



The NEWSLETTER

International Hydrofoil Society
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Editor: Martin Grimm
Contributors: Worldwide
Hydrofoil Community

EXTRACT

VOLGA 275 'AQUASPUR' SAVED FROM OBLIVION

Compiled from emails received from Michael Mifsud and Mark Boom.

In July last year, IHS HQ received a short email message as follows:

Hi there,

I used to be a neighbour of the then chairman of the Hydrofoil Society in London and he was a constant aid in the safe use of my craft which had a lot of design problems

I wonder whether you have someone here in Spain who is interested in restoring a VOLGA 275 which was vandalized in the Malaga province. Even the engine was stolen from the yacht basin. It would be a pity to just throw it away for scrap. There cannot be many of them still in existence.

*Best wishes,
Michael.*

The message had been sent by Michael Mifsud. It was also apparent that Michael had been referring to a time when IHS was still headquartered in London from 1970 onwards when the Chairman had been CMDR Mark Thornton who was instrumental in the formation of the IHS. Michael confirmed they had been neighbours in Dolphin Square, Pimlico. Michael also reported CMDR Thornton assisted him in the use of his Volga hydrofoil especially noting the lack of proper support from Russia for these craft.

IHS President, Mark Bebar, promptly responded to Michael informing him that IHS had no members in Spain but circulated the message more widely while also seeking a further description

of the condition of the boat, photos etc, such that these could be posted on the IHS website to seek out parties interested in a restoration effort. Those further details were finally circulated to IHS members and other known hydrofoil enthusiasts in Europe in the hope that someone might be in a position to take a trip to Spain and pick up the hydrofoil.

Michael explained that he had owned the Volga 275 sports hydrofoil for many years already after it had been displayed at an exhibition. It had originally been fitted out at Tuckton Bridge Bournemouth (or Poole, Dorset), by Sunseekers who were the Sudoimport agents at the time. The Volga 275 was a fairly late version of the Volga design with more modern topside styling and a semi-enclosed cockpit. Earlier versions of the craft were known as the Molnia (with Russian engine and inclined shaft), Volga (with revised bow foil design but generally retaining the same drive train) and Volga 70 (intended for export with Volvo Penta diesel and stern drive leg).



Michael's boat the "star of the show" when new at the International Boat Show in London Olympia in ~1968. Michael bought it off the stand after it captured his imagination when he set his eyes on it. It has two full beds up front and had two seats that convert to beds in the main cabin area. The cockpit is fully covered with an awning. Photo via: Michael Mifsud.

After the Volga was purchased, it was launched at Poole Harbour, however later was transported to Valencia

Yacht Club with Michael following it. There it remained suspended from a

crane for over an hour as the Civil Guards refused to allow it into the water without an official investigation into its nature and origins. But it was finally dropped into the water in its new home location. Michael then ventured down to Gibraltar with the Volga in a range of seas but with a feeling more like driving than sailing, and always at top speed. Michael still remembers this as "A huge adventure that stole my heart". The boat, named "Aquaspur", had given Michael and his friends much pleasure.



Flying "Aquaspur" in the Solent at 40 knots on the way to Swannage and the famous Needle Rocks. Photo via: Michael Mifsud.

Unfortunately, in more recent years in Marbella, after a year of use there, Michael's Volga has been the subject of theft of the Volvo Penta AQ 32 D diesel engine and vandalism but it was still able to be restored as the hull, foils and stern propeller drive leg remained intact with the hull and foils still in a very good condition.



The Volga 275 "Aquaspur" sitting sadly while stored at Malaga. Photo: Mark Boom.

Like the engine, the boat trailer had also been stolen so the boat was stored on a temporary wooden boat support structure with plastic sheeting over the top.



The engine bay of the Volga 275 with engine missing. Photo: Mark Boom.

Michael outlined the extent of restoration work that would be necessary: (1) replacement of the diesel, perhaps with a -rated version as he considered the original slightly underpowered, (2) dismantle, grease and reassemble the outleg, (3) renewal of interior wooden floor, (4) other interior trim restoration, (5) fresh paint, (6) replacement of plexi glass eventually as sun has tarnished the edges and caused fine cracklings, similarly replace rubber mountings.



The console of the Volga. Photo: Mark Boom.

As this restoration was beyond him, he was offering the Volga free to anyone who was willing to take on the task of restoration project, though he was still keen to keep track of the restoration process.

Unfortunately, Michael also noted that it may well be scrapped by the new owners of the yard in which it stood at the airport industrial estate in Malaga, Spain. This was despite the fact that it only requiring a new engine and fresh paint. A new owner needed to be found swiftly!

By early November 2013, one of our Dutch IHS members, Mark van Rijzen, himself a Volga owner and at the time also a captain of the Connexion Fast Flying Ferries Voskhod hydrofoils in Amsterdam, relayed the offer to a friend and fellow enthusiast, Mark Boom, also living in Amsterdam. Mark took an immediate interest and viewed the opportunity as a "real nice project". Provided he could secure the Volga, he planned to restore it with Jan Willem Rotteveel the owner of AddValue Engineering, an aeronautical engineer with a passion for planes and 'boats with wings'.

Later in November Mark, in company with Jan Willem and his nephew Gert-Jan Honders, a diesel specialist from the multinational Boskalis, arranged a trip to inspect the boat at Malaga and Mark was sold on the project: "It doesn't matter to me if it takes 2 years, but I will save it". Pictures of the boat taken when he visited Malaga can be viewed at: www.markboom.nl/volga275. On his return to Amsterdam, Mark swiftly organized transport for the boat to the Netherlands.

Mark recalled that owning a Volga was long standing dream "I never forget the time I came out of The Oranje Lock IJssellake in some insignificant speedboat together with something very unusual: A boat with wings. Of course we were faster and heading out in front with the 2 stoke engine competing against the slow acceleration of the diesel in the Volga. Slowly the Volga got foilborne, lifted itself literally above the crowd, overtook us leaving everything behind without a wake while vanishing in the hazy summer weather. That must have been 25 years ago but I still remember".

The Volga arrived in the Netherlands on 2 January 2014 on the back of a semi-trailer. Mark has marked the occasion with a You Tube video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3y6nqnGmYk#t=37>. Mark van Rijzen and Daan Herber, another Volga owner, also attended the arrival.



The Volga 275 arrives in Amsterdam in the Netherlands. From video from Mark Boom.



The Volga 275 being unloaded with a forklift. From video from Mark Boom.

At the time, Mark wrote: "You won't believe how many people stop to take a look at this strange boat with underwater wings".

Mark has a weblog about the Volga so he can keep readers updated on progress with the restoration: <http://volga275.wordpress.com/>.

A trailer has since been constructed for the boat and, with Jan Willem, work is underway on restoration of the drivetrain.

Jan Willem will make plans for the step by step restoration of the boat, recognizing in certain ways it had to be treated more like a plane than a boat.



The Volga 275 rests on its cradles in the Netherlands. From video from Mark Boom.

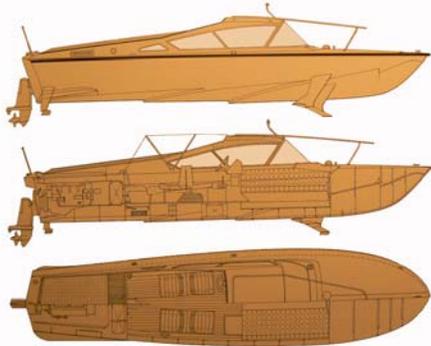
IHS wishes Mark Boom all the best with this project and thanks Michael Mifsud for his generosity in offering Volga 275 "Aquaspur" to a good home. We would also like to imagine that CMDR Mark Thornton was still looking over the wellbeing of the hydrofoil!

Key details of Volga 275 as listed in Jane's Surface Skimmers 1978 are:

Length: 8.55m
Beam: 2.1m
Draft hullborne: 0.9m
Displacement unloaded: 1.47 tonnes
Displacement loaded: 2.05 tonnes
Cruising range: 150 nautical miles
Payload: 480 kg, seating for 4
(could be configured for 6 per Volga 70)
Capability: Operation in sheltered waters.
Hull: Riveted aluminium alloy.
Foils: Stainless steel.
Powerplant: Volvo Penta AQD32A
106 hp at 4000 rpm.
Stern Leg: Volvo Penta 280D
Speed: approx 29 knots max,
27 knots cruising.
Fuel Tank: 120 litres
Electrical: 12V DC starter battery & engine-mounted generator.



Friends Mark van Rijzen, IHS member and formerly a Captain of the Amsterdam based Fast Flying Ferries hydrofoil service, and Daan Herber, owner of 2 Dutch Volga 70's give the thumbs up following the arrival of the Volga 275.



Arrangement drawings of the Volga 275.



Another example of a Volga 275 encountering the wake from a boat.