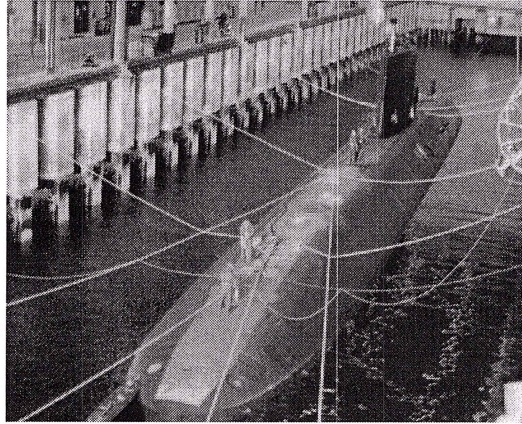


When the boat comes in

Docking a nuclear submarine in the shiplift or alongside the explosives handling jetty at Coulport is a high risk task. Up to 45 people can be brought in from other jobs on the base to handle this – so, for efficiency and safety, it is essential that their training is up to speed. That's the responsibility of Chief Petty Officer Martin Oliver, currently on secondment to BNS and the training liaison manager and manpower co-ordinator for these 'evolutions', as they are called.

When he took over the job, Martin inherited a spreadsheet listing the training of everyone involved. As it did not give all the vital information he needed to know about the team's skill levels, he immediately set about redesigning it. Six months on it is up and running successfully. "The type of work we do here is very high risk and we are required to have regular nuclear audits," said Martin. "That means looking at the training packages to ensure we have suitably qualified and experienced persons doing the work."

The team handling an evolution might comprise people normally working elsewhere on the base. "We have an



'evolution' every three weeks and the job I'm doing here will not be their normal trade job – mechanic, joiner, gardener, cleaner – and away from their daily routine," said Martin. "An electrician may well find himself working as a control room operator for the duration of the evolution."

Because there is no civilian accreditation for this type of work, Martin's new database has to capture everyone's existing skills and the new ones they learn, as well as ensuring these new skills are updated. "It's on-site training," explained Martin. "Someone new will go with an experienced person and we have a self-regulating, self-teaching system that works very well, but skills are being reappraised from the top down, and we all have to go through a process of reinvigoration," said Martin, which is where the computer package comes into its own.

Submarines and catamarans at HMNB Clyde Another Hunt Class refit at Rosyth

Cats tale proves valuable lesson

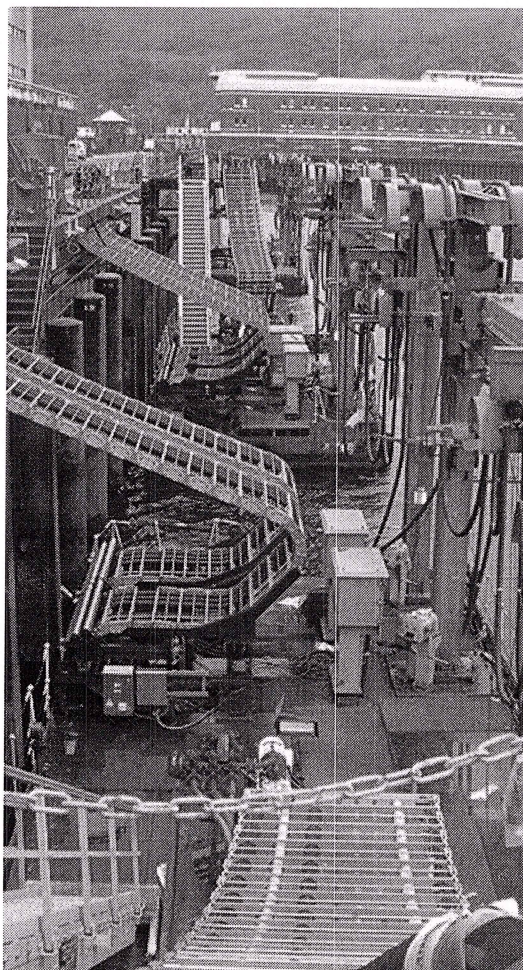
The cats in question are a very much sleeker and faster breed than their single-hulled cousins and, for their preservation, are much happier being left in the water. On the second phase of a major re-preservation contract on the northern area catamarans, BNS is employing an innovative approach that allows the cats to stay in the water while the work is carried out – saving an enormous amount of time and cutting the cost by 50%.

The work currently underway involves removing and replacing the paint on the decks, which in turn means that all the mechanical and electrical shore supplies have to be removed first to avoid damage by shot-blasting. The paint systems in the ballast and void tanks, which keep the cats level on the high seas, are also being re-preserved.

Technical Support Engineer Alan Cowan is managing the project: "Paint systems break down over time and this was expected. The original planning involved removing the cats from the water and doing the work ashore. We did that with one and it took nine months to complete. Now, from the lessons learned, we aim to do the remaining eight in the same time!"

Three cats will have a 12-week refurbishing period and a further two will be worked on over eight weeks. The final three will then be completed over another 12-week period.

Alan Cowan is convinced a major contribution to meeting the time challenge is the fact that a project team, made up of a variety of skills from different areas of the base, will be retained to work on all the cats. "BNS has never done that before and it's proving very successful. The team is working exceptionally well together, they are well motivated and determined to prove they can handle complex projects such as this."



HMS Atherstone proceeds full-ahead

HMS Atherstone has undocked as her refit proceeds full-ahead at a rate of knots. Work started on the Hunt Class vessel in mid-July 2005 and an extremely demanding schedule will see the refit completed in mid-December. By then she will have completed the renewal of her main and auxiliary engines, an air-conditioning plant upgrade and the installation of new external communications, including a high-frequency transmitter update, together with an improved habitability package.

HMS Atherstone was our third Hunt Class refit win since competition began. BES Marine Development Manager, John Mitchell: "The team was delighted with our work on previous projects and we like to think our past performance has played a part in the Ministry's decision-making process."



HMS Ledbury was handed over in 2004 after

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