



'Now you can keep the hull clean without having to go through the hassle of cranes etc.' said founder and

designer Donald Scott-Thom. 'This system also gives us the opportunity to spot any damage that, left unchecked, could spell disaster.'

Floating dry-dock

Toby Hodges reports on an eco-friendly movable dock afloat that could herald the future of lift-outs

When New Zealand-born Donald Scott-Thom first came to the UK he was astonished to witness how we haul our craft onto a quayside to remove marine growth fouling – and then wash the waste straight back into the sea. Eight years later and his solution is now floating in Cowes, on the Isle of Wight.

Launched in late March, Sealift2 is basically a floating car wash for boats. But its selling points are that it offers an economically-friendly, very quick (40mins per boat) and cheap (from £90) bottom scrub. Sealift2 International Ltd is the British company based in Cowes operating the floating dock.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The arm on the side of the dock (the current version only has one arm, but a second can

be added on demand) has rolling dry-dock supports which are lowered below sea-level, so the yacht simply 'parks' on the yellow line as it were. A diesel-powered compressor generates the air to inflate tanks to raise it to the surface while hydraulic power is used to clamp the boat and stabilise the dock to support the weight. Raising a boat out of the water takes around five minutes with a payload of 25 tonnes. Pressure washing it and returning it takes an average of 35-45mins, and all the waste is collected in a sump in the arm and filtered. It will also be able to hold boats in situ for longer periods (overnight) – advice will be given when booking a lift out, but Sealift2 say it will be possible to carry out repairs, maintenance, propeller and anode changes and even apply a new coat of

antifouling. [On the demonstration day, the yacht was raised and lowered 12 times in three hours.]

ON THE MOVE

As the Sealift2 is essentially a free floating dock that doesn't need to be permanently fixed to a seabed or quay, it can be placed anywhere – so is ideal for harbours and exposed waters. It simply requires diesel and a routine pump out of the waste. One unit costs around £300,000 and, having completed dozens of lift outs already in Cowes, the company hope to produce further docks around the country and abroad.

WHO CAN USE IT?

Boats up to 65ft in length and with a beam up to 18ft. Designs are in place to cater for the growing number of catamarans.

Price: basic 'lift and clean', £94.

Contact: Sealift2 International 0870 765 800; www.sealift2.com

Like a floating car-wash: simply 'park' the boat and compressed air then raises the dock and yacht to the surface for cleaning and repairs. The first Sealift2 is next to the UKSA, Cowes

