

ECO FISHING BOAT DESIGN WINNERS

The brief was for an under-10m boat that would not need a licence for fishing under sail or oar. Many entries nodded to traditional types, but the winner was surprisingly radical

Judges Aidan Tuckett, Dan Houston and Martin Castle study the entries



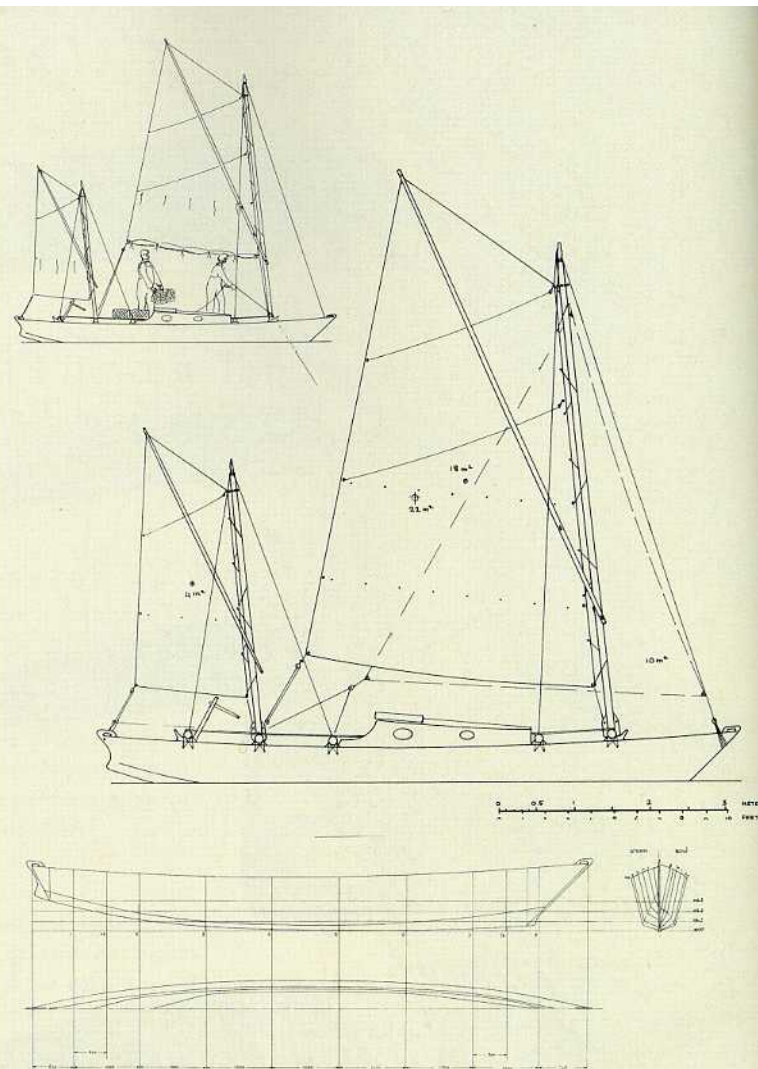
WINNER
Amatasi 27
by James Wharram
and Hanneke Boon

JUDGES' VIEW

Of all the competition entries, this is the one that took us the furthest away from our preconceived ideas of an ideal inshore fishing boat. Then, when we began to look at the design without prejudice, we could see a boat that would be a delight to build, sail and fish. James is well known for his catamaran (double canoe) designs, which

have proved to be very capable craft, sailing the oceans of the world. For this design he has drawn on his considerable knowledge and observations of this type of boat being used for inshore fishing in many parts of the world, and he justifiably reasons that the Amatasi 27 would be equally suitable for Eco fishing in UK waters.

The design is beautifully drawn, with a very clear, comprehensive set of descriptions and drawings showing how to construct the hulls, spars and sails. James estimates the build cost to be about £1500-£2000, which for the inshore fisherman would be very attractive.



WINNER
Amatasi 27 Double Canoe
by James Wharram
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DESIGNER'S THOUGHTS by James Wharram

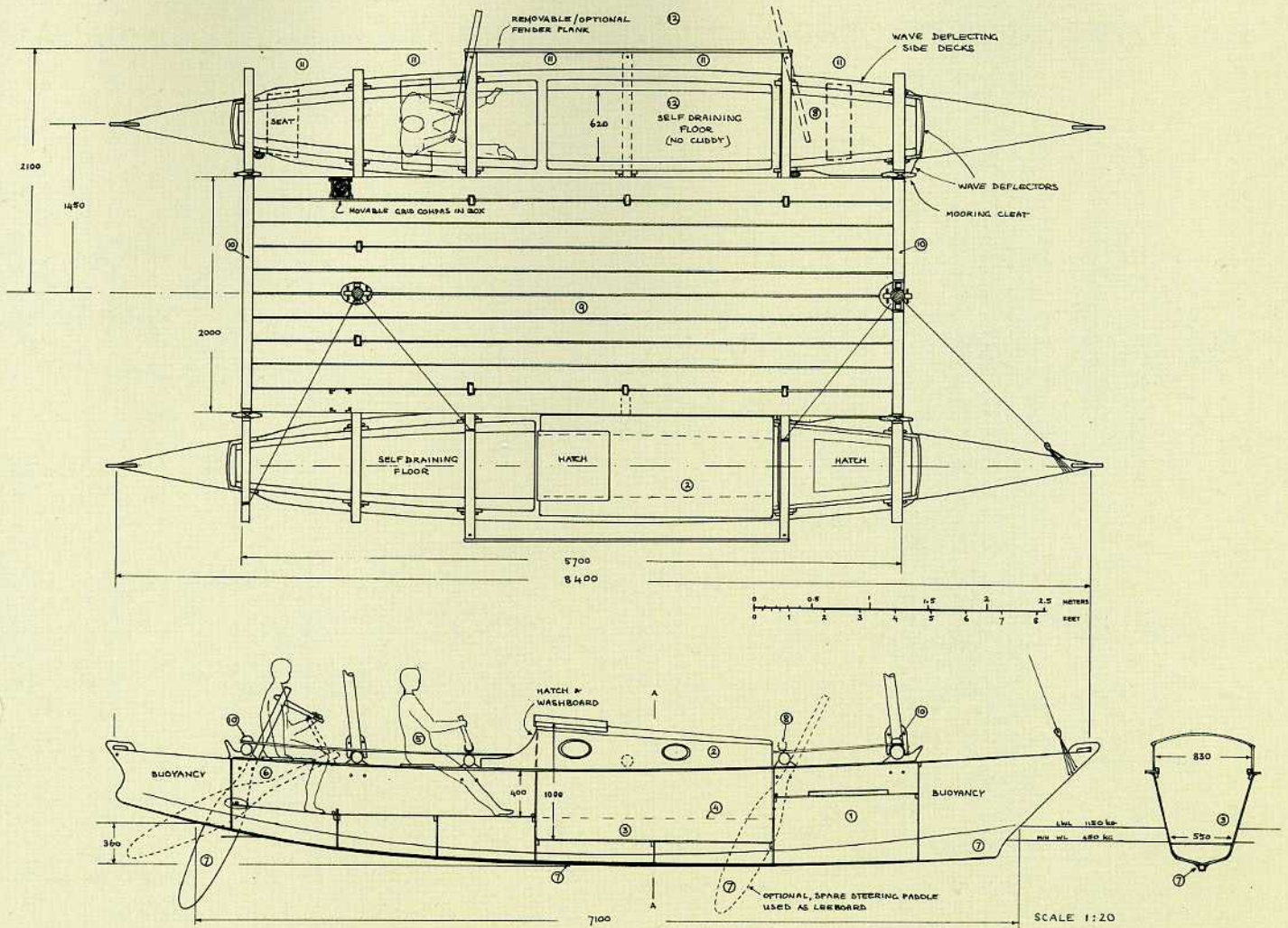
I first went to sea in 1949. My father was a builder and wanted me to be an architect, for our mutual benefit. He snarled at my dreams of sailing the oceans and retorted: "Go to bloody sea and see what it is really like." So I ended up as lowest of the low on the old steam trawler *Westcar* sailing out of Milford Haven to fish on the Porky Banks off the West coast of Ireland in winter. As a lanky, poetry-reading beginner, I was the butt of some practical jokes, but these real fishermen took me to their hearts and gave me the courage to later sail the oceans.

On my first 23ft 6in (7.2m) catamaran, sailing along the coasts of Spain and Portugal in the 1950s I studied many small sailing fishing

The concept of powered catamarans has already been adopted by fishermen around the UK coast, because they provide a large stable platform, with plenty of deck space in a given length (usually within the 10m rule), shallow draught, and easily driven hulls with their inherent fuel savings. Many of these advantages translate to a sailing craft, and are evident in the Amatasi 27.

Well thought-out sprit rig

The rig is particularly well thought-out, with the sprit main and mizzen providing a snug, low-aspect rig but still providing a large sail area. The sprit main is a great sail



boats (now all gone) - the type of boats and fishing this competition is trying to recreate. In my early design career (1960s) I designed small catamarans using simple sprit rigs, inspired by the knowledge I had gained studying these small fishing/work boats.

In the last 12 years we have been designing double canoes inspired by the ethnic canoe craft of the Pacific. In 2008-09 Hanneke and I sailed the 4000Nm 'Lapita Voyage' on a 38ft (11.5m) ethnic double canoe we designed. This canoe had many of the features that we have used in the 27ft (8.4m) Amatasi, so they have been thoroughly sea tested. Features like the steering paddle, lashed beams and platforms, rope standing rigging, wooden deadeyes for blocks, all worked amazingly well.

While sailing this voyage we encountered numerous fishing canoes, many of them with outriggers, some sailing, some paddling, some motored. We could see how suitable canoeform craft are for small-scale fishing, their lightweight and shallow draught allowing them to be pulled up beaches and entering shallow lagoons. We were also approached on several islands to design double canoes capable of sailing 20-30 nM to

other islands and to fish further offshore. They all wanted to go back to using sails due to rising oil prices. These boats would have to be very simple and able to be built from local materials.

The Amatasi 27 is a development of the 21ft - 6.4m Tahiti Wayfarer we designed and built in 2000. She has a loading capacity of 700kg, which is two men at 100kg (fully dressed) plus 500kg for equipment and catch.

We discussed her fishing possibilities with our local fisherman, John Charlton, who fishes out of Falmouth on an Oyster 16. He fishes for crabs, mackerel, pollock, squid, etc. He could see many advantages of the wide deck and stable platform and assured us this boat will be suitable for most types of small-scale fishing.

The cost of building the Amatasi is low (£1500 - £2000), particularly if the sails are self-made. All that is required is plywood, some timber, epoxy and rope; the rest can be handcrafted by the builder. Crossbeams and spars can be small trees cut from a local coppice at little or no cost. Roundwood is much stronger than sawn timber. Finally, Amatasi is also suitable for youth group work, 'raids' and coastal trekking.

to have when working fishing gear, as there isn't a boom to get in the way, and for reducing sail quickly when picking up fishing gear the sail can be brailed up in a trice. Both sails can be reefed down to control speed for trolling or hand lining or for when the wind gets a bit fresh. The mizzen is a sensible size to help position the boat. She should prove an easily sailed boat able to cover a considerable distances to new fishing grounds in the right conditions.

The layout means that she would be able to undertake most methods of passive inshore fishing. There is ample deck space to stow pots, lines or nets, and these could

be hauled over the bow of the platform between the hulls and shot over the stern. Working on the bridge deck might be a bit exposed, but a jackstay between the masts would give a clip-on point. Alternatively there is room amidships in either hull (if the optional cabin top isn't fitted) to stand and work the fishing gear. The wet well for the catch, ideal for crabs and lobsters, would also be a great place to keep live sand eels (lances) as bait to catch high value bass.

This boat would have a minimum impact in eco terms in her build, on the fish stocks, their habitat and the environment, but just as importantly, she would provide a viable

way to try and make a living from fishing, with minimum outlay and running costs. This may be a romantic vision of how things could be - the reality is that it can be extremely difficult to make a living fishing. But it would be a great way to work, choosing the weather and tides to fish part-time to supplement another income.

We can imagine someone trying this out, armed with a mobile phone and calling ahead to prospective buyers as they surf back with a top catch and the restaurant chef nipping down to the beach to meet them... "Bought straight from the boat, y'know - totally eco!"