

Brief history of the DOLPHIN. 1958-2001.

Seems a long time ago in 1962/63 that the forerunner of the Dolphin Yacht Auxiliary engine was beating all the competition to win the British Hydroplane Champs two years in a row !! This all done with a 350 cc engine against the 500cc Konigs etc ! The engine was then producing over 45 bhp at 9000 rpm running on methanol ! Not only that, but it used to go all season with only minimal maintenance compared to the major regular engine strip downs of the competition.

The internals of this early engine formed the basis of the much derated 12 bhp Direct Drive Dolphin engine which was produced in North London for several years until the Company was moved to Bodmin, Cornwall. Dolphin engines have been made in Cornwall for over 20 years now and go back, when produced in N London, as far as the late fifties. The engine was originally designed as an air cooled unit for use in the small Berkeley 3 wheeler car and later in a motor cycle scrambles machine

From this came the Hydroplane engine referred to above and then, after a brief excursion into outboard manufacture (never actually in production) the Direct Drive was born. This only after the Mark IV (with decoupler-no clutch) and Mk V (Mk IV with centrifugal clutch, both using a 2:1 reduction gearbox to reduce prop speed) were found to be too powerful for the application at the time. (Stellas etc).

Production was fairly steady with no shortage of customers right through from 1966 to 1977, then the small Japanese diesel appeared and sales fell away quite dramatically ! Obviously yachtsmen did not seem to mind having their fillings loosened !!

Not to be deterred by this, and quite rightly assuming that there would always be a small market for petrol engines no matter what, myself and the original designer of the engine, Peter Hogan, purchased the remains of RCA Engineering (R Christoforides & Associates), from the Receiver in 1978 and continued to date to produce engines in small quantities and provide a spares and repair service for existing, and new, owners.

In 1986 I redesigned the engine, using all the well proven internals, to become the new Series II. This removed the dynastart and the sailing clutch, did away with the need to stop and restart the engine to go astern, brought the water pump to the front of the engine, and introduced a 2:1 gearbox, electronic ignition and an alternator. Conventional single lever control to the Hurth gearbox to move ahead or astern. Being petrol powered response is now instantaneous!!

This engine is now available as a 440cc 16hp unit (bigger bore and stroke) providing considerably more torque. An improved paint job is now applied to all engines - acid etch primer, undercoat and enamel top coat. Limited numbers of reconditioned engines are available, preferably on an exchange basis.

If you would like any further information on our engines we should be pleased to send you our literature. Please contact us on +44 (0) 1726 824726.

David Chapman
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