



## *Welcome to the Christmas Edition of Ratlines!*

### *But first:*

#### Club News:

Regular clubhouse sessions: ...are still every Tuesday and Saturday from around 7:30/8:00 AM. We usually finish around midday, but that's flexible.

- Charity Status: The registration of WBAC as a charitable organization has been put on hold for the time being while we further assess whether the cost is actually worth the meager benefits.
- Mail: Our mailing address has been changed to 68 Tingira Street, Portsmith. QLD 4870.
- Ports North Master Plan: There are no changes to the Master Plan at this time.
- Insurance: Up to date.
- Incorporation: Our audit is complete and was tabled at the 2020 AGM. Our annual return to the Dept of Fair Trading is collated and will be forwarded in the next week.

#### Clubhouse:

- Remember, we have all sorts of boat stainless steel fittings, bits & pieces, etc, so check us first.
- Sorting of our library collection is almost complete, with the Library program being populated and more shelving planned..
- All three of our containers have been fitted out for their required purpose, and all our goods, tools, and bits & pieces stowed in shelving. We hope not to have to move it around again.

#### Boatbuilding Projects:

**Roger's 15' strip planked canoe** continues at home and has a bit more prettywork being done to cover the buoyancy compartments.

#### **Tom's Pathfinder:**

Whilst Tom continues in his never-ending search for the perfect deck finish, Marc completed the decorative timber transom inserts and has graciously allowed Tom to seal & varnish it all. The Pathfinder has been lifted some 200mm off the building jig at the stern to allow the construction and installation of the skeg keel. The templates for the cockpit coamings have been commenced.



### **Brendon's Hartley:**

The Flareline is now off her trailer and resting on raised keel blocks in preparation for final hull prep/filling/fairing and painting. Stripping off of gunwale trims to facilitate deck repairs has commenced.

### **The Bitaki Taari.**

As most would remember, the Bitaki Taari is/was Bob's pack-uppable, trailerable trimaran that came from Kiribati. Bob has kindly donated her to WBAC, and her new owner will be Roger, our secretary. She is slated to be moved into the second work bay once the Pathfinder has finished construction, and she will be repaired as necessary. Some redesign & modifications to her method of attaching the outer hulls are also being investigated.

### **2020 Annual General Meeting:**

The minutes and results of the AGM were sent out to all members early December. If you didn't receive a copy please email our Secretary on [WBACairns@gmail.com](mailto:WBACairns@gmail.com)

### **The 68 Tingira St compound update.**

The compound has now been subdivided into three sections, with the other two tenants now having moved all their paraphernalia into their allotted areas. We are indeed fortunate in our choice of clean fill for our low-lying areas, as the other tenants have been advised to remove the leftover bitumen products they laid down as a parking base.

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### **Other activities:**

Various members still regularly head on up to Tinaroo for the chance to muck around in boats. And plenty of secret squirrel activity has been noticed around the region in preparation for the 2021 Tinaroo Raid. More in future editions.

For the last issue of the year, we again have 'A bloke and his boat', featuring Dermot and his considerable history on the water:

### [DERMOT AND HIS BOATS](#)

Dermot blames his fascination/affliction with boats on two formative childhood experiences. As a ten-year-old he spent a day on a neighbour's small cruising sloop, *Pamala*, sailing on the Irish Sea off the coast of Dublin – a tantalising introduction to the magic of a floating home-capsule powered by the wind. Soon after that experience, Dermot and his family sailed on the SS *Iberia* to a new life in Australia, stopping at Aden, Port Said, Colombo, Bombay and Singapore along the way. These encounters with the sea and the wonders of faraway places, combined with the loss of family and friends in Dublin, set in motion a dream to one day build a boat and sail back to Ireland.

At the age of 30 and living in Brisbane, Dermot purchased the empty fibreglass hull of a Manitou 32, with the aim of fitting it out for extended cruising. Three years later, thanks to help from many friends and fellow dreamers, the junk-rigged *Erus* (an acronym for Environmental Research Under Sail) was launched in Moreton Bay. After a few months completing the fit-out on the water, including running-in the single cylinder air-cooled Ducati diesel auxiliary, Dermot sailed out of Moreton Bay and headed north towards the Coral Sea.

Interrupted periodically by the need to work ashore, Dermot, accompanied from time to time by friends who had helped build the boat, as well as a German backpacker, Christina, who had sensibly waited for the boat to be built before turning up, sailed *Erus* along the Queensland coast, through Torres Strait, across the Gulf of Carpentaria, and along the Arnhem Land coast to Darwin. In 1986, after a couple of years working for the NT Government, an experience which confirmed Dermot's unsuitability for institutional employment, Dermot, Christina, their 18 month old daughter, and two friends with their 6 month old son, sailed across the Arafura Sea to the Moluccan Islands of Indonesia (coming a distant last in the Darwin to Ambon race), then back to Arnhem Land via the Banda Islands, through Torres Strait again and eventually to drop anchor at their new home on the Bloomfield River north of the Daintree.



It took a couple of years, and the birth of their son, for Dermot to realise that juggling responsibilities of family, house, land, and work were making it impossible to maintain the cruising dream, and his last passage on *Erus* was the delivery trip to her new owner in Port Douglas, which remains her home port today.



*Erus* at Port Douglas under new ownership

It was 20 years before Dermot bought his next boat - a 1986 plywood and fibreglass, trailerable, folding Farrier 680 trimaran, *Placebo* – named for the drug-free health benefits she would bring. At a pinch, *Placebo* could sleep four adults, two in the aft cabin and two in the main saloon. She was fast and her shallow draft was ideal for beaching on islands or crossing river bars.



However, *Placebo* took around two hours to rig on arrival at a boat ramp, there was little protection from the sun in the cockpit under sail, and the cramped accommodation on board limited trips to two or three days.

So, after seven memorable years with *Placebo* along the Queensland coast, Dermot upgraded to *Larrikin*, a 1996 Simpson-designed 10 metre fibreglass sailing catamaran which is moored in the Hull River estuary, near Tully, two hours' drive from Dermot's home in Atherton. With two double cabins, a fully shaded cockpit and plenty of deck space, *Larrikin* provides a comfortable platform for Coral Sea outings and island explorations with friends and family, including young grandchildren.



Soon after joining the WBAC last year, Dermot purchased the completed hull of a plywood Bullseye dinghy which had been built several years before by Cairns local Paul Malkinson, who sadly died before he could finish the boat. Dermot fitted bilge keels, a simple sailing rig and articulated oars to enable forward-facing rowing (inspiring the name *Foresight*) – ideal for playing on Lake Tinaroo.



Dermot's latest boat project is finishing off a sleek, flat-bottomed clinker-built plywood rowing skiff (acquired as a completed hull), seen here fitted with a whale fluke propulsion system for the inaugural Peculiar Propulsion Race during the 2020 Tinaroo Raid.

While Dermot has yet to fulfil his dream of sailing back to his birthplace, he did sail *Erus* up the Johnstone River to Innisfail, the ancient Gaelic name for Ireland!



Ladies and Gentlemen, this concludes Ratlines for 2020, and the next issue will be in February. 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)

Please travel safe over the Christmas and New Year period, and we'll see you all next year.

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/>

**Phone:** 0407 757 949 (Chris)

**Email:** [WBACairns@gmail.com](mailto:WBACairns@gmail.com)

**For sale by John and Asa Breen:**

**Wooden trailer sailer:**

[https://www.gumtree.com.au/s-ad/atherton/sail-boats/wooden-trailer-sailer/1263207147?utm\\_campaign=socialbuttons&utm\\_content=ios\\_VIP&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=email](https://www.gumtree.com.au/s-ad/atherton/sail-boats/wooden-trailer-sailer/1263207147?utm_campaign=socialbuttons&utm_content=ios_VIP&utm_medium=social&utm_source=email)