



Boat Archives - 'Polar Star'

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Length	25'	Prior Names	
Year Built		Build No.	
Beam	7'6	Hull Construction	
Draft	2'6	Deck Construction	
Engine Make		Superstructure Style	
Engine Size		Number of Berths	
Engine Fuel Type		Location	

History

	Thought to have existed. Built for the hire boat fleet.
From Robert Willatts in August 2005	Polar Star definitely existed! I hired it in 196? with some school friends for an expedition to the Upper Reaches of the Thames. I'm pretty sure it was 26' long (not 25) and about 9'6" beam (not 7'6"). It had a fixed timber wheelhouse roof over the aft open cockpit and was powered by a Morris Vedette petrol engine. The toilet-cum-chain-locker was under the foredeck and to hurry up anyone taking too long, their peaceful reverie could be broken by releasing the anchor.
	We had Polar Star for two weeks and although officially not supposed to go under Osney bridge got her all the way to Lechlade, much to the surprise/tut-tutting of the lock-keepers en route. Is this a record? I remember we got stuck under Godstow bridge and scraped some of the canvas on the wheel shelter but otherwise did no significant damage. It was fortunate we did get under

	Osney bridge since just on the other side noticed bubbles breaking by the bank. This turned out to be a drowning child and we hailed a chap on the bank who pulled him out - just in time. Had we stuck to the rules.....
	On the way back from Lechlade the engine died and we spent an idyllic hour or so drifting silently and mostly broadside with the current, not able to get ashore. When we did get to the bank we tried towing but attached a line to the bow cleats whereas your supposed to tow with the rope attached amidships-ish. The towing party gave up in disgust and we then drifted some way stern first before getting a tow to Radcot, then walked to Clanfield in the rain to raise the local mechanic. It was a split rotor-arm and he happened to have one in his van.
	We never fully got to grips with the mysteries of the Morris Vedette. We dutifully kept topping up the oil and by Goring large quantities of smoke and fumes were issuing from under the cockpit floor. No one had bothered to tell us that there were two dipsticks one for the gearbox and a cunningly hidden one for the engine. We had been merrily checking the gearbox oil and pouring oil into the engine. It took till nearly Windsor to burn off and we finally ceased laying smoke.
	On the last morning I remember we salvaged one of Bates' other hire craft (a large ugly non Star Craft) which had got run aground cutting a bend. Despite this the boatyard didn't seem best pleased with us. I can't think why.