

SEA WORK



A year of innovations

At the annual Seawork trade show, the latest innovations are presented to the marine industry, often well ahead of general release to the boating public. Jake Kavanagh went along to see what's coming.

Seawork is a regular event on the marine industry's calendar, and grows bigger every year. The four-day, mid-week event in June is based just along the quayside from the

Southampton Boat Show venue and is aimed squarely at industry professionals.

This year, the thriving offshore windfarm industry had a prime location to itself and the need to work on turbines in dangerous sea conditions has led to several advances in marine safety. While the emphasis is mainly on the commercial sector, many of the new products have applications for the humble cruising yachtsman as well.

Innovation is a key word at Seawork, with

a dedicated showcase featuring all the new products that have been shortlisted for the various awards.

This was our chance to get in there and give you a sneak preview. We found some great new products that will be launched to the public during the two big national boat shows – and one or two that you may never have heard about otherwise.



Recycled pram dinghy

8ft 'Scrappy' Dinghy

Composite Mouldings Group

Price: £120 plus VAT www.composite-mouldings.com Tel: 02380 660770

Here's something different: 8ft (2.4m) pram dinghies retailing for around £120 and made from leftover commercial grade resins. The idea came from the Southampton-based Composite Mouldings Group, which was fed up with throwing away perfectly good raw materials, because batch number surplus can't be re-certified. Instead, they bought a basic pram dinghy mould and, whenever they have material left over from a commercial project, the apprentice sets to work to churn out half a dozen dinghies. You'll get an extremely tough but simple hull, without any thwarts or floorboards, and inevitably in one of several commercial colours (green, grey, dark blue, black etc) but at 4ft beam and 2ft depth it will make an ideal tender for a very low outlay. Scrappies can also be DIY improved with varished plywood thwarts, rubber fendering, transom pads and so forth. The dinghies are made in batches, so phone first to see when the next lot will be available and what colour was left over this time. Remember, you can always paint them.

Laser flares

Odeo Flare

Price: From £120 www.odeoflare.co.uk (Contact via website)

The advances in eye-safe laser technology have found their way into the search and rescue market and a new concept of laser flare was on display at the show. Earlier attempts at laser flares have involved limited static beams, but the Mk1 Odeo takes the technology forward by utilising four red lasers on a spinning drum. The Mk II version, due to be released in October, has a fifth laser that points a cone of light vertically. According to Steve Groves, a development engineer, the Mk I laser throws a flickering cone of red light 1,000ft high at a range of one mile, and 3,000ft high at three miles. The Mk II will be even more effective and can be seen from directly overhead while still remaining 'helicopter friendly'. It is also safe for night vision equipment.

The flare is about the same size as a standard handheld pyrotechnic and is powered by just two AA batteries, although the Lithium-ion disulphide 'digital camera' type are preferred for greater endurance. These not only light the lasers, but also spin a rotating head to give the flickering effect that mimics a conventional pyrotechnic. The easily changed batteries are tightly sealed in the floating, waterproof body and will power the lasers for five hours of continuous operation, equivalent to over 300 chemical flares. The new Mk II version will feature an injection moulded body and a longer battery pack for three AA batteries. A fixed liferaft type and hill walking version are also under development. Unfortunately, the laser flare isn't particularly effective in daylight, because it emits no smoke.



Caught on camera:

See JK's video overview of Seawork 2011 on the Sailing Today website: www.sailingtoday.co.uk



Water in your fuel?

Aquasock AQ28

Price: from £14.99 (TBC) www.asap-supplies.com Tel: 0845 1300870

Condensation and dirty fuel can cause a layer of water to form at the bottom of your diesel tank, enabling the dreaded diesel bug to thrive at the water/fuel interface. Extracting the water isn't always easy. If your tank doesn't have a drain tap, you have no choice but to empty the tank completely, perhaps even removing it from the boat for a steam clean. ASAP Supplies has just announced a clever answer. It's called the Aquasock and is made from two fabric pockets that are weighted and filled with a water absorbing gel. The sock is thin enough to be lowered by a fuel resistant string into your tank through any inspection hatch no less than 68mm in diameter. Once inside, it sits for a minimum of 24 hours (but no longer than 72 hours) at the bottom, soaking up the water. (The boat should be at rest so the water is settled.) The sock swells up, trapping up to 28fl oz (0.83 ltr) of water while leaving the fuel untouched. Then simply remove the bloated sock and discard responsibly.

AIS transceiver with stealth mode

Camino 101 and Cypho 101

From: £192

www.mantsbrite.com

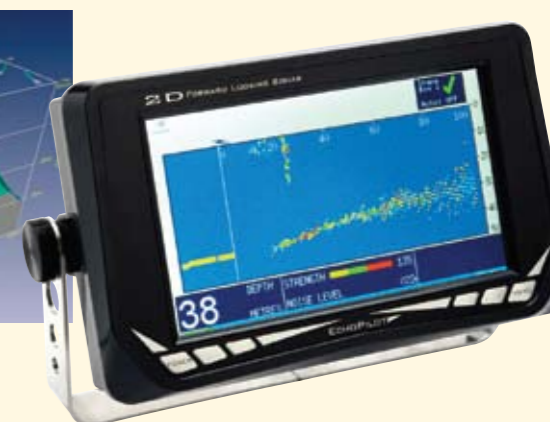
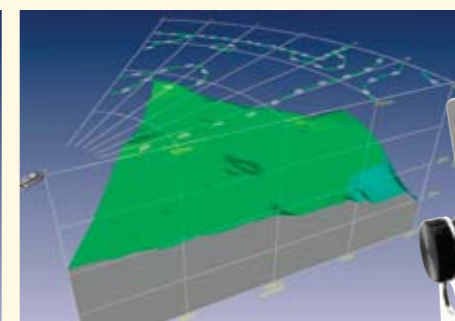
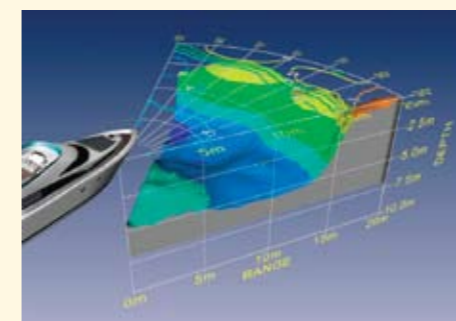
Tel: 01621 853003

Electronics distributors Mantsbrite were showing the latest Class B AIS transponder, the AMEC Camino -101, which they say, is easy to install, and has a 'silent' button designed for stealth operations by the authorities. Apparently, AMEC is the only AIS system to currently offer this remote silent switch as standard, so customs, police and commercial fishermen can vanish off AIS while still receiving information from targets.

For those that do want to be seen, the Camino 101 package also includes easy to use viewer software for on board PCs, a neat GPS antenna and mounting bracket, and NMEA 0183 and RS-232. The unit is also available in 12 or 24v versions, and is priced at £630 including the silent switch. For those on a tighter budget, there is the smaller AMEC Cypho-101, that receives both class A and class B messages retailing at £192.



And the winner is.....



Forward looking Echo-sounder

Echopilot 2D and 3D FLS

Price: (2D) £906 (3D) £6,500 www.echopilot.com Tel: 01425 476211

Carrying away this year's Safety Innovation Award was the Ringwood-based family firm of Echopilot for its new 2D FLS (Forward Looking Sounder). This compact sonar uses the attributes of a full colour 7in screen to show not only the dimensions of the bottom ahead of the boat, but also whether it is hard rock or soft sand or mud and in time to do something about it. Last year, the company's £6,500 3D FLS was another winner and, despite the high price tag, is proving very popular with leisure yachtsmen. The unparalleled graphic views of the seabed ahead are a huge aid to navigators, especially when approaching coral reefs and other poorly charted areas. Sadly, the price is unlikely to come down. Echopilot says its nearest competitor is retailing at around £100,000, so it's a miracle their version is so cheap.