

A NEW breed of fishing vessel destined for Lynn's in-shore fleet was due to be launched this week. In so many ways it is different from any of its predecessors, and may well be only the forerunner of others.

Built by Lynn dockworker, Mr Jim Bowman and his partner Mr Les Riches its completion marks the culmination of three-and-a-half years of research and building.

It was built for Lynn fisherman, Mr David Howard to his own specifications after having visited many ports, including a number on the east and west coasts of Scotland in search of ideas and specifications.

The boat was built over the past two-and-a-half years by Mr Bowman and Mr Riches on land at White's Nursery, in Edma Street, overlooking the Long Pond.

It is of the most modern design to come into the fleet, and certainly has the biggest beam at 16ft 8ins. The vessel, named Jean Howard, after Mr Howard's mother who lives next door to him in Loke Road, is 42ft overall — 39ft 3ins registered — and the extra beam compensates for loss of length required under existing regulations.

Apart from its distinctive shape, the vessel has an impressive wheelhouse for'ard which represents a big step forward on the normal standards associated with the Lynn fleet.

Cruiser

The outside is eye-catching with its decoration. It has been painted in Scottish style with wood grain effect in panels, the work of Mr Bowman's son Tony. And inside it is even more outstanding. It is large at 8ft by 10ft, and surprisingly — as far as Lynn is concerned at any rate — is fully lined in walnut veneer giving it an air of luxury.

It gives the impression of being aboard a cruiser rather than a fishing vessel, but it was not installed for its looks alone; more for its functional, easy-to-clean qualities.

It also serves as a saloon, with a galley, housing cooker and small sink unit, a bunk-type locker on one side and a small locker on the other plus a small table.

It is the intention that there should be two people in the wheelhouse at sea, one at the wheel and the other readily available if help is needed whether he should be awake or asleep on the bunk.

The wheelhouse is fitted with up-and-down ship's windows, and a clear view windscreen panel which provides clear vision ahead under all conditions.

Equipment includes hydraulic steering, radar, echo sounders, VHF radio, Decca navigator. The vessel is powered by a 6LXB engine with 3 to 1 reduction gearbox and swinging 42 x 34 propellor which gives better pull.

Apart from the bunk in the wheelhouse, there are four bunks for'ard, though normally there will be only three crew, Mr David Howard, his son Michael and another crew

member.

Astern of the wheelhouse is a hydraulic winch, driven off the engine and giving a 2-ton pull, and a hydraulic net drum for retrieving the net.

A large fish room is also incorporated in the vessel for bulk carrying of sprats, cod and other similar winter catches.

Said Mr Howard: "The vessel is a multi-purpose one. It can be used for any fishing in the Wash which is the trend nowadays. You must be very versatile."

Mr Howard has been fishing out of Lynn for 20 years following six years in the Merchant Service. He started with a hired boat, the Mascot and went into partnership in the Victory.

When the partnership was later dissolved, Mr Howard

bought the local boat, Mavis to work single-handed. Later he made a big step forward in buying back one of the big vessels from Boston — the Telegraph. Next he bought the Freda and Nora, and later still went to Holland to buy the steel boat Annie.

"That was my best boat and I did very well with her," he said. "She had twin beams — two 26ft nets instead of one — but we ran into problems with Government policies. They will allow only one net as part of the conservation programme."

With the Jean Howard he will fish inshore waters along the coast and across to Lincolnshire — "wherever we can make a living. That's why we have gone for so much comfort on board.

"We would like to stop at Lynn, but the economics of the industry today force us to go further afield to fill in during times when fishing is slack in this part of the country."

Mr Howard and his son will complete the fitting out of the vessel afloat and they expect to be fishing with it in a matter of weeks.

See photographs:- http://jcbarrettphotographic.co.uk/portoflynn_3b.html