

	<p><b>RATLINES – MARCH 2026</b></p> <p>The official newsletter of the  <b>Wooden Boat Association of Cairns, Inc.</b></p> <p><b>ABN 56 194 994 249</b></p>
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Current Membership: 34

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

A great deal of effort has gone into sorting out the contents of our shipping containers, including compiling an inventory of unwanted items for sale or disposal. The plan is to eventually sell one of the four containers to make space for an additional work bay.



## PROJECT SCOOP

Richard reports on recent progress

Scoop continues to power on with ply completed on the bottom and inside of both hulls. The stern extension is coming together with hand-holds for old blokes as part of the design.

Bill is providing some Cadaghi timber to finish off the hand-holds on the stern and for use to make the rails along the top edge of the hulls - again for old blokes to hang on when she reaches top speed as she planes across the Lake.

The first part of the false keel has also been completed, glued and screwed in place so it will not be long before we will turn her over to finish the sides and top construction.



The good news for our team in the last week was the very positive response Chris has had to his treatment, so he will be working even harder as we progress the build.



Glen has been very engaged in gluing and filling up holes with his magic finger for spreading resin.



Tom is waiting in the wings with sandpaper and paint brush ready to start work and in the meantime gives us continued concern with his ladder work scraping and painting the clubhouse.

Richard continues his learning curve with perhaps fewer mistakes.



## BILL'S Ginny

The Rocks River skiff is designed for rowing. A pulling boat. I chose this design to build specifically for that purpose.

However, the great steps forward with electric propulsion opened the possibility of much greater range if I could include it as well. The problem was how to incorporate an electric outboard without compromising the ability to use the boat as originally intended. How do you make outboard transom brackets, battery holders, and wiring disappear when not in use?

I had started out with the intent of a planked rear deck with access to the void space enclosed by inspection ports in the rear bulkhead. I was always uncomfortable with this arrangement because the aft thwart would impede access, and it just looked awful.

I played around with several ideas using a removable deck hatch. This allowed me to keep the electric outboard wiring and battery all in one place, and with a removable floor, I could still access the void space beneath. But the battery size meant this was severely compromised.

Chris came up with the idea of a drop-in tray that accommodated the battery, but when removed provided good access to the stern compartment.

The tray was fabricated from polyester resin - another new skill that this boat has required of me.

With the tray in place there is now ample room for the battery.



Happily, I was then able to plank the rear bulkhead, and when the outboard is removed and the deck planking done, the boat will be true to the pulling boat design intended.

## ***China Bound***

Luis reports on recent progress



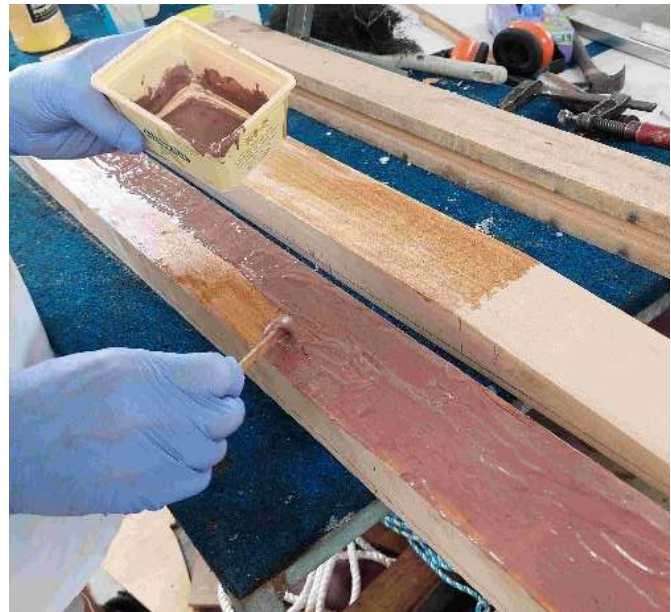
China Bound is continuing with epoxy treatment on the timber. It will be not too long before this process is done.



The current timber mast is too short for *China Bound's* rig. We have started on the construction of the 0.5 metre extension which will be scarphed onto the foot of the existing mast.

We have shaped, glued and clamped together two lengths of Kauri timber to form a solid laminated base section. Next step is to shape the mast foot to fit into the new 0.5 metre base section.

The scarphed joint between the new base and the existing mast will also be supported by a stainless-steel band, so we're confident the extended mast will be strong enough. 🙌



## A Day in the (Short) Life of a Drone

Allison came along to the February Lake Tinaroo outing to try out her newly acquired drone piloting skills, aiming to photograph our wooden boat fleet from above.



In theory, her drone was programmed to behave responsibly. It was supposed to return to its handler when the batteries were running low, it was supposed to follow moving objects (such as boats) at a safe distance, and it was most importantly supposed to avoid crashing into things.

For the first couple of flights, the drone did indeed behave itself, spying on Richard and Glen searching for a leak in *Ninjanij*, and following Keven solo-sailing in *Iona*.



But then .....

On its next (and final!) flight, the drone circled over *Iona*, capturing little *Foresight* in the distance, before ploughing into *Iona*'s mainsail and plunging into the murky depths of Lake Tinaroo, never to be seen again.



Fortunately, boat and skipper were unscathed and undeterred by the aerial assault, and *Iona* sailed merrily on.

The drone supplier acknowledged the incident was caused by rogue programming and was not pilot error. They delivered a new drone to Alison a week later, in time for another boat/drone viewing attempt!

## That Sinking Feeling

Roger reports on Lake Tinaroo outing Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2006

For the first time in months, we were greeted with blue skies and a gentle breeze when we arrived at the Tinaroo Sailing Club. Not so pleasant was the news that John gave us. The sailing club work boat had been stolen from the boat compound the night before. The padlocks to the club site and to the boat compound had been cut and the thieves had made off with the workboat, its outboard and trailer. Seems likely that the outboard was the attraction.

Also unwelcome was the news that Roger Wadley, the TSC commodore, had been taken to hospital a couple of days before. We wish him a speedy recovery, not helped I'm sure by the news of the theft!!



John helped Richard to launch *Ninjanii* - Richard having had especial dispensation to attend as it was his wife's birthday!!

*Ninjanii* had been suffering from an unknown leak, so Richard was intent on locating this.

(Note, I have avoided pathetic jokes about Richard having a leak!!)



My car being out of action, Glen had been cornered and agreed to drive me up and also to tow *Bitaki Taari* (BT) from compound to launch site. With Kevin, John and Glen's help we soon had the tarp off BT and Glen used the mighty Rav4 to tow her to the shore.



Getting BT ready is becoming easier and quicker with routines now established and, she was soon in the water – taking care with the launch site as BT needs a reasonable slope and there are only a couple of places suitable when the lake is full.

Dermot arrived with *Foresight* and soon had her rigged, launched, and ready for her first trip with folding foils attached to her bilge keels.





With the modest fleet of three boats ready for action, coffee-time was declared – an event enlivened by the unlikely appearance of the Bill’s multi-tasking giraffe.

Over smoko we discussed the myriad ways to steal a boat and outboard!!

Meanwhile we were watching Bill with his majestic kettle, waiting for the water to boil. He had overestimated the amount of water needed, so with typical WBAC timing, as soon as he made his cup of tea, we all got up and decided it was time to sail!

The wind was picking up nicely, Richard set off in *Ninjanii*, with his fingers crossed.

Glen decided to stay safely on shore, and Alison stayed with him, intent on her video project and trying out her new drone. (This was a replacement by DJI for the one that had self-destructed on *Iona*’s sail the previous month).

Bill, John, Kevin and I boarded BT, and, slowly at first, set out after Richard. The first real gust changed things, and soon BT was rapidly overtaking *Ninjanii*. Unknown to us, *Ninjanii* was slowly filling with water and sinking! This made her more stable but was disconcerting for Richard!





Dermot was just setting out to test his bilge keel extensions to *Foresight* and was a speck in the distance as seen by the mob (not really a crew!) on BT who were focused on having fun and seeing how fast she would go!!

Turning BT around just before Pirate Cove, we realised that we could not see Richard and *Ninjanii*! *Foresight* was a white speck in the distance, but there was no sign of *Ninjanii*'s red sail. Rather concerned, we headed back and did some searching before catching up with Dermot, who told us that Richard had headed back to the sailing club.

Big relief. Apparently, the water ingress was faster than Richard was prepared to tolerate and so he decided safety was the wisest thing! A good decision.



I was getting sailing lessons from John and Kevin, and, after a couple of attempts, we realised that with four people on board, BT does not turn into the wind and go about as readily as with a lighter crew. However, we had a good sail before deciding that lunch was calling.

John had the approach to the sailing club worked out, and taking his advice, we came in parallel with the shore, and as the wind dropped in the lee of the land, drifted gently along and then turned into the shore. As we had no motor, this was a very good outcome.

Richard was already pumping his boat out and had located the source of the leak. A split along one of the seams where he had knocked the boat while getting it onto the trailer, probably causing the leak. We gave him a lot of gratuitous advice as to how to fix it - thorough drying followed by cleaning, filling and sealing the gap.



Alison had flown the drone and headed home for lunch with flat batteries (and the drone intact). After lunch, Bill took off on other business, and Richard packed up *Ninjanii* after his somewhat anxious trip.

Dermot returned having reached Platypus Point for the first time in *Foresight*, but had to row the last 20 metres to get back to the Sailing Club as *Foresight* lost momentum in windless zone near the shore.

He was happy with the results of the pivoting-foil-enhanced bilge-keels experiment. He thought the dinghy pointed higher into the wind than previously, both foils stayed vertical in the water for the duration of the return voyage, and then obediently folded up on making contact with the shore. However, he noticed increased weather helm, which suggests maybe the foils should be repositioned on the bilge keels before the next test run.



The remaining ancient mariners decided on a second sail, and soon BT was hooning across the lake. The wind was picking up in the centre section, and the consensus was that we got 10 knots out of her. With one ama under water, this is as fast as I'd like to take her, and I was relieved that there were no breakages or signs of stress.



Repeating John's approach to the club, it was easy to get back to shore and prepare



the boat for trailering. To our surprise, the mighty Rav4 pulled her out of the water with no trouble at all, and we soon had the mast down, and her back in the compound. With the tarp over her and tied down, it was time to pack up and head for home.

A satisfying day, some lessons learnt, a leak found and no drones lost!

## SISTER SHIP

Driving out of the Tinaroo Sailing Club gates after the recent lake outing, this very smart new Pathfinder, sister ship to Tom and Sheila's *Iona*, was spotted on the nearby public boat ramp.



## MOODY'S ARK

A recent email from Malanda-based freelance writer Bonnie Nicol inquired about the whereabouts of a timber vessel supposedly built somewhere in Trinity Inlet in the 1970s and known locally as Moody' Ark.

It turns out that our in-house maritime historians, Glen and Phil, remember this unusual craft having visited it several times over the years. They describe it as being constructed of round mangrove logs harvested on site not far from the Edmonton boat ramp. They reckon it was never going to float, and doubt whether much of it remains today.

The "Cairns Then and Now" Facebook page revealed the following photos and information.

Mr Douglas Moody, a Canadian believing that the end of the world was imminent, started to build himself an Ark from mangrove woods. He died before completion of the work but the partially constructed boat remains as a monument to his effort and can be seen by tourists at the spot on Admiralty Island where he worked for several years  
Source - Shire of Mulgrave late 70's c.



Ladies and Gents, this concludes *Ratlines* for March 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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