



25 Years of Quality Boatbuilding



In The Beginning: The Rayner Days

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He had owned a small sailing cruiser and decided she could be improved upon. So he designed the Westcoaster and had ideas about series production in glass fibre. He also decided that he wanted complete freedom to develop ideas his way, so set up his own company: Westerly Marine Construction was born. But that was not it all yet, he had clear and very forward thinking ideas on what sort of boats he wanted to build. Despite the fact that the standard brochure picture of the original boat, the Westerly 22, shows a thoroughly traditional looking gentleman, complete with yachting cap and a handkerchief in his breast pocket, as stark as a picture as you could wish

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If many of today's boat building firms are regarded as part of a cottage industry, what must things have been like 25 years ago? The Westerly story provides both an opportunity to see what things were like in those days and also a chance to see how a forward thinking innovator could see the sensible way ahead.

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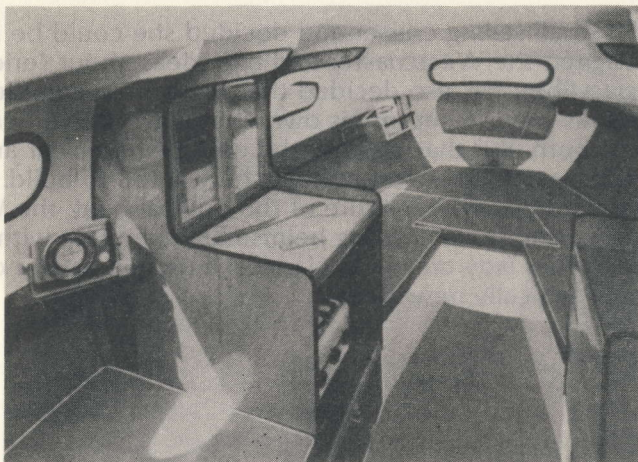
Did Dennis Rayner ever dream that the company he founded would grow so large or so important? Perhaps he did, because he was a very remarkable man. It is well known that he was both a wartime destroyer captain and also writer of the screenplay for "The Enemy Below" and of course he designed all the early Westerlys – but there was even more to him than these skills suggest.

He had owned a small sailing cruiser and decided she could be improved upon. So he designed the Westcoaster and had ideas about series production in glassfibre. He also decided that he wanted complete freedom to develop ideas his way, so set up his own company: Westerly Marine Construction was born. But that was not the end, he had clear and very forward thinking ideas on what sort of boats he wanted to build. Despite the fact that the standard brochure picture of the original boat, the Westerly 22, shows a thoroughly traditional looking helmsman, complete with yachting cap, and a headscarfed lady crew – as classical a picture as you could wish for – he had some radically new ideas.



Commander Rayner and Dodie Walker sailing the first Westerly 22.

He understood the importance of pleasing the ladies who felt obliged to get involved in the sailing scene. He gave them space, comfortable furnishings (cloth, not vinyl covered cushions), a good galley, headroom, a stable hull and most of all: privacy. From the earliest days the heads was in a compartment of its own – even if in the smallest boats the compartment was little more than a cupboard.



The Westerly 22's spacious cabin.

He was years ahead of his time. Even better, he had a lady, Dodie Walker, very much involved in making sure the interiors made sense and, of course, in selling the boats. Did any other British yacht builder have a saleslady back in 1963? You might think that would be enough innovation, but not so: he saw the importance of exports and, aiming high, took on the biggest most difficult one he could find – the USA.

David Sanders joined the company when it was less than a year old. He was a chemical engineer by background but was asked to sort out production, necessary because of problems that followed from the success of the initial Boat Shows. He recalls a number of memories from those early days. For example, on his first day, an owner rang to say his rudder had fallen off. At that time, both galvanised and stainless fittings were used, with the inevitable problems, so they quickly changed to the expensive but safe alternative of all stainless steel. He recalls that Bill Hobbs, the Lloyds' surveyor, gave invaluable guidance on many aspects of construction and from the earliest days Westerly always gave a Lloyds' certificate – another far sighted move to ensure a purchaser's confidence. In those days it was the Production Certificate and to qualify, the boat was dropped into water from a height of six feet below the keel and with sand bags in the bilge ...

On another occasion David recalls the accountant came to him with the awful news that, after studying all the figures carefully, he decided the boats were being sold at a loss and that the company was technically bankrupt. Happily money values in those days were such that an increase of £200 was sufficient to solve the problem. Mind you, the Westerly 22 was selling for just £1250 at that time, so while the figures appear very small they were talking about a 16% increase.

The very early visits to American boat shows, indicated that the company was already taking notice of American requirements and designing boats to suit them. These visits confirmed that the Rayner concept of more beam, more space, more headroom and more privacy was the right route to take. Westerly 22s, 25s (the same hull, lengthened to give a longer cockpit and a counter – which hid an ingenious outboard motor stowage), the Windrush (the 25 but with a full width coachroof) and Nomad (the 22 with a full width coachroof) can still be seen in Britain, Europe and America today: still giving their owners pleasure. A total of 944 of these boats were built between '63 and '69: no mean achievement.

It is hard to see now they sailed to windward with only 2ft 6in draft and Dennis Rayner's design of assymetric twin keels, which was later shown not to be the best, but the magazines of the day were very complimentary. (*Yachting Monthly*: "always making headway in the lightest of breezes and fairly slipping along in a guster. It is not possible to enthuse more." Or the *Yachtsman*: "I particularly enjoyed tacking through the moorings ... a delightful sail."). The brochures also make fascinating reading: for example, that for the Westerly 22 talks about the forward berths: "an insert between the forward berths converts to sleeping quarters for 3 adults in bags if required". I don't think we'd ever suggest these days that 3 people could pack into a fore cabin, or would want to necessarily; in those days it hardly went with the yachting cap and head scarf image. But in an early sign of the common sense way of looking at the boat, it also talks about "an extra worktop when cooking (many Westerly interior features have been thoughtfully designed with your wife in mind!)" though some of the effect is lost by the wording which suggests the ladies would not be shown the brochure. On the other hand, the 22 brochure doesn't mention the word heads at all; perhaps it wasn't thought a proper thing to discuss. But in the Nomad, which was the same boat, effectively, but with an improved layout, the heads is firmly shown in a little offset to the starboard side of the forecabin. Very clever to manage to pack it off to one side like that in a boat as small as the Nomad, even with the help of the full width coach roof.

Sadly, the Westerly 30 was Dennis Rayner's last design. She was also the first to have a brochure which included the engine in the specification; up until now there was reference to a 6 or 9½ hp Johnson outboard, or a Volvo MD 1 7 hp diesel, with a hint that the diesel was rather larger for the 22 or 25 footers. Now the Volvo MD 2 15 hp was offered, with even the 34 hp Mercedes OM 636 as an option. No wonder the brochure extolled the performance under power. But yet again Westerly recognised this was

what the customer wanted: power to be able to get home on time – even in '66. The boat was an impressive design anyway: 6ft 2in headroom on only 3ft draft; 40 gallons of fresh water and comfortably angled backrests in the cockpit. To sell 39 of these relatively big boats, in just two years was an achievement.

We know of at least two epic voyages in Westerly 30s: John Ridgway took part in the *Sunday Times*' Golden Globe Singlehanded Round the World Race in his, named English Rose IV – after the boat in his transatlantic rowing experience – while another sailor and his bride spent their honeymoon sailing his Westerly 30 across the Atlantic. Sadly Ridgway's voyage finished at Recife in Brazil, because he could not make totally satisfactory repairs to damage caused by a Press boat when he set off from England.

Dennis Rayner died soon after construction of the Westerly 30 started in early '66; David Sanders led the company on into the future.

While the shallow draft Rayner cruisers were doing well for the firm, it was decided to open up another side of the market, by producing some boats with more emphasis on performance. The first of these was a purpose designed ½ tonner. John Butler (who had been a student at Laurent Giles) was asked to design her and a very pretty boat he produced, with really classic lines. She had a low forward coach roof with raised doghouse behind it – in the best traditions – and a neat sawn-off counter; as pretty a boat as you could wish for. He achieved two quarter berths by placing the galley opposite the dinette saloon – a layout we will see again in later boats – and 40 of these boats were sold in 2 years.

The following year John was asked to design another boat, the Cirrus, a fin keel, two cabin boat with 6ft headroom on only 22ft overall. Possible? Certainly, and very popular, being judged Outright Winner at a *Yachting*



Westerly Cirrus.

World One of a Kind Rally. What is more, the freeboard does not look unreasonably high to achieve all the useful volume. 398 Cirrus were built in the four years to '72: and average of two a week, quite a production achievement. Westerly considered it was pointless to enter an event in a halfhearted manner, so got a good team together to sail the boat well, both for the rally and later events. Some other builders thought this "offside" though it is normal today. The Cirrus was actually placed first in the Queen's Cup during Cowes Week – but was then disqualified for being too small.

This success was followed by another Butler design, the fin keeled Tiger, 25ft long. Once again he produced a success, this time the *Yachting World* judges rated her performance as "Very Good". The overall shape of the boat has a family resemblance to the Cirrus, as one would expect and, together with good performance, six berths have been fitted in. Production of this boat ran right from '69 to '76 and 284 were built.

Meanwhile, to open up another side of the market, Westerly asked Ian Proctor to design a sporty weekender, the Nimrod. In the right conditions she planed nicely. 272 were built in the three years from '68 to '71 and the boat is still being built today, by a different builder and under a new name.

So, taking '68 as an example, a total of 8 different boats were in production at an average overall rate of 7 per week, which says something about the size and organisation of the Company.

The Centaur Story

But David Sanders had to seek out a designer for the next cruising boat. From his experience of their designs, Dennis Rayner had recommended he should consider Laurent Giles and Partners for any twin keel boats. The question was, would they be willing? At that time, they were of course best known for one-off racing yachts. David recalls that when he first went to explain the brief, he was slightly nervous because, after all, Jack Laurent Giles was known as a very important and responsible designer, so that David had some temerity in asking for a production cruiser. He was even less happy when he returned to see the results because he didn't like the look of it at all: it looked too modern, not at all the sort of boat he had in mind. Luckily Jack Giles recognised his unhappy expression and led him on so that David was able to say that what he really wanted was a very traditional looking cruiser, though conforming to the Westerly parameters, not the boat that Jack had drawn. To which the great man said "Oh I'm so glad to hear that. I thought this is the sort of thing you wanted; it's not really the sort of thing I like. I will design something quite different". This happy coincidence led to the Centaur and the "Westerly style" which survives to the present day: the teak rubbing strip, deckpaint instead of moulded non-slip (though we may see changes here soon, even if the appearance is little altered), a restrained, not too modern appearance (what you might call the

"dependable look"). Down below, extensive use of timber and foam backed vinyl rather than very obvious glass mouldings, gives a warm and comfortable feel. A Westerly is not the cheapest boat on the market and her appearance makes this clear.



The ever popular Westerly Centaur.

Why do some boats achieve tremendous popularity, while some other just miss? What was special about the Centaur that she caught the buyers' imagination? She was, after all, really just a logical progression along the route that Westerly had been following: more beam than usual, with more headroom (so allowing more volume), stability, long waterline, clothes hanging space, a proper sail locker, concern for the ladies and a roomy heads compartment. She also had hot and cold water, because Westerly persuaded Volvo head office to make a heat exchanger for the engine. But she certainly provided just what the buyers wanted and caught the mood of the day so well that 2444 were built in the 11 years from 1968 to 1979, an incredibly long production run for any sort of boat. And of course a Centaur is still a very popular buy on the second hand market today.

In addition to the Westerly concept, she had some specific design features which certainly were to her advantage. The most important of these was the benefit of Laurent Giles' ideas on twin keels. Luckily for Westerly, Giles had done some extensive test tank research on bilge keels for a much larger yacht they had designed. Further research was done for the Centaur and confirmed the original results: that the keels should be parallel, or slightly toed in forward. If they happened to tow out, due to some misalignment in the building process, that was shown to be disastrous as far as performance was concerned. And the keels were aerofoils and ballasted because these were shown to be more efficient than the earlier assymetric designs. She led the way with a short skeg for the rudder, which allowed support for the rudder bearings, together with the freedom to provide an area of balanced

rudder below it. Tank testing showed that this would give very good turning ability for small helm angles and this was confirmed in practice. The Centaur was also the first Westerly to have the knuckle bow, which contributes usefully to a dry ride.

Centaurs sail just as well as the test data said they should: it is simple fact that if you see one going slowly, it is not the fault of the design. A quick look at how the sails are set may give you the clue. As we all know, they sailed as a one design class at Christchurch for a number of years and gave their crews a great deal of pleasure and sport at the same time. Even better, Chris Hawkins raced his successfully against rated $\frac{1}{4}$ tonners during '77-'78, which showed exactly what the Centaur could do when given a little bit of a chance. They certainly inspired their owners: there are records of some transatlantic voyages, while at the other end of the scale, there is a nice ketch rigged Centaur, complete with bowsprit and figurehead, there is also a schooner and there are reports of a square rigged one in France.

Perhaps the strange thing about the Centaur's success, is that its two derivatives were sold in much smaller numbers; the Chieftain (which had a small aft cabin) sold 79 in 4 years between '72 and '76 while the Pembroke sold 97 in the three years from '76 to '79. Pembroke was a fin-keel boat and you might have thought that that would have proved at least as popular as the Centaur, with those who wanted performance, but it just wasn't so. Perhaps both Chieftain and Pembroke arrived on the scene too late or maybe enthusiasm for the slightly shallower draught had its way.

Following their success with the Centaur family, Laurent Giles and Partners were approached for 6 further hull designs, which evolved into 14 different models, by a combination of interior layouts, cockpit positions and keel types. The little Joustier (intended as a racer for events organised by the Junior Offshore Group, which in those days was aimed at boats under 25ft) and Warwick filled in a space at the small end of the fleet, while a 31ft hull provided the Renown, Longbow, Pentland and Berwick. Sales of these variations on a theme were remarkably even and totalled almost 1100 over the years from '72 to '79. No sooner had production of these craft got underway but Laurent Giles designed a 35ft 9in hull, which provided the basis for the Conway, Galway, Solway, Medway and strange as it may sound, the Westerly 35, which came along later. This latter boat was intended as a liveaboard home for the long distance cruising owner, but while she attracted much enthusiastic comment, the sales just did not materialise. However, the Conway family produced 351 sales, though the breakdown of numbers is not as straight forward as it might appear. The Conway itself started as a centre cockpit fin keeler, but after production of the other models stopped, the name Conway was used for the twin or fin keel centre cockpit boat that continued in production. Interestingly, the aft cockpit boats of this class (Galway and Medway) proved most popular in Germany and are still to be found in numbers in that area. These hull designs were tank tested, at some cost, but the owners got good sailing as a result.

For those who did not want a yacht quite as large, the 33 was launched, which later led to the Discus; David Sanders believes these were the best all round yachts of the Laurent Giles range. They were certainly popular enough, averaging one per week for almost seven years. The Discus was a particularly interesting boat, being an early solution to the desire for both an aft cabin and an aft cockpit. She was just big enough for this to be possible and the resulting bridge deck proved perfectly acceptable. A number of transatlantic passages have been made in Westerly 33s.



Westerly 33.

The smaller boat buyers were not forgotten; while the Centaur was still giving great pleasure, they started building the Kendal, a 23ft fin keeled much younger sister of the Pageant, which had already been in production for 7 years. And a market was recognised for an even smaller boat, the 21. Her dimensions are surprisingly similar to those of Dennis Rayner's first boat, the 22; very similar waterline length, displacement and even sail sizes. There was now an inboard diesel, instead of an outboard and the rudder was hung on the transom, giving more room in the cockpit. It reminds one, once again, of just how forward thinking Dennis Rayner was.

By now, Dodie Walker had taken honourable retirement to the Isle of Man, after her very long time helping the company follow the principles Dennis had established, but if buyers did not meet her they almost certainly met Dove Dixon, the well known and very highly regarded retired bank manager turned boat demonstrator. People who sailed with him always remarked on his charm and remarkably placid style, whatever the weather or the experience of his customers. On one occasion (at least) he was confronted by a lady customer in high heels and garden party hat, but it took more than that to upset him. It is a great pity he did not write his memoirs, they would have provided excellent advice for others as well as much humour. At this time demonstrations took place from Camper and Nicholson's marina in Gosport and he was crewed by Reg Heard who lived in the area. It is hard

to imagine a more different man from Dove: his apparent reluctance to do things was a complete contrast, but his skills were real. The two made a remarkable duo and a formidable sales aid. When Westerly moved to Hamble Point Marina, Dove found the extra travelling too much and retired for the second time, but he was certainly not forgotten by anyone who had sailed with him. Later purchasers will remember Joe Stevenson, who joined as a demonstrator in the mid '70s and continued until he died in '83. He was another highly skilled and totally unflappable seaman who could make any boat handling impossibility look easy. He did not have a crew – he didn't need one, but on occasions would take his young daughter along to help. At the age of 12, she could be seen working the tiller and gear lever under father's guidance, while he tended the warps, a salutary lesson for many adult bystanders.

The Racing Scene

Meanwhile, Westerly had been keeping a close eye on the racing scene and their very first move was successful, even if it looked a long shot. Chris Hawkins, who had shown everyone just how quick a Centaur could be, was asked to design a ¼ tonner which, according to fit out and specification, could be used for club racing or the flat out and serious stuff. This was the GK 24, which really tested owners' skill in thinking of names incorporating those initials, because so many were built – 320 in 5 years for what was, at first sight, a limited market. They gave (and still give) their owners some excellent sailing. A couple of years later it was thought the time to try the same formula at ½ ton size and Michael Pocock designed the GK 29. This boat maintained the same sales average as the GK 24, though only over a three year life.

In '77, Andy Cassell, sailmaker and demon sailor, happened to be racing Santa Evita, a ¾ tonner designed by Ed Dubois. He was so impressed with the fingertip control the designer had achieved, that he suggested David Sanders should try the boat. David was equally impressed and decided to try the GK formula at ¾ ton size, which led to the GK 34. While the boat was just as good to sail as had been hoped, she never caught on to a great extent. David feels this was due to being a little too early on the scene at this size and also again allowing two levels of fit out, when the sailing scene was just getting ready for racer cruiser one designs. It could well have become a one design racer in its own right and perhaps more should have been done on the interior to use it in this way, with less worry about the ¾ ton aspect. It could then have been a forerunner to the Sigma 33, but anything is easy with hindsight. David Sanders feels that it was an opportunity that was simply not recognised at the time. He still regards the GK 34 as one of the nicest boats to sail that you could ever find. However, the connection with Ed Dubois was firmly established and this was to lead to many more good boats.

The same year, Westerly took over the European licence for building J24s. The boat was already very popular and soon they were being produced at the rate of 6 per week.

This success led to the building of the J30, Rod Johnstone's bigger design, which gave the same spirited sailing as the J24 but with more accommodation. Although this boat was a great success in America, she didn't suit European ideas at the time so only 9 were built.

The Ed Dubois Designs Arrive

But the result of this foray into the racing scene confirmed the view that there was a market for more performance oriented cruisers than Westerly were presently selling. So the decision was taken to ask Ed Dubois to design the 26ft Griffon to meet this need. This she certainly did, with 446 being built over five years. Improvements were made during this period, but the hull design, deck and rig remained unchanged.

This design led to the commission for the 32ft Fulmar, a particularly successful boat which is still being built some 8 years and 500 boats later. She has proved a most versatile boat and still does not appear dated. She is very popular with sailing schools – some of those at the Westerly Sea School have logged more than 10,000 miles each and look very well despite their constant use and occasional misfortune. At the same time the Fulmar has shown herself well suited to match racing (particularly the Royal Lymington Cup and the Viyella Cup), where the one design guaranteed similarity is essential and club racing events like the Air Canada Challenge. Meanwhile many happy owners race and cruise them privately with great satisfaction.

But Laurent Giles fans have certainly not been forgotten. The 29ft Konsort went into production in '79 and also continues to today, with more than 660 being built so far. She is a masthead rigged boat (which does away with the inconvenience of the swept spreaders on the fractionally rigged Fulmar) and a good sailing boat, with a similar layout to the Fulmar below. However the slightly smaller space means that the quarter berth is narrower and so less able to be used as a double, as it can be in the Fulmar. This boat would have been brought into production a year earlier, but for the company's commitment to the J24. David Sanders feels this may have had a significant effect on Westerly's future, more of which later, because when the Konsort came into the public eye it sold at the rate of 10 per week for the first year.

It's hard and often unfair to put boats into strict compartments but it's probably fair to say that the Laurent Giles designs are cruising boats and the Ed Dubois boats are racer cruisers. The interesting question has been to guess which design owners would choose, when moving up from a smaller Westerly and whether owners would move from breed to breed, so to speak. But it's often heard said that people say either "I'm a Westerly

owner" or, for example, "I'm a Fulmar owner". So at least some Westerly owners seem to characterise themselves as being happy in the mainstream of the cruising boat range while the other (boat name) owners perhaps are going for the slightly more sporting boats. Luckily there will be no conflict at larger sizes, because while all these boats are Dubois designs, most are more cruiser than racer. The other important thing is that even if a Dubois design makes more use of sweeping curves than a Giles design does, there is still a neat and carefully preserved Westerly family style.

The Business Scene

As mentioned earlier, Westerly was very quick to start exporting and setting up foreign agencies. This foresight was a tremendous boon to the company when sales slumped at home, at the time of the imposition of VAT at 25%. Many companies hardly recovered from that shock, which followed closely after the first huge oil price rise, which affected everything derived from oil – including GRP. Despite the difficulties, Westerly gained the Queen's Award for Export in '69, '70 and '77. At the time of the introduction of the racing boats, with all the costs involved, no-one could guess that a recession was just around the corner. Westerly had leased all its buildings until now, but this had caused some unhappy experiences, so the opportunity was taken to buy them as they came available. It seemed a sensible move that would save money in the long term. However, against a background of rising interest rates and slowing sales, part way through the '80 Hamburg Boat Show, the pound rose 15% against the Deutschmark and of course sales just stopped. By '81 exports, normally more than 55% of the company's business, simply collapsed. Redundancies inevitably followed even though £1,000,000 was borrowed (at horrible interest rates) against the factory buildings. By this time the company's performance was being supervised by the auditors and monitored closely by the bank.

There is one good thing: with many marine company disasters, there is often a strong smell that it has been engineered to avoid paying suppliers, because the company pops up again very soon, in a different guise. With Westerly's tragedy, no-one has ever suggested any sort of underhand or profligate dealings. The Sanders' attitude to the firm is well demonstrated by the sight of Mrs Sanders working in the sales office over the next few months, helping to keep things going.

David says that one of the few heartening aspects of those terrible days was the loyalty of the owners. The company was barred from the '81 London Boat Show on various rather questionable technical grounds, so they decided to have their own show later in the month at Hamble Point Marina. They had over 1000 visitors, many of whom were existing owners wishing them well. Despite the circumstances, they sold 15 boats, which justified the effort.

Centreway Industries Arrive

Centreway bought the company, brought in additional management and financial power. They listened to the old hands, decided what was good and what was bad and set course for the future. They continued building the Konsort, Fulmar and Vulcan (a 34ft motor sailer by Giles which started building in small numbers in '80). They went ahead with a slightly modified Griffon, called the Griffon II and laid down the ground work for future designs by Ed Dubois. So much time has passed since this seemingly "recent" takeover, that there has also been time to phase some out too.

Vulcan production stopped in '84 after 45 had been built while Griffon II gave way to the Griffon Club and building stopped in '87 after a production total of 446 boats. That is a lot of boats in eight years considering the doubts and delays that the changeover must have caused.

At 28ft, the Merlin was built in addition to the Griffon and Konsort for three years. As all three were notably different, buyers requirements in this size were very well covered: Merlin achieved all the comforts of a three cabin layout. Again, 122 boats in 3 years was good going.

A need was seen for two larger fin keel centre cockpit yachts and this led to the 36ft Corsair and the flagship Sealord at 38ft 6in. The Corsair was superseded by the Corsair II while the Oceanlord took over from the Sealord, in each case with detail improvements and styling changes over the previous yacht. Each has a three cabin layout and loads of space per person.

A slot in the market was also seen for a 34ft centre cockpit boat and this led to the Seahawk, of which more than 120 have been built so far, while the same hull is used for the aft cockpit Falcon, which is also proving very popular.

It seems remarkable, but it has been found possible to fit a wheelhouse on the Konsort to make the Konsort Duo. The way the existing volume has been used is very clever indeed and has resulted in a popular and successful addition to the range. More than 100 have been built already.

But the success story has to be the Storm, which really seems to have caught the racer cruiser buyers' imagination and two feet shorter, at 31ft, is her younger sister, the Tempest. While they look similar from outboard, the below decks layout is quite different. The Storm has one large double cabin aft under the cockpit, with the rest of the boat having a conventional layout, whereas the Tempest has a double cabin each side aft, with the normal forecabin area given over to the heads and sail storage. Already more than 100 Storms and 50 Tempests have been sold.

And any day now we shall see the first production Riviera 35, a very sleek deck saloon sailing cruiser – styles have certainly changed since the days of the Vulcan.



Flagship of the Westerly range – Oceanlord 41.



Westerly Storm 33.

The introduction by Centreway Industries of extra management effort has allowed tighter supervision and control of costs with better use of finances and resources. The company are rightly proud of the fact that, allowing for inflation, the real cost of buying a Westerly has actually fallen during the last six years. This is despite considerable increase in overheads due to the control systems the management has introduced, more of which later. It would be easy to think that the only way to reduce costs is by short cuts, but the opposite approach has been taken most successfully. What is more, the buyers are obviously happy with the quality they are getting: sales are up over the last few years and Westerly is the major British company in yachts of 29 feet and larger. The company has a 25% share of the total UK yacht market and exports are back up to 35%, making Westerly's exports the most valuable in the yacht market. The easiest way to see what has been achieved, is to review the company's present activities.

Drawing Office Input – much more power than in most yards

One of the big benefits of Westerly's modern approach is the control exercised by the team in the drawing office. In times gone by (and in many yards today) the drawing office staff were busy trying to bring the drawings up to date to reflect construction changes that have just taken place. At Westerly it works the right way round: the drawing office decides what structure needs to be built to provide the strength required and then the boat is built to these requirements. The ideal result is to save cost without compromising strength. And because the drawing office staff includes two naval architects, they have the skills to be able to design the whole entity, so that the hull with its stringers bonded in, is a completely sound, strong rigid structure on its own and does not require the use of bulkheads or furniture to provide essential stiffening. This of course is unusual in yachts, where furniture is commonly used to provide strength or stiffening where required. The result is that the moulding comes from the mould shop with stringers but without bulkheads; it simply does not need them because the shape is completely rigid. The overall result is a much stronger boat. That is the easily visible aspect of the work of the drawing office, but there is actually much more to it. All the working drawings are prepared there, together with designs for small components and deck fittings. All the yacht's designer provides is a lines plan: everything else is done by Westerly staff. And if the lines plan does not provide the height or width required at a certain point – perhaps to allow the required accommodation to be fitted in – then the designer is asked to modify the lines. Hull designs these days are fuller than a few years ago and while this helps with the volume, it also provides more stiffness when the boat is sailing or moored – and so a better night's sleep. Naturally the drawing office team are longing to be allowed to do the lines as well and so completely design the first in-house Westerly

yacht since the days of Dennis Rayner. The strength this drawing office gives the company is immense and justifies the high cost involved. To have the skills available to perform any of these tasks at the drop of a hat, gives great flexibility in design, construction and costs. It is also easy to carry out "What if?" studies on projected designs or alternative layouts for existing hulls.

Construction Today

Modern construction methods show just how far things have progressed since Westerly's early days. The whole emphasis is on control of functions and events and complete knowledge of all the components and conditions under which the boat was built. For example, in the moulding shop, the materials for building a complete boat hull are measured out by one person whose job it is to make sure that everything is done exactly in accordance with the schedule. The required lengths of the right weights of glass fabrics are laid out on a pallet; the required amount of resins are provided and these are then taken to the mould, so that the boat can be built to a controlled weight and exactly in accordance with the design and construction parameters. There is no chance that anyone might be able, even if tempted, to follow the traditional bad practice of "Let's just add another layer there, to be on the safe side. We have lots of matt left over and there is some resin left in the bucket." Similarly, there is careful control over the amount of pigment in the gelcoat, because it is believed that too much pigment aids osmosis. And of course the moulding shop is kept at the correct temperature and humidity required by Lloyds. This is one of the basic essentials before they will approve the moulding. Further, fans have been installed to recycle the warm air from the roof back down to the working area, where it is required. For the company's own satisfaction, two men are employed full time on mould maintenance, to avoid any production delays.

New Moulding Techniques

One surprise in the moulding shop was to find that instead of bonding balsa core into decks to provide the required stiffness, nowadays the company uses polyurethane foam. The changeover has been made because the foam bonds better to the glass laminate of the deck and it is much easier to cut and bend to shape. Furthermore, surprisingly, there is not a cost penalty. Also, instead of using plywood for non-crushable patches, where bolts must be tightened through the deck, now non-woven polyester is used which is easier to trim to shape and much easier to bond into place. In common with many other builders, Westerly now uses combination fabrics to make the structure lighter, stronger and stiffer. They are harder to work, so although less layers may be applied, there is no saving in time.

There are two moulding shops in use at present. One concentrates on hulls and small components such as heads modules, galleys and so on, while the other specialises in hulls, decks and rudders. It is in this shop that two of the company's longest serving employees are to be found. Both prefer to remain anonymous but have achieved 23 and 22 years respectively. They both said that in the time since they had started, the biggest change in moulding was due to tighter controls and better organisation of the work that had to be done. When asked, separately, if they had enjoyed their time at Westerly they each looked surprised and then said they would not have stayed so long otherwise. This has to be true – there are many places where one can work as a GRP laminator.

Like many other companies, some 15 years ago Westerly experimented with chopper guns and sprayed laminates, both of which save time and therefore money. But like other good companies they realised the shortcomings and abandoned the idea in favour of traditional hand layup. With the quick methods it is impossible to be sure what depth of laminate has been achieved or guarantee to get it to the right structural consistency.

Completion

In the early stages of fitting out, Westerly's technique is different from most other yards. While some use a complete interior moulding (which can be used to locate bulkheads and furniture items) – and other companies don't use mouldings at all, but complete the whole interior in timber, Westerly is somewhere between the two. The bulkheads are fitted at jugged positions and then small sections of interior moulding are bonded in to provide links and floor positions for other pieces of furniture coming later. These mouldings therefore butt up against bulkheads rather than fit round them. In some cases, where the total volume of the hull is needed to allow the required accommodation, then no mouldings are used at all and it is back to traditional fitting of joinery by use of jigs.

Joinery, by the way, is constructed in a purpose-built joinery shop, quite separate from the fitting out building. Here the Joinery Manager has more autonomy perhaps than the other section managers, because he chooses the correct grades of materials he requires and indeed orders boards to be made up with the required grain pattern and style that Westerly require for their yachts. Joinery work is built to match jigs and if it has to be fitted to a GRP moulding, such as a heads unit, then all this is completed in the joinery shop. The whole unit is then transported to the appropriate hull in the fitting out shop.

The highlight of a visit to the fitting out shop is the air of hustle and constant activity. Considerable concern is shown on the workers' faces if they come to seek assistance from the foreman in solving a problem. There is obviously a great deal of personal pride in getting things right first time and unaided – a very good sign.

Prototypes and New Components

The present plan aims for a new boat each year; this year it is the Riviera 35, a fast deck saloon sailing cruiser. The procedure is neatly planned and carefully followed through. One building is reserved for prototype work – whether complete new construction or modifications, or the making of test components. The prototype Riviera has been built here, ready for extensive and private trials afloat – probably the most important of these being a live aboard test by senior management – a good sign of their interest and commitment. Any required modifications are made and a second prototype is built, using the resulting production drawings, jigs and templates. This is the final check of all the details – and the drawings – before series production starts. An expensive business but essential if full scale production is to run smoothly. And employees are encouraged to sail, so that they can see at first hand the significance of their tasks.

Commissioning

To speed and simplify final prelaunch fitting out, Westerly recently set up a Fitting Out and Repair facility in Gosport. It consists of a factory unit, large enough to take at least two craft needing repair (there are still more than enough takers as a result of the October '87 storm), a hard standing area for boats awaiting launch (this is to be extended soon) and a newly constructed quay where yachts can lie alongside in a specially dredged pool. Currently water access to the pool is tidal, but it is planned to cut a deeper channel to the main harbour so that access to the quay will be available at any time. Without going overboard with equipment, the four man team can handle the various tasks with impressive ease.

When the storm damaged Westerlys are all repaired, it is planned to use any spare capacity for repairing other boats. This small yard seems to have a bright and profitable future – and no doubt it will grow in size to reflect this.

Quality Control and Lloyd's Register

The commissioning area is the last chance to ensure that everything is correct before the yacht is handed over. Quite rightly, the salesman is the last person to check it is right, before the owner arrives. However, the checking process has been going on throughout building, using a system of which Westerly is justly proud. It is certainly a more comprehensive quality control plan than any other British yard uses. Further, it dovetails with the checks made by the almost resident Lloyd's surveyor and was developed with Lloyd's assistance. It is well known that Westerly have always provided the relevant Lloyd's certificate with a yacht – in years gone by it used to be the Production Certificate, nowadays it is the Hull Construction Certificate.

Brooke-Smith, who set up the brokerage department, continuing a career mainly devoted to boat sales, considers the biggest benefit of early Westerlys compared with other boats of the time, is their dependability when being handled under sail. They are predictable and trustworthy and can be relied upon to do what is required – every time.

25 Years of Quality Boatbuilding

25 years on from 1963 there are over 50 models and well over 11,000 Westerlys bearing witness to the strength of build and loyalty to the marque.

Westerly Yachts' reputation for craftsmanship has made them Britain's premier builders of sailboats – a position which will certainly be retained in the future.

The Westerly Range, in the sequence in which building started

Name	Insignia	LOA	Keel	Draft	Rig	Cockpit	Built	Nos.	Designer	C*	B*	H*	Comments
Westerly 22	W22	22' 3"	Triple	2' 3"	S	aft	63-67	332	Dennis Rayner	1	4	1	
Westerly 25	W25	25'	Triple	2' 6"	S	aft	64-69	180	Dennis Rayner	1	4	1	22 with counter and longer cockpit
Windrush	W	25'	Triple	2' 6"	S	aft	66-68	145	Dennis Rayner	1	4	1	25 with full width coachroof
Nomad	N	22' 3"	Triple	2' 3"	S	aft	67-69	287	Dennis Rayner	1	4	1	22 with full width coachroof
Westerly 30	W30	30' 2"	Triple	3'	S	aft	66-68	39	Dennis Rayner	2	6	1	15 HP diesel fitted as standard
Westerly 28	W28	28' 3"	Fin	4' 4"	S	aft	67-69	40	John Butler	2	6	1	Early ½ tonner
Cirrus	C	22'	Fin	3' 6"	S	aft	68-72	398	John Butler	2	4	1	Yachting World Rally Winner
Nimrod	N	17' 9"	Lift	4'	S	aft	67-71	272	Ian Proctor	1	2	1	
Tiger	T	25'	Fin	4' 3"	S	aft	69-76	284	John Butler	2	6	1	
Pageant	P	23'	Twin	2' 10"	S	aft	69-79	557	Laurent Giles	2	4-5	1	Yachting World Rally Winner
Centaur	CR	26'	Twin	3'	S	aft	69-79	2444	Laurent Giles	2	5-6	1	
Warwick	WK	21' 6"	Twin	2' 9"	S	aft	70-76	207	Laurent Giles	2	4	1	
Jouster	J	21'	Fin/Lift	3' 6"/5' 7"	S	aft	70-75	147	Laurent Giles	2	4	1	JOG Racer
Chieftain	CH	26'	Twin	3'	S	centre	72-76	79	Laurent Giles	3	6	1	Centre cockpit Centaur
Renown	R	31'	Fin	4' 6"	S/K	centre	72-80	272	Laurent Giles	3	6	1	
Longbow	L	31'	Fin	4' 6"	S/K	aft	71-80	259	Laurent Giles	2	6	1	
Pentland	PD	31'	Twin	3' 6"	S/K	centre	73-80	241	Laurent Giles	3	6	1	
Berwick	B	31'	Twin	3' 6"	s/k	aft	74-82	309	Laurent Giles	2	6	1	
Conway	CY	35' 9"	Fin/Twin	6' 4' 6"	S/K	centre	74-83	258	Laurent Giles	2	6	1	
Galway	GY	35' 9"	Twin	4' 6"	S/K	aft	75-78	12	Laurent Giles	2	6	1	
Solway	SY	35' 9"	Twin	4' 6"	S/K	centre	75-78	55	Laurent Giles	2	6	1	
Medway	MY	35' 9"	Fin	6'	S/K	aft	76-78	26	Laurent Giles	2	6	1	
Pembroke	PB	26'	Fin	4' 3"	S	aft	76-79	97	Laurent Giles	2	5-6	1	Fin keel Centaur
GK 24	GK24	24'	Fin	5' 4' 1"	S	aft	76-81	320	Chris Hawkins	2	4-5	1	¼ ton club or flat out racer
Westerly 21	W21	21' 6"	Twin	2' 9"	S	aft	77-79	55	Laurent Giles	2	4	1	
Kendal	K	23'	Fin	4'	S	aft	77-79		Laurent Giles	2	4	1	Fin Pageant, build numbers included with Pageant
Westerly 33	W33	33' 3"	Fin/Twin	5' 5"/4' 4"	S/K	centre	77-79	378	Laurent Giles	3	7	1	Numbers include 33s and Discus
Westerly 35	W35	35' 9"	Fin	6'	S	aft	78		Laurent Giles	2	6	1	See Medway
GK 29	GK29	29'	Fin	5' 8"/5' 1"	S	aft	78-81	182	Mike Pocock	2	5-6	1	½ ton club or flat out racer
GK 34	GK34	34'	Fin	6' 7"	S	aft	80-81	21	Ed Dubois	2	7	1	¾ ton club or flat out racer
J24	J24	24'	Fin	4'	S	aft	78-82	334	Rod Johnstone	1	4	1	OOD Racer
J30	J30	29' 9"	Fin	5' 3"	S	aft	79-80	9	Rod Johnstone	2	6	1	OOD Racer Cruiser
Griffon I	W26	26'	F/Tw/L	4' 9"/3' 3"	S	aft	79-81	446	Ed Dubois	2	6	1	Numbers include all Griffons
Konsort	KT	28' 9"	F/Tw/L	5' 4"/3' 3"	S	aft	79-	660+	Laurent Giles	2	6	1	
Fulmar	FR	32'	F/Tw/L	5' 3"/4'	S	aft	80-	500+	Ed Dubois	2	6-7	1	Some early boats had a quarter cabin
Discus	DS	33' 3"	Fin/Twin	5' 5"/4' 4"	S/K	aft/centre	80-84		Laurent Giles	3	7	1	See Westerly 33
Vulcan	VN	24'	Fin/Twin	5' 4' 3"	S	aft	80-84	45	Laurent Giles	4	7-8	1	Motor sailer with deck saloon
Griffon II	GN	26'	F/Tw/L	4' 9"/3' 3"	S	aft	82-84		Ed Dubois	2	6	1	See Griffon I
Corsair	CS	35' 9"	Fin	4' 11"	S/K	centre	83-86	140+	Ed Dubois	3	8	1-2	Numbers include Corsair IIs
Sealord	SD	38' 6"	Fin	5' 6"	S/K	centre	83-87	52	Ed Dubois	3	9	2	
Seahawk	SK	33' 8"	Fin/Twin	5' 4'	S/K	centre	84-	120+	Ed Dubois	3	7	1	
Merlin	MN	27' 1"	Fin/Twin	5' 3' 4"	S	aft	84-87	122	Ed Dubois	3	7	1	
Griffon Club	GN	26'	F/Tw/L	4' 9"/3' 3"	S	aft	85-87		Ed Dubois	2	6	1	Longer windows & improvements below decks. See Griffon I
Konsort Duo	KD	28' 9"	Twin	3' 3"	S	aft	85-	100+	Laurent Giles	2	5	1	Konsort with deck saloon
Falcon	FN	33' 8"	Fin/Twin	5' 4'	S/K	aft	85-	70+	Ed Dubois	3	6-7	2	Aft cockpit layout on Seahawk hull
Storm	SM	33' 2"	Fin	5' 6"	S	aft	86-	100+	Ed Dubois	3	7	1	
Tempest	TT	30' 7"	Fin/Twin	5' 3' 9"	S	aft	87-	50+	Ed Dubois	3	7	1	
Corsair II	CS	35' 9"	Fin	4' 11"	S	centre	87-		Ed Dubois	3	8	2	See Corsair
Oceanlord	OD	40' 6"	Fin	5' 6"	S	centre	87-	30+	Ed Dubois	4	8	2	
Riviera 35	RA	34' 7"	Fin/Twin	4' 8"/4' 1"	S	aft	88-		Ed Dubois	3	6	1-2	

*C = Cabins. B = Berths. H = Heads.

Booker-Smith, who says the company is mainly devoted to boat sales, considers the biggest benefit of early Western Yachts in the sequence in which building started with being able to order under sail. They said production can be relied upon to be every time.

25 years of Quarter Boatbuilding

Over the years, the company has built over 1,000 boats, and the strength of the build is a key to the success of the company.

Western Yachts' reputation for craftsmanship has made them Britain's premier builder of quality boats, which is certainly reflected in the quality of their work.

Boat Name	Year	Length	Beam	Displacement	Engine	Price
1. 1964	1964	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
2. 1965	1965	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
3. 1966	1966	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
4. 1967	1967	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
5. 1968	1968	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
6. 1969	1969	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
7. 1970	1970	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
8. 1971	1971	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
9. 1972	1972	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
10. 1973	1973	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
11. 1974	1974	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
12. 1975	1975	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
13. 1976	1976	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
14. 1977	1977	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
15. 1978	1978	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
16. 1979	1979	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
17. 1980	1980	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
18. 1981	1981	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
19. 1982	1982	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
20. 1983	1983	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
21. 1984	1984	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
22. 1985	1985	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
23. 1986	1986	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
24. 1987	1987	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
25. 1988	1988	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
26. 1989	1989	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
27. 1990	1990	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
28. 1991	1991	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
29. 1992	1992	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
30. 1993	1993	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
31. 1994	1994	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
32. 1995	1995	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
33. 1996	1996	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
34. 1997	1997	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
35. 1998	1998	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
36. 1999	1999	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
37. 2000	2000	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
38. 2001	2001	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
39. 2002	2002	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
40. 2003	2003	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
41. 2004	2004	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
42. 2005	2005	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
43. 2006	2006	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
44. 2007	2007	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
45. 2008	2008	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
46. 2009	2009	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
47. 2010	2010	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
48. 2011	2011	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
49. 2012	2012	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
50. 2013	2013	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
51. 2014	2014	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
52. 2015	2015	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
53. 2016	2016	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
54. 2017	2017	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
55. 2018	2018	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
56. 2019	2019	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
57. 2020	2020	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
58. 2021	2021	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
59. 2022	2022	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
60. 2023	2023	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
61. 2024	2024	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
62. 2025	2025	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
63. 2026	2026	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
64. 2027	2027	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
65. 2028	2028	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
66. 2029	2029	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
67. 2030	2030	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
68. 2031	2031	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
69. 2032	2032	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
70. 2033	2033	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
71. 2034	2034	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
72. 2035	2035	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
73. 2036	2036	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
74. 2037	2037	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
75. 2038	2038	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
76. 2039	2039	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
77. 2040	2040	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
78. 2041	2041	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
79. 2042	2042	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
80. 2043	2043	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
81. 2044	2044	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
82. 2045	2045	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
83. 2046	2046	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
84. 2047	2047	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
85. 2048	2048	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
86. 2049	2049	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
87. 2050	2050	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
88. 2051	2051	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
89. 2052	2052	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
90. 2053	2053	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
91. 2054	2054	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
92. 2055	2055	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
93. 2056	2056	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
94. 2057	2057	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
95. 2058	2058	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
96. 2059	2059	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
97. 2060	2060	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
98. 2061	2061	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
99. 2062	2062	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200
100. 2063	2063	12.0	3.5	1,200	15hp	£1,200