£56.95

ORCADIAN 18/12/75

ESTABLISHED 1854

Halmatic have built 45 fibreglass hulls in three years

NOW THEY WILL BUILD COMPLETE WORK-BOATS

SINCE going into production at Hatston in 1972 Halmatic (Scotland) Ltd. have produced 45 glass reinforced plastic (GRP) hulls in the three years.

There are seven of the 28 footers, all fishing boats, a size which has been in production for only a year. Nineteen of the 36 foot Mark 1, like the Gang Warily have been built and of these 17 are fishing, one is a yacht and the other is a passenger boat. A deeper version of this 36 foot boat, the Mark II, has 13 in service, all of them fishing except one, which is a work/passenger boat.

The company has produced two 50 footers one of which, the Harvest Gold, is fishing out of Shetland and the other is a research vessel for London University. Their biggest hull is the 54 foot of which four have been built of which one is a yacht in the United States, another is a trawler fishing from Yorkshire, a third is a survey vessel for the Clyde Purification Board and the fourth it is hoped will be sold to one of the Scandinavian countries for fishing.

These hulls are based on designs derived from traditional Orkney boats, such as Duncan's of Burray, adapted to the new material and have provided employment for as many as 25-30 employees and at present for about 20.

The boats have all proved themselves in a wide variety of sea conditions and particularly in the north where perhaps some of the most testing seaways of all are to be found in our storm-tortured tideways.

Up until now Halmatic (Scotland) Ltd., which is a subsiduary of Halmatic Ltd., Havant, Hampshire, both of them part of the Hunting Group of Companies, has made the hulls of these vessels only. The fitting out has taken place elsewhere at the direction of the buyer. In many instances the locally bought boats have been fitted with their engines and other gear at Orkney boatyards such as Duncans in Burray or Anderson's or Mackay's in Stromness.

dispersing gear, will be able to deal with oil spillages.

These bigger boats, which will be in the price range of £95,000 upwards according to fittings, will not in the meantime be completed at Hatston. Only the hulls will be constructed here and the fitting out will be carried out by Robertson, Sandbank, Argyll.

Halmatic opened up in Orkney at Hatston in 1971 when they began tooling up and the first hull came out of the factory the following year — the 36 foot Hildona, still fishing in local waters.

Mr Pierce Webb, who has been manager of the concern since its Orkney debut says they came north in the first place because there was a ready-made factory and slipway available at Hatston; secondly because most boats in the UK fishing fleet were made in Scotland and thirdly because at that time there was a suitable labour force available.

Up until 1973-74 they expanded with throughput and employment increasing. Since then with the world-wide recession, especially in the fishing industry, and the economic situation generally, including rising costs of materials and fuels — all oil-based — they have had to consolidate. One of their materials, polyester resin, for instance, rose 200 per cent in nine months.

The staff employed is mainly drawn from Orcadians all of them trained by the firm. There have been no redundancies — the drop in numbers having been accounted for by natural wastage. Now when the new range of complete Amazon boats comes into production more staff will be needed.

"OFF THE PEG"

For buyers who wish, this system will continue but Halmatic are now to broaden their operations and produce completely fitted out work boats to a standardised specification which will leave their Hatston factory completely ready for sea.

But the hull designs will be exactly the same as those which have already proved themselves as fishing boats. Now they will be fitted out as work/passenger boats, ferries, small cargo vessels, tugs, fire tenders and so on. And Halmatic will quote for the complete work —not just the hull.

Halmatic have been trying to get into the export market for some time and indeed they had a very good response at the various exhibitions and trade shows in this field. They have already sold one of their 28 footers to the Danes and it is fishing out of Esbjerg but, of course, the fishing industry is going through a bad time just now and as a result of this recession not many new fishing boats are being ordered anywhere.

Halmatic felt that a shift of policy was needed to meet this new situation and the obvious place to look appeared to be the oil-related industry. But if the fishing recession caused problems the devalued pound presented and still presents an opportunity in the export field and makes Halmatic's new boats highly competitive especially in Scandinavia

This new range of boats which have been named the Amazon class are tough, versatile, competitive and standardised.

SALES DRIVE

A big selling campaign has already been mounted throughout the world and the Company already has agents strategically placed in many countries. They are aiming particularly at the Middle East oil-producing countries and have already had a number of interested inquiries from that quarter.

The 28 and 36 foot boats will be standardised in several layouts suitable for pilot work, harbour launches, ferries and passenger boats, diving and salvage, general purpose towing and so on. They are in the price range £15,000 to £21,000 complete with either Ford Marine or Perkins Marine engines, navigational aids, radio, hydraulic steering and so on and can be bought "off the peg," as it were.

The 50 and 54 footers will also be available as work boats for such purposes as mooring launches for harbour work, carrying up to 80 passengers, towing, fire tender work and, fitted with