

Some Cautionary Tales by Mike Lucas

Article from Sadler Owner's Magazine, January 2001

We have established a "[Articles](#)" section on our website to provide timely warnings for owners in relation to avoiding problems afloat and developing ideas for making the boat more efficient and safe. Readers of the Owner's Magazine who are able to access our website will already have found the first one which relates to stern glands and procedure when launching. The second is to do with self-draining cockpits and the need to check condition of hose and jubilee clips, which connect the cockpit drains to the skin fittings. The third is advice for avoiding furling headsail wraps. These three brief notes are now reproduced for general interest.

1) STERN GLANDS - PRE-LAUNCH PREPARATION

There are a number of different types of shaft glands fitted to Sadlers and Starlights and some of the later types do give cause for concern, if the right preparatory action is not taken prior to launching.

First of all, let me say that the traditional style shaft gland with packing and provision for injection of grease does not pose a problem and this is the way all the early Sadlers were done until about 1982. From about that time, Sadlers were fitted with a "no maintenance" type of shaft gland using an oil reservoir and neither do these pose a threat at launching.

The problem arises with the Deep Sea Seal which holds back the water as a result of finely machined and adjusted contact faces and also with the Volvo seal which uses a rubber boot with integral neoprene rings. A fundamental requirement with both the last two types of seal described, is to allow the water to dribble through the gland when first launching. If you look at the instruction leaflet, you will find that with a Deep Sea Seal, you should ease the two surfaces apart until the water dribbles through and then allow them to go back again through natural pressure of the rubber boot. Once lubricated, the seal is satisfactory for the rest of the time the boat is afloat and requires no maintenance at all. The same procedure should be applied to the Volvo seal, except this is achieved by squeezing firmly the rubber boot, thus distorting slightly the neoprene ring seals and allowing the water to dribble through. Once this job has been done, the seal is entirely maintenance free.

These maintenance-free seals were fitted to all Sadlers from about 1989 and most of the Starlight 35s. The Starlight 39 was fitted with a traditional stuffing box type of shaft gland, which requires normal maintenance, but no necessity to allow the water to flow before launch.

We are bringing this to your notice because we have become aware of two local Sadlers with Deep Sea Seals, which were launched by owners who were unaware of the correct procedure. The result in both cases was for the rubber boot to disintegrate, thus allowing water to flow in, which if undetected would have swamped the boat. Most owners are aware of the launch procedure, but do check which seal you have and refer to the maintenance instructions.

Cutlass bearing useful tip

It is worth mentioning that the prop shaft should be drawn out periodically and cleaned up in the area of the cutlass bearing. This section of the prop shaft contained within the cutlass bearing will invariably have built up a "crust", which accelerates wear in the cutlass bearing and also on the shaft itself. Once the shaft is drawn out from the cutlass bearing, this can be thoroughly cleaned and then re-assembled. This also gives the opportunity to check the coupling with its fastening bolts, to clean off surplus rust and ideally paint over with a rust preventative paint, such as Hammerite. We plan to write a technical article about cutlass bearings and 'P' brackets in due course.

2) SELF-DRAINING COCKPITS - CHECK OUT THE HOSE AND FASTENINGS

There is a tendency for most owners to assume that self-draining cockpits will look after themselves, because operation is automatic. The reality is that any malfunction of the drains does

severely endanger the safety of the craft. This will arise either through a drain blockage or the hose detaching from the spigot or seacock.

Take care during the winter (when the boat is ashore) that leaves do not fill the cockpit and block the drain hose. We have learned only this month of a Sadler 29 which experienced this problem. The water flowed into the cockpit stowage trough, through into the engine bilge and then overflowed into the cabin, where it proceeded to fill up the boat to the level of the sole boards.

Each of the Sadler and Starlight models has a different cockpit layout and I now make a few comments for each boat.

Starlights

Both the 39 and 35 drain in a similar manner, from spigots glassed in to the drains at aft end of cockpit, proceeding downwards to skin fittings fitted to the underside of the quarter of the boat. Clearly these fittings are above the water line at rest, but underway they will be underwater. The outlet spigots are joined with good quality reinforced hose which after ten years is still likely to be in reasonable condition. However, do check the jubilee clips (which should be two at the top and two at the bottom) for security. After ten years there is probably a case for replacing the hose since it will by now have aged and hardened. When replacing, do take the opportunity to route the hose so that it is clear of gear and equipment stowed in the lazarette lockers.

Sadler 34

These are done in a similar manner to the Starlight, but upto 1989 the hose fitted by Sadler Yachts was not reinforced. The hose certainly needs replacing with reinforced or ribbed hose and at the same time, check jubilee clip fastenings. Also check that lazarette contents do not apply pressure on the vulnerable hose and hence the fastenings.

Sadler 32

Access to the self-drainers can be obtained by lifting the cockpit floor and the stowage trough out of position. In the case of the 32 the cockpit drains go outwards to seacocks fitted in the sail locker (port side) and under the quarter berth (starboard side). These seacocks must be serviced annually with the other seacocks and hull openings in the boat, but in practice I find they are rarely examined. As previously, replace the old hose and double clip all joints.

Sadler 29

Like the 32 the self-drain hose can be accessed through the cockpit sole lid and by lifting the stowage trough. However the drain hose with the 29 goes aft and out through transom skin fittings. Because these are difficult to get at (particularly the transom fittings) it is vital to service these components when ashore for the winter.

Sadler 26

This is an almost impossible situation in that you need to be extremely small and agile to get access to where the hose is attached to the cockpit spigots and then to the skin fittings through the transom. The problem with the 26 is that there is no removable cockpit sole panel.

Access to the starboard side is just about possible by climbing into the sail locker and working headfirst through to the transom. There is no doubt that the hose will then need replacing and securely fixing with double jubilee clips. The port side is impossible to access and I suggest that

you crawl down into the far end of the quarter berth and cut out a suitable rectangular aperture to enable access to the spigot and skin fitting to be obtained. Having cut the panel out, tidy up the saw cuts and make up a teak frame to go around the removable panel which can then be screwed into position with self tappers.

Sadler 25

The self-drainers are situated similar to the 26. However access is much easier through the lifting aft locker lid, where the necessary work can be done.

Regular maintenance

I recommend that a check be carried out on the self-drain hoses every winter, because any malfunction when afloat would be difficult to rectify. Should any owners have a further contribution to make on this matter then why not post it on the Discussion Forum?

3) HEADSAIL FURLING GEAR - HALYARD WRAP

One of the commonest causes of the furling system jamming is a halyard wrap around the partly furled genoa at the top. This will not arise if there is a halyard deflector lead fitted just beneath the halyard sheaves. If you look aloft, you will easily see whether there is one fitted or not. Sometimes I find the lead has been fitted, but the halyard does not go through it. Sometimes the halyard being used for the furling genoa is the no.2, which does not pass through the bullseye.

This all sounds a bit complicated but once you look at your rig it will be crystal clear. There should be a bullseye fairlead fitted about two to three inches below the bottom of the sheaves. The halyard is then fed through this fairlead before being attached to the top swivel. This deflector is missing on many boats and can be fitted by a rigger at very small cost. In fact it is part of the kit with every new Furlex and should have been fitted by the supplier, when new. The Kemp diagram below shows the arrangement.

If required you will be able to purchase this deflector component from a rigger (with appropriate self tappers) and fit it yourself. However the halyard will have to be completely unthreaded, leaving a messenger behind and then rethreaded up through the fairlead, over the sheaves and back down the mast.

Do be careful and first check if your furling genoa is full hoist (maximum luff length) and if there is only one genoa halyard, the halyard deflector must not be fitted, because it would prevent the genoa being fully tensioned. Where the genoa is full length luff, such a sail should ideally be hoisted on a second genoa halyard. This will leave the first halyard for the furling genoa and other small headsails, with shorter luffs.

Useful tip

To facilitate removal of halyards for winter washing or changing, sew a small loop in the end of the rope tail to which you can attach the messenger. Make this loop with sailmaker's twine and using a needle. After passing the needle through five or six times, bind the six loops together with frapping turns. Reference to our technical articles "Decorative Ropework" (click "Articles" button), gives a detailed explanation of how to do this.

Good sailing in 2001.

Mike Lucas