

RATLINES – JANUARY 2025

The official newsletter of the
Wooden Boat Association of Cairns, Inc.
ABN 56 194 994 249

Welcome to the first edition of *Ratlines* for 2025

Membership renewal

Thanks to everyone who has renewed their membership for 2025. Anyone else planning to renew, please do so as soon as possible to continue receiving *Ratlines* and the other benefits of WBAC membership.

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Boatbuilding Projects

Bitaki Taari

Suddenly, it feels like there is a light at the end of the tunnel, and it is not a train! After several weeks of sanding, shaping and painting bits of wood and stainless steel, all the bits are coming together. Keven and Roger have fitted the hinges for the outrigger beams, after some confusion as neither could remember what they had done before Christmas!! The outrigger pivots were also fitted, more confusion. Roger has bought lots of very expensive string to tie all the bits together. This will hide some of the stainless-steel brackets and bolts that are actually holding them together! Now to see if the outriggers will swing back as designed. If not, Roger will not be a happy chappie!!

With Sheila giving the foredeck a final topcoat of paint, all the hatches, and fittings can be installed. The bamboo boom and gaff have been smoothed, sanded and sealed, and the end pieces and jaws are being made. Starting to think seriously about sails and rigging. The internal fit-out will be left until after launch to see how things work out before committing to a final layout.



PROJECT SCOOP: Reflections on an in-house innovative design

From Richard – the client and builder’s assistant

“Why Scoop? To scoop up the ancient mariners with challenged mobility from the Lake after a wooden boat mishap, and to provide easy access for the grandchildren to enter and exit the water.

“Scoop was inspired by an inflatable catamaran landing craft from NZ and a conversation with Chris and other members of the club, with a suggestion that we could make a superior wooden craft to meet the requirements of our mature members and their grandchildren.

“The challenge was enthusiastically embraced by Chris as this would require a great deal of design and special construction that would use many of the special skills Chris has acquired over his working life. The project also offers a huge learning curve to those of us who work as Chris’s offsidiers.

“The design will have to meet many challenges such as easy access and exit, a very stable platform, a sporty feel as it zooms around the Lake, protection from the sun, room for at least three people and safe for grandchildren.”

From Chris – the designer and builder

“A design cobbled together using my boat design skills from 60 or so years ago. I thought I'd have to delve back in time to refresh what I used to be quite good at, but as it turned out design is like riding a bike and the skills were still there. Thank the gods!

We think the design has captured all of Richard’s requirements. And no, we're not going to show the design on the internet as some lowlife will copy it straight away. What we will show however, is week by week updates of the build.

We dragged our steel building jig (that was originally made for Roger's 15' Canadian Canoe build) out of the wilderness and prepared it for Project Scoop. We installed a 2400 X 600mm base sheet on the jig with strongbacks set at frame stations beneath and some 300mm packing strips on the strongbacks



Yes, we know it looks like a jig for Santa's sleigh, but it isn't. Or at least it isn't until we can find a market for sleighs in Oz (which is unlikely given the current climate change discussions around the traps).

The first structure assembled on the base was the laminated floor which will form the main strength member of the boat.



Many calculations have been done on the amount of buoyancy/volume of flotation in each lower pontoon, which has resulted in a change in their size & shape. That of course means a change to the design, and that means a complete redraft of the lines plan.

Then comes the discussion regarding hull sheeting, should it be plywood or should we step up the specs and strip plank her? We shall see!

Chris's Mekong

She's been languishing for another period due to Chris's myriad other projects, but all her double diagonal planking has been completed and sanded externally, as can be seen in the two photos below.



Wayne's Mushy

Mushy has been moved to a temporary awning-covered work bay, where Tom has been sanding, filling and sanding again in preparation for painting to begin.



Library Donation

Roger reports.....

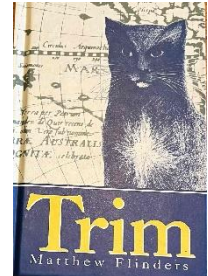
Older members will remember Bill Salmon, and those of us who are newer members will know that when Bill passed away, Margaret, his widow, donated his final boatbuilding project, plans and wood to the club. This project was completed by the club and is now *Iona*, Tom and Sheila's boat.

Recently I was contacted by Margaret's nephew, as Margaret has had to go into a home, and asked to collect as much of Bill's library as we considered would be relevant to the club.

I contacted Glen, who knew Bill and Margaret well, and we arranged to go around, with plenty of boxes. Bill's nautical library was extensive, and we would have needed another clubhouse to house it all, so Glen and I sorted out any books we thought relevant and/or we did not already have. Several boxes later, they are in the clubhouse and it is now down to our worthy librarian to catalogue and put them on the shelves.



Bill's book collection covers a vast range of nautical topics, including boat design, construction, rigging, ocean cruising, adventurous voyages, navigation and a beautifully illustrated 10-volume set on the history of the ship. The collection also includes two tiny books that hint at Bill's passions beyond boats: *Golden Thoughts* – a selection of quotes from American naturalist, poet and philosopher Henry Thoreau, and *Trim* – the biography of legendary navigator Matthew Flinders' cat.

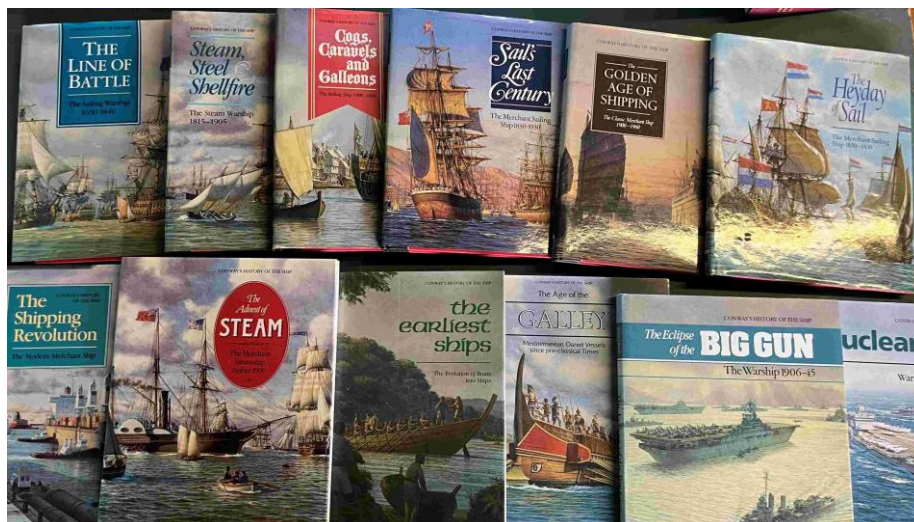


As an aside, we were also asked to go through Bill's workshop, where Glen spotted the item below. Glen knew what it was, I didn't. I can only say that it is very heavy and took two of us to load it into the back of the wagon. Hint: It's 330 mm x 330 x 10 mm and made of cast steel.

What it is, will be revealed in the next Ratlines! Suggestions can be sent to the Club email address, but there are no prizes. No Googling!



This donation was a win for everyone as Margaret wished for the club to have the books and anything left in the workshop, and we are grateful to be the recipients. Once again, thank you to the Salmon family.



THE BIG MOVE

Roger reports.....

Following a recent virtual meeting with the Ports North coordinator and project manager of the WBAC move, I can confirm that, yes, it is going ahead and that they have agreed to our concept of the concrete slab, the big shed and the containers under it. The time frames are quite rapid as they expect us to move in at the end of June 2025. For that month we will not be able to do our usual boat work.

There are still a few things to sort out and agree on, but overall, we have got what we asked for and work is underway preparing the new site for our premises across the road. Good news!



Ballad of the Big Move¹

There was movement at the clubhouse, for the word had
got around
That we're moving all our stuff across the road.
The ancient mariners gathered, their debates began to
sound,
With wisdom clashing under heavy load.

For the library was bulging, filled with books and
magazines,
Four hundred tomes and three hundred mags to clear.
The ship containers loomed like shipwrecks on the
scene,
And the tools—oh, so many!—caused despair.

The President, old Roger, with a twinkle in his eye,
Said, "We'll manage this with courage and with grit.
Though it's chaos now, my mates, we'll be done by July,
For a challenge such as this—we're made for it!"

But Chris, the vice, was dubious, and muttered in his
beard,
"The mess is more than Roger seems to know.
The good stuff from the rubbish—it's worse than I had
feared!
And the timing? Well, it's moving far too slow."

The members grumbled softly as they sorted through the
trash,
A century of treasures on the floor.
Broken planks and rusted nails they piled up in a stash,
While the tools they'd lost for years reappeared once
more.

There were oars and masts and rudders, there were half-
finished repairs,
And a dinghy that nobody could claim.
Arguments broke out as to what should stay or where,
While each mariner defended their own name.

"Now, stack the good wood here," growled Chris, with
furrowed brow,
"We'll keep the teak and pitch the rest aside!"
But Roger called, "No throwing! That could serve us yet
somehow—
A proper shipwright keeps his options wide!"

The moving day drew closer, and the chaos reached its
peak,
The four containers loaded to the brim.
Sweat poured from every sailor, and the future looked so
bleak,
But the team refused to let their spirit dim.

At last, the clubhouse emptied, its old walls left bare and
cold,
And across the road, the new site waited wide.
With sighs of grim relief, they hauled their precious
hoards of old,
To rebuild their wooden kingdom with great pride.

The library was shelved again; the tools were put in
place,
The dinghy claimed a corner of its own.
Though battles had been fought, and every soul had lost
some grace,
A home had risen where the new breeze blown.

So, let the tale be told of Roger, Chris, and all the crew,
Who moved their floating dreams to firmer ground.
For though their tempers flared, and ancient wisdom
often flew,
The Wooden Boat Club's spirit still is sound.

¹ With apologies to Bajo Paterson, and acknowledgment of ChatGTP – Open AI

From our Tasmanian correspondent – Marc Richards, member and former President of WBAC

Extract from the Programme of the 2025 Australian Wooden Boat Festival:

UNVEILING THE INCAT FLOATING STAGE

We're excited to unveil INCAT's floating stage, debuting at the 2025 Festival! This innovative entertainment pontoon, designed by Festival volunteer Marc Richards and crafted as part of INCAT's College of Aluminium trainee program, has been made possible with generous support from INCAT along with Boss Polymer, Sunbrella, 42 South Marine, Kedge Marine, and Spectrum Engineering. Get ready for a memorable entertainment experience on the water!

Te Uiria



Built in 1896 by the storied Bailey Brothers in Auckland, *Te Uira* was one of the first racing yachts to be exported to the thriving colony of Victoria, Australia. One hundred twenty-eight years later, *Te Uira* has been returned to her former glory after a faithful restoration by Cygnet Wooden Boats, utilising a lucky cache of locally stored kauri, which rivals Huon pine as a boatbuilding timber.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE PICNIC TABLES GONE?

Dermot reports on the (modestly attended) first lake outing for 2025

After days of heavy rain thanks to a lurking low-pressure system, it was not surprising that most of the lake regulars opted to stay at home. As a result, it was a modest fleet consisting of Mark's tender and my *Joule* that turned up at the Tinaroo Sailing Club last Thursday 30th January.

Obligingly, the low-pressure system had moved offshore overnight, resulting in fine and sometimes even sunny conditions on the lake all morning. We had our boats in the water by 8:30 and headed off in convoy eastward to Fong-On Campground.

In the calm conditions, Mark chose a stand-up pose for most of the journey, possibly to get a better view of the hazardous tree stumps scattered across lake, or maybe just to spice up an otherwise sedate passage.

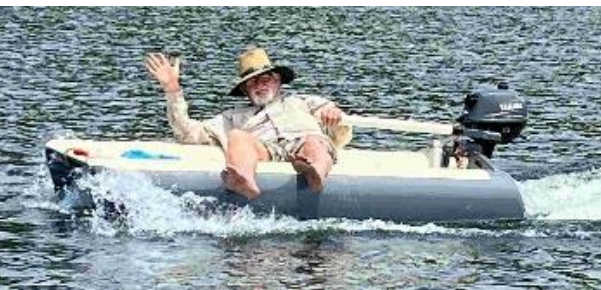


On arrival at the Fong-On, we set off in search of a picnic table, but there were none to be found. Instead, we discovered an impressive and roomy structure labelled "Shower Room", completely devoid of plumbing, but equipped with a ceiling hook on which to hang your BYO shower. Thoughtful!

Picnic-table hopes dashed, we retreated to the comfort of *Joule's* padded cockpit seats where we enjoyed coffee and snacks in the company of rowdy cockatoos, loitering pelicans, marauding cormorants, placid ducks and bashful curlews convinced, as always, of their invisibility. In such a setting, and without the usual argumentative companions to voice their

contrary opinions, global problems were duly resolved, along with wide ranging discussions about "the next boat".

After smoko, Mark tethered his tender to a tree and we set off together in *Joule* to check out Kauri Creek, just across the water north of Fong-On. This is a gorgeous rainforest clad creek with easy boat access and spacious camp sites. A shore excursion, which obliged a flock of camping ducks to reluctantly take to the water, revealed once again no picnic tables!



By this time the sun was shining brightly, and it was time to return to Fong-On to collect Mark's tender and head back to the Sailing Club for lunch and/or Bunnings. For the return journey Mark adopted a horizontal pose – possibly due to exhaustion from all that searching for picnic tables.

All-in-all it was a delightfully pleasant, nature-rich and incident-free morning. The tender's petrol outboard started easily and didn't miss a beat, and *Joule's* electrical power system purred beautifully. The closest we came to nautical drama was needing two attempts to get *Joule* aligned properly back on the trailer – a recurrent challenge for which an unspecified reward is on offer.

What's in a name?

Roger recently received a recorded message from an anonymous caller reporting there was a leak in his boat. Understandably he thought this was odd since the boat is on a trailer under cover. Thinking it must mean some sort of calamitous roof collapse followed by a deluge, he rushed into the boat club to discover.....what passes for humour during the silly season



Dismasting alone at sea

Something altogether more serious was the sight of British solo sailor Pip Hare's foil-equipped *Medalia* running under jury rig having been dismasted in the Southern Ocean, 800 nautical miles from the Australian coast on 15th December 2024.



Two weeks later, *Medalia* reached Australia without need of assistance and was safely docked in Melbourne City Marina.

Ladies and Gents, this concludes *Ratlines* for January 2025 and, as always, if there's more you want to see or know about, please contact us by return email. Likewise, if you have a story or article you'd like included please send it to us at: WBACairns@gmail.com

Clubhouse: 68 Tingira Street, Portsmith, (Cairns) Qld 4870

Committee is: President- Roger Fryer;

Vice President- Chris O'Keefe (WBAC Facebook page);

Secretary- Dermot Smyth (Librarian & Ratlines);

Treasurer- Brendon O'Rourke;

Committee- Tom Sparks, Sheila Sparks (website supervisor),

Keven Muller, and Richard Heazlewood.

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WBAC's Cash For Containers number is:

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