RATLINES – APRIL 2025

The official newsletter of the

Wooden Boat Association of Cairns, Inc.

ABN 56 194 994 249

Membership Update: 31 members

DATE CLAIMERS:

- **2025 Great Tinaroo Raid** will be held at the Tinaroo Sailing Club from Friday 22 to Sunday 24 August.
- **2025 Christmas Lunch** will be held at Tinaroo Sailing Club on Saturday 6th December.

Further details of these events in upcoming editions of *Ratlines*

In This Edition.....

The Big Move.

Things have been happening! The solar power system has now been removed and given a new home up at Yungaburra to help the Landcare group charge batteries and, I suspect, make coffee! All the containers have been gone through once and given a preliminary sort out, and the garden shed has been cut off the back of container 3 as we no longer need it.

Ports North have advised that they will find the best way to include roof insulation in the works. We will probably have to pay for this, but it has to be done during construction. The date for relocation is now expected to be later than 10th May, but we don't have a firm date as yet.

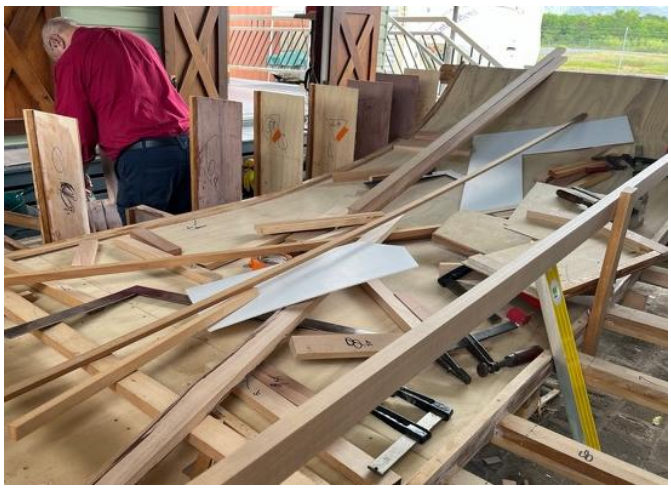
If we can lift the pavers, and palletise them, the contractor will move them for us. First, we need some pallets and some strong backs! We want the pavers for a pathway between the club house and the shed.

It looks like the porch on the front of the clubhouse will have to go to facilitate the move, and we will have to re-instate this, and the verandah. This will be linked to a covered pathway to the shed. Chris has already drawn up a concept plan for this, which we will discuss, dismantle, reinstate and finally agree upon in the next few weeks.

PROJECT *SCOOP*

Scoop has passed a milestone in that all her frames are now glued into position, with the exception of the hull extensions beyond the transom which will come a bit later. We've tried to rush her construction a little to have her in a movable state when our clubhouse is relocated in coming weeks, and as you can see from the photos chaos reigns at times.

It was very pleasing once the frames were in to see the sheer, chines and keel lines were proven, and now we've started setting up for the stringers.



The bit of artwork on the transom was the result of some idle hands and definitely will not be the final design!

Roger's *Bitaki Taari*

The hull painting has been completed, including the addition of "go-faster stripes", (not to Tom's standard, but Roger is happy!),

Bitaki was hoisted up from the wooden cradle that has been its home for at least a couple of years, and gently lowered onto its trailer, which Glen refurbished and repainted and now looks very presentable.

This provided the first opportunity to check that the swinging mechanism for the amas (outriggers) would work and where, and how, the amas would sit on the trailer.

The mechanism worked well, but swinging the amas back put a greater twisting strain on the beams than we had thought and one cracked.

After some collaborative thought the team devised a means to reinforce the beams and brace them back to the gunwale to counter the twist. Templates have been cut out and will be checked. Steel can then be ordered, and Keven will be back to welding!!!

Once this reinforcing is complete, the amas can be mounted and the trailer brackets for them altered to suit.

For a while, Roger has been joking about wanting flames on the hull, much to everyone's disgust. However, with both Roger and Keven away over Easter, Sheila kept busy cutting out some spare orange decal into a flame motif, and sticking it onto one side of the hull, without telling anyone. In typical Sheila fashion, these turned out really well and, with Roger deciding to keep it, she had to duplicate the flame design for the other side!!

Things are progressing well and Bitaki Taari is looking increasingly ready for the water.

Mark’s Car-topper Update

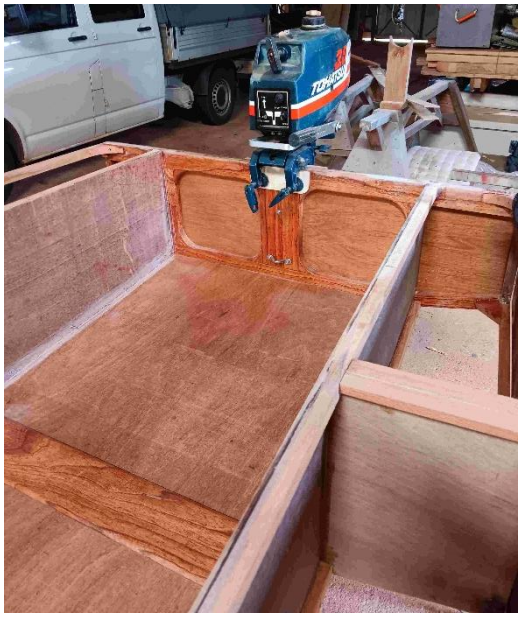
There's a bit to report this month so I'll start with the lever I employed to get the central part of the boat assembled.

Simon, next door, bought a Mercedes sprinter from a Swiss couple who were camped at Palm Cove, a few months back. He and his wife intend travelling to Western Australia to do the wildflowers thing and visit friends. The van had a basic fit-out and served the purpose of short-term holidays. Simon then proceeded to strip the internals out and adapt the van to their own needs. He made a start, then got bogged down in the complexity of the exercise and the time frame they had set for the project. I went over for a coffee and a chat and came away with a (you scratch my back - I'll scratch yours) labour swap arrangement.

So, with a lot of short lengths of copper wire and epoxy glue, together, we assembled the core structure of the boat.

Another friend was also restoring the seats from his ‘80s ski boat in the workshop and helped make the process quicker and easier.

Since then, I've added a series of wings and stringers to form the overall shape. Most of these components were made in advance and only needed a final tweak before attaching to the core.



The transom is now able to take the rudder assembly or, with a quick swap, I can mount an outboard motor.

This came from seeing Glen arrive at Tinaroo with his simple, flat-bottomed skiff with the option of sail, motor, or oars. An independent man for all seasons!

The stringers are made of White Cedar - a long-grained species that was used by timber cutters for their springboards. I used some to make a paddle for stirring compost water, in the garden. It's held up really well in the weather and regular dipping in microbe-rich water. Many others have not survived.

The partitions down the sides, form a series of mini bulkheads as part of full-length box beams.

The lug sail arrived this week, two weeks ahead of schedule. It was ordered from a company in the Philippines, called Really Simple Sails. I included a 3.8m sail bag in the order. Webbing straps to keep it tidy and cordage to attach the yard came with the sail.

Time to track down every clamp in the workshop to ensure good contact for glueing the sides on.

All went well. I'm pleased with the progress and can't wait for the day it's ready for a coat of paint!! Fingers crossed for some good weather.

Chris's *Meekong*

The hull interior has now been finished and undercoated. All timberwork on the bow and transom has been completed, and the gun'l sponsons/rubbing strips have been refurbished and are currently being refitted.

Soon, all three original Yellow Beech thwarts (seats for the uneducated) will be sanded back, re-varnished and re-installed with a bit of extra pretty timberwork.

You never know, she may just be ready for the Raid...

Allan's *Cumquat*

New Member Allan Blair shares his experience of building *Cumquat*, a flat-bottom wooden tender for his trailer sailer *Clockwork Orange*.

Origins

I have recently retired and needed a project. I wanted a tender that was stable, comparatively light and made of timber. I have built and re- built a number of boats over the years, mostly out of fibreglass. I wore respirators and other safety gear, however the smell of polyester resins, acetone and iso monomers gets to me a bit. Epoxy was the way to go.

I trawled through the internet and looked at a myriad of designs. Some delightful clinker designs were available, but they looked very tender. I am almost 70 so I reckoned a flat bottom and a wide beam was the way to go. Ducksworks were agents for the Trixie design which looked about right, so I paid my money, and an electronic plan was delivered almost immediately.

Design

Cumquat is supposed to be 7 foot 2 inches by 4 foot 6 inches, although it ended up 7 foot 4 inches long. I don't know how or why that happened. It's a simple stitch and glue construction method based on two sheets of quarter inch (6mm) marine plywood. There is a cutting profile which involves 6 inch squares drawn on each plywood sheet. The bottom, sides, seats and skegs are all cut out by joining the dots provided by the offsets. Very easy.

Construction

I built the boat on a couple of sawhorses, making sure the bottom panel was level. You don't want to build any twists into the boat. After cutting out all the panels and fairing each panel you sort of thumb some bevels on the bottom sheet, so you have maximum contact between the plywood surfaces you are joining.

I used small stainless screws to join the sides to the bottom instead of the traditional bits of wire or cable ties. I also used a biaxial cloth around 270 grams cut into strips to tape the seams instead of the heavier fibreglass tape rolls.

I taped all the inside joins first and then removed the screws from the outside of the panels.

Early stages of construction

The internal panels and seat uprights were then fitted and glassed in. The boat now becomes quite stiff.

Fairing and sanding.

This is the bit that takes the longest. I glassed in one layer of biaxial on to the floor and up the sides to about three inches. The boat was then rolled over and the chines were planed and rounded. Similar with the stem and stern. After a final sanding with 250 grade sandpaper, biaxial cloth was applied with epoxy resin to the outer surface of the hull. More sanding when dry, followed by a filler of epoxy mixed with talc and or micro-balloons. Sanding, sanding and more sanding.

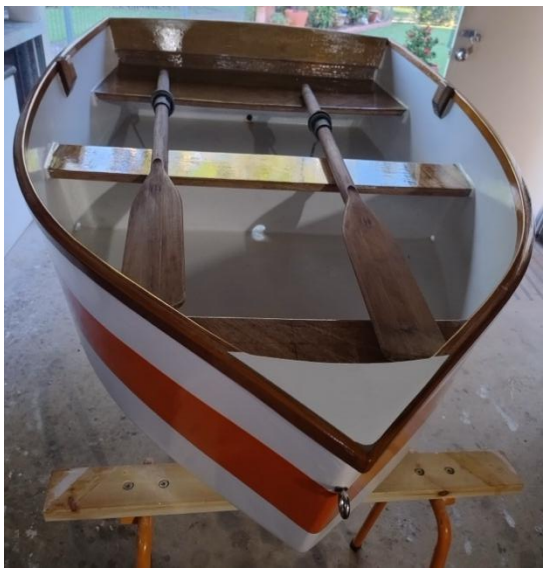
Finishing

Two coats of wood primer and three coats of single pack polyurethane was used for the finish. The single pack polyurethane takes a week or so to dry properly. Final touches included laminated Western Red Cedar gunwales and marine varnish.

Final Comments

Cumquat ended up a bit heavy. I think it is about 35 kilos. I used a hardwood marine ply but if using epoxy, I reckon you could get by with a lighter grade. Does it float? Don't know at the time of writing. Hoping to launch soon.

The finished product



Pirate cove and beyond

Risking the weather, the usual enthusiasts gathered (slowly!) at the Tinaroo Sailing Club. Seven people, and three boats made for a party atmosphere. Dermot had *Joule* in the water, ready and waiting with John, and Phill on hand, by the time Roger and Tom arrived with *Brahminy* - Tom having left *Iona* at home.

Roger's main aim was to give the new Tohatsu outboard a decent run-in. The last time there was no water coming from the tell-tale for the cooling system. Turned out it was the old mud-wasp-in-the-hole problem, but a long way up, so a piece of wire was not sufficient to solve the problem. This time Roger had plugged the hole, so no mud wasps could move in.

With *Brahminy* in the water, and outboard mounted, coffee was needed as we waited for Glen and Richard to arrive, which they did shortly. Suitably refreshed, crews were allocated, Glen in his *Flatty*, Roger and Tom in *Brahminy*, and Dermot, Richard, Phill and John in *Joule*. Pirate Cove was the destination.

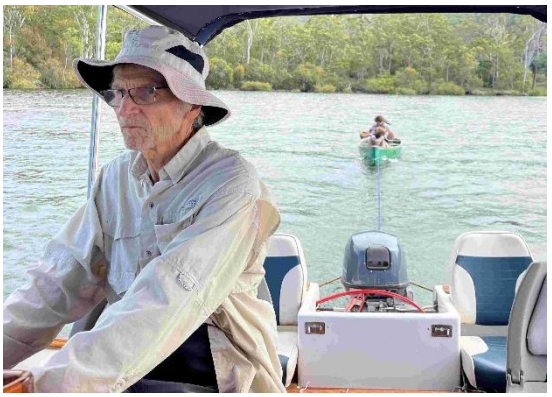
While loading refreshments into *Brahminy,* rather a lot of water was noticed in the bilges. A copper conetite fitting for the boiler drain had come loose, allowing lake water to backflow into the boat. Two seconds with the wrench, and the flow stopped, a minute or so with the bailer and all was well.

While Tom went for a stroll, Roger started the Tohatsu, and had a gentle circle around the bay.

Joule was well loaded for a party, and Tom gave Glen a hand to launch *Flatty*. Glen telling us not to wait for him.

Brahminy needed a shove to get of the bank, then with Tom at the tiller set off smartly across to the Cove.

With *Joule* keeping up, soon the Cove was in sight and another coffee required.



Landing in the Cove we disturbed a couple of lads who were fishing in a canoe. Not for long, as it soon became apparent that their electric outboard had run out of electrons, and they were drifting to the bank. Who better to rescue them than Dermot in the electron-powered *Joule*, so while Roger ate his muffins, Dermot and John set out in pursuit of the canoe. A line was passed and soon, canoe and *Joule* were headed back to Barrabadeen, from whence it came. Turns out the lads had no life jackets, no paddles (useful in a canoe!), no back up battery and no means to charge the depleted battery. There were some grey heads shaking over the coffee and muffins.

Glen had arrived by this time, *Flatty* surviving the rather rough crossing very well. Though Glen anticipated a wet return trip.

The obligatory tow being over for the day, the crew relaxed while Roger took *Brahminy* (soon followed by fully loaded *Joule) for* a run up the little bays and creeks in the vicinity. The rainforest comes right down to the water, so gently cruising along the banks is magical.

Time to head back for lunch. John reckoned he knew a good short cut between an island and headland near Tinaroo township, and Glen wanted a refuelling station, but Tom and Roger wanted the long way around to put time on the motor. That lasted until turning into the wind around the point, a couple of waves, larger than most, changed their minds, and they headed across to see where Glen had got to. *Joule* had caught up by this time, so the small flotilla headed back to the sailing club for lunch with no further incidents.

Lunch taken, Roger was keen to put some more time on the motor, so John gave him a guided tour of the little coves, and the houses around the bay near the Sailing Club. Turns out John has been sailing on Lake Tinaroo since a young lad, and knows the safe channels between the trees. Very useful to know.

Glen was packed up, John gave Roger a hand to put *Brahminy* on the trailer and Dermot needed lots of assistance in getting *Joule* out of the water (see the latest *Joule*-loading innovation in the story below).

The weather turned out to the good, and the boats all behaved themselves. Hopefully, the young lads learnt to be better prepared next time they head out in their canoe.

Treating *Joule's* Retrieval Disorder (Again)

The latest attempt to simplify the loading of *Joule's* curvaceous hull onto its trailer emerged from Phill's involvement in helping Dermot to load the boat after the recent voyage to Pirate Cove. With Dermot operating the winch and three line-holding assistants waist deep in water, it took three attempts to successfully transfer *Joule* to the trailer, with the keel properly aligned on the centre rollers.

During this frustrating process, Phill noticed two metal brackets supporting the submersible taillights on each side of the trailer. He instantly thought these brackets would make ideal platforms to support short metal tubes into which (or over which) long lengths of flexible PVC conduit or piping could be fitted during boat retrieval.

The idea was that the PVC lengths should be flexible enough to allow the maximum beam of the boat to pass through, while having sufficient squeeze springiness to centre the narrower stern to centre the boat on the trailer's rollers as the boat is winched up.

Phill wasted no time in putting his idea into practice. By early the following afternoon, he had found in his workshop the appropriate metal tubing and flat steel, cut them to size, welded them together, drilled holes, painted them and sent Dermot a photo of the two bespoke loading-pole holders!

Dermot gratefully picked up the fittings from Phill's next day and ASAP bolted them on to the taillight brackets as instructed.

He then inserted a short length of 30 mm diameter high pressure PVC pipe, followed by a longer length of 20 mm diameter PVC pipe.

A week later, after another outing to Pirate Cove with a boatload of grandchildren, Dermot had the first opportunity to test out Phill's idea, design and construction. It worked perfectly and hassle-free at the first tempt. Thanks Phill!!!!

Ladies and Gents, this concludes *Ratlines* for April 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**

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