

Electric Bilge Pump For A Single-Handed Enterprise

by Steve Bradwell

SAILING RECENTLY FROM WARSASH (Hamble River) to Wootton Creek (Isle of Wight) in company with David Sumner in his Mirror dinghy led me to contemplate the amount of water that was coming aboard my International Enterprise. Wind was around force 6 and the steep Solent chop and broad reach was causing lots of spray as well as solid water from the occasional breaking wave to come aboard which eventually built up to a point that could no longer be ignored.

Self-bailers were long ago removed from my boat and I am not tempted to fit new ones. Whale pumps may be practical on some boats but I suspect may strain the light construction of the Enterprise. They would be difficult to arrange so that they could be used while sailing, which would be ideal.

Amongst the equipment on David's well-equipped Mirror is an electric bilge pump. With the improvement of rechargeable batteries which are now powerful, quickly charged, memory free and hold their charge over long periods of time without self discharging, I thought maybe an electrical pump might actually be

very useful during windy sailing on open water. They are used on some sea kayaks and my set-up is based on one of these.

Parts used were :-

- 1/ Small waterproof case from Force 4 chandlery
- 2/ Ten AA hybrid 2000 mAh batteries
- 3/ Fuse, wire and battery clip
- 4/ Waterproof switch from Maplin
- 5/ Rule 500 bilge pump
- 6/ 19 mm plastic pipe

It took 24 seconds to empty 10 litres of water from the tray in the photo and with the pump rated at 1.9 amp, ten 1.2 v batteries in series for 12 volts should give a duration of about an hour. If it works as well in practice I think it could prove useful for my single-handed sailing. If not I can use it on my kayak!

Total cost for the components was around £60 including batteries. *SB*

