

"Reliance "Is Now Worth Over £900, Says Mike

A STORY OF INITIATIVE AND HARD WORK

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TO be just 21 and owner of a £900 fishing launch isn't bad going particularly when it's through your own initiative. That's what happened in the case of Mike Haynes, now a tall and sturdy young man, but eleven years ago a nervous wreck after being bombed out of his London home.

Mike, who lives at "Southcote," Maundeville Road, Christchurch, came here when he was 10 and since then his whole life has centred round boats. He has lived in them and worked on them. Now he is the proud possessor of a 32ft. launch which he fitted out entirely on his own. For this reason Mike is particularly flattered that a Government Department has asked him if he will assist them in important coast protection work. The idea is that Mike skippers his boat, "Reliance," while three experts get on with various experiments out at sea. "Shows they have faith in her," commented Mike proudly yesterday.

Mike is the boy who in his own words was "hopeless" at school. The only subject he really enjoyed and was any good at was woodwork and carpentry. For the first couple of years that he was in Christchurch he made regular visits to the hospital as his nerves were in a very poor condition. So when Mike left school at 16, he went on to the Municipal College to learn cabinet making. But he only stayed there a couple of terms as he was advised to take up outdoor work.

FISHING PARTIES.

So when he left he joined forces with his elder brother Tony and between them they managed to scrape up enough money to buy a 25 foot motor launch with the idea of becoming fishermen. However they didn't get much help from the old hands, and after eighteen months eventually gave up the idea. Then they concentrated on taking out fishing parties, and engaging in trawling and towing work. "That was much more profitable," said Mike, "and we soon began to make ends meet."

Soon afterwards Tony gave up and left Mike to carry on by himself. Then one day, on a visit to Southampton, Mike saw the hull of an old Canadian lifeboat for sale.

She was a very heavy boat and ideal as a fishing launch. He managed to buy it for £75 and then one evening in September 1950 on the river bank near Tuckton Bridge he set to work on making her seaworthy. Her name, he decided, was to be "Reliance".

READY FOR LAUNCHING.

It was not until last June that "Reliance" was ready for launching. By that time he had spent £350 on her and fitted her with two nine-horse-power engines which he managed to get cheaply at £85 each. He fitted her with a wheelhouse and a small cabin nine feet long, complete with electric light fittings and Calor gas. Mike's new job on coast protection surveys means regular pay. He starts on June 3rd and will continue for the summer. However, if the trips are successful he hopes he may be engaged in similar work on other parts of the coast.

Area to be investigated this year extends from Hurst Castle to Old Harry Rocks, working about a mile from the coast. The three experts on board gauge the depth of the water and also obtain samples of the sea bed. Other matters they will consider are how far out the sewage goes when it leaves the pipe near Hengistbury Head, and what the sea is likely to do to the coast in the next ten years.