

# Ferro News

June 2000 Quarterly Newsletter for Ferrocement Boat Owners

Issue 14

**W**ell another very late issue. My appologies! I have been very busy as usual, with that thing work, and getting Lilly Ann ready for our short cruise up the coast in September (I'll have some pics for our last issue), and I've finally started back on my Paragliding course - No more broken bones yet, so far!

Yes, so this issue, no #14 is the second last in this series. As no volunteers have been found yet to continue Ferro News I'm open to any other suggestions? It would be a shame to loose touch with the bunch of might Ferros that has given us

all great pride over the past years. One idea, I received was to cut back to an issue once each six months? What do you think?

This issue we have a special feature - a new letter I received from WA ferro lover, an Australian character, and 80 next birthday and still cruising! Thank-you William, and its a shame your joining us on issue 14 and not 4. Anyhow I'm sending you some back copies, so you can read about some other enthusiasts, like our valued and regular contributor Doug Wallace, aboard *Mystery*, whos refit we have eagerly followed over the past years. I'm keen to see her afloat once more.

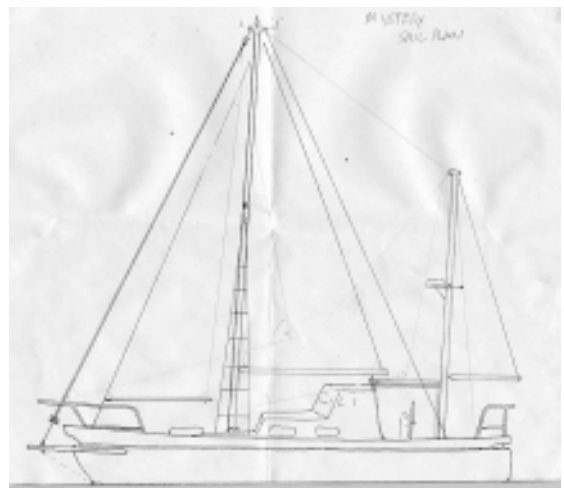


## ***Mystery on Schedule***

*by Doug Wallace SV Mystery*

Another great Ferro News! I certainly hope someone with a suitable computer (and some spare time: is there such a thing?) voluteers to keep the ball rolling. Even if FN turns into a biannual or annual "Concrete Cruising Community" register so we can keep in touch with each others whereabouts and proposed itineries anywhere in the world, share experiences and information. I don't know the percentage of ferro boats compared to plastic, steel, wood, but we should be proud to be part of a select minority with vessels of such unique construction. How many new ferro yachts are being built in Australia today? We are the sole remaining survivors of a past era in the history of yacht building. O.K. thats enough flag waving.

*Mystery* now has a new pulpit and pushpit of 1" stainless tubing. When I bolted the base plates to the deck, I drilled the holes through the deck first, then marked the plates from below to drill the plates. This was to avoid the problem of holes moving sideways when the masonry bit hits the edge of steel reinforcing rods. The pushpit has a plywood seat across the transom. My next major job was to make the raised bulwarks from 12mm ply, fibreglassed all over and capped with Tasmanian oak external corner moulding. The bulwarks are 300mm high at thr bow, curve down to 150mm amidships then curve up to 200mm at the transom. There is a 20mm gap all the way around at the gunwales to allow solid water to escape from the deck. (If I land a fish wider than 20mm it cannot wriggle over the side!) The curve makes a very pretty sheerline (the original deck was dead straight) Another good reason for the curve is because I am not sure how she will trim on launching and if she squats or is down by the head, she will still look



*Mystery Sail Plan*

*(Continued on page 2)*

**Whats On ...**

**BIG BOAT and a BIG STORY**

**3**

**KEITH'S PRACTICAL TIPS**

**6**

*(Continued from page 1)*

alright. There has been weight added to the bow: bowsprit, roller furling, electric winch, more chain. There has also weight been added to the stern: solid dodger, 1.2mtr of hull, wheel steering, mizzen, wind vane gear (Fleming). It will be a knuckle chewing exercise when the crane lowers her back in. The Bulwarks are bolted to timber blocks and stainless plate welded to the stanchions, pulpit and pushpit legs. At the bow I have left a 350mm anchor handling gap, and at the stern, cutouts for mooring lines.

#### *Permanent Cockpit Awning.*

The solid dodger only shelters the forward part of the cockpit leaving the helmsperson out in the sun and the rain. I made a solid awning between the dodger and the mizzen mast. It has 3/4" stainless tubing fore and aft with timber side rails. The tubing is bent to the same curvature as the dodger and cabin top so it looks very neat. The forward end is supported by the aft end of the dodger and has a timber boom crutch. The aft end is braced by the mizzen. I covered it with 5mm ply, fibreglassed and painted with white two part epoxy. This is where the two 60 watt solar panels will be mounted. Eventually I will sew vinyl awning material panels that roll down and lace to the outside of the cockpit coaming all around to totally enclose and waterproof the cockpit. There will be plastic tent zips in the corners so the lee side can be rolled up and the weather side left down. Under the ply roof will be a shower head connected to a submersible electric pump. I will be able to mix up a bucket of warm water, drop the pump in, plug it into the cigarette lighter socket and have a shower in the cockpit. To stop soapy drips splashing everywhere I will make a plastic shower curtain that is suspended from brass cup hooks. I will also make a box shaped mosquito net that encloses the whole cockpit suspended from the ply awning. I may even try to arrange some shade cloth panels which roll up on the inside of the timber side rails so that when the sun is lower I can still have ventilated semi-shade to take the sting out of the dreaded ultraviolet rays. The cockpit will be a comfortable additional living area unaffected by sun, wind, rain or mozzies. I have sat out in exposed cockpits, burnt to a crisp, nose and wind chapped lips smothered in zinc cream, or shivered cold and miserable, rain trickling down my neck, glasses fogged up and salt steaked, or tried to escape the stifling tropical heat below decks only to get eaten alive on deck by mossies.....OK you can call me a wimp, it's no skin off my nose(!)

#### *The Mizzen Mast*

I always wanted to own a ketch. With her original short mast and sloop rig she was mostly undercanvassed, relying on a huge overlapping genoa to set a reasonable amount of sail. It was not much fun short tacking single handed in narrow channels. Now, with the roller reefing genoa on the new bowsprit, a tall self tacking staysail (with one deep reef) between the bow and mast, the fully battened main (with three reefs), a mizzen staysail and a mizzen with a reef, I can set plenty of sail with almost unlimited reefing options to keep the helm balanced while reducing sail.

The mizzen is a convenient place to mount radar reflector, wind generator, radar, T.V. aerial, fluxgate compass etc. It can support awnings and provide a leaning post for sailors using binoculars, camera or sextant. A ketch will steer herself

on a wider range of courses and can be hove-to more comfortably and safely closer to the wind. The main disadvantages are added windage and a decrease in pointing ability which explains the general rule of "sloops for racing, ketches for serious cruising".

My main mast is timber, (hollow box section) but the mizzen is aluminium, (will be painted white to match the main). It is the same size section as my original main boom, 105mm X 76mm so I bought a length 9.1m and cut off 3m to replace the corroded main boom leaving 6.1m for the mizzen. It is stepped on the original rudder tube which now acts as a compression post. I welded a cap from 5mm stainless plate with 3mm X 50mm sheave cheeks. The cap is deliberately robust because I will weld a socket on top to take the wind generator mast. The generator is a three blade AIR marine, made in U.S.A., weighs only 6Kg with a claimed output of 400 watts at 24 kts.

The mizzen boom is made from a piece of 60mm diam Corsair mast (same as the self tacking staysail club boom) and projects too far aft to allow a central mizzen backstay. The spreaders are angled back so the cap shrouds (and the aft lowers) support the mizzen from astern. The triatic stay and the forward lowers support the mizzen from ahead. When I am using the free flying mizzen staysail, the mizzen topping lift (wire) will be set up to act through the mizzen sheet as a backstay for additional aft masthead support.

When I fabricated the mizzen gooseneck I welded it to stainless plates that slide inside the mast and protrude out of the sail slot. This means I did not have to cut the mast or drill any holes which might weaken it at a vulnerable place. The mast is also braced near the gooseneck by being located in a plywood crutch bolted to the aft of the permanent awning. The sliding gooseneck makes it possible to cleat the mizzen halyard and tension the luff by bowing the boom down with the vang or a small tackle.

Well, the job list is slowly shrinking (despite being continually added to) and a launch in October is looking very achievable.

Best wishes and good sailing

Doug

**Ole Ferro Timer!** by William Wreford

I've just noticed your article in Cruising Helmsman, I can't locate the particular number so can't quote its date, but I do commend you on your effort, ie. to initiate some togetherness" amongst Ferro. owners, I ask that you be patient with my typing? I always type my letters, because my own handwriting is so indecipherable, but, now I'm getting a bit old (80 next up) I don't belt this thing as often as o' yore and spelling and other errors do crop up, however I guess; you'll be able to sort out the crap from the gutz of what I have to say .....

I am the owner/builder of one of Richard Hartley's "Ferro. 57's" slightly altered, by him at my request, to change its draft from 8'- 6" to 6' 6" by continuing the (underwater profile straight along from keel to rudder, eliminating the gap betwixt after side of the keel and the rudder, see: 'photo'.

Now my own background has always been nuts about boats, built my first canoe in '29 (more bailing than paddling!) built a 12' vee bottomed sailboat in '34, pulled it to bits in '35 and built the second VJ in this state, then re-built an old 14' snub nosed dinghy (sister to 'Triads' if you're old enough to remember her!) then share owned a, couple of 1/2 decked 22' centreboard craft common to these parts in the thirties, was a pre G'far Naval reservist, called up Sep '39 de-mobbed 6 1/2 years later, went from Ordinary Seaman to Lieut. Saw quite a bit of activity off your coast from '42 onwards, served in "Hobart", "Swan" and "Hawkesbury" in that order, paid off back here and re-entered the yachting scene (have been a member of one club for 67 years! and first got interested in Ferro. construction when I met up with a bloke named Griffiths (a Yank) who I met in Geraldton on my way North in the sixties he'd just made his first landfall, in W.A right then intended coning South so I gave him my card and offered the hospitality of the



there, an' done that, he was here for all that Winter and grew



to have a firm friendship with a cove named Merv. Finn, past commodore of the Club, builder by trade and a boat builder by choice, he'd already built a little Herreshoff design named "Prudence". anyway Griffiths maintained a close correspondence

friendship with Merv. from then on, and, many times quoted his liking for Ferro construction which he'd taken into account in New Zealand. So, when he finally piled up 'Awahnee" on some reef or other when almost home to the states, he couldn't get back to N.Z. quick enough to duplicate "Awahnee" in ferro. and since that time, he's apparently been all over and done that again an' again! probably dead by now, and ole' Merv's had a stroke ain't really fit but prior to getting crook, he, many times, called at my home whilst I was building "Stand Easy" and many times, mentioned that she was "Twice as ruggedly built as the new "Awahnee"; Griffith having sent

him photos' see!

Back to me an' Hartley .... I bein' a reasonably practical cove, threw a, lot of questions at Hartley, it was "Dear Richard", "Dear Bill" style after a few months, and every time I threw a query, he came back with a sensible sailorising answer.. he undoubtedly knew his stuff, if I had an idea he hadn't tried, he'd suggest, "Sounds good, give it a try!" or, "we thought of that too Bill, it didn't work" A very amicable work out, I've since sent him photos of the finished product but I understand that he's developed alzheimers so ain't up to answering core espondence no more! So, at the age of 50 I retired, and set about becoming a beach bum. I had the design I thought I wanted (bein' in my forties when I was dreaming of it, and thinking that all my ole' sailing mates were going to stay young, I find that it's now too bloody big .... at 45 tons displacement it is a, big boat! Our first shake down trip took us up north, as far as a Port Hedland, then my much loved wife got yet another dose of cancer, so back we came, ultimately she couldn't manage her sixth session with the bloody curse and died in '89 after beating it five times earlier, from 1958, very gutzy girl and I fell into a bloody deep hole ... kids have all left home, I'm now a Great Gran' Dad, have sons in Townsville and Mt Isa and daughters in Broome and Darwin, and, by the grace o' God have managed to enter a second marriage with a girl in almost the same circumstances as I was.... nuts about her late husband as I was about my late wife ... notta bad way to enter a relationship... she's ten years my junior and is nutz about the boat! I've run out've pre-war sailors, all my mates are suckin' heart pills or com-

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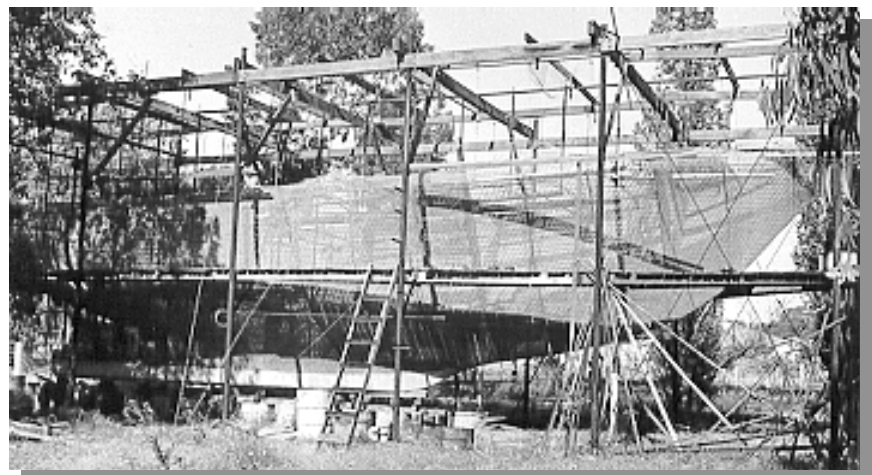
plaining of aches an' pains, can't get off their arses in an emergency, so, unless I do have a team, three at least of day sailing young blokes I don't dare haul up any sails so the ole' couple simply putter along under power, most of the time-after first calling up the local, well organised, radio mob, all volunteers, and tell 'em where I'm going and call 'em again when I get there something I've allways scorned but now, just in case, I have to get with it!

The ship's powered with a V8 perkind, the second one since launching ... the first one history unknown, did not miss a beat in twelve years and eventually simply rusted out.. it cost me \$1,500.00 so I didn't complain, it's been replaced with yet another V8 Perkins, a blown job, which likewise didn't miss a beat up until season before last (it cost me \$4,000.00 gettin' into the big time!) then I had pump trouble and, according to the "experts" (all of whom charged for their theories), many and terrible reasons for my strife .. eventually a retired cocky, fellow member, diagnosed the trouble ...All I had to do was to lengthen the return pipe from the fuel pump to the main tank; air was somehow getting past the pump's non return valve, into the pump, an' not bein' able to get out! simple as that, the whole job cost about \$1.50, so you can guess my opinion of "experts" shun 'em like the plague! So I've set up the craft for liesurely weeks away, we usually stay pretty close to home and pick our weather... lousy skies, stay put, lumpy seas, likewise stay put neither of us have any hankering for long off shore trips any more ...nice ole couple we're told, "very active for their years!" have a 16' tender, use it for pullin' cray pot and fishing, do not go to the "popular" places in busy times and use the deep freeze, "experts" again to make a lot of very cold ice in the pen, then use the fridge as an ice box, lasts about ten days, the original idea was to have, the frig. and deep freeze operative with the aux. 240 genny goin' for an hour a day .... "with this heavy insulation you'll be able to keep ice In the Sahara for a week!" what bullshit! alongside, in the pen its brilliant, a sealed Kirby unit with con-

stant power Supply, freezes everything solid in minutes, at sea, it don't! As you



can imagine we do have a lot of storage space, full headroom under the wheel house. We carry 4 tons of water and about 180 gallons of diesoline, burn about 5 gallons an hour at 8K ...have a big collision bulkhead at frame No.3 then a gash hand's bunk to starb'd, guests' head to port, then two twin cabins abaft that, then the wheel house, dining saloon, galley chart room, it's 16' x 16' and then aft to Owners' quarters, big sports sized. double bunk, ensuite and bags of storage space, along



side that a, passage way to the after hatch, it allows anyone in wet weather gear to disrobe OUTSIDE the living area, so that the craft's interior is always dry. Now, I'm rambling a bit but all this is good gut the question of Ferro. construction as compared to all

others ...there's no perfect medium .. the end result always depends on the method and expertise of the bilder, a lot of new comers were attracted to Ferro, because of its economy, so thought, and they went for the Samson deal of cold mould construction, its quick and its is cheap and the result is usually very fair and appealing, BUT, as Hartley says, its as phoney as a harlot's caress, there's absolutely no strength in it, a few ends of hard wire are turned in board, and when there turned, they are made up into bulkheads, no inherent strength in the hull at all ... yet, many such constructed craft have been bilt and have done some remarkable passages. Due more to arse and good handling, than anything else! In the last ten years, 3 amateur build ferros have left my home club, Fremantle sailing club, and have come to grief, two were well built, in Tahitians and one was a samson double ended craft... None of the drivers were in anyway, "experienced", they were all going to learn as they went along. Well, the two Tahitians went up on the coast, one was about 70 Miles north of here, (he didn't know where he was) and was rescued, the other, a young couple were not heard of again, the third bloke got as far as Africa, went up on the rocks, disregarded by explicit instructions "never" leave this craft untill its sinking under you ... went over the

side in a dinghy, was arse ended in it a few times, ran out of puff, disappeared, his son survived, as did the craft, with a few inches of water in it... no matter how badly the craft has been built, it will usually take more bashing than

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the human body! ... Now these efforts are press grabbed, and always specified as "concrete boats" in the press' ignorance, and as a result, they are bad news... and insurers, working on rumour, and their own experience shun 'em... This does not worry me, I've never insured any boat, I've owned in 70 years... I don't claim to know all the answers, but I've learnt a lot of 'em... When I rang some mob, "experienced" in maritime business, they were quite happy to give me a phone quote, quite outrageous, and did not want to either view the boat, see what my experience tally'd up to etc, so I told 'em to stick it... As I'd intended to all along. At my club, right now, there are literally dozens of craft, mostly powered, with far, far more sophisticated gear than we ever had in the "Hobart", arguably the slickest 6" cruiser in our war and they still manage to hit each other, go around untold damage to 'emselves and others it beats me .... "All Insurance" they say ... borlz, it's all other peoples insurance premiums... my theory is, "if you need all that gear, even if you know how to use it, you shouldn't be out there" in the past week, we had two craft run up on the West End of Rottnest, one a Tuna boat, ("I went to sleep"), the other a "game fishing power boat", man and wife team pulling cray pots near a reef, got one of the pot lines snagged, didn't know what to do! and Rottnest has two lighthouses, main one visible at 19 miles. My usual retort, to critics of the ferro medium, is "ask the bloke who owns and operates one, or get to know what your talking about" Stand Easy's been in the water 19 years, its been aground on rocks twice, once in the Monte Bellos, the other at Rottnest, my own carelessness, total cost of hull repairs - 25 cents! Mainenance has been a breeze, the deckhead ply ( I saved about half a ton weight by using it, the timber toew rails and rubbing strake (four strakes of Meranti, plus ten foot strips of Jarrah on the outside edges, take more than the rest of the craft in maintenance. The local cement mob back in the seventies, were so impressed that they presented me with the mag 'o cement necessary to repair the Rottnest grounding, I deliberately chipped away at the crushed section to

check on the internal mesh and hard drawn wire...it was pristine clean, after 13 years in the water... the whole deal is IF the craft has been properly built, the mix to specifications and NO (R) No additives put in it, the mix is so dense so's not to allow the ingress of water... the 2 to 1 mix, no agregate, is so different from the normal 7/8 to 1 "concrete" that they may use in the bridge and building construction, that the average layman makes the comparison... Any rust visible on Ferro boat, is invariably surface only, its usually the end of some bit of mesh thats exposed... we have a "South Seas" at the Club, it's a shocker, by the end of each Summer it's a mess of rust streaks, the owner, a pretty practical bloke, is completely unpeturbd, the thing sails like a witch.. "and it's getting stronger every year!"

All up, in the Club, we have about 14. Ferro. boats, most of 'em "Hartleys" and every owner is completely satisfied, I don't think any of 'em are insured-which makes me a bit wary, of getting too close to some o' the mugs! ...we do not have to worry about osmosis, dry rot, rust, nail sickness, structural fatigue or any expensive overhauls. Most of us are pretty innovative coves, the very medium attracts self helpers.. as a guide, including the two engines the total all up cost without labour of of Stand Easy is under 120 gees, she's 58' x 16' x 6'6", a big boat .. on the market I'd be lucky to get that figure, but, apart from the nouveaus who know nothing about boats, and are the wrong people with all the dough today! the only craft people don't do dough on the mugs who are prepared to latch onto other mugs to off load their expensive toys, once they're learned that they either can't handle 'em or don't accept the responsibility... at the goin' rate, for the better of these tupper toys, with all the fruit, is at least \$600K for a 45' craft .. and they're selling like crazy over here right now! My pen, at the Club. owes me ten grand all up, and it's mine in its entirety (I got in before "boating" became a cult and a status; it's present value is at least 65 gees..but it ain't for sale ...every club in the Swan river is full as a State school. No more river moorings or Club pens are available..the only solution is more, very expensive, reclaimed ocean marinas....we're battling to keep our mem-

bership down to \$3,000 We've arguably the best facilities in the country, we have a large percentage of non contributing mug nouveaus stink boat owners who are so dumb that they don't know that they don't know. We don't have flag officer who's been a member longer ten years woe is me! I hate being an old hand. Was down at Busselton earlier this month, new marina, there, very expensive and many years yet to show a return in my book, stuck up with a young couple, ex. Souh Africa, who'd been world sailing, in their 32' Samson for the past twelve years, it MAY have been th same craft I mentioned earlier, mug that I was not to pursue the subject but, as I say, even the badly built Ferro's, properly handled, still get by.

Gettig back to your idea, by all means pool all the info you can get, Hartley had some bloody good ideas-my steering gear for instance I have a Bedford rack and pinion, 7 teath on the pinion, I think about 32 on the crown wheel, (not sure about that but this particular truck has the pinion outside in other words the wheel can be mo mounted gears up and the pinion simply rests on top, this gear is coupled per 3 ton steel belting, to the binnacle the wheel's exactly 21/2 turns hard over to hard over, under any conditions the craft can be sailed with two fingers on the wheel, under any arrangement of the ketch rigged sail plan. So the message is, in your contacts find out what other other blokes have done, steer clear of the usual chandleries, all they re are suppliers of mass produced stuff for the mugs, a bit like car dealers, I always say "Go along any jetty, you'll always find some ideas. and the poorer the craft's owner is, the better will be his ideas! Ive rambled long enough, thanks for your patience I look forward to healing from you any time. .

regards,

William Wreford

## **Fresh Calamari**

*by Keith Fleming S/V Zodiac*

One item of gear that should always be carried on a cruising yacht is a selection of squid jigs. Often squid can be found sheltering near a moored yacht. Around coral areas you will often find that when you get on deck in the morning that there may be a school of squid hanging around the boat. I'm not sure whether it has something to do with the water flow or pressure, the shadow cast by the hull in the early morning light, or the fact that often small fish will seek shelter close to the hull. But it happens often enough to warrant the carrying of a selection of Yo-Zuri jigs. There are just tied onto the end of the fishing line and cast near the squid and worked slowly back toward the boat. Best colours are pink or orange, but it pays to carry a green and blue one as well. Often the squid will be small so the small size 3 jig covers a better range. Just don't have the clean washing on the line if your fishing for squid from the deck of your boat. It can have disastrous results both for the washing and your domestic bliss. The fresh squid are cleaned and cut up and should be dropped into very hot oil in the pan and removed after exactly 60 seconds. Cook them any longer and they'll go rubbery.

## **Rigging**

*by Keith Fleming S/V Zodiac*

A friend was up his mast installing a new VHF antennae and just happened to notice what appeared to be a crack in a Norsman fitting on the cap shroud. This led to a thorough examination and he found that he had 3 different fittings with cracks. The boat is a little over 10 years old and is fitted with all Norsman fittings. After talking with his local rigger he found that this was quite common and some time ago there was a general recall and all in the rigging business were informed. Apparently the early ones were made out of tube steel and these were the ones that cracked. Later models were made from solid bar and there is no problems with these. If you have an older boat that has rigging fitted with these fittings then I suggest you check them out to make sure. There are still plenty of the early ones about!



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## **Stuck Oil Filters**

*by Keith Fleming S/V Zodiac*

It can be very difficult to remove a screw-on type oil or water filter if you do not have the right tools. A piece of cord with a loop in one end and a screwdriver is all that you need. Put about 4 turns around the filter and feed the screwdriver through the loop and use it as a lever to apply enough pressure to break the seal on the thread.