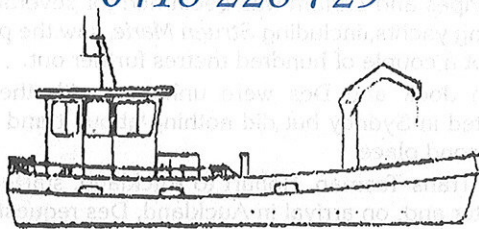


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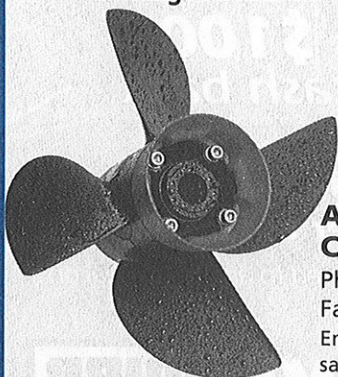
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We called them Kitchener rudder cutters – a diabolical 40ft contrivance that contributed to our heavy burden of training and maintenance of our self-esteem.

In the West Indian spring of 1960 we were at anchor off Georgetown, Grenada with both gangway ladders down. Approaching the starboard ladder (NCOs and ratings) with a full load of happy passengers, I made a perfect line for the bottom end, wound the buckets to full astern and then lost the plot. I pushed the tiller to port to bed the stern. As all outboard motor specialists know, I pushed the wrong way.

The resulting entertainment carried the day in an environment that demanded high decorum. The rather pompous Officer of the Day (RN of course) leant over the side and informed me, somewhat sardonically, that in the Royal Navy "we prefer to leave the boat behind before we climb the ladder".

Tim Bowra,
Rozelle.

Solving litter afloat

Yachting have contributed much to helping keep the harbour clean, and especially in giving a lead in Clean-up Australia Day. The good work keeps going with some authorities installing systems to catch litter at the discharge points of storm water drains, before the material gets into the sea.

However, spending time on the harbour still reveals too many floating items like plastic bags, drink containers, and pieces of styro-foam.

These items look ugly, contribute to pollution, and are a hazard to marine life.

I suggest that ferries might help keep the harbour clean by being fitted with apparatus for "sweeping" the surface waters along the route they travel. Something like the "cow-catcher" on the front of the old steam trains in Western movies comes to mind, suitably developed with a fine mesh.

Another option would be a fine-mesh scoop behind a ferry, to pick up rubbish swirling in the wake. Catamaran ferries may be suited to a scoop installed between the hulls. Careful design is needed, to reduce the hazard to wildlife.

Ferries are continuously covering a lot of the harbour. If all the rubbish they pushed aside were removed, the harbour would be a much cleaner place. Equipment thus developed should also have a wide international market.

Ted Lilley,
Canberra.

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