



RATLINES – NOVEMBER 2025

The official newsletter of the
Wooden Boat Association of Cairns, Inc.

ABN 56 194 994 249

Membership Update: 34 members

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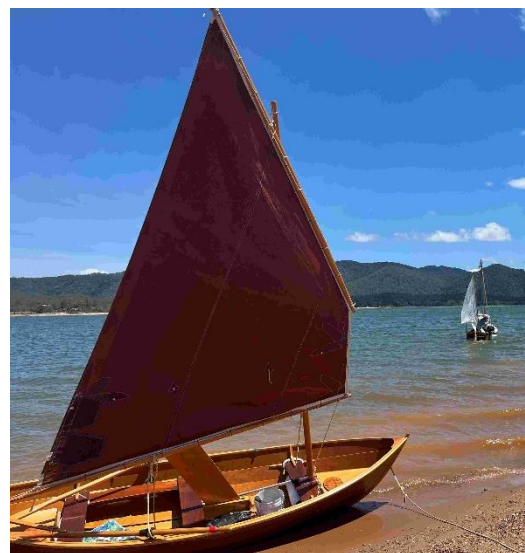
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CLUBHOUSE REDEVELOPMENT

Returning from a family visit after a couple of weeks absence it was nice to see that the electrical works in the shed are progressing. Power is now available from drop down power points and 3 of the containers have power outlets installed. Thankfully this reduces the snake lines of extension codes previously needed for the power tools. We are waiting for fans and lights to be delivered so they can be installed.

Keven is placing supports under the steps to help reduce the amount of warping in the timber. Direct sunlight and unseasoned timber will do that.

Gradually the containers are being organised. The hand tools are being located in the old library and Brian is sorting out the many bolts, screws, fittings etc, so we can actually find the one we want. A system is being developed.

A plumber will be coming in shortly to resolve the drainage issues with the storm water and the sinks.

As we have to comply with building regulations, we will be applying for a grant to design and construct the cover between the shed and the clubhouse. In the meantime, it is proposed that we install a temporary cover to provide shade for this area.

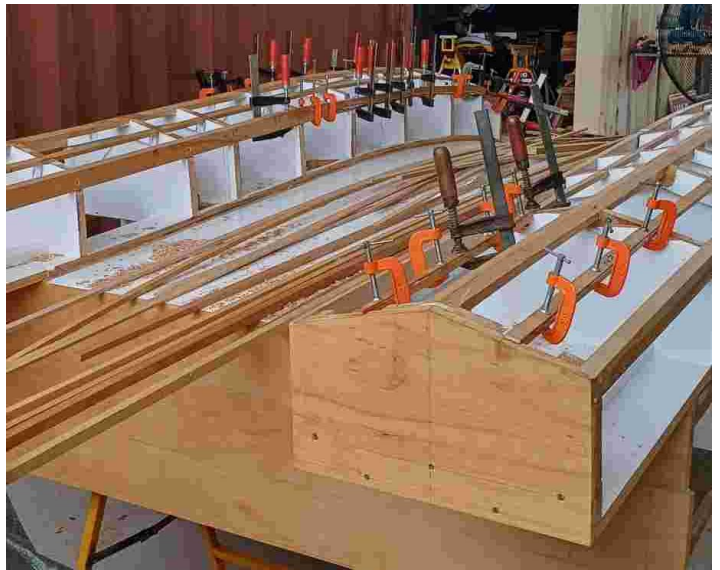
PROJECT SCOOP

Richard reports on recent progress

A loud crack rings out from the work bay as the 4th attempt to bend a stringer in two directions loudly fails. This followed two previous attempts the week before with the same loud retort.



Chris to the rescue! Despite his current medical ordeal, Chris appeared on the following Saturday and, using the exact same technique as Tom and I had done previously, he successfully placed a set of stringers bent in two directions keeping them intact. Tom, Glen and I have subsequently managed to place another four without breaking.



A few more pieces of timber will need to be glued into place, then the stringers and chines can be planed back to an even and level line.

Chris also demonstrated a time-honoured technique to measure up the plywood skin using a cardboard template with small nails lined up along the keel and edge of the frames. After pushing the cardboard through the nails, the subsequent nail holes are joined up for the margins of the template. When we start to apply the skin, she will look like a real boat!

So, despite a few setbacks, Scoop is progressing well!

BITAKI TAARI UPDATE.

Roger reports on some final touches for his folding tri.....

Needing to do some of the fiddly work on her, I kept Bitaki at home for a couple of weeks, and fitted her with the basic electrics needed for bilge pump, navigation system and lights, (oh, nearly forgot, plus the fridge!!). This is untried as yet, so a testing time ahead!

The replacement steering mechanism has been purchased and so, after taking my UK rellies for a trip on the lake where she behaved herself, she is now outside at the boat club to be fitted with the wheel steering system and some minor tidy ups.

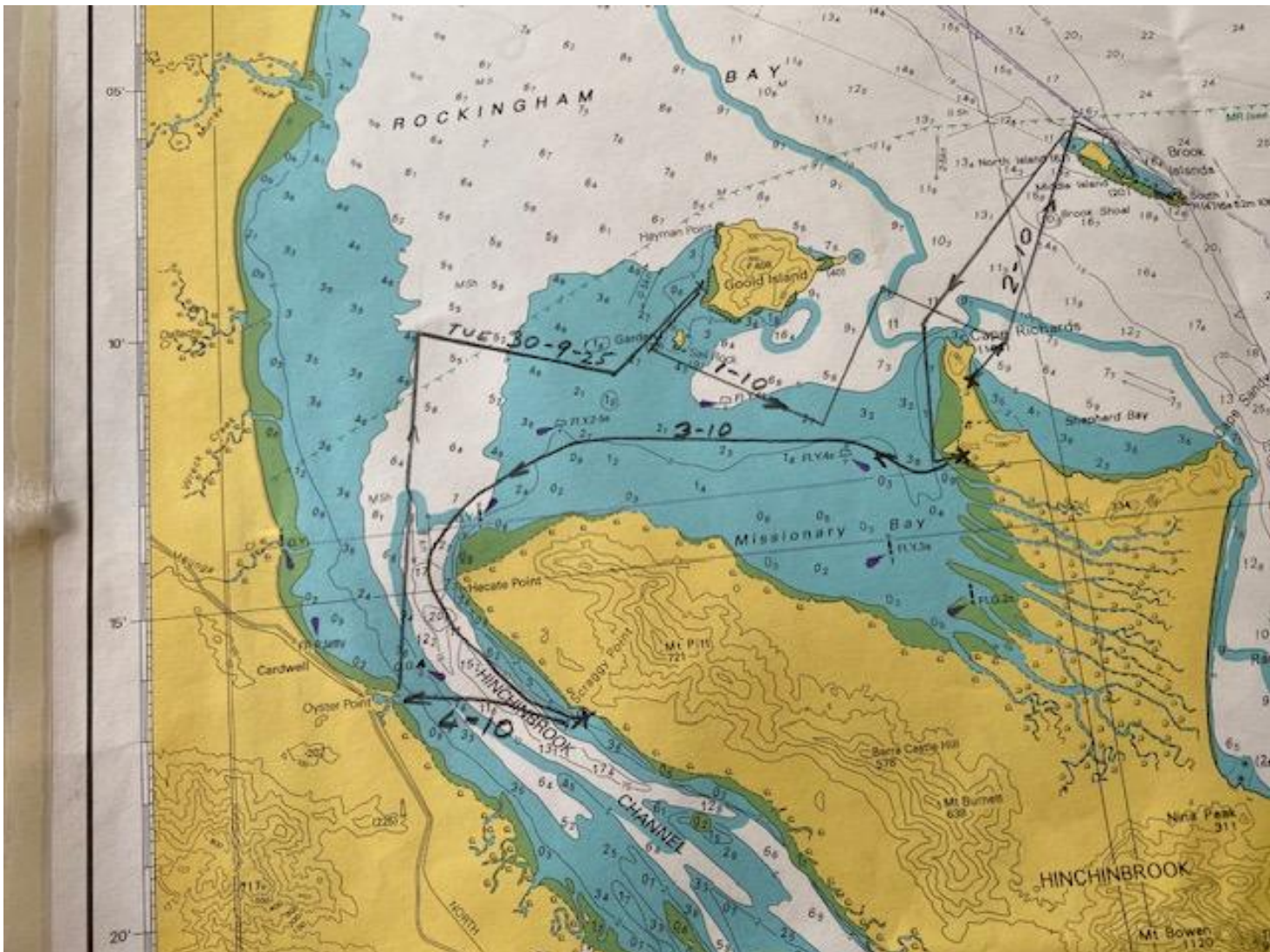


HINCHINBROOK CRUISE

John Breen reports on his sailing-in-company cruise around the northern tip of Hinchinbrook and nearby islands

My wife Asa and I in *Circe* (Blue 6.7m Timpeny), in company with six friends in three other trailer sailers, launched at Port Hinchinbrook on Tuesday 30th September, returning there four days later.

We had hoped to circumnavigate Hinchinbrook Island, but with a less-than-ideal weather forecast, we opted for a route that included an overnight anchorage off Gould Island, a run past the ocean side of the Brook Group and stops at Hinchinbrook's Cape Richards, Macushla Beach and Scraggy Point.





Anchored off Gould Is (arrived at dusk)



Anchored off Middle Is of the Brook Group for swim and lunch



Wednesday morning at Cape Richards beach where resort used to be.



Sailing past north side of Brook Group



Off Macushla Beach campground, Hinchinbrook Island



On anchor off Scraggy Point in the channel 3nm from Port Hinchinbrook boat ramp.

Wind was forecast to be strong from SE, so we hauled out on high tide at 7 am on Saturday. 4 boats and 8 people had a great time!

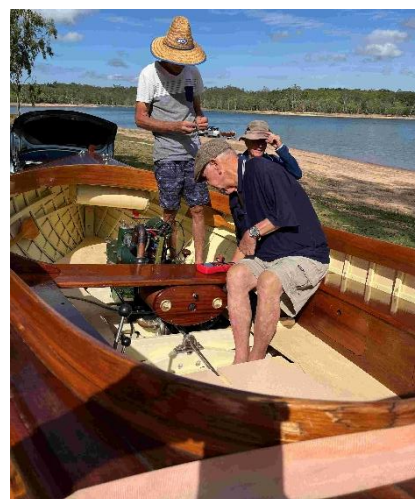
A FINE DAY OUT (DESPITE CHALLENGES ASHORE AND AFLOAT) Lake Outing, Thursday 20th November

New member, Mike Sutcliffe from Townsville, brought along his classic Port Phillip Bay clinker-built putt putt *Sarah Kate*, joining Dermot with *Joule*, Richard with *Ninanji* and Tom & Keven with *Iona*.

Mike made sure that *Sarah Kate* was looking her best for her first outing on Lake Tinaroo. However, blisters on the varnished topside appeared after the drive from up from Townsville, resulting in unresolved speculation regarding possible causes: moisture in the timber, change of altitude, blistering heat on the highway etc.?



Mike explained that the clinker-built hull typically leaked until the planks expanded in the water to seal the gaps – making the electric bilge pump an essential piece of on-board equipment. While the petrol motor was in fine working order, the bilge pump refused to operate despite the collective wisdom of the assembled ancient mariners. So, unfortunately *Sarah Kate* remained cradled on her trailer.



While Tom and Keven set about rigging *Iona*, Richard set sail in *Ninanji* in a stiff breeze, while Dermot took Mike for a short cruise on *Joule*, with the plan to return to the Sailing Club to join Tom and Keven for smoko once *Iona* was rigged.

Ninanji made good progress in choppy, gusty conditions, but *Joule* dropped anchor close to shore to hunt down an e-gremlin that prevented power getting to her e-motor. With no quick fix, Dermot switched to the auxilliary electric motor which worked fine, and the e-cruise continued.

With *Iona* rigged, *Ninanji* and *Joule* returned to shore where coffee and ample quantities of cake, muffins and scones were consumed in traditional fashion.

Suitably caffeinated and bloos-sugar restored, Dermot set about tracking down and taming the e-gremlin on *Joule*, while Richard opted for a restorative swim after his somewhat challenging encounter with wind and waves under sail.

With *Joule*'s motor operational, Dermot and Mike set off again, transiting the lake and introducing Mike to the delights of Platypus Point and Pirate Cove.

Reinvigorated by his swim, Richard couldn't resist another outing in *Ninanji*, while the rest of us kept an eye on the little red sail from a distance. However, we were too far away to witness Richard survive a challenging near capsizes that half-filled *Ninanji* with water when the mainsheet became entangled in the rudder while going about in a particularly strong gust. He did very well to make it back to the sailing club unaided.



Meanwhile, Tom and Keven set sail in *Iona*, under jib and mizzan sail, leaving the mainsail furled. In the choppy conditions, the gaff fork rattled against the mast and eventually broke, so the mainsail could not be raised. It turned out that *Iona* performed well under the jib and mizzen sail combo, nicely balanced and coping well in the gusty conditions.

By midday, the three boats had returned from their separate adventures, and the hungry sailors enjoyed a leisurely lunch. We had no trouble agreeing it was a fine day out, despite the challenges (as usual) ashore and afloat.



JOULE IN BRAZIL

Dermot was surprised to discover that his electric-powered *Joule* made a virtual appearance at the UN Climate Conference in Brazil earlier this month.

The occasion was the presentation of a proposal to achieve 100% renewable energy for Pacific island nations. Titled ***Lighting the Way: A Partnership for a 100% Renewable Blue Pacific***, the presentation included case studies showing how all the industry sectors of the Pacific could adapt to solar and wind energy, ending their current dependence on expensive and polluting fossil fuels.

The case study for small scale marine transport and fishing boats is a trial by E-Class Outboards, a small company from NSW, that is providing training and kits to enable Solomon Islanders to convert their petrol-powered outboard motors to electric power.

E-Class Outboards is the company that provided Dermot with the converted electric outboard for *Joule* – an event that made its way into the proposal document that was launched in Brazil:

<https://smartenergy.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/Powering-up-the-Blue-Pacific-Report.pdf>

Case Study: Solar Electric Boats

EClass Outboards are undertaking a trial outboard motor retrofit training program in the Solomon Islands using kit supplied from Australia.

Led by Lynelle Johnson, a social entrepreneur, the EClass kits reflect 15 years of precision engineering excellency by innovator Ron Kelly. The retrofit program in Solomon Islands follows successful pilots in West Africa.

The outboard motors range from 5kW all the way up to 30kW, the equivalent of 60 horsepower and the retrofit and other power electronics all use commercially available parts, with EClass making the right selection and sequencing of parts and manufacturing precision tooling to allow existing outboard motor casings to be retrofitted.

Local partner, solar installer Gavin Pereira, is pleased with the trial. He sees good opportunities to establish solar-powered battery recharging stations around the archipelago to support the electrification of small vessels.

While not yet mainstream, one EClass customer is already experimenting with fitting flexible solar panels on vessel canopies.

Early results are promising, demonstrating that depending on the speed of travel, it is possible to fit vessels with flexible solar panels and travel on sunshine alone!

EClass is a member of Australia's Maritime Emissions Reduction Coalition (MERC).

Able led by husband and wife team Angus and Christine McDonald, MERC represents more than 30 companies ranging from small boat to hydrofoil and large commercial ferry electric boat builders and designers, technology providers and port electrification specialists.



Photo: Dermot Smyth

YOUNG ENDEAVOUR REPLACEMENT

Chris passed on this item on the building of a replacement for *Young Endeavour*

Construction of *Young Endeavour II* has officially commenced at the Birdon shipyard in Port Macquarie, Australia.

The Australian Commonwealth Government has ordered the vessel to replace the brigantine Sail Training Ship (STS) *Young Endeavour*. This vessel is now 35 years old and has been delivering sail training voyages in Australia since 1988.

The new sail training ship, to be built over the next three years, will be a barquentine rig, with square sails rigged on the foremast and fore-and-aft sails rigged on the fore, main and mizzen masts.

The vessel was designed by Dykstra Naval Architects, and Birdon will be working with Dykstra on the core vessel design and will also have responsibility for the design, engineering, and integration of the vessel's systems, including mechanical, electrical, propulsion, communication and navigation systems.



Like *Young Endeavour*, the new ship is expected to be steel hulled, have timber deck covering, and be rigged with aluminium masts and spars. The vessel will feature increased endurance at sea, and air conditioning throughout the ship.

It will accommodate up to 42 youth crew on each voyage and will be able to undertake more voyages per year than the older vessel, meaning more young Australians will be able to access the unique development program it offers. Over its 30-year life, the vessel will have capacity to embark tens of thousands of youth to participate in the world-recognised *Young Endeavour* Youth Development Program, and a similar number of youth to participate in Community Day Sails around Australia.



The *Young Endeavour* Program is an investment in Australia's youth, helping participants develop life skills and reach their full potential. Since 1988 the Royal Australian Navy has operated, maintained and crewed the sail training ship *Young Endeavour* on behalf of the Commonwealth – ensuring that voyages, while physically and mentally challenging, are conducted with the highest regard to safety.

Young Endeavour will remain in service until delivery of the replacement vessel.

HARTLEY 16 UPDATE

New Owner – New Members

The Hartley 16 trailer sailer advertised in the October edition of *Ratlines* has been purchased by Sheree Willems from Cairns, who has also signed up for WBAC family membership.

Welcome Sheree and family!



Ladies and Gents, this concludes *Ratlines* for November 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: 6 MSQ Access Road, 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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Phone: 0417 266 555 (Roger)

WBAC's Cash For Containers number is: C10026463