

An Introduction to
Blue Heron



Blue Heron is a 25 foot Dawncraft centre cockpit cruiser, thought to have been built about 1974. We, her American owners, bought her in November 1995, and have equipped her for serious March-through-November cruising. We have spent three continuous week living aboard and a number of occasions, and have taken the boat to Gloucester, Shardlow, Wigan, Chester, and Llangollen, among other places.

She is named for the American *Great Blue Heron*, a bird similar in habit and size to the Gray Heron found in the UK.

She is offered for sale only because we have purchased a considerably longer, and slightly newer, centre cockpit Dawncraft.

General Configuration

We have arranged the boat for two, with a fixed transverse double in the aft cabin and a “fixed” dinette forward. This allows a couple separate space for personal activities when moored, and

A new owner could restore the twin longitudinal single berths in the rear cabin by moving the desk unit to the center of the back of the cabin. The dinette table can be dismantled and stored under the forward deck if forward “make-up” berths are desired. The filler boards and cushions needed to convert the dinette area to an additional double berth are also included.

Hull

The hull is of GRP (Glass Reinforced Plastic) construction.

The Dawncraft cruisers have a low resistance shape which means that they are

Buyer Be Aware

The information included here is intended to help you in examining Blue Heron and comparing her with other boats.

While it is thought to be correct, the sale of the boat is “as seen,” and this document is not to be regarded as a statement of fact at law or a part of any sales agreement.

Note: *Blue Heron* was sold by us in 2002 and was later resold by the buyer. I have no information on her current location and name.

economical on fuel, and can travel at 4 mph while most steel boats must travel at reduced speed to control wake.

(Tip: Looking at the older GRP cruisers which are in use today it appears the Dawncraft boats have had a very good survival rate.)

We have had the boat hauled, pressure washed, and stored on shore two winters. The bottom was professionally painted with anti-fouling in the autumn of 2000. Our visual inspection before launching this spring showed that the anti-fouling is generally in good condition.

Propulsion System

The engine is a 15 HP four stroke Honda, purchased new in September 1998, and professionally serviced annually. In canal use only about 8 HP can really be used for propulsion on this boat, but the 15 HP engines (and the virtually identical 9.9 HP model) have electric start and a 6 ampere alternator. These engines are easily started manually, so that flat batteries are unlikely to result in great inconvenience. The original manuals, tool kit, and spares are included.



The engine mounting is very unusual; we have seen only one similar installation. The rear platform mounting of both engine and fuel stores means that there is no petrol within the boat. This virtually eliminates fuel smells from the cabin as well as greatly increasing safety. The platform provides standing room and can be reached from either the bank if moored or from the side decks if under way. Engine access is much better than with most transom mounts, and the rearward displacement improves maneuverability.

There are two Honda 13 liter petrol tanks plus two 5 liter portable containers. At a average overall consumption of about 2 miles per liter these provide a range of about 70 miles. We have left our sturdy trolley with the boat since it has been used primarily to transport petrol. A “water separator” filter funnel is also included.

(Tip: To cruise freely on the canals, a petrol powered boat needs a range of about 25 miles.)

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The engine control lever and cables were replaced with new when the engine was installed.

The steering system consists of a Teleflex rack-and-pinion with cable. This was installed new in about 1997. A Davis helm position indicator is attached to the wheel so that you can determine how the boat will move before applying power.

(Tip: The life expectancy of control cables is about 15 to 20 years. Many used boats are in need of replacements.)

Gas System

The current gas system was installed in 1996. It includes two 6 kg propane tanks, and an automatic changeover regulator.

Water Systems

The water supply system consists of a Shureflow pump and accumulator, both installed about 2000. There are two water tanks of about 10 gallons each located under the cockpit floor.

The tap is an American domestic unit with a spout high enough for convenient filling of a kettle, rinsing bottles, etc.

Hot water is provided by a Paloma unit installed new about 1996.

(Tip: We have chosen to fill the water tanks directly through the removable lids, rather than using the deck fitting. This is faster and easier to monitor.)

The Rule 360 bilge pump has both automatic and manual controls. The automatic float switch is linked directly to the batteries with a separate fuse to insure that it is active when the rest of the electrics are switched off.

Shower System

There is a shower curtain installed the toilet compartment. The large plastic box in the compartment is used as a tray, and can also be used as a mini-tub. A “sun shower” camping bag-and-spray, easily filled with warm water at the tap, is included.

Toilet

The toilet is a PortaPotti unit.

(Tip: Portable toilets are easy to empty and are virtually maintenance free. BW provides FREE disposal points throughout the canal system. They can save you about £10 a week in service charges.)

Electrical System

The boat has a 12 volt electrical system with two batteries and a selector switch. Battery boxes

There are three 12 volt outlets installed, one in the forward cabin and two in the aft one.

Particular attention has been paid to the lighting arrangements, with new overhead halogen lamps for reading in both cabins, a light over the sink, etc.

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Heating System

A new Taylors Diesel Heater was installed in the boat in about 1996. This was additionally fitted with a water coil connected to a radiator in the back cabin. We have found that the cabin can be kept at a comfortable temperature when the decks have a coating of Easter snow.

Current price for this heater is about £630, not including water coil, radiator,



or installation.

Additional Modifications

The major addition to the rear cabin is a desk with a drawer for stationary and ship's papers, a pull-out shelf for a laptop computer, and a lockable storage compartment which we have used for storage of "pocket" items. The top can accommodate a portable television, and a 12 volt outlet is located at the desk.

We had a "paint locker" installed in the cockpit. This accommodates diesel for the heater as well as other potentially flammable supplies.

Other additions include book shelves, drawers, mirror, stainless steel vents, cabinet in toilet compartment, and 12 volt cabin fan in the forward compartment

Certificates, License, Insurance and Documents

Blue Heron has a Boat Safety Certificate issued on March 2002 which is valid through March 2006. The original certificate will be provided to the buyer at the time of sale, and the copy required for a license has been submitted to British Waterways.

The British Waterways canals-and-rivers cruising license is so new that we have not yet received the disks! The disks will be posted to Venetian Marina (or the buyer) when they are received.

The current owners have insured the boat with Haven Knox-Johnson, and will maintain cover until after the sale. The buyers must arrange for their own cover after sale in order to retain the BW cruising license.

A folder containing various manuals for the engine, heater, etc. along with keys for the doors and other locks will be supplied at the time of sale.

(Written by Wallace Venable in April 2002)

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