

Winchrite

It would be hard to fault this bit of kit - providing you know what it is, it does exactly what it is meant to do, save the muscles of the aged and ward off those dreadful "trimming" blues. This power winch handle has been extensively reviewed elsewhere, so here are some personal impressions.

Winchrite is the same size as a "long" (300mm) handle, but much wider and heavier although not too heavy for me. My wife has a bad back and decided it was a little too much for her, but was encouraged by my reaction since I do all the heavy winching! Having the feel of a well built bit of kit it also has a useful non slip rubber coating which stops it sliding everywhere in the cockpit and is "water resistant" (not submersible). I would have no hesitation in keeping it under the sprayhood and trimming in a rainshower.

Electronic speed control and a reversing switch allows 2 speed manual winches to be used optimally. Although not as fast as someone working hard, it is a lot easier. Having plenty of power it does a good job of sheet trimming. I tried it out in a variety of winds and it never faltered. The main problem is that the motor is so powerful, that you have to counter the torque with your own hands - although not actually having to winch, you must stop the Winchrite turning round. It is noisy too - often breaking the mood of a tranquil sail - but you can't have everything!

I find furling or reefing our genoa a bit of a stretch occasionally, and this has saved one or two potentially back wrenching occasions, so I am pretty pleased on that score. Not being built to go up the mast I have not tried it, but the torque is excellent so it should work for a decent ratio manual winch with a light person.

The battery is Lithium Iron and just needs topping up (there are 12V and 240V charging leads provided) - it seems to last well, showing no signs of dying in light use during a decent day sail.

The alternative would seem to be to fit an electric conversion kit or fitting all new electric winches - conversion for 3 winches would seem to be around £5000 or new electrics at a much higher cost.

So would I buy it - well yes given current experience, although I would have liked to try it in slightly stronger winds. For me, it does the job I need - furling the genoa and trimming the sheets.

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