



RATLINES – JULY 2026

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

Current Membership: 37

Membership enquiries and renewals contact Richard at wbacairns@gmail.com

Date Claimers:

- 2026 Tinaroo Raid Friday 21st to Sunday 23rd August
- AGM & Christmas Lunch: Saturday 12th December Tinaroo Sailing Club

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Full house for smoko last week

CLUBHOUSE REDEVELOPMENT



Painting the exterior walls of the clubhouse is almost complete—just the harder-to-access eastern side to go.

Supports for the canopy between the clubhouse and the shed are being installed.





Fitting of the canopy frames underway



Thanks to Bill's delivery of a trailer load of roadbase and some back-breaking shovelling, the puddle mitigation strategy is underway—recent rain showing there's more to be done!

PROJECT SCOOP

Chris updates progress.....

Great news with Scoop is that we have both starboard outer and inner gunwales complete, fitted, glued and screwed into position. Then we'll fit two stringers and bingo—we move to finish the port side!







Port side waiting for the inner and outer gunwales to be fitted.



Meanwhile, Glen has been sanding the transom steps, for which John B is making the deck covering. A great team effort!

MEKONG DESCENDS

Astute *Ratline* readers will recall that Chris built his beautiful dinghy *Mekong* last year. She was subsequently swathed in plastic sheeting and hoisted to the ceiling of his workshop.



Now she has descended from her workshop davits to have her floors fitted.



Chris promises they won't be the usual type. Maybe all will be revealed at the Raid!

CHINA BOUND

China Bound's upper deck and cockpit is benefitting from a multi-generational team to complete the sanding and prepping to Tom's rigorous standard before painting gets underway.



ROCK RIVER SKIFF

Planking, Hatch, & Weather Problems.

Bill Miles updates progress and challenges on building his Rock River Skiff.

Planking of the rear deck has been completed and the hatch frame and covering boards made to match. Satisfied with the resulting fit, I stopped work for a couple of weeks at Tinaroo for the school holiday break, intending to tidy up with trimming later.



On my return the hatch didn't fit. The curve of the hatch no longer matched the deck. What happened?

While deliberating about how to fix this, I realised that we had just had two weeks of sunny weather after a prolonged wet season, and I had not yet sealed the timber. Maybe the hatch planks had pulled the hatch frame out of shape?

The forecast was a return to wet weather, big surprise! I decided to wait and see, and sure enough the hatch returned to shape a couple of days after the showers started.

I will make sure I seal the timber before the next dry spell. Should be plenty of time for that!



IRISH WOODEN BOATS & ENGLISH BARGES

Roger, our roving correspondent, shares his recent encounters with wooden boats on both sides of the Irish Sea

On my sojourn around Ireland, while supping the odd glass of Guinness and Kilkenny, I did manage to see that there were wooden boats around. Some with tales to tell.



While in Dublin, I noticed the *Jeannie Johnston* tied up at the dock next to the Emigration Museum. The current *Jeanie Johnston* is a rebuild of the original that was used to transport Irish emigrants to the Americas during the potato famine. Apparently, the ship was commissioned and paid for by the estate owners and landlords. Without potatoes, infected by the “blight”, there was not enough food in Ireland.



The museum was fascinating and, significantly, covered Irish emigration from the Viking era to the current day. The sorrow is that, of the thousands who emigrated to America, a significant proportion did not make it, dying en-route.

The *Jeanie Johnstone* is typical of the ships of this time. Not sure I would like to cross the Atlantic on it however.



Also found the *Emma* in Ireland, hauled out on the trailer for repairs to the rudder.



I did not manage to talk to the owner, but I liked the carving on the stern and the general look of a sturdy wooden boat that was designed for the muddy shallow tidal estuaries, with the bilge keels to keep her upright when the tide goes out.



Have not seen so many wooden boat in England, apart from three restored Thames barges. These are shallow draft boats that were used in the rivers and estuaries around east coast of England to transport cargo into and out of London to the coastal ports. The three I saw were moored, but capable of sailing and are used for tourist day sails and events.



VICTORIAN VISITORS

Sheila recounts a recent visit from two members of the
Wooden Boat Association of Victoria.....

We had a couple of lovely visitors from the WBA of Victoria, Kirsty and Peter Batchelor, during a Tuesday club session early in July. They were very impressed with our shed set up and our clubhouse. They have to share a clubhouse in Melbourne, and don't have premises to work on boats, so they were quite envious of our facilities.

They have regular sailing events so are a pretty active group. Peter has built 3 timber boats. They mentioned that they would include their WBAC visit in their newsletter.



Peter's latest build was this
Core Sound 17 Mk 3 *Nyatne*.

Videos of building and sailing *Nyatne*, can be found at
<https://www.batchelors.net/boats/core-sound-17-mk3>

More information about the Wooden Boat Association of Victoria is available at
www.woodenboat.asn.au

Lake Tinaroo Outing Thursday 25th June

With our regular Lake Outing scribbler (Roger) swanning around the British Isles, and last month's entertaining guest correspondent (Mark) incapacitated (see below), we had to rely on our (AI-assisted) poet of last resort (Anon) for this account of another fine wooden boating excursion on the Lake.

BALLAD OF PIRATE COVE

Come gather round, good boat-folk all, and hear this merry lay,
Of Wooden Boat Club mariners upon the lake that day.
With polished hulls and eager hearts, we launched beneath blue skies,
Where laughter filled the gentle breeze and joy shone in our eyes.

Poor Mark arrived without a craft, to everyone's surprise,
A victim of a savage foe that no one could despise.
No pirate fierce nor crocodile had laid the poor chap low—
A rogue branch leapt from ambush while he drove his trusty tow!

The tractor bucked, the branch took aim, as though with wicked glee;
It struck him with such force and left him shore-bound, sadly.
Yet Mark, undaunted, smiled and laughed, despite his battered plight,
For every crew needs one good yarn to share before the night.



John B climbed aboard with Rex that day on *Sacre Bleu* so brave,
A Hartley 16, trim and swift, she fairly danced the waves.
She skimmed the lake with graceful ease, a credit to her crew,
Her every tack and every gybe as sweet as morning dew.



But Fate, who loves a comic twist, had one more scene to play—
A gum tree stood where gum trees stand, precisely in the way!
The hull escaped with scarcely a scratch, the crew remained in view,
But aloft at Pirate Cove the wind vane was bent askew.

Skipper Tom set forth in style aside *Iona's* helm,
With Keven and Yen aboard to complete the shipboard realm.
They sailed with skill through gentle airs, no trouble did they know;
Their wake lay straight behind the stern wherever they did go.



Until t at last at Pirate Cove they reached the soft sand shore,
Where all seemed set for dignified arrivals... nothing more.
Yet Tom, inventive as always, ignored the common trend,
And landed elbow-first ashore—acrobatic to the end.

John P sailed his *Rova* lone with quiet, steady hand,
A picture fit for artist's brush across the lake so grand.
No mishap marred his handsome course, no awkward gust or shove;
He glided smooth in company with *Iona*, like two doves.

The sisters two—one trim and neat, one just a little grand—
Then changed from doves to swans as they sailed in close command.
The fleet looked on with smiling eyes to see the pair proceed,
Proof elegance is measured in grace not size indeed.



Though Peter and Gael were somewhat late—the fleet had slipped away;
They missed the Club's famed smoko break that bright Tinaroo day.
But *Peridot*, their trusty craft, a Young six metres true,
Made up for lost refreshments with a steaming on-board brew.



The kettle sang while under sail, with cups and biscuits near,
A civilised and cheering feast that put all want to rear.
At Pirate Cove their tiny tender proved worth its weight in gold,
To row beyond the beached-up fleet and frame the scene so bold.



And Dermot steered the press boat *Joule*, so silent, calm and slow,
With Phill and Richard sharing watch wherever boats might go.
No roaring engine broke the peace; no fumes disturbed the air;
She glided like a patient sheepdog, faithful everywhere.



She gathered every wandering lamb that strayed from course or fleet,
And shadowed every noble craft from launch to lunchtime treat.
To Pirate Cove she led the way, then homeward once again,
Content to watch the merry fleet across the wind-kissed plain.

Among the many splendid sights that crowned our splendid day,
Were cormorants on ghostly trees beside the fleet at play.
They perched upon the silver trunks that rose from waters deep,
Like solemn, black-clad sentinels maintaining silent keep.

Then one by one they spread their wings and launched into the blue,
To skim the lake with practiced grace as only cormorants do.
They dived beneath the mirrored waves in search of fish below—
A timeless dance of lake and bird that all were glad to know.



But is someone missing from this tale?—I can hear you ask;
Someone who to keep track of is always quite a task.
Glen launched his trusty *Flatty*, where the gentle breezes played,
While other crews sought Pirate Cove, his own sure course was laid.



He voyaged far across the lake, where open waters gleam,
Then sought the sheltered bays where birds disturbed the mirrored stream.
Content when wind and wings had shared the riches of the day,
He hauled out *Flatty* trouble free and stowed her safe away.
Then watched and waited with calm and careful eye—
Until the fleet was safely home, beneath the Tinaroo sky.

So, raise a toast to comrades all who sailed that shining day,
To wooden boats and willing hands that keep old skills at play.
To rogue gum trees and flying limbs, to elbows, laughs and cheer,
To tales that grow a little more with every passing year.

For boats may scrape and wind vanes bend, and branches have their fun,
But friendship is the finest prize beneath the northern sun.
Long may the Wooden Boat Club sail where Tinaroo winds blow,
And may such happy ballads bloom wherever good boats go!

BOAT RAMP ENCOUNTER

John B reports on a fine wooden sailing boat belonging to his friend Ron, encountered on the boat ramp opposite the Sailing Club following our recent lake outing.



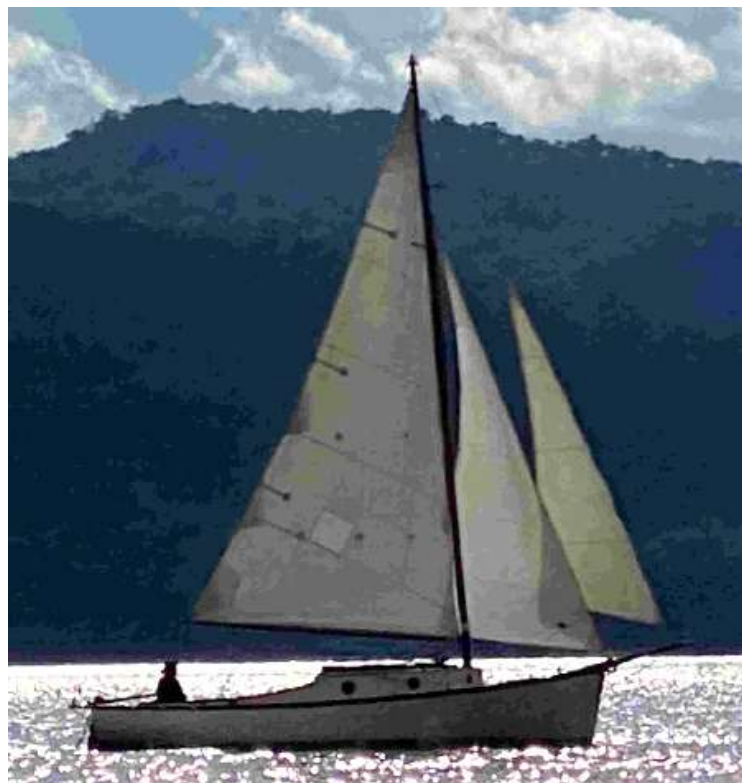
Ron and his brother designed and built this 25-footer about 30 years ago. They drew up a set of plans from a photo of this style of boat. It has twin headsails and used to have a conventional mainsail until recently when the mast snapped near the top and the rig collapsed into the lake. Ron, being the handyman that he is, managed to recover the rig from the water and get back to Black Gully ramp using the trusty two-cylinder inboard diesel engine.

The boat weighs about 2+ tonne I believe. Once home he decided to go to a gaff main because he lacked the Oregon to reconstruct the mast as it was. So, he constructed a gaff and upper mast section to support the gaff and rigging to suit. The tabernacle on the deck also needed to be reconstructed as it was damaged during the dismasting.

Only a few weeks later and he is happy to be back on the lake again. Boat looks better on the water now than the original I reckon.



Photo from 6 years ago,
before the recent
dismasting.



16 ft Hartley Trailer Sailer for Sale
Including rigging, sails, rudder, centreboard and registered trailer
Price: \$1,000 Location: Cairns

Contact WBAC member Sheree Willems: willems.sheree@gmail.com



THE 2026 GREAT TINAROO RAID

The 2026 Raid is only three weeks away! It will be a low key, relaxed event with the usual mixture of fun races, opportunities to catch up with other members and celebrate the joy (and otherwise) of wooden boatbuilding and boating.

Raid Events

Friday 21st August

- Afternoon sailing event—details to be advised on the day.

Saturday 22nd August - Race Day (Race times subject to change on the day)

- **Electric Propulsion Race** - around 9.30am
- **Paddling Race**- around 10:30am
- **Rowing Race** - around 11:00am
- **Seagull Race** - around 2:00pm

Register for all races on race day.

Note: Seagull Race rules require drivers to face forward while operating their vessels for safety.

Sunday

- Free range boating, catching up, packing up.

Camping

Camping is available at Tinaroo Sailing Club for TSC members and their guests.

WBAC members who are not TSC members can camp from Thurs 20th to Sun 23rd Aug.

- Adult TSC Member: \$9 incl GST, per night
- Adult Non-Member: \$15 incl GST, per night
- Youth (ages 5–18yrs): \$6 incl GST, per night
- Children aged 4 and under: Free.

Please contact wbacairns@gmail.com to book your camping, and pay your camping fee by direct deposit to:

WBAC's Bank of Queensland account;

- BSB 124976
- Account: 100053156
- Description: "Camp number of people x number of nights"

Tinaroo Sailing Club rules for campers:

- No Generators allowed
- Keep the amenities and kitchen clean
- BYO Firewood
- No dogs are allowed on the club grounds
- Respect the rights of fellow campers

SEE YOU AT THE RAID!

Ladies and Gents, this concludes *Ratlines* for July 2026 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: 6 MSQ Access Road, Portsmith, (Cairns) Qld 4870

Committee:

President- Roger Fryer;

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

Secretary- Dermot Smyth (Librarian & *Ratlines*);

Treasurer- Brendon O'Rourke;

Committee- Tom Sparks, Keven Muller, Richard Heazlewood and Bill Miles

Websites Supervisor: Sheila Sparks

Email address: WBACairns@gmail.com

Website: <https://www.woodenboatscairns.com.au>

Facebook:

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WBAC's Cash For Containers number is: C10026463