



BOAT REPORT STEVEN'S 1140

Given their sturdy construction and low air draught, the Dutch-built Stevens range are obvious river boats. But what would a trip out of the Thames Estuary to Ipswich reveal?

STEEL displacement cruisers from the Stevens yard at Drachten in the Netherlands have been offered in the UK via agents Boat Showrooms of London since the late 1980s, with a steady number of this relatively low-volume manufacturer's products sold.

The hulls of the 1140 and shorter 1040 models first saw the light of day as the 37.5 and 34 respectively, but an almost continuous development programme made possible by traditional Dutch construction techniques has allowed modifications to the superstructure styling, gunwale height and interior fit-out without recourse to expensive re-engineering.

Design

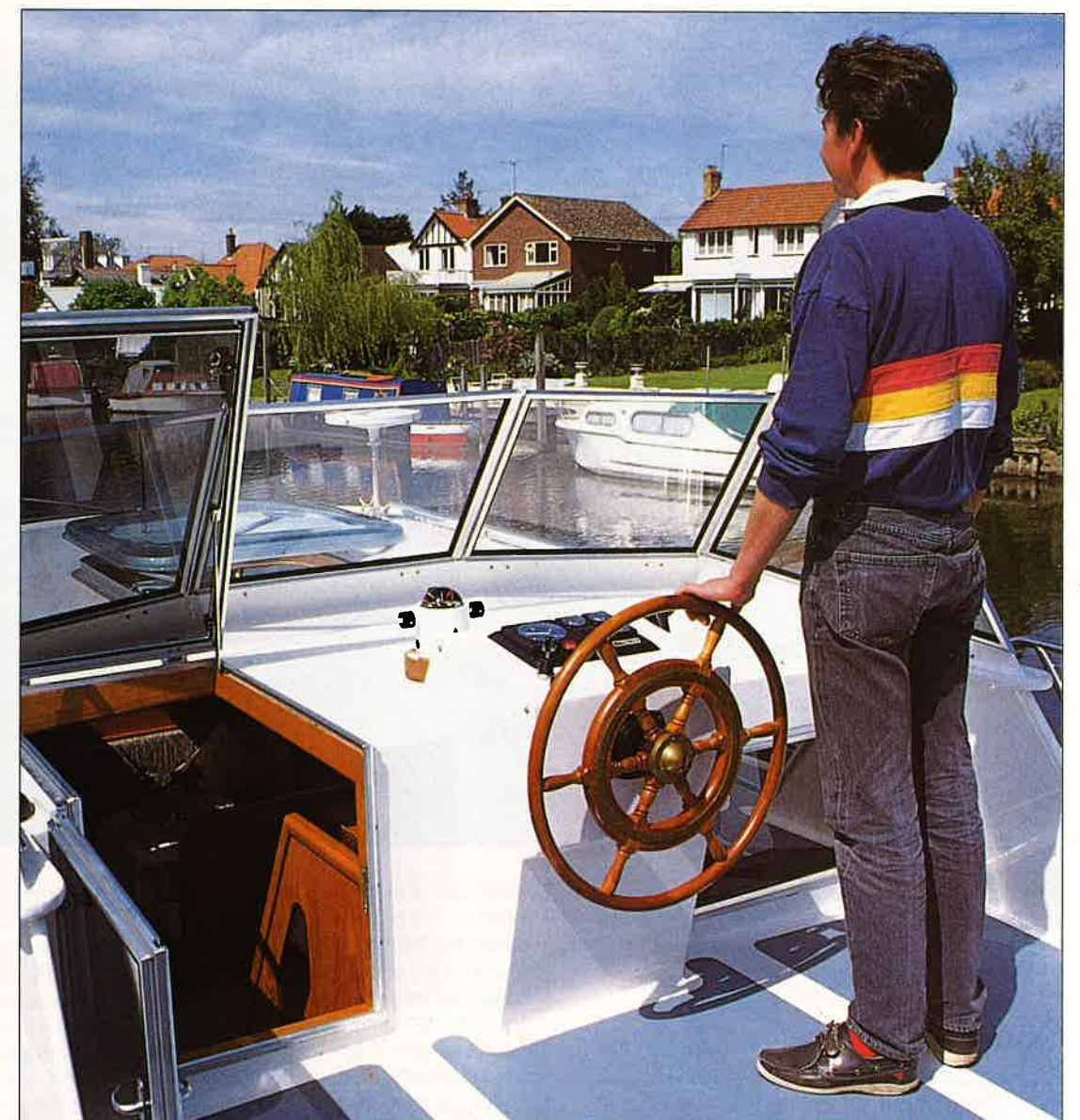
The vast majority of steel displacement cruisers are constructed with a single hard chine, making the manufacturing process relatively easy. The 1140 is no exception and the nominal vee that

results in this case is 19.5° at amidships and 10° at the transom.

Single or twin engine installations are offered, both allowing for a good depth and length of box keel to house the propshafts. A 'shoe' extension to the keel is used to give a landing for the bottom of the sizable rudder and further protection to the stern gear. With a twin installation the keels allow the 1140 to take the ground, while actual bilge keels can be welded to the hull if required in the case of a single engine.

Exhaust boxes run externally down the topsides at waterline level, while at the transom a number of different bathing platform configurations are offered: either a straightforward teak platform or a full box extension to the hull in steel, the interior of which can be employed as a holding tank.

Hull plating is 5mm, dropping to 4mm for the superstructure, with frames every 45cm (18in). Pre-shotblasted steel is used, with local



Above: teak joinery makes the saloon light, warm and inviting. There is full headroom if you are standing up, and a good view if you are sitting down. Left: on our test boat, the double berth in the aft cabin was fully offset. Above right: the raised aft deck is large but devoid of fixed seating. Right: the well-equipped galley and convertible dinette are down a couple of steps forward of the upper wheelhouse, but fully open to the saloon area.





shotblasting to clean weld areas after construction. The finish is a Sikkens single-pot epoxy paint system, with International Interguard employed below the waterline.

Exterior

Hop aboard virtually any steel boat and it immediately imparts a feeling of solidness and security. The Stevens 1140 is no exception.

Breaks in the stainless steel guardrails to the lower run of 15in (38cm) wide sidedecks allow for easy access, the rails themselves topping a 5in (13cm) high mini-bulwark while the coachroof top is provided with handrails.

There is a decent-sized working area forward, with a manual Vetus windlass to handle the standard Danforth-type anchor, stowed in a bow roller, and chain. The latter's locker is of a useful size, but would benefit from segmentation to allow the stowing of warps and fenders without fear of them fouling the chain.

The foredeck is also equipped with a pair of 9in (23cm) high stainless steel bollards, with adjacent closed fairleads in the bulwarks. The aft deck sports a similar pair, with stainless steel protection on the deck edges. Springs are handled by a pair of 8in (20cm) bar cleats welded out of harm's way atop the bulwark amidships.

Back aft, the large raised deck area is completely devoid of seating. This is most easily rectified by specifying a couple of deck boxes, which would also considerably augment the minimal exterior stowage; a large gas-bottle locker capable of handling 7kg cylinders is the only other built-in stowage.

The central helm has full engine instrumentation and a welcoming, decent-sized wood wheel (in common with the interior helm).

Apart from the joystick for the optional bow thruster, it is bare of any ready-use switches or additional instrumentation. Whilst there is plenty of room on the adjacent coachroof, the amount of actual console space for retrofit items of equipment is limited.

The screen is a reasonable height, and is easily folded to reduce air draught to under 8ft (2.4m), a good figure for a boat of this length. The optional stainless steel mast hoop is also fashioned to hinge out the way.

The main access to the saloon is through a good-sized hatch and half-door from the aft deck, while a useful, if expensive and rather cumbersome, option is a large sliding window adjacent to the interior helm, which can obviously double as a further access for those who are on the nimble side.

A small set of davits are supplied as standard, and all deck areas are finished with an excellent non-slip paint finish.

Interior

The 1140 has a full-headheight, well proportioned and appointed interior allowing up to six (seven at a pinch) to cruise in privacy and comfort. There are double cabins to bow and stern, and a dinette-cum-double amidships, leaving the main saloon unless absolutely required as a single.

With its L-settee to starboard, the saloon is light and inviting, warmly set off, as is the rest of the accommodation, by a solid fit-out finished in teak joinery. The side windows are low enough to provide a view for those on the settee, with extra light and ventilation provided by an overhead opening skylight. For further ventilation, the centre portion of the main windscreen also opens, and we were pleased to see all three

Above: wide side decks and stainless steel guardrails all around help to convey a feeling of security to all aboard. Our test-cum-delivery trip started on the Thames but took us up the east coast to Ipswich. Below right: in single-engine installations the powerplant is to be found under plywood hatches in the saloon sole, and additionally cocooned within an insulated box.

sections of screen cleared by its own pantograph wiper.

Adjacent to the settee is a drinks cupboard with provision for stowage underneath, while the length of the port side is fitted with a run of cupboards complete with fiddled shelves. All storage areas were wood-lined, which was good to see, although a touch of varnish would have finished them off nicely.

The helmsman has his own free-standing adjustable high-chair. This is perfectly comfortable but, due to its height, a footrest is required but not fitted.

The helm layout is simple and adequate, with the engine instrumentation right in front of the vertical wheel taking up most of the space, and a rather more angled area of fascia behind with room for a basic fused ready-use switch panel and some additional instrumentation. A more thoughtful layout might have allowed the space in front of the wheel to be left clear for a folded chart or pilot book.

Visibility from here is not bad, certainly ahead and to the sides, but could be improved astern by the simple expediency of changing the solid dodgers mounted within the aft-deck guardrail to clear vinyl. Stevens have already gone to the trouble of providing glass panels to the actual superstructure and door access, so clear dodgers would seem sensible.

Down a couple of steps, but still fully open to the main upper wheelhouse area, are the galley and dinette.

The former is well equipped both for storing and preparing victuals, although the gas oven/grill on our test boat was an option, a built-in hob only is supplied as standard. The good-sized fridge has a small freezer compartment and runs on gas, on the boat's batteries or on 240V, a mains ring being supplied.

Hot water comes courtesy of a gas-fired instantaneous heater, which is mounted in the galley but also feeds the toilet/shower faucets.

Opposite the galley is a dinette, capable of seating six at a squeeze, which converts into a 3ft 9in x 6ft 1in (1.14m x 1.87m) double berth. Lockers beneath the seat-bases are copious enough to take bedding, while clothes storage for anyone sleeping here is thoughtfully provided — albeit at the other end of the saloon — by an extra large three-quarter-height hanging locker.

The forecabin vee-berths and these are of such generous proportions, especially at the foot, that they can comfortably be earmarked as singles rather than necessitating the use of the infill. For that extra touch of privacy, there are even separate hanging lockers. Further stowage is provided beneath the bunk-bases, although we found a portion of this was bordered off to take the bow thruster unit. Ventilation is via a



Stevens 1140

Engine: single Sabre 135L, 135bhp at 2600rpm, 6cyl, 6220cc.

Conditions: wind N Force 3, sea calm. **Load:** fuel 100%, water 75%, crew 2.

rpm	knots	gph	lph	mpg	range	trim	sound levels dB(A)			
							saloon	aftcab	fwdcab	aftdk
1000	5.0	—	—	—	—	—	64	61	57	63
1400	5.8	0.9	4	6.44	709	—	71	66	65	67
1800	6.8	1.5	7	4.53	499	—	70	75	67	71
2000	7.5	2.8	13	2.68	295	—	75	81	70	73
2200	7.8	4.1	19	1.90	209	—	75	84	72	74
2500	8.1	5.5	25	1.47	162	—	77	88	77	74

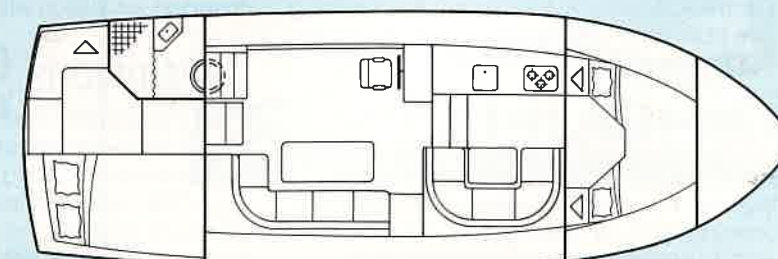
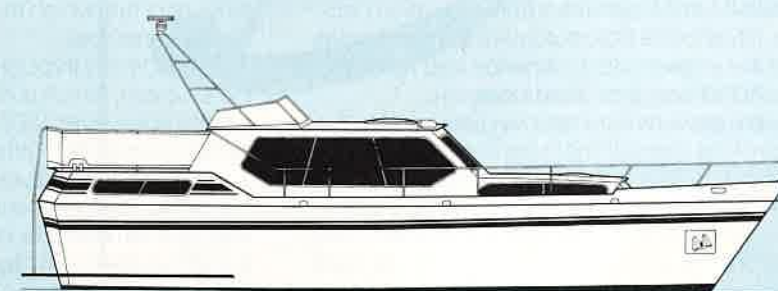
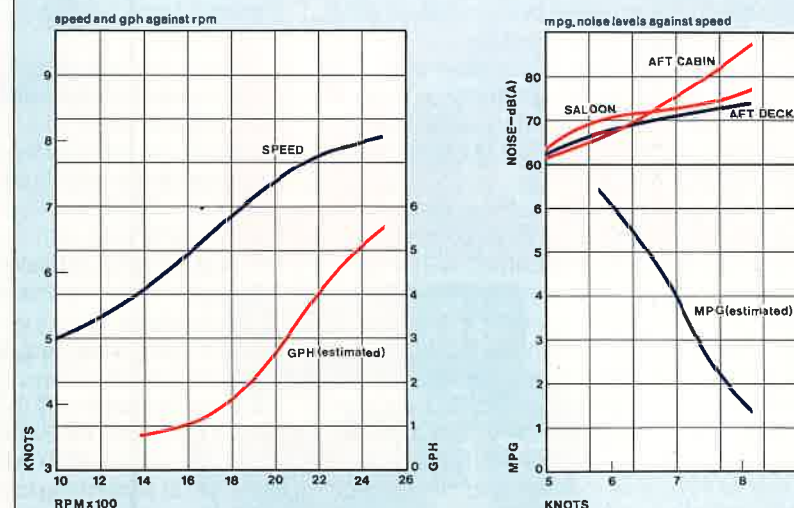
Acceleration: not measured.

Loa	37ft 5in (11.4m)	Air draught	7ft 9in (2.4m)
Hull length	36ft 4in (11.1m)	Displacement	10.5 tonnes
Beam	11ft 6in (3.5m)	Fuel	110gal (500lt)
Draught	3ft 6in (1.2m)	Water	77gal (350lt)

Price: £74,787 ex VAT from the yard with single 62hp Volvo. £77,925 as tested but with standard inventory. £84,216 as tested.

Builders: Scheepswerf De Steven BV, De Steven 26-9206 AX, Drachten, Netherlands. Tel: (31) 5120 12669.

Suppliers: Boat Showrooms of London, Shepperton Marina, Felix Lane, Shepperton, Middlesex TW17 8NJ. Tel: 0932 243722.



central opening window.

Back aft, the master cabin is available in either of two layouts: with the fully-offset double (as on our test boat) where the toilet is entered via the saloon, or with an angled double so that the facilities become en-suite to this cabin alone.

The area beneath the 4ft 3in x 6ft 10in (1.3m x 2.1m) bed is given over to bulk stowage and faces straight onto the hull. There is also access to the steering gear from here, as well as a weed hatch—one option not fitted to our example. Clothes storage is provided by two adequate three-quarter-height lockers, one given over to hanging and the other fitted with shelves.

Adjacent to this cabin is the good-sized part-tiled toilet compartment, complete with separate shower cubicle. Again there is plenty of dry toilet storage as well as space for bulkier items. A sliding window provides ventilation, although the clear glass used means that a curtain has been deemed necessary in the shower to give some privacy from the outside world. Frosted glass would be a better solution.

Engines

A comprehensive range of engine options is offered to suit whatever cruising grounds are envisaged, inland or estuary and coastal. Even the river-orientated owner can opt for a sensible twin installation, the smallest being a pair of Volvo Penta MD31s rated at 62hp apiece.

A single MD31 is offered at the lower end of the range, and further single installations run up to a six-cylinder 135hp Sabre Lehman, as tested here. The 100hp Volvo Penta TMD31 is the most potent option in the twin line-up.

In the normal way, access to the engine beneath the saloon sole is via three plywood hatches under the loose-laid carpet, with only one needing to be lifted for a quick inspection. However, to limit the noise cavern created by single installations, in an otherwise commodious compartment, an additional insulated box has sensibly been built around the engine; the top of this uncatches for day-to-day service purposes, and the sides for complete access, but this does mean that all three sole hatches and their bearers have to be lifted for a look at the engine.

Multi-layer barrier/absorbent insulation has been fitted to this box, complete with vent holes, while the engineroom bulkheads and hatches are covered with eggbox-style foam.

Water tanks (with cross-over) are set into the wings of the compartment behind false bulkheads. Apart from a pair of strongly constructed battery boxes and a large electric bilge pump there are few ancillaries down here.

On our first encounter with the 1140, we were surprised to find there was no water/fuel separator in the line to the lift pump, just a stop-cock from the tank at the forward end of the compartment. This serious omission is something we have seen on at least one other Stevens built to NRA (Thames) specifications, although the correct solution would have been to have fitted a proper pre-filter system with a fireproof bowl complying with the regulations. Otherwise the installation appeared satisfactory, and further attention has been paid to reducing noise levels by accommodating a Vetus muffler in the exhaust line, and an optional Aquadrive flexible shaft coupling was also evident.

Performance and handling

To satisfy ourselves that the 1140 was equally capable on the mix of inland and coastal waters that its versatile form should allow, we planned an easy two-day jaunt from Boat Showrooms' base at Shepperton on the Thames to the East Coast Boat Show at Ipswich. This would give us an opportunity to assess its power, ability and comfort as a sea boat, as well as the hull and engine's capability for placid lockwork and low-speed meandering.

Our skipper for the trip was John Puddifoot from the Thames Navigation School, who themselves run a single-engined Kempers Kotter, which made him well placed to deliver an opinion or two.

Our departure was delayed by 24 hours, not so much because John objected to the near gale-force winds as because the rain was horizontal and we preferred to stay dry.

Still with plenty of wind but without the wet accompaniments, we set off at 0930 the following day. Whilst there was little else moving under power to hold us up, we were beset by any number of men and women in oar-propelled craft, and it was while waiting for these to sort themselves out that we had our best chance to use the bow thruster in earnest, straightening up on finger-tip control when the bow paid off with the wind. Lazy, perhaps, but if you've got it fitted, why not use it?

Having the locks pretty much to ourselves, we could always go starboard side-to, allowing paddlewheel effect when going astern to turn us alongside, so the bow thruster was useful only to help push the bow out upon departure.

An even 1000rpm produced a comfortable 5-knot river speed, although dropping back to idle at around 700rpm still gave responsive steerage. Straight-line stability was good, and the hydraulic steering light enough to finger-wind plenty of helm when required.

Moving into the tideway, we completed our test runs. Suffice to say that, unless plugging the tide, 2000rpm on the Sabre 135 gave the best all-round performance, maintaining a useful 7.5 knots at something less than 3gph (13lph) without needlessly burning the disproportionate amount of fuel which the extra half-knot top speed consumes.

Sound levels throughout were good except in the aft cabin, which suffered from vibration and related noise over 1800rpm. This was almost certainly propeller- rather than engine-induced.

When we came abreast of the Crouch at the foot of the Thames, John decided to hole up for the night. An early departure to catch the tide for a push up the coast saw us running through untidy seas but with a commendably easy motion. Heavy spray kept the crew below decks, but the skylight and open aft-deck access provided ventilation within the saloon.

Conclusions

The 1140 is a tidily-finished and roomy river cruiser which can assuredly undertake coastal sorties to fresh cruising grounds, provided a better filter system is fitted. We can level criticisms here and there, but nothing fundamental which detracts from a sturdily fashioned yet comfortable package.

Next month

We test the new popular Fairline pair, the 28 Targa and the 33, plus In Brief reports on the Fletcher 180, Grand Banks 42, Lochin 38 Fast Fisherman and Boornstream 42.