NEW ERA OF BOATBUILDING IN ORKNEY

Sea trials of the 36 ft creel boat 'Hildona', the first glass reinforced plastic commercial fishing boat to be designed and built in Scotland, has begun a new era of boatbuilding in the Orkneys. Built for an Orkney fisherman the hull of the vessel was GRP moulded in the year-old yard of Halmatic (Scotland) Ltd., at Hatston, Kirkwall, in buildings which served as a Second World War seaplane base.

The vessel is the work of a team of local operatives who under the guidance of Mr P M P Webb, the manager and Mr B Davies, the foreman, were trained at Halmatic Limited of Havant, and have since illustrated their aptitude and ability to work with new materials.

The superstructure of 'Hildona' and the machinery was fitted by the family firm of Duncans of Burray, considered to be the foremost exponents of the traditional clinker-built Orkney craft.

A spokesman for the Highlands and Islands Development Board who assisted in establishing Halmatic to settle in Orkney said that the 'Hildona' was the first of a new line of fishing vessels, and signified the beginning of a new era for the Orkney boatbuilding industry. New materials had been introduced to the industry and craftsmen in traditional boatbuilding methods had shown themselves willing to adapt to the new techniques involved.

Currently under construction at the Halmatic Yard is a 54 ft yacht hull designed on fishing boat lines by G L Watson of Glasgow.

Inquiries have come to Hatson from all over the world and the company expect more business to result from the performance of 'Hildona'. Interest in GRP generally can be expected to increase the turnover of the other yards in Orkney and in the North of Scotland through finishing work.

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GLASGOW FIRM DEVELOPS NEW 700 TON FRAME BENDER

Three identical ships frame benders of 400 ton capacity completed by Hugh Smith (Glasgow) have been installed in three Italian shipyards to the order of the Italian Government Authority, Cantiere Navali del Tirreno e Riuniti.

The machines costing a total of some £90,000 are installed at Riva, near Genoa, Ancona and Palermo, in yards which are now building ships of respectively 92,000, 100,000 and 240,000 tons.

Other recent installations of Hugh Smith (Glasgow) ships frame benders include a 400 ton unit in Port Weller, Ontario, in one of the leading dry docks in Canada and a 700 ton model for Blohm & Voss in Hamburg. These two orders total more than £80,000.

The firm exports 80 per cent of total production and is represented in main shipyards around the world.

The 700 ton frame bender is a new machine developed in anticipation of the market in the handling of large welded Tee frames for bulk carriers and tankers. It is a development of the existing range of which more than 60 have been installed around the world.