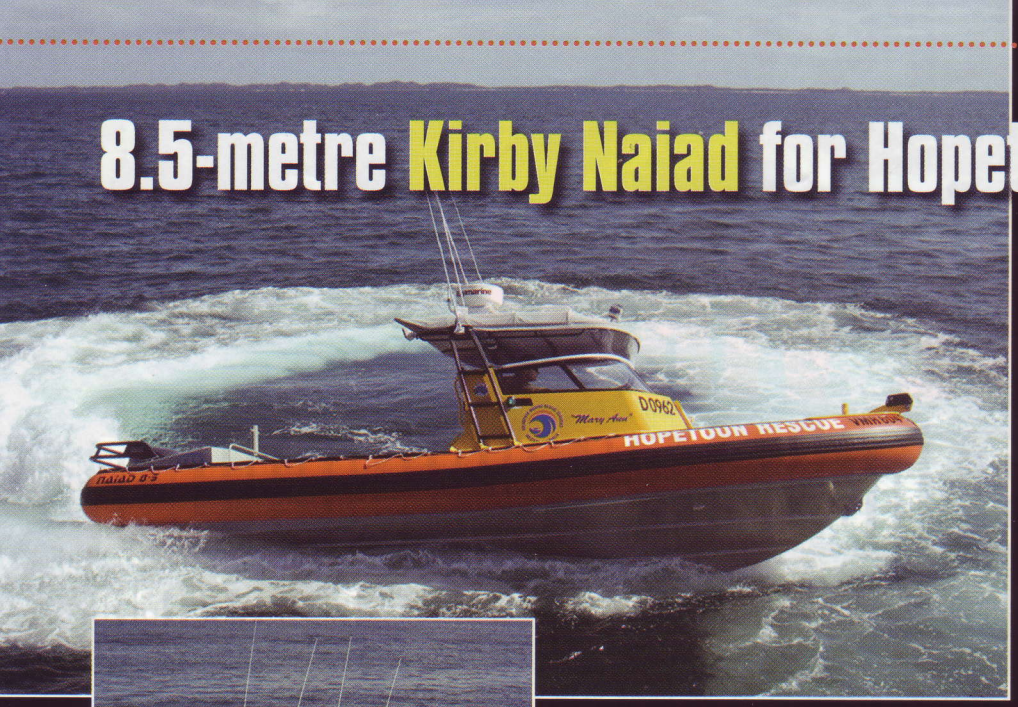
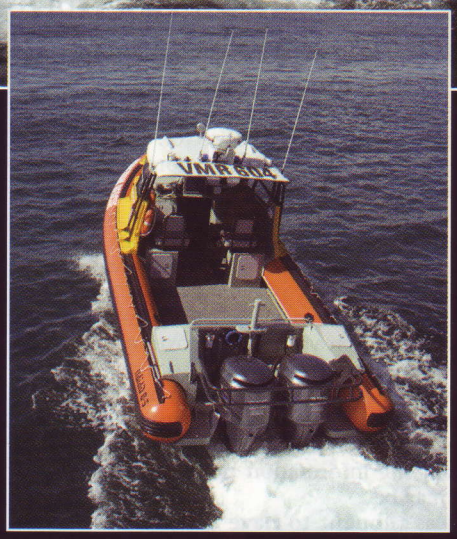
8.5-metre Kirby Naiad for Hopetoun Sea Rescue

By MIKE BROWN





Hopetoun on Western Australia's south coast has taken delivery of the seventh Naiad to be built by Kirby Marine for the state's sea rescue groups.

For many years a small, isolated town, Hopetoun has seen a huge population rise due to a resurgence of mining at BHP's Ravensthorpe mining project. Among the services and infrastructure struggling to keep pace was the sea rescue capability. Much of the money for the new vessel was raised locally, but the Fire and Rescue Service's Regional Co-ordinators Paul Kimber and Jeff Howe facilitated additional funding through the Lotteries Commission and State Government grants.

The layout varies from other rescue Naiads by its removal of the forward cabin. The result is called a mid-cab, although it is effectively a well-protected console with full beam storage ahead – albeit with a watertight door to give access forward.

The fore cabin removal has created a forward working area, considered locally more useful than a larger cabin. The anchor fairlead is a retractable, folding design so the vessel can go bow-on to another vessel for passenger transfer or tow line passing without damage to either party. To cope with rigorous encounters with other vessels the hull tubes have been given a heavy-duty abrasion band.

The mid-cab's wrap around sides, fabric awning and reverse-rake clear infills create a dry environment for the crew and the electronics. Proven on earlier vessels, the mid-dash positioning of the multi function Raymarine display allows visual access to both coxswain and navigator. The further share-out of functions gives the navigator, the radios and the coxswain the engine monitoring.

In rescue work the chances of losing people overboard are heightened, and the chances of doing it unnoticed are similarly raised. With this in mind the vessel uses the Mobilert man overboard system. This Australian-invented failsafe system of personal beacons is activated if a beacon gets more than a certain distance from the monitor.

Power comes from a pair of Yamaha 168kW Yamaha four-stroke outboards, the brand that is close to standard for the Kirby Naiads. Despite having a hull bottom minus the twin steps of the highest performance Kirbys, they deliver a top speed of 47 knots. Cruising is nominally 28 to 30 knots, at which speed fuel consumption is around 50 litres per hour.

The motors, mounted in a splash well, are protected from impact by a collision frame aft. Ahead of them is a tow post: the majority of call-outs resulting in tows rather than outright life saving.

Seating is provided for two to three other crew on a folding settee at the cockpit's rear. Movement throughout the vessel, or just standing, whilst underway is eased by the fatigue membrane laid over the entire deck under the carpet. Around 40mm thick, it has a disproportionate effect in removing impact shock.

In the interests of minimal power consumption and maximum life and reliability, all internal and external lighting uses Hella LEDs instead of conventional globes. These make an astonishing reduction in power demand, ensuring plenty of wattage is always available for starting.

Any marine operations on WA's south coast anticipate heavy sea conditions. The Naiad copes legendarily well with conditions under way, and Kirby has ensured that the launching and recovery phases are as fast as possible to reduce the chances of the sea damaging the vessel.

Part of the technique is weight reduction to make launching and recovery possible with standard vehicles. To compensate for the vessel weight consequent on the massive strength built-in, Kirby build its own trailers, in aluminium where weight is critical.

Minimal time spent in the launch and recovery phases is critical, and for this Kirby invented their, now commonly imitated, auto catch and recovery system. The custom-built trailers are equipped with a device that, when set, allows the boat to unlock and reverse off without the need for anyone at the trailer. When recovering, it is similarly a one man operation: just drive on and lock automatic.

For further information contact:
Kirby Marine, Australia.
PH: (08) 9410 2270,
Web: www.kirbymarine.com

'Mary Anne'

SPECIFICATIONS

Type of vessel:	Sea rescue RIB
In survey to:	2C USL Exempt
Home port:	Hopetoun, Western Australia
Builder:	Kirby Marine, Western Australia
Designer:	Naiad Design, New Zealand
Owner:	Hopetoun Volunteer Marine Rescue, Western Australia
Length overall:	8.5 metres
Length waterline:	7.2 metres
Beam:	3.0 metres
Draught:	0.4 metres
Displacement:	2.7 tonnes
Construction material:	Aluminium
Main engines:	2 x 168kW Yamaha 4-stroke outboards
Maximum speed:	47 knots, lightship
Cruising speed:	28 – 30 knots, full load
Radar:	Raymarine
Sounder:	Raymarine
Compass:	Plastimo
GPS:	Raymarine C120
Paints:	International
Windows:	Beta Marine
Seating:	Universal Upholstery
Deck surface finish:	Autex Carpets
Fuel capacity:	580 litres
Fuel consumption:	45 – 55 litres/hour
Crew:	2 + 2