

YACHTING

MONTHLY

Hurley 24/70

These 1970s Hurleys are tough little sea boats with good accommodation. Simon Jinks takes one for a spin



Designed by Ian Anderson in 1972, the 24/70 was in fact a stretched version of the popular Hurley 22.

The main differences were a restyled coachroof and transom. Buyers had the choice of fin or bilge keels, and a bulb was used on the fin keel to keep the weight down low and improve performance. Hurley were delighted with the new yacht, as were the buyers, because the combination of the new coachroof and a deep bilge gave her 5ft 11in standing headroom – very generous for a 24-footer. After Hurley Marine's demise in 1974 Atlanta Marine in Plymouth bought the moulds and produced their own version, called the Atlanta 25; this had the same layout, bar some differences in the interior finishing.

One of the last 24/70s to be built was *Black Velvet*, launched in 1974

in time to compete in that year's Round Britain and Ireland Race. Hurley Marine went under just before the handover. To save her from the receivers' hands and to allow the owner to qualify for the race, she was 'stolen' and hidden from the asset strippers, miraculously turning up at the start of the race with the owner at the helm.

Her current owner is David Southcott, who has just finished the first part of a refit. He plans some coastal and cross-Channel cruising this summer, and this little cruiser will take most conditions in her stride.

The deck layout is simple and effective. Forward, the anchor locker has room enough for a CQR and chain. There is only one bow cleat. This is centrally mounted on the foredeck and David plans to add one on each side to make easier work of mooring.

For a 24 footer, the cockpit is huge. During our sail it accommodated three strapping crew in winter gear plus a load of camera equipment. It is deep and safe and would suit a small family; with spray dodgers rigged, the kids are well cocooned.

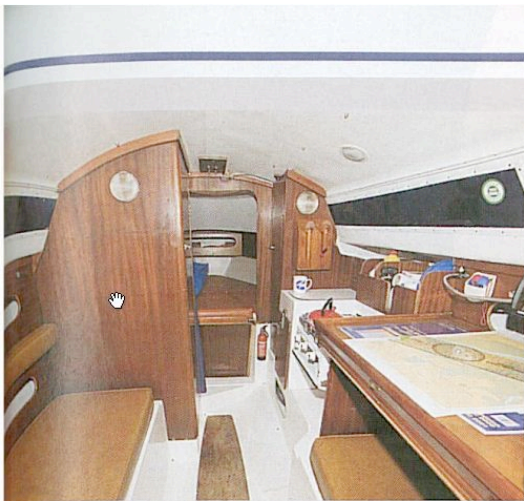
Below decks

There is standing headroom of 5ft 11in the main saloon, which decreases as you go forward.

The main saloon is simply fitted out but it is light and airy and has all that's needed for offshore cruising. She has a moulded inner liner up to the height of the berth margin boards. This gives her a modern look and makes her easy to keep clean. To starboard there's a neat, slide-out chart table which accommodates a folded Admiralty chart with storage below for a small folio. The similar Atlanta 25 has the



Photo: Lennox McCreedy



Far left: the opaque hatch allows extra light. Left: pint sized saloon, but with standing headroom and everything to hand. Above: the chart table slides out of the way when not in use. Top right: the deep cockpit suits three - four adults. Bottom right: a compact galley and small hanging locker forward



chart table folding down on the port side, leaving the starboard side clear.

The settee berths to port and starboard, double as bunks, both giving a leggy 6ft 4in length. Underneath these berths are three 'lockers each side'. For some reason Hurley Marine decided to put seacocks slap bang in the middle of some of these lockers, making them all but useless. Above the berths are some useful 'stuff' lockers. The whole galley area, including the sink, is a glassfibre moulding. *Black Velvet* has a two-burner stove and grill but there's plenty of space for a larger oven if longer periods are to be spent aboard. Above and to the side of the stove is stowage for culinary gear and further forward, a hanging locker.

To port, forward of the berth is the heads compartment. Again, it's strange to see such a large heads on a yacht this size. She presently has only a toilet inside but there would be room for a small handbasin.

The forepeak contains a double V berth of 6ft 1in length with stowage underneath for sails. There are ample stuff lockers around the bunk and underneath it is the water tank.

Unlike normal 24/70s, *Black Velvet*

did not have an engine fitted from new, so her engine arrangement is slightly home-made. The prop aperture in the skeg is rather small, so there is not enough clearance between the prop and rudder. David is going to enlarge the hole this winter and shorten the shaft, which should put it right.

Originally the 24/70s had a Mini-Petter 5hp installed and this is what *Black Velvet* still has although some owners have replaced them with 8-10hp diesels. She motored well with the Mini-Petter at around 5 knots and would cruise at 4-5 knots quite happily. She'll turn in a boatlength and a bit and has a useful kick astern to aid turning. Once this kick is overcome she'll go astern well as long as you keep a steady hand on the tiller and don't give her too much rudder.

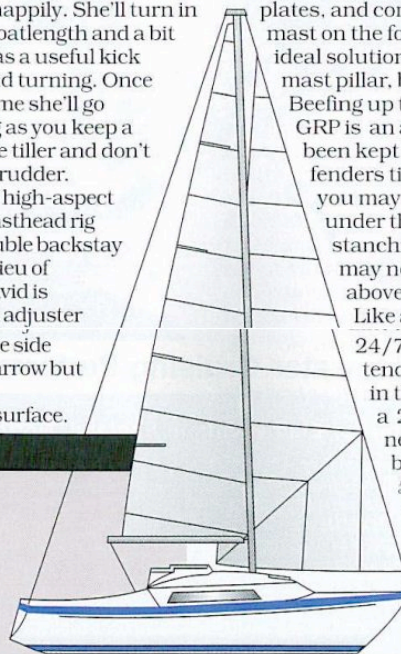
The 24/70 has a high-aspect single spreader masthead rig supported by a double backstay and a babystay in lieu of forward lowers. David is planning to add an adjuster to the backstay. The side decks are rather narrow but have a sure-footed moulded non-slip surface.

Black Velvet proved an easy boat to sail shorthanded. She has been rigged so that most of the sail control lines come aft, although if the lines are left at the mast it is not far to travel. In the unseasonably light March breeze she was perfectly balanced. Tacking through 90 degrees, she made a pleasant 4.2 knots to windward. One could bank on 4 knots for passagemaking in a fair breeze and then be pleasantly surprised with any better results. Her original owner in the Round Britain and Ireland race commented on her 'seakindly' behaviour in atrocious gales off the West Coast of Ireland'. The gentle whispers of breeze in Poole Harbour seemed a long way from being hove-to off the West Coast of Ireland but she does exude confidence in a 'tough little battleship' sort of way.

Points to look out for are stress crazing around the aft mooring cleats, which may need larger backing plates, and compression from the mast on the forward bulkhead. The ideal solution would be to put in a mast pillar, but this is not possible. Beefing up the deck beam with GRP is an alternative. If she's been kept in a marina, with the fenders tied to the guardrails, you may find star crazing under the small circular stanchion bases and these may need backing from above to spread the load. Like all the Hurleys, the 24/70s were well built and tend to have a lot of life left in them. In the early '70s a 24/70 cost £3,350 new but expect to pay between £5,000 - £9,000 depending on condition and engine. They are a super little boat, ideal for a young family or single/short-handed cruising. ▲

Beefing up the deck beam with GRP is an alternative. If she's been kept in a marina, with the fenders tied to the guardrails, you may find star crazing under the small circular stanchion bases and these may need backing from above to spread the load. Like all the Hurleys, the

24/70s were well built and tend to have a lot of life left in them. In the early '70s a 24/70 cost £3,350 new but expect to pay between £5,000 - £9,000 depending on condition and engine. They are a super little boat, ideal for a young family or single/short-handed cruising. ▲



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

LOA 23ft 9in (7.23m)
LWL 17ft 6in (5.33m)
Beam 7ft 5in (2.26m)
Draught 4ft 1in (1.24m)
Displacement 5,040lb (2,285kg)
Ballast 2,500lb (1,135kg)
Sail area 216ft sq 20.06msq

Headroom 5ft 11in (1.85m)
Owners' Association Yes
Web www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Cabin/4829/index.html
Email hurleyowners@freeuk.com
Contact John Udy 01392 490939
Second opinion No