

Facelift for historic motor-yacht

By JACK DEWES

A LUXURY motor-yacht that once belonged to the Lord Mayor of London is in the Port Elizabeth harbour, in the process of being bought by businessman Bill Oddy, 62.

Built in Ireland 60-odd years ago, only the best timbers were used — elm for the keel, oak for the sternpost, teak for the large deckhouse and mahogany for the living-quarters.

"I'm pretty certain I'll be buying her, but a deal hasn't been signed yet," Mr Oddy said yesterday.

"Five years ago, when I spotted her, she'd already been lying in Knysna for some years. At that time it belonged to someone's deceased estate.

"Then a Johannesburg businessman bought her, had her in Cape Town for a while and then lost interest. Now I'm negotiating to buy her.

"Below water the timbers are fine, but it's above that a lot of replacement work needs to be done.

"It isn't really a sailing yacht. It has sails, but it's a motor-yacht, designed to use the sails and the engine at the same time."

The Ancilla's history was uncertain, but it was probable she had been used in the Second World War to evacuate Allied troops from Dunkirk, Mr Oddy said.

"I'm no yachtsman but I take an interest in boats.

"She needs extensive renovation, and the man to do it must put his spirit level and square aside. He must be a craftsman in wood.

"Hopefully the job will get done in six months."

The British publication



BILL'S LATEST BODY ... She's a shabby old lady waiting for a facelift in the Port Elizabeth harbour, but when she was young she was posh. Local businessman Bill Oddy is thinking of buying her.

Picture: B-JAY PIERCEY

Motor Boat reported in 1932: "The deck saloon, which is also the wheelhouse, is sunk below deck level in order that there may be full headroom in the engine compartment directly beneath.

"The saloon, which is of considerable size, is fitted with seats at each side, a large hinged table and

other unusual furniture.

"In view of the possibility of cruises to the Baltic and Mediterranean, the tank capacity is large.

"A centre gangway allows any part of the craft to be reached without coming on deck.

"There are two single-berth cabins forward, together with a forecabin for two men. The guest

cabins have wash-basins and a wardrobe.

"The owner's accommodation is aft."

A "rather unusual feature of the stateroom is the upholstered seat which is run around at the side of each bunk".

The report said Ancilla had been built by Henry Skinner and Sons, of Baltimore, County Cork, Ireland.