RATLINES – OCTOBER 2026

Official Newsletter of the Wooden Boat Association of Cairns, Inc.

ABN 56 194 994 249

Current Membership: 46: AGM & Christmas Lunch: Sat. 12th December Tinaroo Sailing Club
Membership enquiries and renewals contact Richard at wbacairns@gmail.com

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AWESOME AWNINGS

After months of planning and preparation, the awnings providing sun and rain protection between the clubhouse and the workshop, and along one side of the clubhouse, were finally installed in October. Huge thanks to Tom, Sheila, Keven and others who did the design, purchasing, preparation and installation. It greatly improves the comfort, safety and operation of the premises. Well done everyone!















PROJECT *SCOOP*

A brief update from Richard





The Scoop team powers on. The core members, Chris, Richard and Glen, have recently had assistance from Martin and Roger, who joined in for some glueing and screwing. We look forward to Tom rejoining the working group when sanding and painting recommences.

The ply sheeting of the hull, except for the top, has been done and looks pretty good. Chris is redesigning the steps on either side of the stern, so that they will now fold up neatly against the transom.









Storage area for stuff and fuel tanks is being fashioned into the hulls.



She is generally starting to look like a very special craft that will be a very stable and probably fast platform to enjoy on the Lake.

WINDSONG MOVES IN

The new workspace, courtesy of the gazebo donated by Luis, was made ready for the arrival of its first occupant, ***Windsong***—the Hartly16 Trailer Sailer recently purchased by Martin and Valary Rhodes.





Windsong was wheeled into the new workspace on 12th of October in reparation for a major repair to her transom and other improvements to make her ready joining the club's outings on Lake Tinaroo.




BW·5225

IN-HOUSE ENGINEERING

Diligent readers of the WBAC Committee Minutes will recall that at our last meeting Chris brought to our attention a safety issue with the club's mitre circular saw.

The bushes that insert into the centre hole of the blade are too flimsy, making it impossible to reliably tighten the blade, with the risk of catastrophic failure at speed.

Chris reported that replacement bushes were not available in Cairns, so consideration was given to commissioning new bespoke bushes to be made. At which point, someone called out "Phill!" So, Keven was dispatched to Phill's place with the saw, the blade and the flimsy bush.



Even before the Committee minutes were written up and despatched, Phill was at his lathe, and bingo—a new, perfectly fitting bush and two spares were created, and the mitre saw is now back in service.

The benefits of a multi-talented pool of WBAC members proving its worth once again.

Thanks Phill!



LAKE OUTING 1
A Mizzling Day notable for CAKE!

Roger reports on a dampish lake outing,
redeemed by cake and therapeutic rowing.

Thursday 1st October was always going to be a dubius day without Dermot's links to the weather gods. For once, I got up early and arrived at the lake before the rain. Mark also arrived early, *with ZigZag*. Thinking he was first there he sent me a text as I was looking back at him. Only in 2026!

Meeting in person, we considered the day marginal. Rex was less optimistic when he drove in, and as the mizzle turned to rain, we retired to the clubhouse to consider our options (and to have coffee and Rex's excellent fruit cake).

Shortly after, there was Keven and Tom, with *Iona* looking damp, and Glen arrived with *Flatty* as the rain eased back to mizzle and then cleared.

"Right", I said, "let's get *Bitaki* ready". Rex and I got the cover off, only to have to shelter in the car as the rain came back. Sensibly, no-one else had moved from the clubhouse. The rumble of a V8 announced Warwick and Yan had arrived in the silver Mustang. Still raining.

John Pullar called with apologies—staying at home seemed a sensible thing to do.

Back to the clubhouse and a check on the weather gods, aka the BOM radar, showed more rain on the way. Tom had a rather nice date and walnut banana bread that went down well. Fortified, if rather dispirited, it was decision time, and sailing was not going to be pleasant. It was getting rather late to set up the boats, so back to *Bitaki* to put the covers back on with Keven and Rex. No sailing today!!

Bill had phoned to say he was going to bring his newly completed Rock River Skiff, (and a freshly baked cake) when the rain eased, so the rather damp mob had something to look forward to.

The tough characters, Mark and Glen, were determined to get on the water. Mark wanted to test his new rowlocks for *ZigZag* and Glen just loves to be boating, so they launched and had a quick row around the bay.

The weather had cleared and Bill arrived with cake and boat. Both were highly appreciated. The skiff is beautifully finished and looks at treat. Does it float and can it be rowed? Will the cake taste as good as it looks? Vital questions that needed answers!

Yes, the skiff launched and floated perfectly, drawing a minimum of water. Invited to give it a try, I bent my back to the oars. Something I haven't done in years. Slipping gently through the water, the skiff is a delight to row. Easy to keep in a line and keep moving with no power needed. Turns out I was the first in a queue. Keven had a whirl in it and then Warwick and Yan showed it could handle 2 adults with ease, though

Warwick's concept of rowing meant going stern first for a while, before transitioning to the more conventional approach. Turns out he had never rowed before!





It was great to see 3 row boats on the water at once, and what had looked like a rather dreary morning had turned into a fun time. Glen took his turn in the skiff, and Bill and I took turns in Flatty, enjoying the extreme maneuverability of a short flat-bottomed boat. We were doing doughnuts on the water! Mark also managed a turn in the skiff before Warwick and Yan commandeered it again for a last row before lunch.

Yan had made a cheesecake which meant a surfeit of cake on the table, joining Bill's cake that tasted as good as it looked. Lunch turned into a cake fest and Tom was in heaven.

LAKE OUTING 2

A Perfect Day on the Lake (minus cake).

Bitaki needed some minor work, and I wanted to check that, after repairs and re-installation, the amas were doing their job properly. So, after an early start on 8th October, I spent a couple of hours working on the boat and hoisting the mast, checking the rigging. Having done all the hard work, Dermot arrived just in time for coffee and cake. However, a minor disaster: he had baked that morning, but the cake was still sitting on the bench at home! A complete reversal of the previous lake outing. The consolation was that the weather was perfect, so we decided to put the boat in the water after our break.

While sipping coffee, Denis arrived, with his smart blue Heron. Not recognising him, I went across, only to find he was a WBAC member— a presidential black mark for not recognising him. After a lengthy chat, we suggested meeting up on the other side for lunch, and that when he was going sailing in the future, we would let the membership know so that anyone could join him if they wanted.

Leaving Denis to rig his Heron, Dermot and I launched Bitaki, and in the gentle breeze, sailed us out from the shore. Halfway across, making good time, we decided to see if we could make Pirate Cove without using the motor. Not usually possible.



However, the wind direction and speed was just enough to allow us to sail down the bay, and around into the cove. Perfect! It's lovely to be able sail directly to where you want to go. Lunchtime.



We had seen Denis set off and assumed that he would have seen us heading into the bay, but apparently not, and we later saw the Heron at Platypus Point.

Again, we were able to sail directly out of the cove, and with the minor rigging changes, Bitaki was behaving well as we tacked into the wind. She has been somewhat reluctant to go about at times but now seems much better behaved.

The repaired amas behaved well, moving a little more within the cords, as I had not tightened them up as much. Seems to be better with a little more give in them.

Back at the sailing club, we pulled her out of the water and were about to lower the mast, when Keven arrived with his sisters in tow. Great timing for them to see the result of all his hard work.

Back in the compound and under cover, a quick check showed that the amas had no water in them, even though they had been under water at times!

It was a lovely day to sail and to make sure that the repairs and changes were successful.

Roger

15 Oct 2026

LAKE OUTING 3
Boats Galore!

Roger reports on a big turnout for our lake outing on 29th October

I arrived early at the sailing club for once but before I could get the cover off *Bitak*i, the gate opened and Phill arrived with *Sea Snipe*. After that it was just a procession of cars, boats and people.



The weather looked perfect for sailing. No rain and enough breeze for some speed but few white caps. Dermot had worked his magic again!

With a little help from my friends, I got *Bitaki* rigged and ready for the water. All around was hectic activity. John Pullar rigging *Rova*, Tom and Keven rigging *Iona*, Richard with *Ninanji,* Phill had *Sea Snipe* launched and was puttering around putting some time on the auxiliary engine, Denis arrived with his Heron.



Dermot had some problems launching *Whileaway* (due to the drooping centreboard catching on a trailer crossbeam) but got her in the water eventually with John's help and no serious injuries. Glen arrived with Flatty but ended up on *Peridot* with Peter and Gayle. *Peridot* had sailed quietly into the chaos and was there for ½ an hour before I realised it! I think Rex paddled across in his kayak, but there were too many people to be sure.





Mark turned up with his dismasted catamaran on the trailer. Not to put her into the water, but to seek advice and opinions on centreboards, leeboards and steering mechanisms. As my crew for the upcoming Dunk Island trip, I also wanted his advice on the various things I needed to do to make *Bitaki* ready for overnight camping.

Martin and Val arrived, minus boat, but keen to crew with whoever. An alternator problem meant their car spent the day attached to my battery charger!



Soon after *Bitaki* was launched, Alison and her son, Robert, arrived for coffee. Good to see Alison up and about after being run-into by a car in Woolworths car park. Dangerous place Woolies!!

Coffee time was called prior to the mass exodus across the lake. Dermot's fruit muffins were the treat of the morning. Worth the drive just for them.

Gradually the mass of boats set out from the shore. Just enough breeze to not need the motor.

Mark and I were watching John head out in *Rova*. A pretty boat and usually very well sailed, it was apparent that he was not pointing as close to the wind as usual. We wondered what was wrong—see his confessional explanation on page 15.

With Mark, Martin and Val onboard *Bitaki*, we gently eased out, just missing *Peridot*, we soon caught a breeze and were away. Looking out, the lake had been empty, but suddenly there seemed to be sails everywhere.



Too many boats for Pirate Cove, so Platypus Point was the lunch stop. A headwind meant a few tacks, but made for some good sailing and impromptu races. With 4 on board, and an expert sail trimmer, *Bitaki* sailed noticeably closer to the wind and went about nicely.







Lunch was a shady sit down on the grass affair. Some taking a few minutes to close their eyes. Not sure a snooze was possible with the hum of conversation going on, but not a difficult way to spend a Thursday lunchtime.













There was some crew swapping after lunch, and so John came back with Mark and I, and Martin and Val went back with Dermot in *Whileaway*. I gave Mark the wheel and sat back while he and John set the sails and, with the wind almost astern, steered a fast straight course back to the club.







Arriving back, we ran into Ken and Penny who were camping there for a couple of days. A communication problem had prevented them getting the emails, so they were unaware of the event. All sorted now.

Mark and I discussed sleeping arrangements on *Bitaki*, whether the seats were wide enough to sleep on (they're not!), various locations for the radio and aerial, helped by Keven and Tom providing advice.

Between times, various boats were helped from the water and onto trailers. Lots of hands making for chaos and light work! I think the count was 7 or 8 boats and 15 people.

Eventually I got home, home, exhausted, somewhat sunburnt but having had a really great day with lots of people.



Roger
31 Oct 2026

CHECKLISTS CAN BE HANDY

John Pullar reflects on his forgetful start on *Rova*



Setting off sailing from the Tinaroo Sailing Club is usually a simple affair. The South-East trades waft you off the shore into steadier sailing conditions. Whoever chose the site for the club knew what they were about.

Last Thursday, however, we had Easterlies, which pushed the boats onto the shore. Normally, I can have *Rova's* bow on the beach, the centreboard down, the rudder ready to go, all sails deployed and the motor puttering away ready to back me out and away. Not this time.

With a bit of assistance, I got *Rova* pointed away from the shore and set off with the main and mizzen up. First job was to release the rudder's uphaul and pull on the downhaul. Too sticky, so easier to lean over the back and push it down by hand. Use the tiller to steer a basic course. Use the main sheet to set the main for the wind direction. Use the tiller to steer a proper course. No need to do anything with the motor, it was already out of the water. Release the roller furling line, take the slack out of the jib sheet and cleat off. Use the tiller to steer a proper course.

At this stage I was feeling like I had finally got things under control. Time to put a tack in. I steadied *Rova* on an upwind course and tried to tack. It didn't work. I checked the mizzen sheet to see if this was affecting the boat's balance—no, seemed about right. I tried again. Same result.

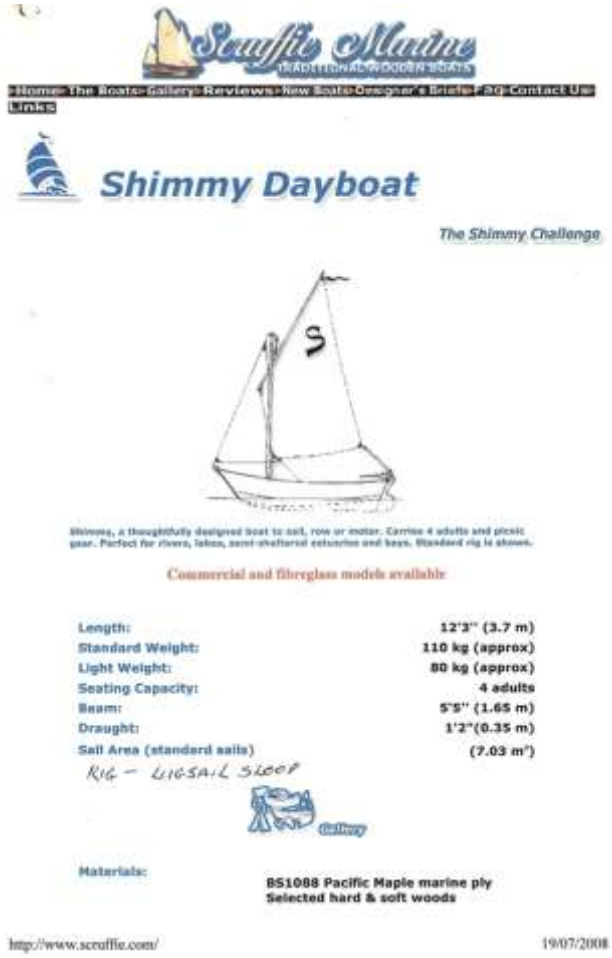
Oh (insert swear word of choice), the centreboard hadn't been lowered. Release the uphaul, use my handy dandy centreboard prod to get the centreboard down and back to the tiller to steer a proper course. Pick up speed and tack. That's more like it!

So, in my defence, a very hectic first few minutes of sailing all done under the watchful eyes of one of the biggest fleets the WBAC has had for a Thursday's outing, led me to forget a basic required step. That said, I am sure I have the wit and the skills to create a different cock-up on my next outing. If I'm not careful, I could find myself becoming a regular contributor to *Ratlines*. Aargh!

SHIMMY DAYBOAT FOR SALE

John Williams has decided to sell his Shimmy Dayboat, *Jaydubbya*, designed by Scruffie Marine. John built the boat several years ago, with help from Roger, Glen and other WBAC members. *Jaydubbya* sails well and recently won the electric-powered race in the 2026 Great Tinaroo Raid. The boat comes with a purpose-built Oceanic trailer.





Scruffie Marine
TRADITIONAL WOODEN BOATS

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Shimmy Dayboat

The Shimmy Challenge

Shimmy, a thoughtfully designed boat to sail, row or motor. Carries 4 adults and picnic gear. Perfect for rivers, lakes, semi-sheltered estuaries and bays. Standard rig is shown.

Commercial and fibreglass models available

Length:	12'3" (3.7 m)
Standard Weight:	110 kg (approx)
Light Weight:	80 kg (approx)
Seating Capacity:	4 adults
Beam:	5'5" (1.65 m)
Draught:	1'2"(0.35 m)
Sail Area (standard sails)	(7.03 m²)

RIG – LUGSAIL SLOOP

Gallery

Materials: BS1088 Pacific Maple marine ply
Selected hard & soft woods

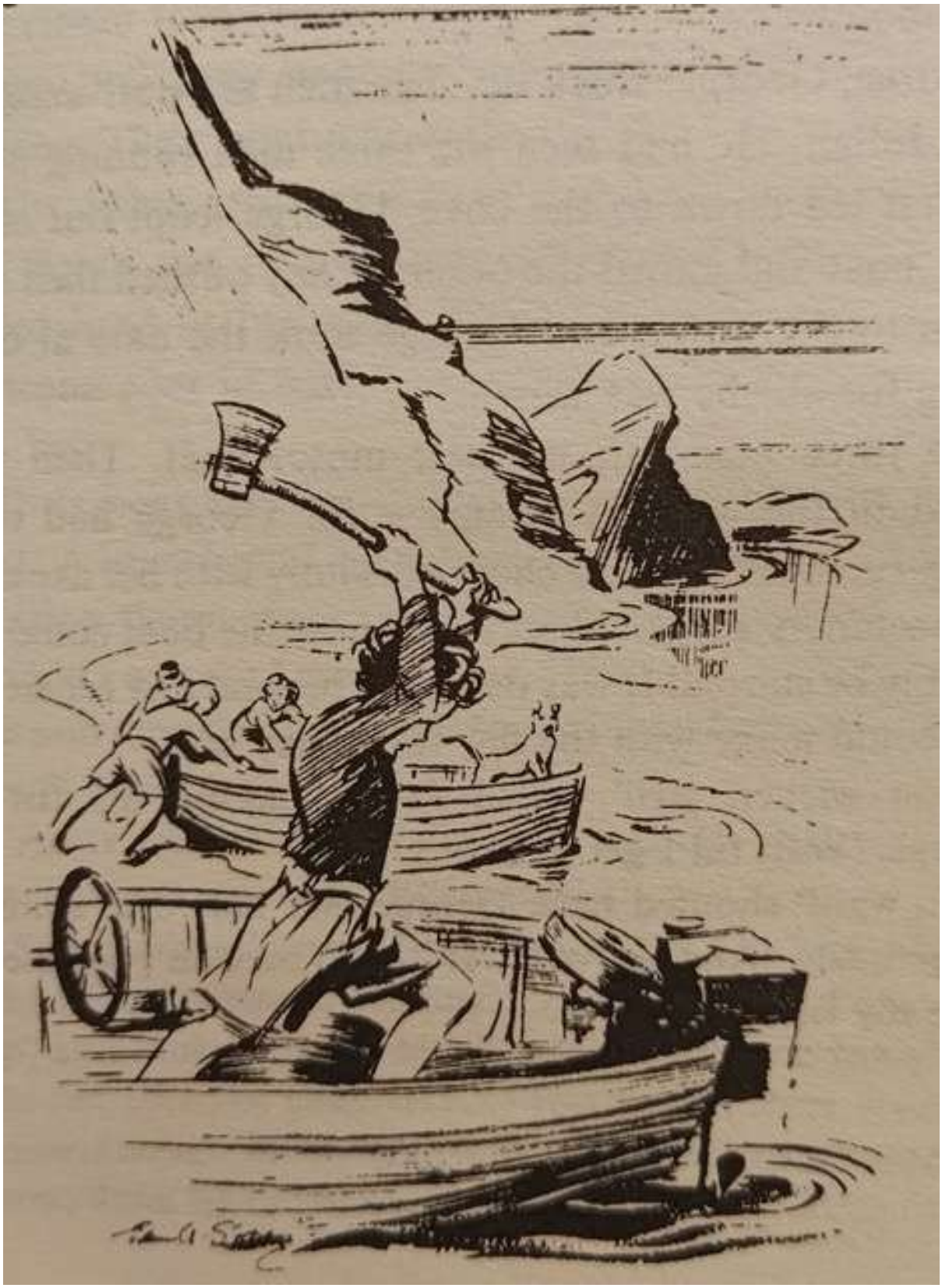
http://www.scruffie.com/ 19/07/2008



Contact John at **willyjd@bigpond.com**

HOW TO TUNE A SEAGULL

In preparation for next year's Great Tinaroo Raid, Chris recently encountered this demonstration on how to tune a Seagull



PUMPKIN REGATTAS

A tipoff from an occasional *Ratlines* reader in London led to a deep dive into the phenomenon of aquatic pumpkin racing.

The first pumpkin regatta was held in Windsor, Nova Scotia, in 1999, which inspired the creation of pumpkin boat races New Hampshire in 2001, Oregon in 2004 and Maine and Wisconsin in 2005. Pumpkin regattas now regularly feature thousands of spectators and are attended by people from across the United States and Canada. Pumpkin regattas are also held in the United Kingdom, Germany and Scandinavia.

Pumkin races include many forms of propulsion, including paddles, sails and outboard motors—so why not a Seagull at next year's Raid?











AGM and CHRISTMAS LUNCH INVITATION

You are invited to our Annual General Meeting followed by Christmas Lunch at Tinaroo Sailing Club on **Saturday 12th December 2026**. Further details regarding the AGM will be sent out later.

The Christmas Lunch will be served at around 12:30 and will once again comprise a fabulous smorgasbord prepared by Melanie and her team at Golden Roast Catering, Atherton. The lunch menu includes:

- Antipasto grazing platters
- Turkey, ham, baked fish
- Vegetable Medley, Roast potatoes, Creamy pasta salad,
- Roast pumpkin, Cauli cheese, Caesar salad, Greek salad, Potato salad
- Pavlova Strawberry Cheesecake, Tiramisu, Black Forest Cake

Cost per person is $55. Please book and pay for your Christmas Lunch by transfer to the WBAC bank account (details below) by **Monday 30th November.**

WBAC Bank details
Bank of Queensland

- BSB 124976
- Account: 100053156
- Description: "Christmas Lunch x number or people"

Ladies and Gents, this concludes *Ratlines* for October 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

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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

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