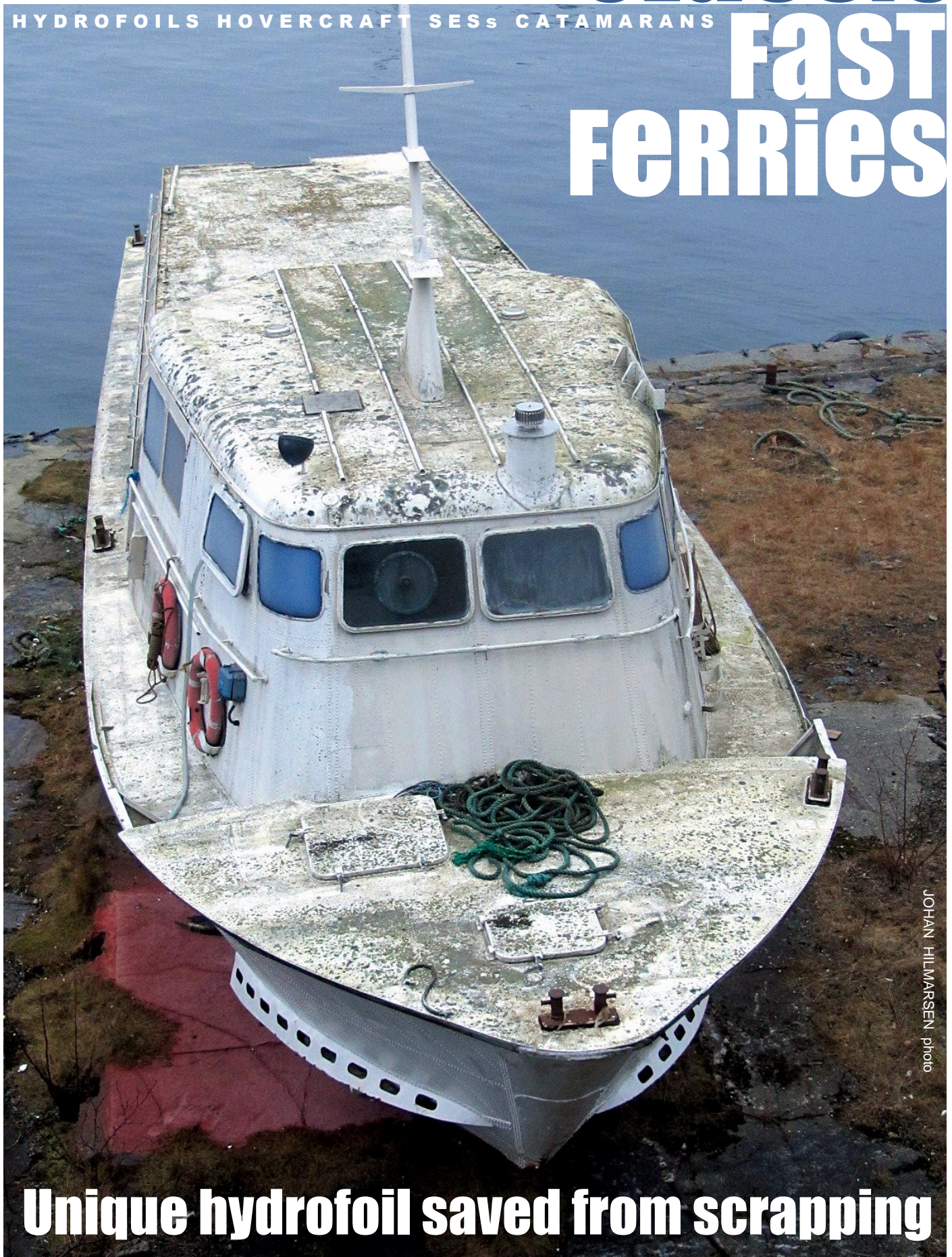


CLASSIC FAST FERRIES

HYDROFOILS HOVERCRAFT SESS CATAMARANS



JOHAN HILMARSEN photo

Unique hydrofoil saved from scrapping



Unique hydrofoil saved from scrapping

Above + below : The former PT.20B hydrofoil *Ekspressen* back in Stavanger after thirty-eight years, last December / JOHAN HILMARSEN photo, both

The last remaining hydrofoil in Norway, PT.20B *Ekspressen*, was recently saved from extinction.

As we have previously reported, the Stavanger Maritime Museum had been looking to raise funds for its preservation since some time. The former hydrofoil, built in Italy in 1961, arrived back in its old home port of Stavanger just before Christmas.

Former, as the vessel was stripped of its foils already in the late 1970s following withdrawal from service with Det Stavangerske Dampskibsselskab, DSD, in 1975 and sold in south Norway. Having changed hands and locations a few times, the vessel had been sitting in the water in Arendal for a considerable amount of time before being acquired by Museum Stavanger late last year.

Despite attempts by the intermediate owners to convert the hydrofoil into a leisure craft and houseboat, exteriorwise the vessel still pretty much looks its former self. Also, on arrival at Stavanger it was established that the general condition of the boat is better than expected. However, all original interior, including the engine, is since long removed. On the other hand, relatively few

alterations and additions have been carried out on the inside, especially when considering that it has been thirty-eight years since DSD disposed of the hydrofoil.

The preservation of *Ekspressen* is unique not only from a Norwegian perspective, but also because it is one of only a handful of PT.20s – likely less than five – still in existence worldwide, none of which in service.

(cont'd on page 5)



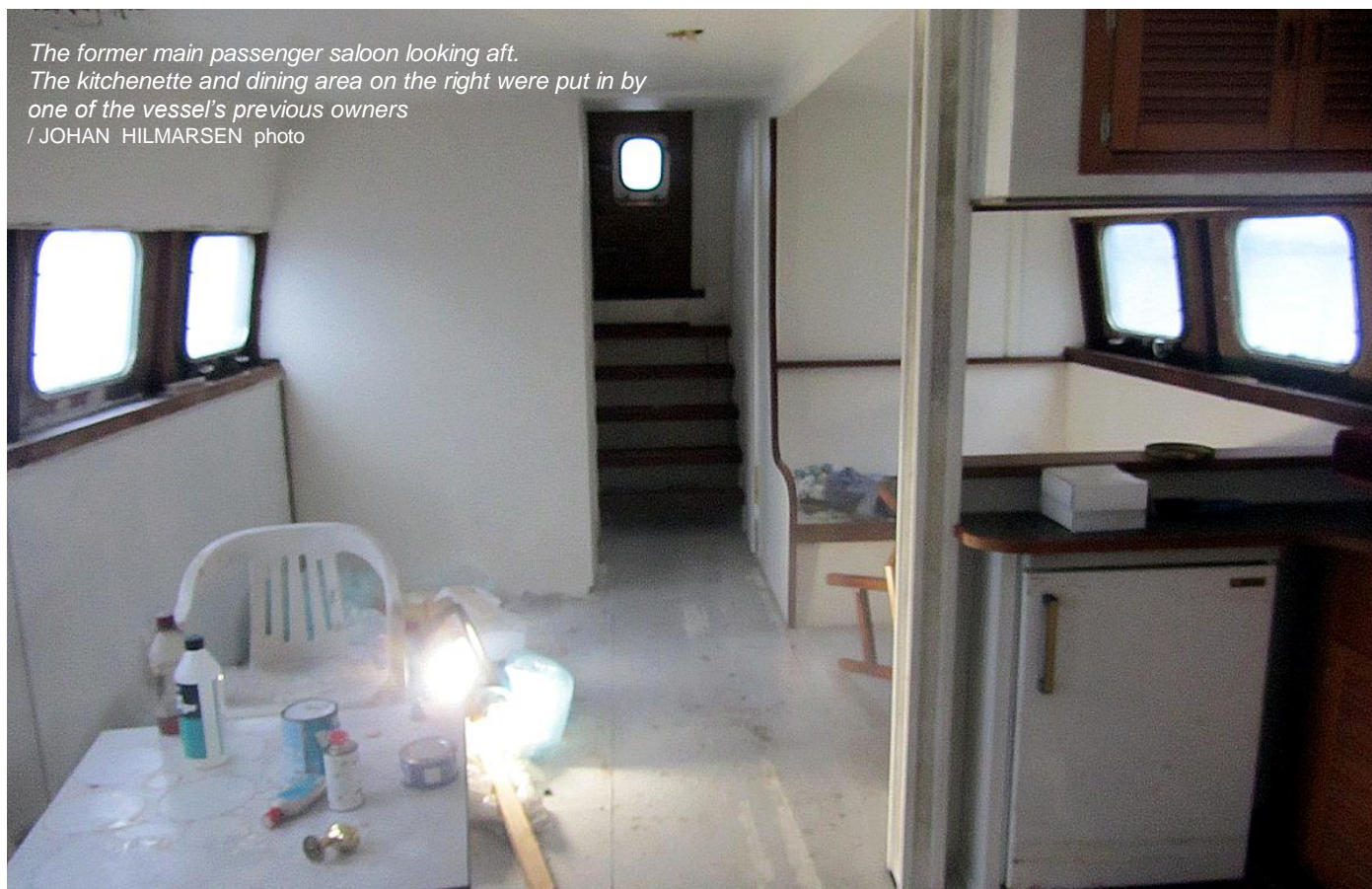
*The former small passenger saloon on the raised deck
behind the wheelhouse
/ JOHAN HILMARSEN photo*



*Characteristic of the PT.20B is the forward position of the
wheelhouse as opposed to midships on the standard PT.20
/ JOHAN HILMARSEN photo*



*The former small passenger saloon on the raised deck, looking aft.
Visible below is the main passenger saloon
/ JOHAN HILMARSEN photo*



*The former main passenger saloon looking aft.
The kitchenette and dining area on the right were put in by
one of the vessel's previous owners
/ JOHAN HILMARSEN photo*

Moreover, *Ekspressen* is of the non-standard PT.20B type, of which, to the best of our knowledge, this is the sole survivor. The most notable difference between the two versions is the location of the wheelhouse which is forward on the PT.20B as opposed to midships on the standard PT.20.

For instance, it is remarkable that not a single PT.20/PT.20B has been preserved in Italy – once the stronghold of Supramar designed hydrofoils. Between 1956 and 1971 the Rodriquez shipyard in Sicily delivered nearly fifty PT.20 hydrofoils, only a few of these were of the PT.20B variant. In addition, some twenty PT.20s were built in Japan, Singapore and Norway. The Norwegian craft were all PT.20Bs; a total of four were built by Westermoen Hydrofoil in 1963–64.

Saving *Ekspressen* was difficult. The impossible takes a little longer. Bringing the hydrofoil back to Stavanger is just the first step on a long journey to restore it to its former glory. In the best of worlds this includes seeing it once again fly over the water in the Stavanger area. It is not impossible but will certainly take time and cost a bob or two. For instance, foils would have to be manufactured as it is probably safe to assume that no such are lying about anywhere anymore. Add to this everything else needed to make the vessel run, if only for show with no passengers.

The short-term plan is to put *Ekspressen* on display, assumingly having been cosmetically restored and possibly with replica foils.

Read more about *Ekspressen* in the CFF News section for October 2012, and about all other hydrofoils in Norway in the October 2003

CLASSIC FAST FERRIES theme issue. **CFF**



/ JOHAN HILMARSEN photo



Still carrying its name but stripped of its vital parts, *Ekspressen* is seen here at Sarpsborg, near Oslo, in April 1990
/ LARS HELGE ISDAHL photo