

Original Comment:

04/03/02

Rudder Stock Adjustment

The rudder stock on my Bavaria 34 (vintage 2000) has a very slight amount of play, about 1mm when flexed from side to side. It appears as though the only means of adjusting for this is at the top of the stock where the emergency tiller is fitted. However the locking bearing seems to require a special tool with two pegs which bear on two holes in the locking ring. My questions are :-

1. Is this the only means of adjusting the play out of the rudder stock?
2. If so do you know where I can get hold of such a tool?
3. Has anyone else found this sort of problem?

David Roache

Replies:

I think that Opal are your first port of call. Opal Marine have now set up a parts service, contact Tim Selwood, and a repairs department, contact Ray Hoskins, both at Hayling Island, tel 02392 466075. I suspect they will tell you to replace the bearings as they are simply two polypropylene bushes (NOT nylon - nylon absorbs a slight amount of water and expands, gripping the rudder stock), nothing too clever. I suspect the plate you can see is just the retaining plate. As I said, let me know what Opal say.

Graham

Graham,

Thanks for your response to my rudder stock question. I have contacted Opal's warranty people who assured me that, first of all a little play in the stock is neither unusual nor fatal. There is a round locking ring on top of the stock where the emergency tiller is fixed. This ring has two blind holes in it and a grubber screw. A small amount of slack in the stock can be taken up by tightening the ring (he suggested putting two screw drivers in the holes with one across them to act as a tool) after slackening the grubber screw and, if possible, taking up the weight of the rudder. He cautioned against over tightening the locking ring. I will give it a try at the weekend to see if it works.

Regards,

David

Hi David

Thanks for that. I'm glad Opal have come up with an answer. Did they say what sort of bearings are fitted? Are they plastic bushes.? I ask because they are on our 320 and I have now worn out the second set. If you only have a small amount of play then I agree with Opal that this should not be detrimental. Indeed, I would caution against going for a 'solid' set up as this will restrict any feel from the rudder through the wheel.

Although, through the wheel, we can feel the rudder moving from side to side (when motoring) we can also feel the pressure on the rudder and adjust the way we are sailing to reduce this. The more pressure you can feel means that you are using the rudder to correct a problem that lies elsewhere, putting undue strain on the steering gear and slowing the boat down.

Graham

Dear David,

We have the same problem with our 10 year old Bav 43.

Regarding access to the rudder stock, we have a key that fits those two blind holes. Whether it is an original part or a homemade effort, I don't know, as it came with the boat. It looks like a small section of heavy pipe the diameter being the same as the width between the two blind holes. Two short rods are welded to the bottom, which fit into the holes. Across the top of the piece of pipe is welded a bar, which allows you to exert pressure in the turning motion. If Opal, cannot supply a key, it looks like something you could make yourself and I am sure you will find it easier than the two screwdrivers suggested. (Contact me if you would like me to send you a drawing). This top plate with the two blind holes, does not tighten the rudder stock, it is just a cover which has to be removed in order to fit your emergency tiller.

We contacted Opal, with the same question of what to do about a loose rudder stock (and were given virtually the same information). If it is only a small amount of play, tightening the retaining ring, which you will find under the cover plate, pulls the rudder stock up, and as it is tapered. pulls it slightly higher into the housing. which takes out a small amount of play.

However, this did not work for us, as it was already as high as it would go. The alternative is to fit a new bush, and this is where our difficulty lies. To remove the old bush, you have to drop the rudder right out. As we were out of the water on the hard, we tried this, but the rudder reaches the ground before you can free the top of the stock. We were unable to dig a hole in the concrete to lower it further, so found we could not remove it. (If you try it beware, the rudder is very heavy and ours hit the concrete, knocking a piece off the edge).

To try and improve the situation whilst we had access on the hard, we bought a sheet of PTFE 1mm thick, and put a collar round the bottom of the stock just above the rudder blade. Initially this wouldn't allow us to get the stock back up, so we had to cut the collar down, to quite a narrow band. (The rudder is so heavy we had to use a car jack stood on blocks, to jack it back up, it was too heavy to lift). This seems to have taken the play out and we thought we had sorted the problem out quite well.

We are due to launch in a couple of weeks time, and have just finished the antifouling, but found when we turned the wheel, to antifoul behind the rudder, the wheel was very stiff to turn. So now we are back to investigating the problem as to why it has gone stiff. Has the PTFE band moved and is fouling the stock, we don't know yet!. I will post the conclusion to this saga when we have investigated further, but in the meantime, I hope sharing our experience might throw some light on your problem.

Regards,
Carole - Yacht MICA

28/07/03

Referring to our to earlier comments, the homemade PTFE bearing shells have now worked well for two seasons.

Mike Ferro (MICA, BAV 43)

Same problem, B34, launched May 2000. I got my advise from another B34 owner in Mercury who had the same problem. Whilst out of the water I loosened the locking screw pushed the rudder up from below using a long piece of wood as a lever and hand tightened the collar. I retightened the locking screw and it's OK. I did have to buy a screw driver with a spanner head to be able to move the locking screw.

Geoff Cutts (B34 Ad Infinitum)

We've had a few problems with the rudder - initially Bavaria had over-tightened it resulting in a stiff action and a lot of noise. As it was year 1 of warranty they sent a chap around who did loosen the top plate and re-tighten the grub screw (took 3 attempts to get it right). The rudders are lighter than water so should lift up when in water - but you might need to loosen the gaiter around the lower bearing.

However, we still get a noise from the rudder bearings when beating to windward. The rudder is clearly stressed in this situation - I'm wondering whether the bearings are damaged as a result of the initial over-tightening. Had a lot of correspondence with Opal's over this one - they were less than helpfull. Does anyone have the same problem?

Also, we are planning a bit of a trip next year - has anyone dropped the rudder when out of the water for an inspection?

Tony Brighton (B34 Pohutukawa)

Hi Tony,
Yes we have dropped the rudder whilst out of the water. See my posting above, not an easy job. That was about two years ago, but we did solve the problem we had by inserting smaller strips of PTFE. Regards
Carole - Yacht MICA

Hi Tony,
We had a similar problem on our Bav 32. We experienced a pronounced graunching noise (and you could feel it through your feet) when the rudder was under load, ie. bearing away down waves etc. When the boat was lifted last winter, Opal inspected and said that the bearing had seized onto the stock and the whole bearing was turning in the hull. They replaced the bearing and all was well, but I'm not sure it's not happening again (or I may be just paranoid). I'll be checking it again when the boat is lifted out this winter.

Andy Horwood (32 Minna)

Andy,
Sounds like the same thing as ours. We took the boat round to Opal's and they lifted it out.

dropped the rudder and made a big improvement. BUT we suspect they greased the cup that the lower bearing sits in rather than freeing it up i.e. the bearing is possibly still bound to the stock but turning within the (greased) fibreglass. I'm getting a second opinion (from Moody's) when I have it lifted out in a month.

Tony Brighton (B34 Pohutukawa)