



The Whale Chaser *Cheynes IV*

Brian Lemon writes of the whale chaser presently on show at Whaleworld in Albany. This article appeared in the Model Shipwright magazine in September 1987.

The idea of building a model of the whale chaser *Cheynes IV* came to me a few years ago after hearing of the proposal for the Jaycees, a local Community Foundation in Albany, WA to take over the restoration of the defunct Cheynes Beach whaling station nearby, which had closed in 1978, and to create there a Whaling Museum. Along with the buildings, etc there were also the three chasers which had been operated by the owning company.

Cheynes IV was the newest of these, having been launched in 1948 as the *W Fearnhead* by A/S Framnaes M/V, Sandefjord, Norway. Later the name was changed to *Wilfred Ferahead*, and the vessel was acquired from her then owners by the Cheynes beach Whaling Company in 1970. The length overall was 45.45m, moulded breadth 9.00m, and maximum draught 5.182m (149.1ft x 29.53ft x 17.0ft); gross tonnage was 530 tons. The steam compound machinery gave a speed of 15 knots. The vessel was of part riveted and part welded construction.

Some two years prior to this I had built from plans a 1/48 (1/4in = 1ft) scale R/C model of a Norwegian whale chaser, supplementing these with some photos of the deck fittings, winch and harpoon gun from the Albany ships for detail. Since the museum model was to be a static one, the hull would not require all the internal details of the earlier R/C model. Nevertheless the hull construction would be basically the same – keel, bulkheads (formers), planking, etc.

As no plans of the *Cheyne IV* were available, I used the Norwegian plans as a basis on which to start the model, on the assumption that a whale chaser is a whale chaser! The general shape and scale profile were worked up from information taken from an 8x black and white enlargement of a 35mm colour

transparency showing the original vessel at sea. Details were obtained from a series of on-board photographs taken by John Bell. The model was built from different types of wood, brass, and many bits and pieces which were handy. There are 22 formers in the hull, and on each side there are some 40 separate 0.8mm ply sheets of varying sizes and shapes.

Imagination – how to adapt different items of materials, ‘bits and pieces’, etc which are lying around to the required piece of detail – plays a big part in my modelling. Thus, the funnel was formed around a piece of cardboard tube from a ‘gladwrap’ (‘clingfilm’) roll and part of a 35mm film cassette (about seven hours work). The steam winch, designed specially for whale chasers, was soldered up from brass and bits of slot-car gears (about 30hrs work). The main body of the harpoon started life as a cycle (push bike) tyre valve. However, the stand was made by a friend from a beautiful piece of jarrah plank, which he treated to bring out the natural colour and grain of the wood.

Although the model took nearly a year to make, there were delays from time to time while waiting for photographs and other information about colour and so on to come from John Bell who, with his wife, now manages the museum. Without their help the model would have taken much longer, since Albany is some 250 miles from my home. So it was only right that in December 1980 my club, the West Australian Model Boat Club, should invite them to our Annual Trophy and Christmas wind up night, when the model of *Cheynes IV* was presented to the Cheynes Beach Whaling Museum on behalf of the West Australian Model Boat Club.

Below: Brian Lemon's model of the *Cheynes IV* with a view of the deck of the real thing below

