

Hello to all our members and friends, and welcome to the May Issue of Ratlines.

We're still progressing with our projects despite the current virus-affected way of life, although it has meant that our activities have been curtailed quite a bit, as you will see.

Club News:

Restarting our regular clubhouse sessions: Now that the travel/gathering restrictions have eased, our regular gatherings recommenced on Saturday 16th May. Much frivolity and celebrations ensued on the day, but we had to restrict the regular hugging sessions to the bare minimum.

Ports North Master Plan: Progress on the PN master plan has not been updated as yet, and we fully expect any progress will be delayed considerably. We plan to seek a progress report in late May.

Insurance: After a great deal of to-ing and fro-ing, we have accepted the insurance quote sourced by Brendon from Gallagher Insurance, the premium has been paid, and the Certificate of Currency received. We're very happy as to how it has turned out as our policy cost is now some **30% of what it was in previous years!!**

Clubhouse:

We're currently in the process of re-arranging the contents of the storage containers to better suit our needs and to streamline our workshop operations. This has necessitated the discarding of a veritable ute-full of old paint, unidentifiable bits and pieces, furniture bits, and various piles of rubbish accumulated over many years. New shelves & racks are on the drawing board and will hopefully be completed in the next two weeks.



Cairns Motor Boat Club Update:

Picture this scenario:

Deep in the wilds of Edmonton, a retired mariner sits alone in his shed (one of several, actually) surrounded by his vast collection of Seagull Outboards and parts thereof. Late into the night he tinkers away, tink-tinking with the many different versions, endlessly trying to develop the ultimate Seagull – ***one that will actually run without problems*** – and he is continually beset with a burning question: How Many Seagull Outboards Is Enough?

Watch this space.....

Boatbuilding Projects:

Roger's 15' strip planked canoe continues at home. He's currently deeply involved in steaming, laminating and gluing the seat supports:



Can you see the (un) happy faces..?

Tom's Pathfinder: Rudder completion has occurred, and the centerboard is now glass-sheathed. Likewise, the operating mechanism nears completion.

And the bowsprit has now been fitted:



Events Calendar:

*** The 2020 Great Tinaroo Raid ***

Sunwater has now re-opened Lake Tinaroo. We have re-confirmed the booking for the Raid at Lake Tinaroo Sailing Club for the weekend of 17th, 18th and 19th of July. It is expected that some restrictions will still apply to allowances in travelling distance and gathering numbers, so for this year only our Raid will be restricted to members and guests.

A programme of events for the Raid's 3 days will be presented in June's edition of *RATLINES*.

Committee Meetings

For the past couple of months, the monthly President's Report has had to replace the monthly committee meeting. This is now set to end with the lessening of movement restrictions, and we expect the meetings to recommence on Saturday, 13th June at 10:30 AM. Don't forget the meetings are open to all members.

Gambling Fund Grant.

The list of tools and equipment has been finalised with the suppliers, and the orders placed and paid for. We anxiously await their arrival, currently planned for the week 18 – 22 May.

A Bloke and his boat – our regular feature about one of our members..

This month is another of our tablelands members – Dr. Tom. And here, **in Tom's own words**, is his story about how wooden boats became a part of his life:

I consider that Cairns is a beach at the end of the line. In the sense of the railway line, this is literally true and also of the road line, the Bruce Highway. If life is a beach, Cairns attracts the flotsam and jetsam of humanity that wash up onto "The Beach at the End of the Line", and I am no exception. Born in England and brought up in Central Africa, we migrated to Cairns in 1965. My parents had enjoyed "messing about in boats" on the rivers in England and wanted to instill that same love into their children.

My brother Tony and I sailed a Gwen 12 sailing dinghy at the Cairns Yacht Club on Trinity Inlet. My parents sailed a Heron, which had been beautifully built for them by Sydney Bolton, who also built and sailed the 16-foot skiffs that epitomised dinghy sailing all over Queensland in the 60's and 70's. I remember sailing as fast as possible up Trinity Inlet in the Gwen, me on the trapeze, Tony at the helm, and still going backwards because of the outgoing tide!

In my late teens, I built my first boat, an Australian Scow Moth. It was from a kit, put together with resorcinol glue, which did not waterproof the seams adequately, or perhaps I was too "stingy" with the amount of glue. Initially, it leaked like a sieve until I did some reparative work!

My second boat was built during the university holidays. Also from a kit, it was a Contender sailing dinghy designed by the Australian Ben Lexcen, he of America's Cup fame. This boat was more successful, but after that, my mother put her foot down. She had had enough glue and paint droppings on the concrete under our high set Queenslander-style house and told me that the next boat I built would be at my own house! However, I decided to stick with what I knew I could do and leave boat building to those who were good at it!

I moved back to Cairns in 1990 when cyclone Joy was lashing the coast, after a time of working in England, Sydney and then in the late 80's, in Mackay. Whilst in Mackay, I had been involved in the Mackay Sailing Club where my two sons learnt to sail in Sabot dinghies.

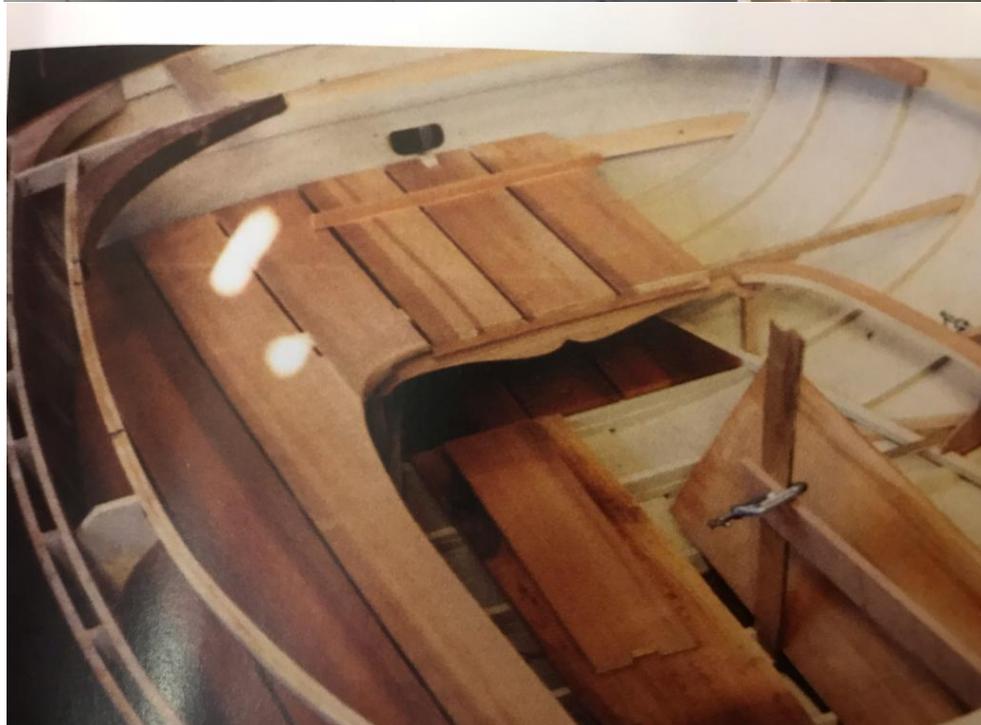
A chance meeting in the early 90's with Bob Goodall at his plywood shop on the corner of Lyons and Hartley Streets (where "Tutt Bryant Hire" now lives) lead to a long friendship. He started the Wooden Boat Association together with Rob Sperling "Kiwi", Steve Jarret and Dale Murray. I had read about the "raids" in Europe and Scotland, which are organised, competitive trips along rivers held over several days. They are a rather similar concept to a car rally. I realise that a similar event could be a focus for the newly formed Wooden Boat Association, and suggested a Tinaroo raid. It wasn't a trip from point A to point B, rather a camperthon at Tinaroo Sailing Club. It was a great success for 10 years until it was rained out at Barrabadeen in 2014.

I would like to acknowledge and pay tribute to the Wooden Boat affectionados and builders in our area. **Grainger Morris** is or was a canoe builder extraordinaire based in Kuranda. **Peter Jones** restored one of the Gwen 12's, which I possess and I am lucky enough to have one of his "smile" canoes built from dacron over huon pine ribs. **Mark Boutle**, RIP. He was a wonderful local chiropractor from Innisfail who died some years ago. I have a beautiful sailing dinghy of his. Mark's mentor Brian was a local fisherman in Innisfail who taught Mark how to build wooden boats.

I always think of the phrase "*A thing of beauty is a joy forever*" when I see a beautifully made wooden boat. I am a firm believer that wooden boats are great for the mental health, if not so great for the wallet or the endless upkeep they demand! **..Tom..**

The following pics are from Mark Boutle's build of the sailing dinghy:





And now, fresh from the wilds of Tasmania.....

Marc's extended activities in Tassie due to CV-19

Tasmania without a doubt has one of the most active wooden boat building and preservation cultures in Australia. Apart from the increasing restriction on travel I managed to get out and about exploring interesting and beautiful wooden boats.

The Huon Valley township of Franklin is renowned for its Wooden Boat Centre and school, an active wooden boat club and picturesque waterfront, however on further discovery the township of Cygnet has a very active wooden boat scene including a boatshed with about 8 vessels being refitted, restored and newly built.

Port Cygnet is also the location for the famous Wilson Bros. boatyard that has been continuously building wooden boats since 1863, some over 100 tonnes.

Alongside the flash yacht club is a men's shed type club not unlike the WBAC with their own small slipway and clubhouse/boatshed with coffee breaks only interrupted by occasional wooden boat activities.



A classic sailing vessel refit at Cygnet

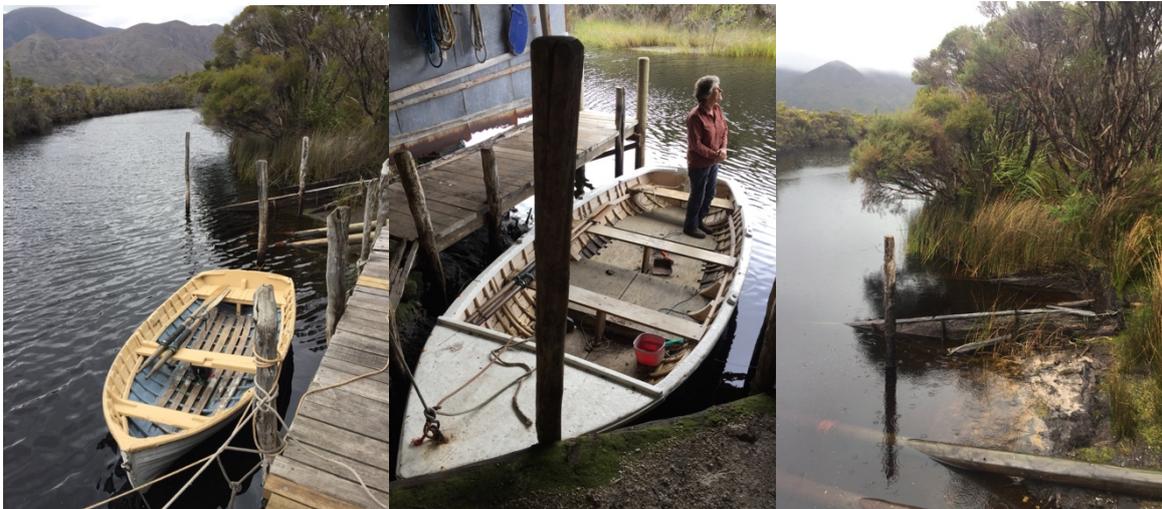
The Franklin Wooden Boat Centre has had a major management shakeup and the attached school is now very well attended with additional personal protective equipment worn by the attendees. The shop now has large picture window providing an excellent view into the boat shop.



I was most fortunate to once again be invited to help with the delivery of a friend's boat for an adventure tourism operation traveling from Hobart to Port Davey in the most remote, fascinating and rugged part of SW Tassie. The only way in or out of this area is by light aircraft or boat. No phones or other distractions.



The small number of early settlers that lived here were a pretty tough lot and relied on their wooden boats to survive and operate their fishing and tin mining operations. The most famous settler was Deny King who was not only a tin miner but an artist, environmentalist and botanical collector, explorer, meteorologist and built the airstrip. His Quonset hut style home was based on his observations of the army buildings at the massive wartime recuperation centre on the Atherton tablelands. His home, boatshed, slipway and various boats are being preserved at the Melaleuca site.



Our occasional southern members are going fine. Peter Sutcliffe has been busy making a teardrop caravan of his own design and beautiful ukuleles. Peter Jones has been preparing for his next F1 kayak course at Franklin once things open up a bit more.

I managed a couple of kayak outings and made some bespoke furniture (coffee table below) but generally been very busy assembling 3D printed face shields and masks for Tassie front line health personnel.



CHEERS !!!

One final photo, and a question: *How does one fit an outboard as an inboard into a canoe?* And why?

Here's the answer to the how:



As to the why:- *Just because, of course!*

This concludes Ratlines for April, if there's more you want to see or know about please let us know by return email - WBACairns@gmail.com

Cheers everyone, and stay safe.

Chris O'Keefe
President

Clubhouse: 68 Tingira Street, Portsmith, (Cairns) Qld 4870

Committee is: President- Chris O'Keefe; Vice President- Marc Richards; Secretary- Roger Fryer; Treasurer- Brendon O'Rourke; Committeemen- Glen Chisholm, Phill Smith and Tom Sparks.

Build days: Every Tuesday and Saturday mornings. Other days available on request.

Website: Currently being revised.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Wooden-Boat-Association-of-Cairns-118900728480121/>

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