

15 Plank lands



A rule of thumb for planking land width is twice the thickness of the planking; thus if the planking is $\frac{3}{8}$ in the lands will be $\frac{3}{4}$ in. The plank land bevel is dictated by the moulds and faired in between the moulds.

Set the combination square or your thumb to $\frac{3}{4}$ in and run a pencil line down the plank. This line marks the lower edge of the plank landing.

In way of the moulds, bevel off the outer corner of the plank until a straight edge touches from the pencil line marking the lower edge of the plank landing to the mark on the mould for the top of the next plank up. This is sometimes not possible due to the curve of the mould; in this case bevel according to the point where the straight edge touches the mould. The bevel will be different at each mould.

Look along what remains of the top edge between moulds and bevel off for a smooth run into the bevelled areas at the moulds. If the winding bevel isn't fair fore and aft, the planks won't fit together properly. And the landing that you are making must be flat athwartships. If it has a bump in it, the water will be kept out by $\frac{1}{8}$ in of bump rather than $\frac{3}{4}$ in of well fitted, surface swelling landing.

A no. 4 plane works well for shifting material at the start of the bevelling. It seems to be best to finish with a block plane. If there is a minor

wobble that you are having trouble eliminating, a wide chisel can be used as a scraper to iron out local bumps. If scraping, do be careful not to slip and dig an edge into either the landing or the visible part of the plank. It has been done and makes a scar that is difficult to erase.

The plank above remains full and square on its lower edge, so all of the change of angle of the hull has to be accommodated in the bevelling of the top edge of the plank below.

Whilst in the yard I expect the bevel to be perfect first go and any plank after the garboard to go up first time and never be removed; I am trying in a haphazard and rather ill-thought out way to put food on the table. However, if the challenge is not commercial, it is recommended that until total confidence is gained, bevel cautiously. It is better to take off too little than too much.

It is normally relatively straightforward to get the bevels correct for a distance forward and aft of the mid-ships mould. There is often some difficulty with the bevels between the forward mould and the stem and between the after mould and the transom. For a greater degree of certainty in these areas, bevel a little less than is needed and then dry fit the next plank.

At the dry fit stage the gap on the outside between the two planks will show how much timber still needs removing. If things go wrong



15.1: Marking out the land width



15.3: Checking the land bevel



15.4: Land with a bump



15.5: Land without a bump



15.2: Bevelling the lands



15.6: Marking a rebate



15.7: Marking a rebate

and too much is removed there are two ways out. You can ignore the $\frac{3}{4}$ in land mark and spread the bevel further into the plank below; this reduces the acuteness of the bevel angle. Or if this is not possible, a bevel can be put on the inside of the plank above. This is a little complicated. A third possibility, when it is all too late and the plank is half attached, is to play the steamer over the internal plank land and gently clamp up. This will only alleviate minor gaps.

In all events, it is simplest and best to get the bevel right on the plank below. Once one starts messing around with adjustments things get complicated and a lot of time can be lost.

Planking rebates

Clinker planking must be smooth at both stem and sternpost. There is nothing worse than seeing bottom edges of planking proud at the stem, or a transom with a series of chines. There are

different ways to achieve this. The best method is perhaps more involved than the others but does create a better job in terms of strength and longevity.

The plank fastened to the boat must have a rolling rebate cut into its top edge for a distance of perhaps eight to ten inches. The planking bevel must run into nothing at its top edge when it meets the transom and rabbet in order to let the plank above fit to the transom or rabbet. At

the same time, on the plank fastened to the boat, the edge of the landing nearest the keel begins to be rebated from full planking thickness where the rolling rebate starts until it is approximately half of the thickness of the planking at the transom or stem. This rebate is then deep enough for the plank above to accommodate a nail head punched in flush. This winding bevel must be fair and flat.

The final preparation is difficult to do with a



15.8: Planking rebate in lower plank at transom



15.9: Cutting the rebate edge on the bench



15.10: Section through the rebates seen at the transom; these are not gaps, but close fits indicated with a marker pen; the unmarked rebates are difficult to see

normal rebate plane or even a bull nose plane as the plane blade digs into the transom or the plane nose hits the stem. When a plane is no longer of use, take a sharp chisel the width of the land and use it as a plane; then when it is almost there make it flat and fair by scraping with the chisel.

The new plank that is to be fitted above must have a corresponding winding bevel on its underside for eight to ten inches (but no rebate) so that when the two are put together at the stem

or transom their combined width is that of the planking.

Cut this winding bevel on the bench. Again, it must be flat and fair. Take nothing off at the bevel's start point and increase until it leaves approximately half of the plank thickness at the lower edge of the plank where it reaches the transom. This will correspond to the half plank thickness rebated into the plank below and the 'fag paper fit' will be successfully achieved.

Cut the forward plank rebates for the first two planks after the plank has been fitted and fastened. Although this is more difficult than cutting on the bench, as these planks are steamed and have significant twist, the plank would be liable to split on the landing if cut prior to steam bending. Cut the remaining

plank rebates on the bench, which is easier. Use a tenon saw to cut the line of the rebate because it will give a straight edge. At the transom, if the upper plank is proud of the lower plank at the rebate, it can be faired off after glueing and prior to fastening. This would be unusual practice at the stem.