



SUZUKI DF140

Photo: Main: The Suzuki 140hp on trial at Southampton Boat Show.

I'd better get this right this time, or Suzuki will send the boys round.

Last time I wrote about Suzukis, I got the weights all wrong. As a feature of this new release from the Crawley crew is its lightness – only 186kg, making it 15kg less than a Mercury 135 Optimax, and 39kg lighter than the Honda 130 – one mistake here and I'm dogmeat.

Ok boys? Did I do OK this time? A broken leg I don't need... Anyway, who cares? The fact that your transom is carrying a few pounds less doesn't make a lot of difference to the kind of boat that wears this size of motor – what we all care about is power delivery, smoothness, economy and reliability.

And that's where this new motor comes into it's own – it does

everything you could possibly hope for plus some. It really is incredibly quiet and smooth, and the power delivery is not significantly worse than the Optimax. Obviously, a four stroke motor can never provide the kind of instant get-up-and-go that a digitally injected 2 stroke gives, but it isn't far short, and certainly punched the new Humber RIB up onto the plane with no fuss whatsoever. Conversation at full throttle was easy, with hardly a raised voice just 6 feet in front of the gray powerhouse.

The smoothness of the beast was also exemplary – no shaking or juddering, although with most of the electronically managed fuel injected motors around these days you can stop worrying about your false teeth being vibrated overboard.

The motor is an overbored 115,

the capacity having been raised from 1950cc to 2044cc, with an extra 200 rpm on hand – the red line is at 6200. This is extraordinarily high, when you consider that like all outboards a single speed transmission is all you have to put the power into the prop. Imagine a car with only 1 gear that would pull smoothly from rest to 100mph, and would maintain any speed in between without fuss. This ability is largely dependent on the engine's electronic management and fuel injection systems, enabling exactly the right amount of fuel at the right mixture to be squirted into the pots at any given rpm. Valve timing, temperature control and combustion chamber design also play their part in this, however, but this knowledge threshold has long been crossed by all the main engine manufacturers.

The engine layout is the same as the 90/115, with the cam chain running underneath the powerhead



for quietness and compact design. This works well – the profile of the motor is remarkably slim, and no bigger than most 2 stroke units of similar power.

The gear ratio is 2.38:1, and this certainly helps the engine's excellent pulling ability. The Honda 130 in comparison has a 2:1 ratio, so when the Suzuki propeller has turned 100 times, 476 firing pulses have pushed the crankshaft round, compared to the Honda's 400. Bear in mind that at wide open throttle (6200rpm) that translates to 2605 turns of the Suzuki propeller – the Honda at its redline of 6000 turns the prop 3000 times, thus has to run a finer pitch to keep it spinning. (Don't ask for the physics behind this, it would bore you to death reading it and me writing it, even if I understood it). However, this would suggest that if the horsepower being applied to either prop was the same, then in theory the Honda would accelerate quicker, provided the engine co-efficiency and load was the same.

Suzuki's extra 10hp and 39kg less weight undoubtedly make a difference when comparing these two motors, whatever I may have said at the beginning, so for performance the Suzuki must win out by a short hair. As with all new engines, it remains to be seen how well the new motor stands up to the rigours of sea duty.

It would be an interesting exercise to strip a brace of competitor's motors after, say, 5 years of hard work on commercial boats, if only to check things like sump corrosion and the like.

Did I hear someone squirm just then? Not nervous about me asking Scottish fish farmers about their experience with a certain brand of motor, are we? Hmm... (It's alright, Suzuki, I'm not talking about you.)

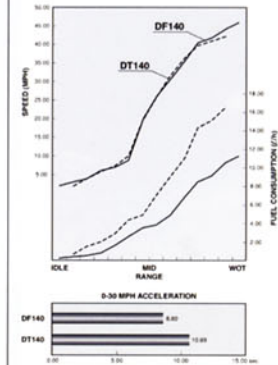
One other area that Suzuki boast they have an advantage is with the exhaust fitted to the 140. It has a 4 into 2 into 1 system, which they claim is derived from their racing experience – presumably with motorcycles. This reduces drag in the exhaust, and therefore gas evacuation is quicker and smoother. And we all know that good gas evacuation is an essential, ask any curry aficionado.

This is the first Suzuki outboard to be wearing an oil cooler. This is no surprise – the stresses on lightweight high-power engines are enormous, especially when you crazed throttle jockeys get your hands on them, so keeping the oil reasonably viscous becomes a must. Keeping everything slippery inside the big Suzuki is over a gallon of oil – the sump holds 5.5 litres of black gold.

Suzuki has also announced a couple of other new 4 strokes – the 4 and the 5 hp models. These boast a capacity of 138cc, the largest in their class, so these should make good little pushers. Weighing only 25kg means they are easily portable, although Yamaha's little 4hp 4 stroke sneaks under the Suzuki at 22kg, so no first prize there, Crawley.

A nice sounding feature in these tiddlers is the introduction of a new ignition system – the electronic brain and the HT coil are all in one, thus making diagnosis even easier should your sparks go on holiday. Wonder how much one of those costs...

The steering angle appears good on this baby, with a full 90 degrees either way. This means that when you stagger out of the pub, hang



the little beast on the back without tightening the thumb screws properly and then gun the motor sideways, it spins upside down on the transom and cuts your head off. Cool!

In summary, there is no doubt that Suzuki are sitting at the big boy's table when it comes to outboards. Their range is wide enough to suit most needs, but most importantly the motors are superb – it is no compromise to hang a Suzuki on your transom.

Getting to try out new engines like the Suzuki 140 leaves me with one lament. I just wish that for once I could get to test something that blew up in a big way, or was a real turkey, so that I could write something really meaty... meanwhile, I just have to keep going out on tasty new boats with silk smooth engines.

Oh, that leaves me with just thing left to say. If you get the chance, feast your eyes on the new Humber 7 metre. Frank and Andy Roffee have been letting their imaginations run away with them, I mean just take a look at the console – cor! Joe 90 would have demanded one of these, I'm sure, and it works as good as it looks.

Based on the Ocean Extreme hull, this boat has a lot of promise. This was the RIB that the Suzuki I tested was mounted on, and the boat perfectly reflects the enormous experience that Humber has quietly accumulated over the last 35 years. Safe, fast, and gorgeous, it would take a better man than me to find fault with this craft.

Surely, it can't be from Yorkshire!..? ■

Andy Clark

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Photos: All: You will note the compact design and advanced styling of the new 140hp which represents Suzuki's launch into the larger four-stroke engine market.



Andy Clark takes a good hard look at the very latest engine technology from Suzuki Marine - the brand new 140 Four Stroke. Plus we evaluate its water-borne 'test bed', Humber's latest breed of offshore RIB - the Ocean Extreme.



HUMBER

Ocean Extreme 7.0m

Photo:
Main: Side profile of Humber's latest model, the 'Ocean Extreme', on test within the waters of the Solent.
Below: '007' Helm console

I have to admit to having changed my opinion of Humber RIBs of late. Steadily, over the course of the last 18 months, it has become apparent that the company has increasingly focused its attention on the wider RIB market. By that I mean it appears a definite change of direction has occurred, from that of producing boats aimed almost entirely at the dive sector to the design and build of performance/offshore sports RIBs. It's a fair jump but perhaps not quite so huge when one considers the ability and seakeeping attributes of the Humber hulls. The Humber 'Attaque' hull is still one of finest on the market even though it was first conceived some 30 years ago. It may be vintage, but hell, does it ever go! The subject of our engine /boat review, the new 'Ocean Extreme', is therefore 'out of the same mould', if you catch my drift, and in every way displays the same surefootedness of its smaller yet very capable predecessor.

In line with their move toward all things fast and furious, black appears to be very much the 'in' colour when it comes to Humber's latest range of boats. Furthermore, the 'Ocean Extreme's' menacing lines are yet more keenly enhanced by the inclusion of what I can only describe as a '007' styled helm console. Such styling is obviously very male orientated and will clearly not be according to the tastes of all desiring a performance RIB. It some respects it could even be considered dated by some, but with retro very much in vogue these days, maybe the critics

could be wrong.

Unlike the commercially orientated 'Ocean Pro', as reviewed in issue 35 of RIB International, the 'Extreme' features tapered tubes which further distinguishes this model from the former as being performance orientated. The advantage of this slender bow also means that forward vision is not impaired in spite of the bow carrying quite a distinct sheer. On the 7 metre version, the layout includes low set sit-astride seats which are not only comfortable and supportive but assist also in the maintaining of a low central point of gravity. The seating positions set at this slightly lower height afford greater protection behind the substantial helm console and provide a more secure location for personnel when travelling at speed.

In front of the helmsman's position are enough dials, gauges and instrument panels to cause one to think you've stepped aboard the flight deck of an A320. Whilst they all have a function, this array of 'techno info', certainly also adds to Humber's '007 experience'. Though this RIB is great fun and would clearly appeal to the 'go-faster' element within many of us, it too is a serious seaboat. In no way have the necessary attributes that make it such, as featured on Humber's commercial models, therefore been abandoned. In this regard, the 'Ocean Extreme' might well appeal to those professional agencies and organisations that do in fact require an extra capable offshore craft in which to undertake their

business.

Key features and components include: optional single/twin outboard or inboard diesel/outdrive installations, heavy duty NFB steering system, raised floor with non-slip GRP surface, unsinkable airtight hull compartment, 5/7 air chambers to the hypalon sponsons which in themselves carry a 5 year warranty, an under-deck 300ltr fuel capacity plus a rear deck drain and ventura. This particular model is CE classified to Category B and the hull itself Lloyds approved.

Obviously, on the day of test the 'Extreme' was powered by the brand spanking, recently launched, Suzuki 140hp, but this hull is certified to take up to 225hp if so desired. I was impressed by the performance of the Suzuki nonetheless – at 30 knots or so it provides a comfortable cruising speed and an economical one at that. If speed on the other hand is what you desire, you do at least have in this RIB the potential for very much higher performance figures – in excess of 60 mph with a standard 225hp. For me though, the appeal of this boat lies in its sea-keeping attributes. Soft riding, well mannered and capable in the rough, this RIB typifies the British approach to RIB building.

I would if I may, like to conclude this brief appraisal with a hearty well done to the Humber team, who are clearly not only perceiving the growing market trends, but responding to them with such enthusiasm. ■

HMS

SPECIFICATION

Ocean Extreme
7.0 Rigid Hull RIB

Length(m):	7.0
Beam(m):	2.6
Internal Beam(m):	1.5
Max Load(kg):	2250
Fuel Capacity(Ltr):	200
Air chambers:	5
Tube Diametre(m):	0.53
Weight(kg):	1020
Max hp:	225
Category rating:	B
Model range(m):	6m-8m

Price as tested: **£21,500 inc vat**
Package start price:
£17,500 inc vat

SUPPLIER

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