

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>RATLINES – FEBRUARY 2026</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">The official newsletter of the <b>Wooden Boat Association of Cairns, Inc.</b></p>
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Current Membership: 32

Membership enquiries and renewals contact Richard at [wbacairns@gmail.com](mailto:wbacairns@gmail.com)

**Date Claimer: 2026 Tinaroo Raid 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> August**

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## CLUBHOUSE REDEVELOPMENT

In between boat-building tasks, the Saturday and Tuesday morning crews have been busy upgrading the old library shipping container into a ship-shape tool storage shed, with new shelving



Outside, John and Tom continue to strip, sand and repaint the clubhouse walls and doorways.



A plumbing contractor has installed stormwater drainage for the yard.



# PROJECT SCOOP

Richard reports on recent progress

After a full Saturday work program, Chris went home and face-planted in his workshop following a simple trip and sustained significant soft tissue and head injuries, requiring an ambulance trip to hospital. Scans on his head confirmed the grey matter was still present and undamaged, but he had significant concussion and looked like he just stepped out of the boxing ring after a good beating. A timely reminder to us all about falls and concussion in our age group. The Qld Brain Institute (<https://qbi.uq.edu.au>) has some good information on the topic.

Despite ongoing medical issues, Scoop continues to make good progress. The alignment of the bows has been fixed, and the inside ply sheeting has been shaped, fitted, glued and screwed.





Glen continues to work on the fiddly bits and sometimes finds it easiest to move around on a set of wheels.

## NAVIGATING MOLTEN LEAD AND TABERNACLE

Roger Fryer reports on assisting John Pullar on a couple of critical boatbuilding tasks: pouring molten lead into the centreboard and drilling holes to attach the mast to the tabernacle.



John Pullar is building *Nova*, his Wellsford-designed Navigator, a gaff rigged yawl smaller sister to *Iona*, and like *Iona* it needed a lump of lead in the centreboard. Having helped Tom pour lead into his, I am obviously an expert in the art of melting and pouring lead!! So, I was asked to assist.

Actually, I think it was because I own a portable gas ring big enough for the job. So, I went to visit John one morning.

John had already cut a suitable size hollow in the centreboard, making sure that the side had some small cavities. This is so that when the lead is poured in, it flows into them and will not fall out.



A cast iron pot from the WBAC was the container of choice. With a suitable amount of lead inside it was placed on the gas and the waiting started. While the lead melted, the centreboard was laid out and chocked up to make sure it was level. We did not want any spills over the side.

Kitted out in long pants, welding gloves, face mask and leather shoes, we scooped the dross from the top of the now liquid and silvery lead. It was time to pour.

John prepared a long-handled hook to lift the pot, while I got the long-handled water pump pliers to grip the side, and enable tilting. Note we were not getting close and personal with the lead. Carefully lifting the pot over to the centreboard, the molten lead was gently poured into the hollow, accompanied by some steam and smoke as the wood charred around it, but no flames.

John had done his calculations well, and all the lead went into the hollow, ending up about 5-10mm below the level of the centreboard. Perfect! Time for coffee and cake. While everything cooled down.

John left it to cool right down overnight and then filled the remaining hollow and shaped it to suit the centreboard curve, so it was not visible.



After the successful pouring of the lead into his centreboard, John wanted some help in drilling the holes to connect the mast to the tabernacle for the Navigator. As the drill press at the club has limited depth of throw and the tabernacle would not fit under it, he brought the mast and tabernacle to my place see if we could do it on my drill press.



We decided on the process before starting as the holes in the tabernacle must be drilled first, so that the mast can then be properly aligned before the holes for the mast are marked and drilled.

Initially John was looking for just a single pivot bolt to be fitted, but after discussion, it was decided that the mast would be easier to mount single handed if it had a pivot bolt and a locking bolt above it. This meant two holes all the way through the tabernacle and mast. These are sleeved in 16mm stainless steel tube to take a 12 mm stainless steel bolt.

Yes, the tabernacle fitted under the drill press, but the drill did not have sufficient depth of throw to put the bit through both sides of the tabernacle. So, the holes had to be measured accurately on either side of the tabernacle. Double and triple checked before the decision made to drill!

Fingers crossed, 4 holes were drilled, and when tubes were pushed through they, amazingly, lined up and were at right angles to the tabernacle. Stage 1 complete!!

The mast was then slid into the tabernacle, and both were clamped, wedged and lined up to make sure that the mast was parallel to the sides and back of the tabernacle. The base of the mast was kept about 10mm above the base of the tabernacle to allow it to rotate.

Another round of checking, lining up, thinking and checking again using a bubble level. Once satisfied, the mast was marked through the holes in the tabernacle using the same drill bit that drilled the holes. Getting the base of the mast under the drill press and level was a bit of a challenge, but the bubble level came in for use again, as well as a set-square to ensure that the drill bit was at right angles to the mast. Clamped into place and fingers crossed again, the holes were drilled into the mast at the extreme length of the drill throw.

Now for the critical bit. The mast was fitted back into the tabernacle and two short lengths of stainless-steel tube slid through the holes in both the tabernacle and mast perfectly to hold it in place. Amazing and time for a high five. The outcome was better than either John or I dared hope for and showed that meticulous care in measuring and checking pays dividends when the result is critical and there are no second chances.



## OARS, SAILS AND DRONE

### LAKE OUTING Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> February

The misty morning began with an impromptu regatta of forward and backward rowing – Richard, Dermot, Glen and Rex swapping dinghies and directions until they were thoroughly discombobulated!



Roger's *Bitaki Taari*, with plenty of room on board for extra crew and passengers, was a popular option for those whose towing vehicles had broken down on the way to the lake (Mark), or chosen to commute to the Sailing Club by canoe (Rex) or just left their boat safely tucked up at home (John).



Rex joined Richard for a sail in *Ninjani* across to Platypus Point and back.



On the return passage they noticed water accumulating in the bilge below the slatted floorboard, necessitating electric-drill-powered bilge pumping on return to the Sailing Club.

Much discussion and exploration followed to determine the potential source of the leak. Nothing definitive was found, but some sort of centreboard casing defect was thought to be the most likely culprit.

When Glen later looked through the photos he'd taken at the lake, he found one shot that showed Rex sitting in the bow of *Ninjani*, which Glen thought may have lowered the top of the centreboard case sufficiently to allow water to over-top the case and into the bilge.

Richard has now suspended his search for the “leak” and is grateful for Glen’s vigilance and detective work. Glen’s hypothesis will be tested next time *Ninjani* takes to the water.



With her gaff fork repaired, *Iona* was once more ready to take to the water under sail after being land-bound for several months.

With assistance from Keven and Mark, Tom supervised the rigging process, then retreated to the undercover area of the Sailing Club to escape the intermittent showers and keep watch over the on-water activities.

With Tom shore-bound, Keven took the opportunity for a solo sail in *Iona* – setting off under paddle power before picking up a breeze across to the other side of the lake and then continued in the direction of Kaurie Creek.



*Iona* made a fine sight driven by a tail wind on a brisk sail back to the Sailing Club





Dermot took *Foresight* out for a couple of sails during the day, reacquainting himself with the joys and hazards of dinghy sailing for the first time since last year's Raid.

He almost made it across to Platypus Point before deciding to turn around as the breeze tapered off and then died.

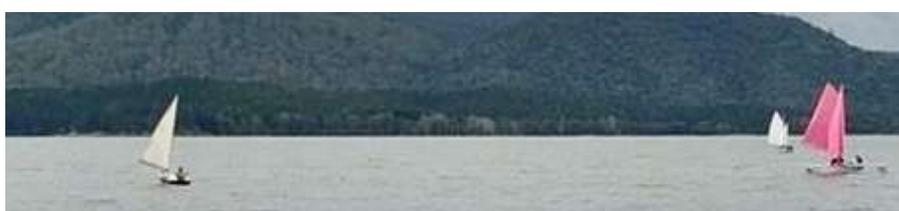
Stopping around in the lumpy, windless conditions, Dermot contemplated taking to the oars, but after about 15 minutes a zephyr emerged that eventually developed into a very satisfactory blow.

Once *Foresight* picked up speed, it became clear that the sloppy conditions had caused the pin holding the rudder in place to work loose, leaving the boat somewhat challenging to steer as the rudder tried to leap out of the pintle.



This lake outing was a day of modest ambition, indulging in the joy of messing about in boats rather than setting off for distant shores. The boats and crew came and went at leisure, meeting up for smoko and lunch as the need for caffeine, food and companionship required. The showers came and went and were largely ignored.

The day's proceedings were intermittently overseen by a forest kingfisher and a camera-equipped drone, piloted by Roger's friend Allison who is at the early stages of mastering the simultaneous skills of remote-controlled flying and camera operation. This process was hindered by a fault in the drone's control system, subsequently acknowledged by the supplier who has agreed to supply Allison with a replacement drone before the next lake outing.



## BLEUBERRY BOATHOUSE

Christina's recent acquisition of *Whileaway* came with a low-budget 6-metre-long shelter comprising a tubular steel frame with a gabled white tarp roof. The roof provided some rain and sun protection, but the open sides left *Whileaway* vulnerable to wet season storms and gusty "dry season" drizzle.



Inspired by the blueberry-growing tunnels on the Tablelands, 7 metres of horticultural film were purchased to provide continuous rainproofing on both sides and over the roof.



The very tough film comes in 7.5-metre-wide rolls, folded in such a way that it can be rolled out on the midline of a horticultural tunnel and then unfolded to allow the film to drape over both sides. However, with the pitched roofline on *Whileaway's* shelter it was necessary to unfold the film on the ground and then haul it up one side, over the top and down the other side, aided by ropes and various helpful and unhelpful instructions from skipper and crew.



The bottom long edges of the film were turned inwards and taped up, providing a snug tube into which a 6-metre length of PVC water pipe was inserted. This provided a stiffened border which was then tied down using short lengths of split PVC tubing snapped over the water pipe and tied down to the base of the steel uprights.



So far, it's keeping *Whileaway* dry even in heavy rain and the translucent film allows plenty of light penetration for working on the boat. Cyclone tie-downs pending!

## STEAMBOAT @ ALDI

John Breen encountered this fine-lined timber steamboat in the Aldi carpark in Townsville – presumably because there wasn't room for it in the bargain centre aisle.



## ONLINE ENCOUNTERS

### AI ART

Peter Walley-Thompson passed on his discovery that Open-AI's disruptive, potentially menacing and sometimes useful ChatGPT can convert a photo of your boat into a "painting" in any style you desire.

A photo of a Willy Tern on an Oughtred boat webpage caught Pete's eye, so he politely asked ChatGPT to create this watercolour version:



Pete is pondering whether an AI boat painting competition would appeal to WBAC members?

### FOILING FERRIES

Meanwhile, our freelance Townsville correspondent (another Richard) reported the launch of electric-powered high-speed foiling ferries in Sweden. The Candela P-12 Shuttle will carry 30 passengers travelling at 30 knots, with claims to be the most efficient electric ship ever.



For further information and a video of the flying foiling ferry go to [www.candela.com](http://www.candela.com)



## 4.5 m LAPSTRAKE FISHING BOAT FOR SALE

Trevor Noy from Townsville has contacted WBAC to let us know that he is selling his 4.5m William Atkin designed lapstrake open fishing boat - optimistically named *Last One*. He mentioned that he previously sold another boat he built to Dr. Tom.



The boat is powered by a 9.9hp 4 stroke Yamaha and according to Trevor will cruise at 5.5 knots all day.



Building commenced in early 2024 and the boat was launched August 2025. It is built from exterior A bond marine 12mm ply hull/sides with a 10mm ply sole covered with bi-axial fibreglass sheathing sitting on top of Qld maple floors and Silky Oak stations.

Screws are 316 S/S and timber surfaces have 2 coats of West systems epoxy, paint is from Norglass and consists of 2 coats of 2-pack primer/undercoat and 2 coats top colour. The rub rail is varnished Spotted Gum, epoxy glued and screwed.

Other features include:

- Aluminium under floor removeable fuel tank up front;
- Generous storage under bow and under two seats;
- 7" Lowrance sounder GPS on an adjustable mount;
- Removable carpet
- Automatic bilge pump
- Redco trailer;
- Boat and trailer are registered.



**Asking price: \$12,600**

For further information contact Trevor Noy:

- Email: [noy36@bigpond.com](mailto:noy36@bigpond.com)
- Phone: 0437498856

Ladies and Gents, this concludes *Ratlines* for February 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](mailto:wbacairns@gmail.com)

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WBAC's Cash For Containers number is: C10026463