



**WELCOME TO THE 2021 GREAT TINAROO RAID EDITION OF RATLINES!**

**Club News:**

**Regular clubhouse sessions:** Every Tuesday and Saturday from around 7:30/8:00 AM.

- **Ports North Master Plan:** The rumour around town is that October is looking good for the release date.
- **Insurance:** Up to date
- **Incorporation:** Up to date.

**Clubhouse:**

- The pavers for workbay 2 have been generously donated by our member Stewart Smith, saving the club a bucketload of money. They're now on site, and being installed! Thanks again Stewie!!

**Boatbuilding Projects:**

**Tom & Sheila's Pathfinder:**

***Is completed, named, and launched! More in the Raid roundup later in this issue...***

**Brendon's Hartley:**

Deck repairs remain at 90% complete. The cockpit dash has now been removed and a total re-wire is planned. Marc & Brendon's new foredeck hatch is complete, with glass insert! A beautiful piece of work indeed.



## Roger's Bitaki Taari:

Thanks to a brilliant suggestion by John Williams, the design problem with changing the outrigger support beams to a folding configuration seems to be solved. Much thought is currently being applied to this new idea – usually in those wee hours when sleep eludes.

## John Williams' 'Shimmy':

Due to the 2021 GTR approaching, not a great deal has progressed.

## Other activities:

Various members still regularly head on up to Tinaroo for the chance to mess around in boats, test drive weird & wacky contraptions – some with hydrofoils, some with steam engines - and so on. If you'd like to meet up with them, best to co-ordinate with our Secretary Roger.

## 2021 Great Tinaroo Raid – a Huge Event!

The rollup to GTR 21 started on the Thursday morning when Roger arrived at the TSC grounds, and all he had for company were birds & wallabies. But not for long!

Within several hours many campsites had been set up, boats launched, boats being assembled, tested, and modified. And then of course was the unmistakable sound of Seagulls being started, being sworn at, and being threatened with conversion to anchors (in itself, not a bad idea).

Much laughter, pulling of legs, and campfires followed, along with the inevitable tall stories, jokes, and plans for the Friday, which included the naming & launching of the Pathfinder.

Friday continued with the influx of people, campers, and new members keen to be involved with the club's activities – and especially the races (but we'll get to that soon).

We had a lead-in to the event by the Cairns Post, and that seemed to spark a new interest in our club, with numerous phone calls by interested people and even an interview on ABC Radio.



Then of course, it was time for the Pathfinder's moment. And given her origin, it was fitting that her launching was preceded by a bit of a tribute to [Bill Sammons and the story of his Pathfinder:](#)

*Tribute by Chris O'Keefe, President.*

Bill learned to sail with his Uncle on Port Phillip Bay when he was 7 years of age, and obviously that's when he was bitten by the sailing bug. He continued to sail with family and friends for a few years and then progressed to building his own wooden sailing boat. Naturally, this was when the sailing bug partnered up with the boat-building bug – and all three remained together for life.

As Bill's life progressed he built a number of wooden boats, getting bigger & better all the time until he progressed to buying a bare 40 foot steel yacht hull from a builder in Brisbane, which he then had transported to Cairns so he could complete it to his own requirements.

In the meantime (and I say this because sailing & boating was such an integral part of his life) Bill managed to continue his chosen calling as a Chemist, raise a family, continue his studies to graduate as a doctor, and run a GP Practice in Cairns. He finally finished his yacht and made numerous trips up and down the coast from Yamba to parts of New Guinea. A full life indeed!

Bill finally decided to downsize and build an 18' John Welsford designed Pathfinder to return to his wooden boat sailing days. He purchased the plans and all materials and commenced the build. Sadly, as often happens, Bill succumbed to a long illness and passed away before he could progress the build very far.

Bill's wife Margaret then donated his project to WBAC, and we took it on to build as a tribute to one of our original members.

Bill would be extremely proud of the beautiful vessel that **IONA** has become, and every member should be justifiably proud of the very professional craft we have created over the past 5 years!

*And at last, the much-anticipated launching speech made by Sheila Sparks:*

## **Pathfinder Launch: 2pm Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

Thank you for coming to the launch of this beautiful Pathfinder sailing boat.

Tom and I would like to thank the members of the WBAC for the tremendous effort they have put into building this boat over the last six years. There have been many club members involved in this build project. In the early years members including Reg Cornish, Bob Goodall, Phill Smith, Phil Grimmett and Gill Cook were active in the construction process.

In the last four years since Tom and I have been members of the group we have had tremendous help from Chris O'Keefe, Marc Richards, Roger Fryer, Dermot Smyth, Brendon O'Rourke and Glen Chisholm.

We especially want to thank the current members who have worked tirelessly to complete this project in the last few months and meet this launch deadline.

An extra special thanks goes to Chris O'Keefe who has driven this project right from the beginning. His mastery of shipwrighting and eye for detail is clearly shown throughout the boat. It was great to see Chris use old craftsmanship skills when making the coamings. Without Chris's knowledge of boat building the Pathfinder wouldn't have the professional finish you can see.

We also want to thank Marc Richards for his precision engineering, architectural wisdom and energy! He has solved numerous fabrication issues, producing numerous design drawings and mock ups throughout the project. His manufacture of the transom is a masterpiece!

### **The naming of the Pathfinder.**

I am delighted to name this sailing boat **Iona**.

Iona is a tiny island of the SW coast of Mull, in the Inner Hebrides. The name is synonymous with natural beauty.

- *A fitting name indeed!*

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*..and at that point IONA was christened with champagne and slowly lowered to kiss the water for her very first time. A beautiful moment and very fulfilling for all our members who have spent so much of their time on her construction.*

.....

It's pleasing to report that when IONA took to the water she sat well with plenty of buoyancy, was very stable, and sailed very easily – which was pleasing beyond belief to Tom & Sheila.

IONA did a number of trips out on the lake over the next two days, and even motored around by Seagull just for a while, but we all think a different type of outboard (one that actually works efficiently) may be better for her.

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**New road talk heats up P3**

**Roosters win Tableland Cup P43**

**SAILING AWAY**

Dr Bill Sammons had a dream to build and sail his own sailing boat. Now five years after his passing the Tinaroo Sailing Club is helping achieve his vision. The boat affectionately named IONA, christened in his name at Tinaroo last Friday with Dr Sammons' friends and family bearing witness to his dream being realised.

**Sammons legacy sets sail**

Tom and Sheila Sparks on IONA on Friday at Tinaroo Dam.

feel beyond proud for their small group of boat enthusiasts. "I feel immense pride that our members have banded together to produce such a beautiful boat with a finish equal to that of a professional builder," he said. "It certainly wasn't easy, and near impossible at times given the delays imposed by COVID and other projects, however each of our members had one thing in mind, to complete her as a personal tribute to Dr Sammons. "The launch is one of the highlights of our annual flag-ship event, The Great Tinaroo Raid, which will once again be held at the Tinaroo Sailing Club where we are made very welcome." Tom and Sheila Sparks of the WBAC have now purchased the boat and affectionately named it IONA at the launch. The rest of the program after the launch of IONA covered many events from padding and rowing races, a Seagull outboard race and a peculiar propulsion race.

**BY ELLIE FINK** when IONA took her first sail across the dam. (WBAC) was determined to complete this project after being gifted her by his wife. Although Dr Sammon sadly passed in the beginning stages of the Welsford-demon's legacy was honoured at the Tinaroo Sailing Club

After a lifetime's dream of constructing his own 18 foot long sea vessel, Dr Bill Sammons' legacy was honoured at the Tinaroo Sailing Club

Now a long five years on, the President of the WBAC Chris O'Keefe said that launching the boat made him

The pics & articles from the EXPRESS newspaper.

...and a misty photo from Dermot the very next morning....with Migaloo and her whaletail...



Then of course, it was race day, with the first up being the *Peculiar Propulsion Race!!*

All started well for the four entries:

1. DR. Toms Tinaroo Lake Monster (AKA Kitty and her paddle wheels).
2. Chris's Gnu the canoe with pedalled propellers;
3. Dermot's whale of a tail Migaloo, and..
4. Roger's canoe Heron with the really impressive dual-operation flipperdrive.

Kitty managed to strike terror into every person on the water with what looked like a huge floating woodchipper controlled by a mad scientist bearing down on them, and once started she was never headed!

Gnu the canoe was pedalled furiously through the race and came a very close second (close to 180 seconds later that is).



The prep before the start: Gnu foreground, then Heron, then Kitty, with Migaloo out of shot.



The start – and words are not enough...

Sadly neither Migaloo nor Heron could finish the race due to engineering failures.... i.e. they both broke! More development is required. Then, once the race was over, there was furious activity getting boats prepared for the ..

## *Paddling & Rowing Race!*

And if there was furious activity before the race, it pales into insignificance with the race itself!!!

There were far too many entries to list for the race, with what seemed like a whole flotilla milling around the start line.



Once the hooter went off it was sheer bloody mayhem! Oars, blades, paddles and froth everywhere – and that was just the jockeying at the start line!! The pandemonium around the first marker was such a frenzy it was described by one racer as trying to manoeuvre through a threshing machine without a flak jacket or a helmet and avoiding drowning at the same time!!

Rounding the second marker brought the flotilla of crazy people in small boats into the breeze & chop created by their own furious threshing, and at least one small canvas-on-frame kayak shipped a reported 25 litres of water.

The rounding of the third marker into the home stretch was a much calmer event, with Geoff – one of our brand new members first across the line, followed by Guy (another new member) followed closely by our Vice-Pres Marc – who did really well given the competition.



Marc, Geoff and Guy with the first two boats. In the background rows a late finisher....

Finally, the race of the day – *The Great Tinaroo Seagull Race* - had arrived, and the lake was rife with the staccato clatter of illegally doctored Seagull engines complaining into the air, along with the smell of various grades of fuel. Hydroplane *UFO* was a late scratching, and Sheila's venture on her outrigger kayak was shortlived (both due to engineering failures), but the rest of the fleet moved up to the line in anticipation. Doctor Tom moved up just a tad too far and had to turn 360 degrees and recross the line after the hooter blared out the start.

There was a gaggle of craft at the start line... but they were soon gobbled up by Glen in the Silver Gull, and he stayed in front the whole race by at least 25 lengths – even with her 100 metre turning circle (a problem with long, skinny boats).

The jockeying for position continued in the pack with Heron, Migaloo and the JT Special keeping close quarters...



And at the final turn Dr Tom & Heike employed their secret weapon – the papier-mache Seagull!



....But to no avail as Glen & Silver Gull came first by almost a kilometre:



Second was Dermot & Migaloo



Followed by Roger in Heron and Dr Tom & Heike (& J. Livingston-Seagull) Roger waving...



Once the hype & noise was over, and a number of joyrides were taken on available boats, everyone prepared for the awards and cocktail party at the very respectable hour of 7 PM.

Any respect was shortlived however, seeing as the theme for 2021 was 'Christmas In July' and the costumes came out. Elves, Tropical Santa, jinglebells galore, and Sheila done up as a huge, glossy red, flashing light adorned Christmas present. The mind boggled!

Not all winners could be there, but as you can see from the awards photos, we made do with who we had.



Best boat for IONA to the Sparks

Marc accepts for Geoff's P&R win



Glen's win for the Seagull Race

And finally, a few random shots from the 2021 GTR

And on the last day there, we were pleasantly surprised when Adrian rolled up with his absolutely stunning steamboat. More than a few of us were suddenly gripped with the desire to build one.

That is, until common sense returned and we realized just how much effort a boat like this would take to build.





How's that for a thing of beauty!!??

Finally, a few random photos of a fantastic weekend! Thank you all for your efforts, work, and involvement.





The Tinaroo Lake Monster!  
(Note the 'bespoke' steering system)





Canoes, steamboats, dinghies and more!



Steam's up, let's go!



Ladies and Gentlemen, this concludes the Great Tinaroo Raid Ratlines for July 2021.

As always, if there's more you want to see or know about please let us know by return email – [WBACairns@gmail.com](mailto:WBACairns@gmail.com)

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- Tom Sparks, John Knight and Dermot Smyth.

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

**Website:** <https://www.woodenboatscairns.com.au>

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

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