

# Advice on keeping Gigs – Peter Williams

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- If possible, store the Gig in a cool shaded area with ventilation.  
Most damaging is direct sunlight and exposure to wind.
- A cool dark boathouse is favourite but failing that, northside of a fence, preferably under a lean to roof, but avoid creating a wind tunnel.
- In extreme dry and or hot periods, it is fine to keep a little water in the bilge (not more than a dozen buckets. Traditionally hemp sacking was used because it holds the moisture quite well and reduces the volume of water necessary to cover a large area in the bottom. Ideally add some salt to the water (or use seawater)
- Whether on a trailer or on the hard, always make sure the keel is supported evenly in at least three places, long term more than that. Then just snug Frenchman or bilge chocks under the bilge rubbers – they do not need to be in hard.  
If the boat is going to be left for weeks at a time, remove the thwart struts to let the boat relax, otherwise there can be a tendency for the thwarts to take and bend.  
\*Never be tempted to row the boat without the struts in though as it puts excessive strain on the thwart and knees.
- If possible, try to have vents in your boat cover and avoid sponge tight to the hull unless it stays dry as it encourages rot if always wet.
- Avoid any fresh water in the boat sub-zero
- Check the boat each month for cracked timbers, delaminating knees, split plank or loose pins and pads, if you're concerned speak to a builder. You quite often find cracked timbers in the extreme turns in by the keel in the ends, this isn't the end of the world, but keep an eye that the adjacent timbers don't start failing towards the middle.
- When lifting the boat, lift under the seats or riser, never on the gunwale if you can avoid it as the top strake can split along its grain between knees.

- If the paint is obviously thick and starting to lift it needs to come off but if it is unbroken and adhering well, don't disturb the underlayers unless you are prepared to do a thorough and competent job.
- You can use paint/varnish stripper or a heat gun to remove coatings. Take care not to dwell on any a varnished area as if badly scorched it can be hard to sand out. Use a sharp scraper or tungsten blade and be careful not to score the timber with the edge of the blade.
- Use an oil-based paint. Don't be tempted by 'one coat nonsense', on bare wood apply a thinned down primer, full primer then undercoat and gloss.
- Take advise on 'Soda blasting' before going down that road, it is strongly recommended not to sand blast unless you are prepared to spend weeks refilling spring growth of the wood grain where its worn away. Next time you go to a pub with exposed beams and nautical clap trap, look at the way the grain looks striated and eaten by rats – that is what your boat will look like if you are not careful!
- Always take advise from a builder if you are unsure.