

A DATE WITH "MISS ENFIELD"

I WAS privileged the other week to be the only Isle of Wight journalist present at the testing of a new revolutionary all British powerboat aimed at winning this country's first world title in Class 1. Made at Fishbourne, *Miss Enfield* Prototype I is the first Formula One boat in the world to be powered by a gas turbine engine. The test was made for the national daily press, radio and TV companies.

I was met at Hamble Marina by Mr. X. P. Stathatos, chairman of Enfield Marine Ltd. and Enfield Industrial Engines Ltd. who escorted me to the *Tramontana*, positioned alongside m.v. *Gay Enterprise*, which was to take us to the point in the Solent where *Miss Enfield* was to undergo her tests. The first person I saw on the *Tramontana* was Mrs. Shirley Jackman from East Cowes. As she works for British Hovercraft I thought "Have we got an industrial spy on board?" but found out that her husband, Arthur, was electrician for *Miss Enfield*.

The first person I met on *Gay Enterprise*, with the Press party from London, was a journalist friend from my own home town. We had gone to the same school and whilst waiting to go to University, he did a little reporting on the local paper on which I was sub-editor. Since then he went to Oxford, won a scholarship to Berkeley University, U.S.A. and has worked on the Daily Express, The Times and Financial Times. His P.R.O. firm organised the visit to the *Miss Enfield* trials.

After a cold buffet lunch and a few short speeches, the *Gay Enterprise* sailed to the area in the Solent where *Miss Enfield* showed us what she could do. She was piloted by Tim Powell with Dag Pike as navigator and Martin White as mechanic, together with Mr. A. Pollock. *Miss Enfield* gave us a display as good as the Red Arrows at Bembridge Air Show. She travelled at such a speed that all one could see, quite naturally, was the hull of the boat up in the air like a phallic symbol.

She floated past and around the *Gay Enterprise* at terrific speeds. At one stage the Enfield Freight Hovercraft came on the scene. *Miss Enfield* gave her the same treatment, as though she was a cat playing with a mouse. Whilst she passed the *Gay Enterprise* slow enough to be snapped by photographers on the *Enterprise*, she must have been doing at least 60 m.p.h.

Mr. Ernest Sims, managing director of Enfield Marine Ltd. told me: "This is the first vessel in the world of this type so fitted, and the greatest interest is being shown among the racing fraternity in this country, Europe and America. This could be the greatest breakthrough engine-wise that has happened in the raceboat world since the internal combustion engine, and speeds of well over 100 m.p.h. must soon become commonplace. It is now necessary for the hull designers to produce hulls capable of using the enormous powers now available from the new generation gas turbines.

"This company is very conscious of the enormous potential that the gas turbine offers, and is among the first to produce a marinised version.

"With sponsorship from Phillip Morris, backed from Enfield Marine, and piloted by international race driver Tim Powell, the coming race season promises to be very exciting.

"A small workforce of about 50 people is employed at Fishbourne. It has always been the company's policy to seek out and employ experts in their own particular field. We believe we have assembled a team second to none for the projects we have on hand.

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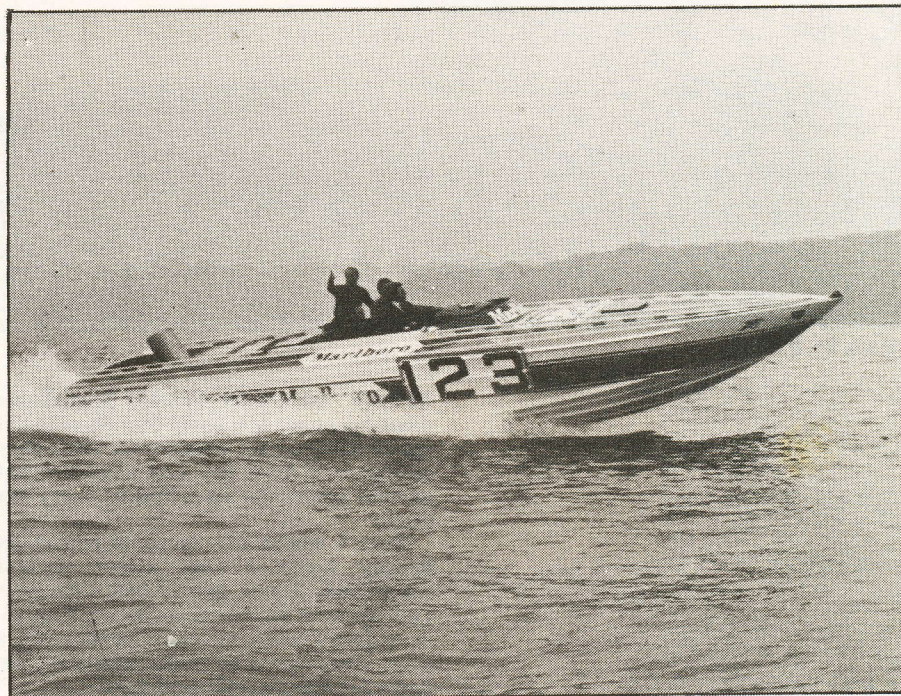
"Backing our raceboat team on the installation we have Geoff Hay, who did most of the work on installing the engines. An ex-racing motor cycle driver, Jim Sweeney prepared the engines, has had experience on gas turbines in many parts of the world. Ivor Verlander has overall responsibility for all installations, and has had a great deal of racing experience in the U.S.A. and this country. For many years he was racing mechanic for the famous Gardner Brothers on *Surfury*.

"We believe that aluminium alloy raceboat hulls specially designed for gas turbine installation in the hands of a determined and experienced crew must form a formidable challenge to any international competition".

Miss Enfield has been commissioned by Greek shipping magnate John Goulandris, who, when on the Island stays at the Holmwood Hotel, Cowes and sits at the family table with Mr. and Mrs. Iddles and their daughter. He is so unassuming and on the odd visit I have made to the Holmwood, he has chatted with me about the *Islander* and the electric car which we wrote about in our magazine in June.

A.J.C.

WHAT A GAS



Tim Powell's new Marlboro sponsored boat.

I HAVE never seen a launching of a new powerboat, with new engines, go so smoothly. As reported last week, Tim Powell's boat sponsored by Marlboro and launched last Wednesday, has a gas turbine, but it is not a Napier-Gazelle, but a Gnome which is very similar. The problem of reverse is overcome by lowering a deflecting shield over the props to give reverse thrust. This works on the water jet principle — where they got the idea from.

Tim Powell found the engines far more responsive to the throttle than he imagined, although he has had to put a marker on the throttle controls to prevent

throttling back too far. If he does this the flame cuts out, forcing a wait until the engine cools before they can re-fire it, otherwise they could have a "blow-back".

Dag Pike, Tim's navigator, told me the ride was fine and the noise level about the same as a pair of Mercruisers at full chat. The only thing he found disconcerting was the compressor rev counter which was registering 25,000 revs. Weighing about 350 lbs and producing 1,000 bhp, the engine consumes about 0.700 lbs per hour, per bhp using kerosene.

