

The Petternut Guide To Petters

Petter engine types for M & S types

All Petter engines were assigned a Type code and this document covers those for the M & S type engines.

The detailed construction of each engine or plant was covered by a “Build” sheet also known as a “Bulletin”. This listed the number of every part used, including items “bought out” for each build, of which there are many dozens. Only a few undated samples of build sheets exist.

M types (includes Junior, Universal, and Handyman)

VZ Applies to all 1 ½ -2 hp engines including series 1 & 2 Little Pet and air-cooled engines.

VA Applies to all 2 ¼ - 4 hp engines.

VF Applies to all 5 - 6 hp engines.

VF2 indicates a two cylinder VF

VB applies to all 8 hp engines (of which more later).

To these may be applied various prefixes and suffixes:

Prefixes

P indicates a portable engine sold on an engine or plant wheeled-trolley,

Prefix **SP** indicates a semi-portable engine sold on skids (called a stretcher by Petters),

Suffixes

M indicates a Marine engine (VF only),

A indicates an Agricultural specification engine also known as a Handyman,

U indicates a Universal engine fitted with a petrol cylinder head and optionally a Paraffin ring,

Auto applies to the Automatic generating set (VZ only),

Gas is an engine built for Town Gas,

Compressor is used for a VF or VF2 modified to be or include a compressor.

S types

Most are VS (vertical) or HS (horizontal).

The S could stand for semi-diesel or surface ignition as Petters used the terms interchangeably.

VS was followed by the nominal hp rating. A twin would be a VST only as there were no horizontal twins.

The nominal hp ratings were 5-6, 12-14, 18-21 per cylinder. For example a VST24 or a VS12M or a PVS5.

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Each size was developed via early models during 1922 and early 1923. These had types VFC crude oil (diesel), VBC crude oil, whilst the VS12 and VS18 were developed via types VCW and VDW respectively. The reason behind the use of W is not known but L had already been used for Lamp and it is possible that W indicates light-weight.

To these may be applied various prefixes and suffixes:

Prefixes

P indicates a portable engine sold on a wheeled trolley,

Prefix SP indicates a semi-portable engine sold on skids (called a stretcher by Petters),

Suffixes

M indicates a Marine engine.

Type VB

demand explanation as, for whatever reason, Petters used it for 4 different engines:

The first was an 8hp hot bulb two-stroke designed, in response to a Government requirement for cold-start, to run on Paraffin and be started on petrol by a magneto and spark plug. This was built in 1917 as part of a 4KW direct-coupled generating set on a cast aluminium base.

To avoid confusion whilst indexing engine records at Internal Fire I have designated these as VBJ8. Some of those delivered after the Armistice were sold to non-military customers. I know of only four surviving engines; two in Devon, one in Eire, and one in Australia.

The engine was prone to runaways owing to the fuel pump emptying fuel into the crankcase whilst standing. The magneto was deleted and the engine sold as a VBL (lamp).

The 8hp Junior was given type VB. Some early examples were fitted to the same 4KW sets developed earlier for the VBJ8.

Finally from these roots was developed the VS8 via many parts drawings for type VBX (experimental) and VBC (crude) . The specification of "crude" oil is near identical to modern diesel.

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