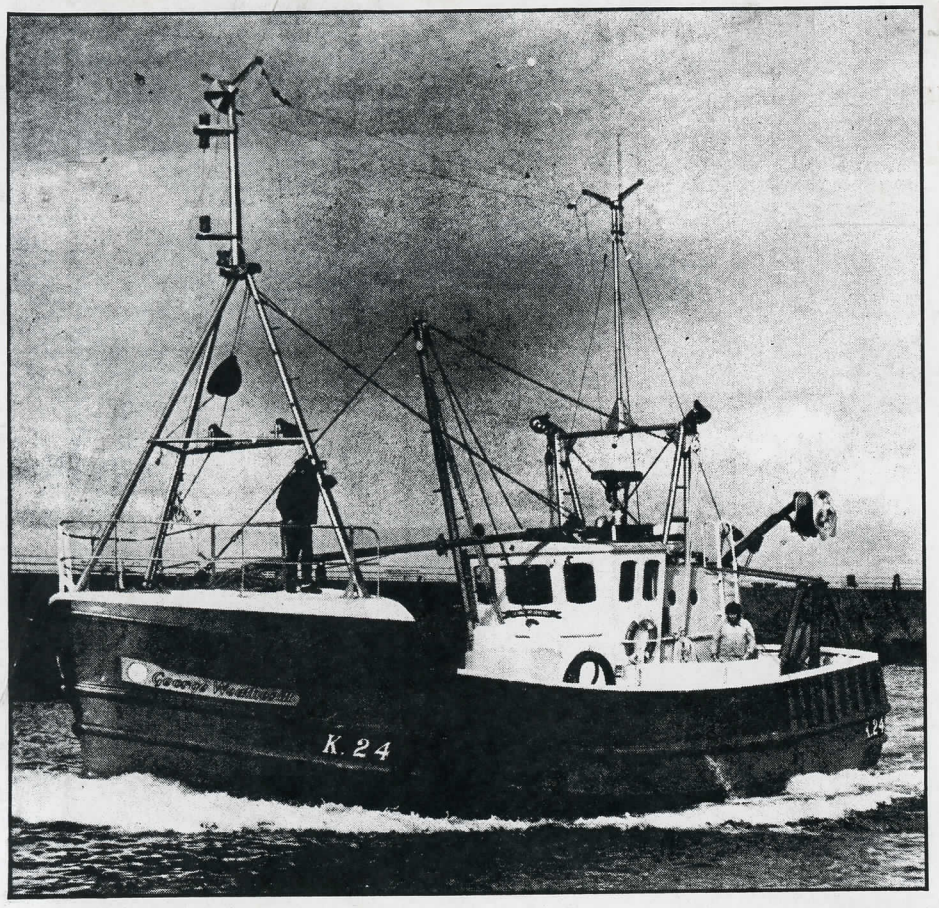
GRP seiner-trawler —no repairs needed after two accidents



The 54 ft. seiner-trawler "George Weatherill." After four years in operation, she is justifying her owner's faith in GRP's 'superiority' as a boatbuilding material.

IT IS NOW almost four years since the 54 ft. (16.5 metre) *George Weatherill*—the largest GRP fishing boat in the British fleet—began fishing from the North Yorkshire port of Whitby.

She was built to the order of businessman Mr. C. E. Jarman, who said he had a feeling that GRP was the right material for a fishing boat.

Skipper Ian Britton commands the vessel, which has spent most of her time trawling for white fish, but last winter she had a very successful few weeks on sprats.

The transom sterned *George Weatherill* was designed by G. L. Watson and Co. with a beam of 18 ft., and her GRP hull, deck, deckhouse and whaleback were moulded in Orkney by Halmatic (Scotland) Ltd.

She is of traditional British seiner-trawler layout, with the deckhouse aft, and is powered by a Kelvin 240 hp engine.

Recently, our associate newspaper *Fishing News* asked Mr. Jarman and Skipper Britton what they felt about the suitability of GRP as a construction material, after almost four years of experience with their boat.

Mr. Jarman said that, without any doubt, he preferred GRP to wood and steel. He is absolutely convinced about the superiority of the material in terms of maintenance.

Once a year the boat is beached to be cleaned and repainted with anti-fouling below the waterline; the crew are able to do this themselves. Otherwise, the GRP needs no repainting.

Apart from beaching the boat to inspect the anodes, he was quite happy to leave her in the water for a year at a time.

It is now two years since the *George Weatherill* was put on a slipway and, then, shipwrights had said she needed no work done.

Small scratches on the gel coat of the hull's topsides, caused by knocks from other boats or quaysides, are "negligible", said Mr. Jarman. A local GRP firm had said that these are too small to be regarded as damage.

The GRP has proved very strong: no repairs were needed after the vessel was involved in two accidents.

On one occasion she ran into a drifting wooden trawler at the entrance to Whitby harbour. Skipper Britton saw the vessel too late to do anything but throw the engine out of gear. The *George Weatherill* was undamaged.

During last winter's sprat season, she was leaned on by a larger wooden boat at low water in Scarborough harbour. When they refloated, the boats sprang apart and debris flew in all directions.

This was found to have all come from the wooden boat, which had to have several planks replaced.

Another advantage of GRP is that it is a good insulator. One fish buyer claimed that the quality of the fish from the *George Weatherill* was often better than that from other boats.

Mr. Jarman said there had been some problems, but they were being overcome.

Leaks have developed around fastenings in the hull. These are fitting-out faults rather than the GRP itself.

More care should have been taken to ensure that all bolts passing through the hull and deck were absolutely watertight, he said, because unlike wood the GRP does not tighten itself around fastenings.

The GRP has also been found to be too flexible in places where loads are applied, such as eye bolts on the front of the deckhouse. This has been rectified by fitting steel or GRP stiffeners.

Mr. Jarman added that, although the boat cost more to build than a similar boat in wood or steel, the venture had paid off. If he wanted to build another boat he would have no hesitation in going for GRP.

Skipper Britton has some reservations about the use of GRP. He said the leaks around the fastenings had been a problem and the GRP deck was far too slippery, despite non-slip paint.

He thought the faults may have arisen because the fitting-out yard was not fully experienced in fishing vessel construction.

Skipper Britton also feels that the hull is too flexible in stress-bearing areas such as around the trawl gallows.

But he is delighted with the boat's fishing ability and seakeeping qualities.

He has sailed on all classes of vessel, from inshore to deepsea, and finds the *George Weatherill* the best sea boat of them all—even in the foulest of weather.

Her towing and carrying abilities are also excellent □