

“Yachty” Fasteners for a Cabin Sole

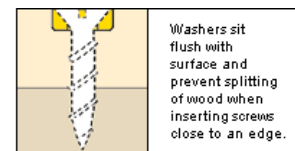
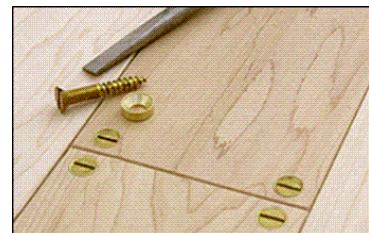
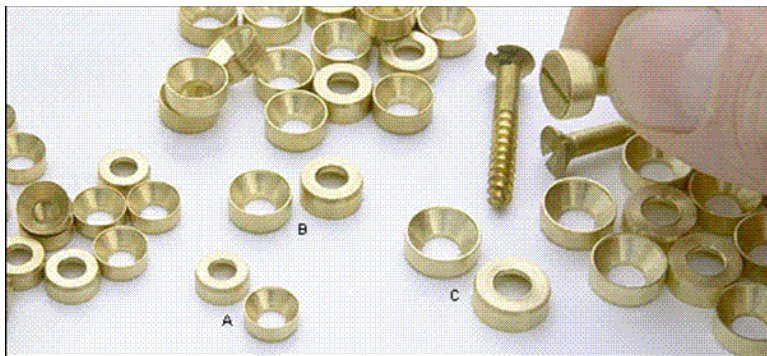
Bob Thompson CS 36T *Heron*

When we first looked at *Heron*, our CS 36, I was impressed by the teak and holly cabin sole. This helped elevate the boat into the yacht classification in my mind. After we bought her and got to know her more intimately, I became slightly disappointed with how the sole was fastened to the frames and liner. Somehow, the exposed stainless screws didn't live up to that yacht image, but I couldn't think of another way so I tried to ignore them. Then one day I noticed a new product in Lee Valley Tools Hardware Catalogue, countersunk brass washers. With these nifty little gizmos, the screws would bear on metal rather than squashing the plywood, would still be flush with the cabin sole and would be much more professional and "yachty" looking.

Now comes the tricky bit – installing the washers in the existing floor boards. The washers are set into a shallow flat-bottomed hole centered over the screw hole. This is easy when starting from scratch because you drill the hole for the washer then the smaller hole for the screw. You can use the centre point left by the larger drill bit to centre the smaller drill bit. Centering the larger hole over the smaller one is a bit tricky –especially when trying to hold a large piece of plywood in a drill press!

I chose the #10 washers which need a 7/16" hole. Unfortunately, this size doesn't seem to come with most Forstner drill bit sets so, back to Lee Valley for another bit. A Forstner bit won't self-centre over the existing hole because it only has a very small centre point. I had to clamp the floor boards to my drill press table to drill the shallow holes because you can't use any kind of handheld drill without the aid of the centre point to guide the bit into the correct location. A spade bit would probably work but I couldn't find the right size. I finally figured out that if I pushed a screw up from the bottom of the hole, I could align the drill bit's centre point with the screw's tip, clamp the board to the table, drop the screw out and then drill the hole. The hole has to be just the right depth so the washer is perfectly flush with the surface of the floor board. You can either set the depth stop on the drill press or mark the drill bit.

This was a somewhat fiddly job, but I think the results were worth it. The new fasteners do look much more professional and definitely add the finishing touch to the freshly varnished cabin sole.



Designed for use with turned brass screws, these machined brass washers prevent the normal tendency of screw heads to split stock.

The washer/screw combination applies force the same way a pan-head screw does, only they are countersunk to a flush position. The finished work is normally sanded before varnishing, creating a smooth, finished look, the screw head and exposed washer rim being at the same level.