



Restoring the Herreshoff S-boat Mischief

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[Maynard Bray](#)

Brooklin Boat Yard began this project on speculation as a fill-in during slack periods. So it went forward by fits and starts until a buyer emerged, after which the pace picked up and became steady. *Mischief* is virtually complete now as I write this in mid-January, 2012, with only the finish paint remaining. I've divided the story into segments, and will take you all the way to launching and the sailing trials that follow, one episode at a time.

You can see the beginning of *Mischief's* restoration, as well as view a bit of her background and learn a little about the S-boat class of which she's a member, in our OffCenterHarbor.com [reframing video](#).

Here are two more good sources for Herreshoff S-Boat photos and information:

[Herreshoff S-Class of Western Long Island Sound](#)
[Narragansett Bay Herreshoff S Class Association](#)

This first blog gets the deck into place, and begins soon after the reframing video was shot.

Here, the bilge stringers and sheer clamps have been put in, the new oak floor timbers primed with red lead, and *Mischief* now has brand new varnished oak sheerstrakes and transom, including its pair of laminated reinforcing knees. The few planks that were removed for reframing have been renewed, and scarfed-on ends have replaced the damaged ones near the stern. Five temporary cross-spalls assist the frames in holding the hull shape until the deck beams go in.



Permanent deck beams now have replaced the cross-spalls (except for one near the bow) and the forward bulkhead has been framed up. There's to be an opening through the bulkhead this time around so the forward compartment can be accessed for maintenance. The original S-boat bulkheads had no such opening so the space became an air chamber whose purpose was to keep the boat afloat if she were to capsize. This bulkhead can do the same with a dogged-shut door. Herreshoff's signature molded sheerstrakes show here, made of oak as were the originals on this boat. (Mahogany, and occasionally teak, were used on others of the class.) Brian Larkin (facing the camera) is in charge of this project. He's also one of our OffCenterHarbor.com [Guides](#) who you'll be hearing more from.



***Mischief's* interior will be painted** while her hull is essentially open and still accessible. While one person is sanding, another follows at the bow vacuuming. The sheer clamps and the visible portions of the bilge stringers will be varnished, so they've been taped off to stay free of paint. Near the stern you see the beginnings of the aft bulkhead taking shape.



A pine pattern (Brian's idea) made to the curve of the cabin and cockpit openings provides a reference and a temporary support for installing the stub beams. The five full-width beams that the pattern now lies on will eventually be sawn back to become stub beams, but now they serve to establish and secure the boat's beam, assuring that *Mischief* gets neither wider nor narrower, and provide a place on which to lay the pattern.



With both sides of the pattern now in place, you can clearly see where the coaming and cabin sides will lie. Besides the full-width, white-painted beams that span the forward and aft compartments, the stub beams on either side of the opening have been installed. These visible beams will be varnished.



A pair of under-the-mast-step tie rods will relieve the mast step from some of the thrust of the mast. They'll reach diagonally downward from the bronze chainplate connectors to assist the step in supporting its load. Rig tension is at anyone's discretion, and modern sailors tend to screw things too tightly. With over-tightened turnbuckles, the mast can push downward with more force than the step was designed to take. These tie rods, or stirrups as they're sometimes called, are one way of compensating.



***Mischief's* plywood deck has now been laid** and sheathed with Dynel and epoxy. Decks built this way have proven far stronger and more durable than canvas-covered, planked-up ones. Next will come the curved mahogany pieces, one on each side, that will form the cabin sides and coaming. You'll see this and more in my next *Mischief* blog.

