

Reggie built a boat a week and the last one **Special.**

■ For the past 19 years Peter Regional Trevithick built a boat a week. Known as 'Reggie', he joined Whittley Cruisers at age 61, when most people would be near retirement, and kept working for nearly 20 years.

Reggie officially retired on his 80th birthday in July, but returned to the factory recently to the surprising discovery that the last boat he built had been kept for him - the last Whittley Impala ever made.

Reggie arrived at Whittley in 1987 when the company was located at Briar Hill. Since then he has averaged one Impala a week and has seen the company move first to Thomastown and more recently to its current Australian headquarters at Campbellfield.

He has been part of a dedicated team of craftsmen who have helped earn Whittley a place as the first boat builder in the Victorian Government Manufacturing Hall of Fame.

Born on 23 July 1926, Reggie came late to the world of boat building, having previously worked in television and electronics.

During his 18 years at Whittley he mastered every facet of boat building and applied it to turning out hundreds of Impalas over the years, ultimately working in quality control alongside Co-Owner and Managing Director of Whittley, Neville Whittley.

Neville said Reggie had remained a constant through all the growth and changes at Whittley, and had become close friends with the family.

"When Reggie started we would have only had around 20 staff, and now we have nearly 90 people working out here in Campbellfield," he said.

"If it were possible I would have Reggie cloned, and have 20 to 30 Reggies working

here; he's the sort of bloke you have to send home if he's sick, because he just always turns up."

"Outside of work, our family has had some great Christmases up at Lake Eppalock with Reggie and his family. Not only did he build himself a holiday house by the lake, but he built his own boat. It was made from plywood and had these fins on it - it looks like the Batmobile."

As a token of gratitude, Whittley joined forces with several of its suppliers to surprise Reggie with the gift of the last Impala he ever built.



Reggie Trevithick puts the finishing touches to the last Impala he built for Whittley ...



Austex helped with upholstery, Bob Littler Agencies (BLA) with boat building hardware and Mackay with a trailer, making "The Last Impala" as special for the sentiment involved in it as for its place as the last of a classic model series.

Neville and Steve Whittley were joined by their father Jim, the company's founder, and the entire Campbellfield staff to thank Reggie for his friendship, tireless effort and unrelenting commitment to quality throughout his years at Whittley.

... and much to his surprise it was his farewell gift from Neville, Jim and Steven Whittley ...



... which prompted Channel 9 News to seek him out for the story of his remarkable career.