IN A PUB . (NOT ME!) by Nige Dale.

HOW I ACQUIRED AN OLD LOOKING MODEL YACHT, AND HER JOURNEY TO CATCH THE WIND.

Llwyngwair, a Newport Sloop.

INTRODUCTION.

Sitting on a shelf, in a Newport Pub, of the County of Pembroke, sat a model of a boat which had seen better days. Being in the "I'm on holiday" mood, I asked if the landlord, Mr. Dyfed Williams, was available for negotiations for the boat, as I would like to buy her, and restore it for sailing.

After some quiet negotiations with the landlord, the deal was struck,
And I put the boat under my arm. As all projects should go, research is the first step to completion. The size gave me some concern as it was only thirty inches long (750mm) would it carry the sail suit it was wearing, just do the research, and the answer will hopefully evolve with favour.

The first bit of information came when I was not expecting it, and that was at The International Model Boat Exhibition 2014, where a fellow from The Wickstead Park Group, informed me that; "a lot of model sailing boats of the time that my boat was probably built (possibly early 1900s but as yet, the date not determined) were about that size, so the owner could carry it on a bus, as not all people had, or could afford cars". Was this the first piece of the puzzle?

The period I started investigating was 1920- 1925. Where, two types of smaller model were being made. The first were static sideboard, or windowsill model, and the other were the sailing on ponds type. Now which of the two types was the one that I have? My investigations led me to conclude that she was a model of a Newport Sloop, (USA) two jib types and a large four cornered main, as sails.

Newport Sloops (Newport USA) as static models have normally a length of about twenty six inches, a beam of four inches, and have a solid hull. (This is what I have found out, and as time goes on I would hope to find out more information, and possibly be corrected or confused). The model I have, is thirty inches long, and has a beam of six inches, (promising), complete with a cavity hull. There is a lot of mention of plank layer bread and butter build, but none I have found (as yet) of plank on frame construction. The model I have is plank on frame, which increases my interest to proceed, and also indicates it is probably not 1920-1925 built.

But first the decision is that the model must have a name from which an identity can be evolved, so I have chosen *"Llwyngwair"* after the place she came from.

The first job in renewal to be undertaken is to set the sails to the mast, boom and lift. With the original boom broken, and a quick fix (jury rig) with a piece of dowel was done, and followed with a refit of the bow sprit and sails.

Fig 1.

STAGE 1, EVALUATION.

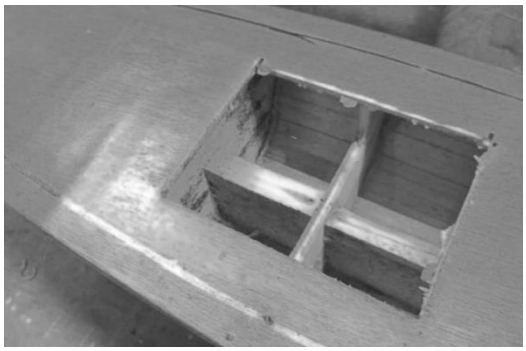
Evaluation is necessary to formulate a programme of events which ultimately become the plan of the restoration. So the first job is to look closely at the hull, keel, rudder and deck. The sails I am happy with, so they were washed and ironed and put away in a safe place. The hull planking was coming adrift in places, so that was taped up to stem the spreading of the splitting planks. The keel had a bit of a twist so add this to the list, the rudder was removed, to be replaced with one that could be adapted for servo control.

Fig 2

Fig 2, shows the extent of the taping up of the hull, to stabilize the planking damage, but this should repair quite well, and be a sound hull. The model had a box type fixture on the deck, for probably no other purpose than the originals had

something like it, so it came out of the model.

Fig 3. Box removed



Removing the box gave the first view to the inside confirming Llwyngwair was probably a static model, the challenge is now to put her on water, and not on a window sill. The deck will need to be removed, allowing access to the hull interior for the repairs. A line was marked on the deck, close to the gunwale, so the deck could be removed as near as practicable to the hull sheer. In removing the deck confirmed that she was a static without some of the robustness of a working model but with some inherent fragility.

STAGE 2. THE REPAIR.

Fig 4.

The first job was to strengthen the hull and to add some extra strakes or capping to the gunwale, and also increase the free board slightly.

Fig 5.

Using Beech strip for the extra strakes raised the gunwale line. This had the strengthening effect that was needed, and it also gave the hull more of a full shape. With the hull repairs complete to the initial stages, the inside was coated with fiberglass resin. The fiberglass resin held together the planking, and also adds strength and some water resistance. The outside of the hull was lightly sanded, and two coats of thinned varnish were applied.

In preparation of testing for the centre of gravity, water line and ballast requirement, the internal frame work for the deck clutter was installed. Add to this the control tube for the Sail Arm Servo control line, which controls the sheet to the Tack of the Main Sail, the time was getting close to getting the hull of *Llwyngwair* wet for the first time.

Fig 6.

The added timbers to the inside of the hull to support deck fittings, increases the strength of the hull.

STAGE 3. BALLAST AND KEEL.

Putting Llwyngwair into the water for the first time was a nervous occasion, as with all vessels. The ballasting was conducted as normal with known weights, to determine the ballast load, and centre of gravity. The ballast loading was determined at 2000 grams, (4lb 6^{1}/2oz) so for this I will use mild steel, for cost, and also for the size it will have in comparison to lead, a greater volume, thus spreading the load over a longer length of the hull. This, I hope, will give the sail more stability, and also to spread the strains out of the hull from the sails.

Deck fittings for the Running Rigging were made, and a Goose Wing to join the main boom to the mast was constructed, leaving the Gammoning and Sprit Foot Bitts. Now I have bits of boat all over the Dry Dock (shed), ballast weight complete not fitted, brass bits, wood bits, it's time to finish the project.

Fig 7.

The keel was fitted to the hull complete with steel weight, in a keel pattern that is different to what normally be associated with this type of boat, but still capable of fitting within the original boat stand. Two coats of red oxide as a primer were the first of the paint coats to be applied, this will support the hull colour of blue, and be a representation of an anti -fouling paint for below the water line. Waterline and stern flash are white, with the name emblazoned across the stern, the hull is now complete. The renovated hull still fits comfortably into the original stand, but now with a lot more stability.

STAGE 4. THE DECK & CONTROL BOX.

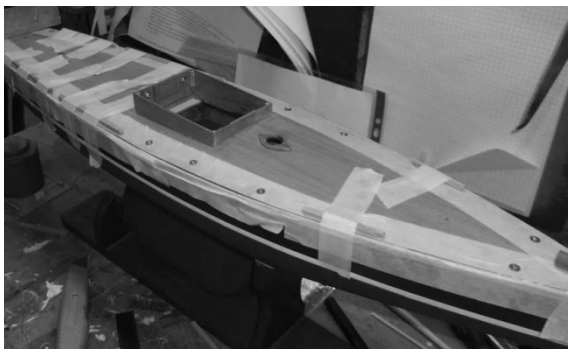
The deck is a single piece of Walnut Ply, not walnut faced, but walnut all through. Not the most cost effective way of doing things, but the vessel warrants the attention. The original mast was stained walnut, and will be reinstated, as with the tiller and topping lift. The replacement sprit and boom will be of walnut dowel. The original booms and sprit had brass ferrules at the ends, the topping lift will retain the ferrule, but the new fitments will vary.

The original Gammon for the sprit was a horseshoe staple, but the replacement will be made a little more elaborate, and of brass. On the model prior to rebuild, the rudder and tiller were for show and not functional. The rudder was replaced, and the original tiller was re-instated with a control arm for the rudder control, again made from brass.

The control box will follow the lines of the original, by design, that is, box type. On the lid of the box, there will be an inlay of a Bowen Knot of the Bowen family, who resided at Llwyngwair Manor for many generations. James Bowen, to whom the knot is attributed, died 1629 at Llwyngwair

The deck was fitted and varnished to seal the wood, and give a presence to the vessel.

Fig 8.



The task of gluing down the deck is a one for patience, but in the end one could always do better.

Fig 9.

The fitted, and varnished hull, in the original stand doesn't look too bad, although I am never really happy about my own work, and I always feel I could have done it better. The Bowen knot has turned out quite well for my first attempt at marquetry, and probably be my last. A skill of better men than me.

Fig 10.

The next job of the list (which now is getting shorter) is to fit the deck fittings. These are screwed to the deck in the position of the original fitting. However, brass staples have been replaced with brass gammon and foot, and the brass eyes for the running rigging, have been replaced with chain plate fixtures. The result of fitting the deck fixtures, gives the model a classy look, which I hope is not viewed as over the top.

Fig 11.

As always, when you find yourself at this position of the build, and all the components are made awaiting fitment, there is a great urge to finish the vessel. The controls are in, and functional, parts made, sails hung up, bowsies and hooks in there packets. So get on with it.

Fig 12.

The time has arrived when fully rigged Llwyngwair has left the dry dock (shed) on her way to the maiden voyage, and trimming the sails. The sail set up is what I determined to be the set up when I

brought the model from Dyfed at the Llwyngwair Arms in Newport. A good day to get her wet so it was into the water for the first time, and use the light winds that are present today.

Fig 12A.

The winds on the first outing were a little light to get a feel of what the model could do, but I didn't have long to wait as the next day was a little more breezy. Feeling a little more nervous than yesterday heightened by the higher breeze, Llwyngwair went back to the water. My anticipation in the control of Llwyngwair, was well placed, as she is very quick and lively on the water when driven by a firm breeze.